

NORTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY COMMISSIONERS



Highway Commission Will Launch Bond Road Program This Autumn

Raleigh -- Governor Scott's ten new highway commissioners will launch the first phase of their \$200,000,000 road improvement program this fall.

Barely three months after the successful June 4 bond referendum the state's new roadbuilders expect to begin announcing which roads get first priority under the expanded program. By late September they hope to release full details

about the first batch of bond money roads.

That doesn't mean the roads will get paved immediately, but work will start on some this fall and on many others next winter and spring.

Planning these road projects has been a full-time job for the commissioners since their appointment last May 1.

During the summer months they have been poring over highway plans with their engineering staffs, holding public meetings with county commissioners and hearing about road problems from an increasing number of citizens' delegations.

Some commissioners have been personally riding over every road ear-marked for hard-surfacing. Others have asked commissioners and citizens' groups to assist in recommending roads for improvement.

All this is new experience for the Governor's roadbuilders. None of the novice commissioners had much knowledge about highway construction matters before joining the Commission. Only one man, Highway Chairman Henry W. Jordan of Cedar Falls -- was a hold-over from the Cherry Administration. Dairyman George Coble of Lexington had three months head start on his colleagues. He joined the Commission February 1.

The others began with a clean slate -- and a reshuffling of division engineers July 1 made it a new start all around.

The new commissioners got a quick start on their planning program. In June they voted to request the issuance of \$50,000,000 of the \$200,000,000 in bond money. In July they decided to buy \$5,000,000 worth of road construction and maintenance equipment. This month they directed their engineering staffs to speed up work on all regular construction projects waiting to be let to contract.

Governor Scott's road program calls for the hard-surfacing of 12,000 miles of secondary roads and stabilization before construction.

Some feel that keeping dirt roads well maintained during the coming winter should outrank the black topping program. Letters have been sent to county school superintendents requesting about school bus routes needing first attention during bad weather.

Each commissioner has direct responsibility for expenditure of all funds in his division. The General Assembly, following recommendations of the Commission, decides how much money shall be allocated to construction, maintenance, betterment etc. Then these sums are divided ten ways, using a special formula. From that point on the division staff takes over. They make financial decisions on locating new roads, hard-surfacing old ones and maintaining old and new.

No Regular Salary
For rendering this service, the commissioner gets nothing more than \$7 per day remuneration while on the job. In addition he gets subsistence and gasoline mileage when he travels on highway business. Only the chairman of the Highway Commission draws a full-time salary.

Of the eleven current members of the Commission, five have a pre-eminently farming background, five have a business background and one is a retired physician also interested in farming.

Dr. Henry W. Jordan, Chairman, is the son of a Methodist minister. He practiced dentistry for about 20 years in Belmont, then joined his brother, Everett Jordan, in the textile manufacturing business in Randolph and Alamance counties.

Commissioners Henry Grady Shelton and W. Guy Hargett of Eastern Carolina are prominent farmers of Edgecombe and Jones counties. Both attended State College, and Hargett was a classmate of W. Kerr Scott. Shelton's first highway division office is in Ahoskie (covering Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Bertie, Hertford, Martin, Northampton, Edgecombe, Halifax and Warren Counties). Hargett's second division headquarters are in Greenville (covering Beaufort, Hyde, Tyrrell, Washington, Carteret, Craven, Jones, Onslow, Pamlico, Greene, Lenoir and Pitt Counties).

The third division commissioner, A. Wilbur Clark owns and manages a peach orchard and a laundry in Fayetteville. His division encompasses Brunswick, Duplin, New Hanover, Pender, Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland and Sampson Counties.

Dr. R. E. Earp, fourth division, of Selma, is a retired physician with extensive farming interests in Johnston County.

James A. Barnwell, runs the fifth highway division from his home in Burlington where his principal business interest is Associated Transport, a large trucking concern.

Dairyman George Coble of Lexington, sixth division commissioner, parlayed a bankrupt Davidson County dairy from an organization with five employees in 1934 to a dairy products business operating today in seven states.

Otis Poole, seventh division commissioner of Jackson Springs, Montgomery County; Mark Goforth, eighth division commissioner of Lenoir; and Joseph Graham, ninth division commissioner of Iron Station, Lincoln County; have extensive farming interests. And L. Dale Thrash of Asheville, the tenth di-

vision commissioner has both, business and farming interests.

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