

# Road Report

A publication of the Road Commission for Oakland County for public officials serving Oakland County [www.rcocweb.org](http://www.rcocweb.org)

## Quarles is new road commissioner, LaLonde is RCOC chair

In January, a new face joined the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) Board of Road Commissioners – though she is certainly not new face to many in Oakland County.

Nancy Quarles, a long-time public servant in Oakland County, was appointed to the RCOC Board by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners on Jan. 6. She is a former state legislator and county commissioner.

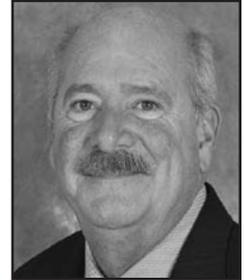
“I am excited to continue to serve the residents of Oakland County in this new capacity,” Quarles stated. “I am honored that my former colleagues on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners chose me for this position, and I look forward to learning more about roads, road maintenance and road funding.”

The three Oakland County road commissioners are appointed for staggered six-year terms. While the road commissioners are appointed by the County Board of Commissioners, the Road

Commission is a separate unit of government and is not funded by the County Board. Rather, RCOC receives the bulk of its funding from the state in the form of fuel-tax and vehicle-registration fee revenues as well as state income tax revenues.

Quarles attended her first RCOC Board meeting Jan. 7. Also at that meeting, the RCOC Board elected Andrea LaLonde as the Board chair and Quarles as the vice chair, both one-year terms.

Quarles has a PhD in public administration and public affairs from Western Michigan University as well as a master’s degree from Central Michigan University and a bachelor’s degree from the



*New Road Commissioner Nancy Quarles, left, Chair Andrea LaLonde and Commissioner Ron Fowkes.*

University of Detroit. She served in the Michigan House of Representatives from 1996 to 2002 and on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners from 1995 to 1996 and again from 2011 to 2020.

She is a professor at Central Michigan University and a resident of Southfield and has an extensive history of national, state and local community service.

Chair LaLonde is a resident of Clawson. She is an employee of the  
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## Former Road Commissioner Greg Jamian honored for 12 years of service to the agency

Former Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) Board of Road Commissioners Member Greg Jamian has been the subject of a lot of praise of late for his 12 years of service to RCOC.



Oakland County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a proclamation praising Jamian’s service on the RCOC Board.

In February, the Oakland delegation to the Michigan Senate presented Jamian with a resolution of special tribute signed by all five state senators serving the county: Rosemary Bayer, Ruth Johnson, Mallory McMorrow, Jeremy Moss and Jim Runestad.

Jamian retired from the RCOC Board at the end of 2020, having served two six-year terms on the body. Since his retirement, Jamian has been the subject of honorary tributes from the ROCC Board, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and the Michigan Senate.

The members of the RCOC Board, on Jan. 21, officially acknowledged Jamian’s accomplishments and contributions in the form of a resolution. Also on Jan. 21, the

Jamian was first appointed to the Board in 2009 and reappointed in 2015. His terms included four years as the Board chair (2013-14 and 2019-20).

RCOC Board members are appointed by the Oakland County Board of  
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## Taylor is new head of RCOC's Construction Division; will oversee millions of dollars worth of road projects every year

Beth Taylor, the new head of the Construction Division of the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) Engineering Department, is no stranger to road construction projects.

In fact, she joins RCOC with 27 years of civil engineering experience, including spending the last three years at the Wayne County Department of Public Services (DPS) Engineering Division. Most recently, she was the assistant division director of Engineering for DPS.

Prior to that, she spent 24 years at two consulting engineering firms, first CTI & Associates and then at PSI.

Taylor holds a bachelor's degree in

civil engineering from the University of Michigan. She also comes from a family of civil engineers.

Her father was a civil engineer, and three of her six siblings are also civil engineers, including her twin sister, who is a City of Ann Arbor engineer.

So far, Taylor likes what she sees in the Construction Division. "I'm impressed with the amount of work the division does," she stated.



*Beth Taylor*

"There are a lot of dedicated and hard-working people here," she added. "I hope that I can enhance the processes and the department."

She added that she wants to continue what the division has been doing. "And, perhaps, I can bring a new kind of energy," she noted.

Taylor and her husband are the parents to two teenage boys, one in the 10th grade and one in the eighth grade.

**JAMIAN, CONT'D FROM FRONT** Commissioners, though the Road Commission is a separate unit of government and not funded by county general government.

