

finding more small tumors, we're also finding less big tumors."

taking into account the shift in tumor size.

received, so no direct conclusions about the value of these can be drawn.

Roads

From A1

sometimes have a large number of roads to see after. He pointed out District 2 - whose boundaries are set according to population, not roads - is a particularly large district with numerous roads to see after.

Edgil also pointed out that Districts 2 and 3 are the ones seeing the most in coal and timber hauling, which also accounts why those two districts have 68 percent of the road repair needs. District 2 needs work on 35 percent of its roads, while District 3 needs work of 40 percent of its roads.

A centralized crew for the county would probably not work because one would still have to build facilities in each district anyway and travel some distance to each site.

Grant funding from the state and federal government for paving county roads has been scarce, which has been a major irritation with county officials across the state in recent years.

Edgil has noted for some time now in discussions that the county usually gets \$500,000 annually in state and federal funding that could be used for the bridge and roads, and those funds are tied up in resurfacing projects through 2007. However, starting with 2008 funds, the money would likely need to be saved for two or three years to help pay for a new Ripley Cutoff Bridge.

However, the situation is more complicated. The state and federal funds, which also need a 20 percent match that amounts up to \$100,000, are restricted to

major and minor collector points around state roads, and the state designates which areas can get the money. They are considered more major roads in the county, Edgil said.

Even now, the money doesn't go far. The county just received a bid to resurface and traffic stripe Burrows Crossing Road from State Highway 69 east of Jasper to Drummond Road - a total of 5.34 miles. The low bid was from Good Hope Contracting of Cullman for \$555,636.71, which Edgil pointed out was roughly \$100,000 a mile.

Once the \$500,000 goes to the Ripley Cutoff Bridge project, the county also gets \$865,823 annually which are actual funds that do not require a match and can be used for most of the county roads. These funds are to be used for material, not labor, which makes comparison with the \$8.15 million figure an apples-to-apples comparison, as that does not include labor costs.

However, the bad news is that it would take 10 times the annual appropriation to pay for all the road repair needs in the county, and Edgil does not know of any additional funds coming down the way to pay for those needs.

Borrowing will not help, now that state auditors have criticized county commissioners for borrowing to pave streets, as streets crumble. In fact, Edgil pointed out that even if \$8 million came out of the sky, that is still not paying for state standard and commercial vehicles and heavy loads can take their toll in six

months.

"They will resurface a road and three months down the road the property will be mined, timber is hauled and coal trucks start on it. In six months that road is in need of resurfacing again. But we've got to give them a way out. This is their job. They pay taxes like everyone else," he said.

With no funding to catch up, Edgil said Walker County is not isolated in its problems, as other counties, as well as state and national officials, are facing the same needs.

"It's a national problem. Roads were not built to carry the weight and traffic nowadays," Edgil said.

However, American Timber Investments president and owner Beryl Nichols, who said his vehicles haul timber hundreds of miles each week, said the roads he sees now in Walker County are not so bad when compared to the past and to other counties.

Nichols, who was standing near District 1 Commissioner Dual Tubbs as part of a photo Friday for a new Curry subdivision both men have ties to, said many county roads such as the Tutwiler Road used to be extremely rough. However, he pointed out that road was recently resurfaced, and feels the process for getting roads paved has been made much less political over the years and more professional.

He noted unlike other counties, Walker has most of its roads paved and the roads are kept up well.

Empire

From A1

the volunteer fire departments in Walker County, Empire depends solely on donations from the community, government grants and fund-raisers to raise the money needed to purchase fire-fighting equipment and to maintain the department's firefighting operations.

"Our department is strictly a volunteer fire department, so we have to get out and find ways to raise money for any new equipment we buy," Green said. "We try to collect a fire donation each year of \$35 from each of the residences we serve. But only about 20 percent actually send back a donation."

Empire Fire serves 660 homes in the Empire community. The department also serves mutual aid with both Sipsey and Sumiton fire departments.

"I don't believe the people

in our community realized just how bad we needed these new fire trucks," Green said. "Both of our old trucks have gone down at the same time while we were on a fire. We had to call on another department to come out and help us. So we desperately needed these new trucks."

Green said he would like to thank residents in Empire who sent extra money with their fire donation this year, because it was a big help in getting the new fire trucks.

"We had quite a few this year who sent extra money and made specific notations that it was to be used to purchase a new fire truck," Green said. "So we want to thank everyone who did that, it was a big help. Now we're going to have start putting money back whenever we can to replace what we used from our emergency fund. We want

to always have money available in the event something happens to one of our new trucks."

One of Empire's old fire trucks, a 1953 International, probably ran its final fire call early Sunday morning, before the new trucks were ever delivered, when Empire responded to a structure fire on Union Street around 1 a.m. Green said the home was a total loss.

"It was already gone by the time we got the call. That's another problem we have with being in a rural community," Green said. "A lot of times the structure is already gone by the time someone notices it's on fire. There's not much we can do about a situation like that, but at least we won't have to worry about whether or not our trucks are going to make to the scene in the future."

Green said a special plaque will be placed on both of the new fire trucks to honor three of the department's most distinguished members who have now passed away.

"Empire Fire Chiefs Ralph Higgins and Jimmy Wingo and Assistant Fire Chief Morris "Mop" Wingo are three of the main reasons the department was able to get at least one of these new fire trucks," Green said. "Not only were they three of the founding members of the Empire Fire Department, they were also the ones who had the hindsight to start the emergency fund we used to purchase one of the new trucks. So we're going put a plaque on both trucks in their memory."

"Their dedication to this community, even to this day, is extraordinary and they deserve to be recognized for it," added Green.

Scouts

From A1

build a camp fire, and other things associated with scouting," he said.

Boys in grades 1 through 5 will be eligible to sign up for Cub Scouts: boys in

•T.R. Simmons - 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 30, in the lunchroom

•Maddox Middle - 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 30, in the lunchroom

•Townley Jr. High - to be announced

•Bankhead Middle - 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 20, in the lunchroom

•Cordova Elementary - 6:30 p.m.,