

				
<p><b>Charles E. Russell</b> 1913-1926</p>	<p><b>Ralph M. Lobdell</b> 1926-1950</p>	<p><b>Melvin E. Amstutz</b> 1950-1970</p>	<p><b>Kenneth E. Welton</b> 1970-1972</p>	<p><b>Edward Streed</b> 1972-1984</p>
				
<p><i>Slip Scoop Team</i></p>	<p><i>Buffalo Grove – Mundelein Rd</i></p>	<p><i>21st Street, Zion</i></p>	<p><i>Greenleaf Avenue</i></p>	<p><i>Washington Street</i></p>

### ***Following in the Footsteps of the Five...***

The position of County Engineer, formerly named the County Superintendent of Highways, has been around since the famous Tice Law of 1913<sup>1</sup>, which was part of the general assembly enactment of statutes dealing with important reforms: public utilities law, new road law, labor legislation, tax and revenue legislation and political reforms.

The following is a quote from an article from that time on the new road law:

A general revision of road laws provides for state aid in the construction of state highways. A joint committee of the previous general assembly had made an extended investigation of the road conditions and the road laws of other states, which proposed important changes in local road administration, and provided the machinery for a state road system. This bill was amended to some extent.

As passed, the road law establishes a state highway commission of three members, to be appointed by the governor with the consent of the Senate, for terms of six years, at each. This commission is given general charge of the state roads to be built in cooperation with the local authorities. The state and county are to pay each 50 per cent of the cost of construction of permanent roads and state appropriations aggregating \$1,400,000 have been made for the next two years. Provision is also made for county superintendent of highways, to be appointed from nominees of the county boards who pass the competitive examinations of the

state commission. The former system of local administration remains for the management of local roads, with three highway commissioners elected in each town and road district. But an optional provision permits any town or road district to substitute a single commissioner for the three. Another act authorizes the employment of convicts on the public roads.

Both the public utilities laws and the road laws are significant measures in the general tendency toward the development of state regulation and more centralized administration, in which Illinois has lagged behind the other large and important states.<sup>2</sup>

The scheme of the new law was to have the state and the newly empowered counties work together to plan for and build an interconnected state highway system, removing this power from the townships. This intent was to “get Illinois out of the mud.” The prevailing view was that a professional person at the county level needed to be in charge rather a political manager—the county superintendent of highways. The new system of roads were known as State Aid Roads, which after construction by the county, the state would maintain the new roads. Counties were authorized to issue bonds after voter approval, which Lake County did. Thus Lake County built much of what is now the state highway system in Lake County.

Alas, progress statewide was agonizingly slow, with the proverbial lack of funds the cause. Federal funds and one hundred percent state-funded construction came to bear by the 1920's, but the state-county partnership has continued to this day with the county engineer still serving as a “deputy” to the Illinois Department of Transportation.

There have been only six occupants of the state-created office of County Engineer in Lake County since 1913. The previous five are listed in the accompanying personal photos and highways of the time. The Tice Law brought the counties into the road business.

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## Acknowledgements

Much appreciation to Andrew Plummer, who retired as the Associate Executive Director of the Chicago Area Transportation Study in 1999 but is still active with the RTA. His unpublished article, updated since his presentation to the 10th Annual Conference on Illinois History, October 2008, entitled “County Surveyors and Highway Superintendents; Their Role in Building Illinois” is very informative. Andy can be reached at [PLUMMERat242@aol.com](mailto:PLUMMERat242@aol.com). See also his website “The Story of Building the Expressway System in Cook County 1939 to 1979” at [www.Cookexpressways.com](http://www.Cookexpressways.com).

<sup>1</sup> An Act to revise the laws in relation to roads and bridges, House Bill No. 843, approved June 27, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Hohn, Fairle A., “The Illinois Legislature of 1913”, *The Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 21, No. 10 (Dec., 1913), pp.931-937. Available thru JSTOR, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping the scholarly community discover, use, and build upon a wide range of intellectual content in a trusted digital archive. <http://www.jstor.org/>