NAMPA HIGHWAY DISTRICT NO. 1

Commissioners: Dick Smith, Randy Noble, Bryce D. Millar

July 3, 2019

Editor
Idaho Press
Nampa, Idaho
(submitted on-line)

Subject: **Letter to the Editor – Chip Seals**

Dear Editor:

The Nampa Highway District (along with most other road agencies) chip seals its roads this time of year. We are always asked, "Why are you working on a perfectly good road?"

First of all, a "chip seal" is a film of oil sprayed on the pavement, with a layer of crushed gravel spread over the oil, and then another coat of oil sprayed over the gravel. The process only works well in hot dry weather. Chip sealing is like painting a house. It extends pavement life by sealing out moisture and the sun's ultra violet rays. It also protects pavement from wear, and provides traction.

When a road is newly paved, we wait one to two years before sealing to allow the new asphalt to properly cure. But afterwards, it needs to be sealed and periodically resealed to prevent deterioration. Our goal is to chip seal main roads every seven years, and subdivisions every ten. This is limited by funding, however, with higher-use roads getting higher priority. The district has 368 miles of roads, and chip seals about 45 miles per year.

The per-mile cost of chip sealing is $35,000, compared to $165,000 for repaving, and $250,000 for a complete rebuild. Properly sealed and maintained pavements last more than 30 years, but non-sealed pavements can fall apart in ten.

The district uses several practices to minimize public inconvenience when chip sealing, but we are always looking for improvements. The public is invited to call me with any questions or suggestions at (208) 467-6576.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)
ERIC R. SHANNON, P.E.
District Engineer

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