

In light of the predicted bomb cyclone, and subsequent blizzard warning, the Box Butte County Road Department wishes to encourage travelers and rural residents to be safe on the roads. Once the storm has subsided and it is safe to be on the roads, we will be back out assessing any damaged areas and put together a plan of action.

After the March 13, 2019 event, the goal of the Box Butte County Road Department was to open one lane to all of the rural residents. This was not an easy task given the flooding that followed, some residents had restricted access (ATV/UTV access only) for three weeks following the event. It has been a slow process, one that the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) believes may take upwards of four years to put everything back to pre-event status. Our goal is a much shorter time-line but in the meantime local law enforcement agencies, utility crews and fire departments are given updates of the road closures and have contact information if there is a need for equipment to respond to an emergency. There are certain areas of priority within the road system; mail and bus routes along with the higher functional road classifications are at the top of the list. These are for general guidance but an excellent starting place. Most recently we have been fielding calls regarding the repairs made, why we stop and start in certain areas and that if we would have “just gone another mile we could have taken care of all of the ruts” to their residence. While ruts are an issue that needs addressed; the washes, either across or parallel to the road, that are keeping a road closed are the focus now. Many producers have notified the Road Department of their feeding needs, brandings, livestock moving..., we appreciate the heads up and will continue to try to accommodate in the best way possible. This pertains to residential needs and other social events as well; we will do our best to provide an improved access.

Box Butte County has been approved as a recipient of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding. FEMA operates as a grant system, monies will be expended from the Road Department funds and then partially reimbursed at a later date. We are still getting pictures, dimensions and GPS coordinates of the damaged areas for submittals. This is an interesting/exhausting process and one that isn't the easiest to navigate but it can be done. This is not the first disaster Box Butte County has received assistance for, the most recent was in 2015, but the process has once again been improved upon and changed. The Road Department would ask the public for assistance in this area, if you have any pictures that were taken of the eroded areas, snow drifts or other damages we would welcome them electronically. Please contact us at 308-762-6797 for more details.

The Road Department has been assisted by many producers in an effort to get the roads patched back together; individuals hauling rock, doing minor repairs, resetting barricades and letting us know when the water is going up, or down, in certain areas is all appreciated. All of the donations of time and equipment have allowed us to stay focused on daily goals as well as long term goals, for this we cannot say thank you enough times.