

NEW TRAFFIC SIGNS FOR POLK TOWNSHIP

Polk Township, Ohio, April, 2019. A year ago, Polk Township Trustee Glenn Cheesman seized the opportunity to apply for the Ohio Department of Transportation Township-wide Safety Signage Grant, a non-reimbursement grant program which provides traffic signs, posts, and hardware to townships identified as having met specific criteria and is designed to systematically improve the signage in the township. Polk Township had not previously received any funding under this grant program and did meet the eligibility requirements.

In April of 2018, Cheesman attended a lengthy pre-grant meeting presented by ODOT in Columbus, where applicants were introduced to all types of qualifying signage and were encouraged to review all aspects of the grant application, including an informative video highlighting the legality and purpose of each sign and the importance of its location, placement, height, depth, and visibility. Several new traffic signs will now use symbols to replace words. Deadlines for the completion of each lap of the grant were emphasized to trustees by ODOT, with confirmation of acceptance to be announced mid-summer.

Cheesman was happy to learn in July that Polk Township's grant had been awarded and so began the next leg of his mission...surveying the 27 miles of roads in the township. Upon the recommendation of County Engineer Mark Baker, ADN Safety Solutions performed a sign survey for the township to assess for needed upgrades and improvements and to determine conditions of present signage and where omissions existed. Cheesman noted that some of the signs and posts were over 35 years old. He explained that the survey was a necessity in order to complete the grant application accurately. "Many of the curve speeds require expertise in calculation because there is a definite method used so that correct speed limit signs are posted before approaching any length of curve in a road."

Upon completion of the survey, Cheesman drove the roads several more times both ways to confirm the results for signage types, design, placement, and visibility. He emphasized that in order to be effective, a traffic control device should meet five basic requirements: fulfill a need, command attention, convey a clear, simple meaning, command respect from road users, and give adequate time for proper response. In addition, all signage must be installed according to ODOT guidelines for placement, height, and depth of posts. The Ohio Utility Protection Service (OUPS) provided the verification for each sign post, stating that "hitting an underground utility line while digging can cause damage to the environment or serious personal injury."

Early this year, Cheesman's order for 230 traffic signs, posts, and hardware arrived. Included in the order were stop signs, stop ahead, curve signs and chevrons, bridge markers, school bus warnings, and speed limit signs, to name a few. (Street name signs were not part of the grant.) Placement of the new signs began in early March and will be completed by late April through the coordinated efforts of Trustee Cheesman and the Crawford County sign installation crew, under the direction of Highway Superintendent Travis Koschnick. When asked why he took on such a huge project himself, Cheesman replied, "I wanted to help give Polk Township residents and anyone driving our roads something that would keep them safer not only now, but in the years to come...a lot of work, but well worth it."