For their part, the current RCOC Board was very appreciative of Jamian's contributions during his time on the Board.

"Greg helped lead this agency through the dark days following the Great Recession," noted RCOC Board Chair Andrea LaLonde. "Those were hard days, when our revenues were falling. Thanks in part to Greg's leadership, RCOC was able to reduce its staff by one third without laying off a single employee in the wake of recession-related financial challenges."

LaLonde added that Jamian was an outspoken advocate for motorist safety and for adopting efficiency-generating technologies. "Greg always had the best interest of Oakland County residents and businesses in mind and was a strong advocate for our county," she said.

RCOC Vice Chair Nancy Quarles, while noting that she did not serve with Jamian on the Road Commission Board, appreciates his commitment to traffic safety. "Some of the agency's safety-related practices are in place because of Greg," she noted. "For example, the wider striping along the sides of roads, which is more visible in all types of conditions and which lasts longer, was something Greg pushed for."

Road Commissioner Ron Fowkes, who served with Jamian throughout his own 10 years on the RCOC Board, echoed his colleagues' praise of Jamian. "Greg always tried to see things from our customers' points of view – from the per-

spectives of the people using the road system," he said.

"He did a great job of walking the fine line between protecting the sometimes-conflicting interests of the individuals with the larger needs of the county road system. That is a true balancing act," Fowkes noted.

RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar concurred with the RCOC Board members. "Not only will we miss Greg's unwavering commitment to safety and fiscal integrity, we'll also miss his sense of humor and insight," Kolar said. "At every Board meeting, you could always count on Greg to lighten things up a little with a humorous quip or praise for a staff member."

A resident of Bloomfield Township and former Oakland County commissioner and Bloomfield Township trustee, Jamian has been president and CEO of an integrated health-services corporation in Troy for more than 35 years. A graduate of Oakland University with a BA in economics, he and his wife, Sandra, have three daughters and two grandchildren.

Jamian has also been active in academic and charitable organizations in Oakland County and Southeast Michigan for decades, including serving on the board of the Manoogian Manor Home for the Aged, the board of the Oakland University School of Nursing and the Traffic Improvement Association (TIA) Board of Directors.

Jamian has frequently advocated for better roads and highways in Oakland County as well as improvement to the regional connectivity of multimodal transportation systems in southeast Michigan.

## More "mumble strips" coming to Oakland roads

In elementary school, your teacher may have told you not to mumble. But when it comes to traffic safety, mumbling is a good thing.

That's because "mumble strips," a newer form of the traditional "rumble strips" that road agencies have long used to alert drivers when they are crossing a road centerline or edge line, are reducing traffic noise for area residents.

The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) received a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Safety grant to place mumble strips on the centerline of approximately 26 miles of roads in the county this year.

Mumble strips look like tiny waves and are quieter both outside and inside a vehicle than rumble strips. Inside the vehicle, the noise helps keep drivers alert to prevent a head-on or run-off-the-road collisions. The mumble strips are also quieter for residents living along the roads.

The \$208,000 MDOT grant includes approximately \$28,000 in matching funds from RCOC.

Mumble strips will be placed along the centerline of sections of nine RCOC roads in Highland, White Lake, Milford, Commerce, Springfield and Orion townships. Work will take place this summer and fall.

This will be the second group of RCOC roads to receive mumble strips. Previously, they were placed along sections of Fish Lake Road, North Holly Road, Ormond Road and Dixie Highway.

## Honored by peers:

# Road Commission Traffic-Safety Director Deneau named 2020 Engineer of the Year

The County Road Association of (CRA) Michigan Engineering Committee, on Feb. 10, named Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) Traffic-Safety Department Director Danielle Deneau, PE, the 2020 CRA Urban Engineer of the Year.

“CRA’s Engineer of the Year Award honors the best of the best in innovation at county road agencies,” RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar said. “Danielle has gone above and beyond in improving the county road network. Her contributions have been instrumental in making Oakland’s roads among the safest in the world for a community our size and population.”

Deneau is known internationally for her expertise in traffic-signal systems and connected-vehicle technology. She has worked at RCOC for 27 years and leads the road commission’s Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) initiatives.

The annual CRA Engineering



*RCOC Traffic-Safety  
Director Danielle Deneau.*

Awards recognize county road agency engineers across the state in both rural and urban areas.

Deneau is a resident of Novi and a graduate of Michigan State University with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering. She has overseen and been involved with numerous cutting-edge connected-vehicle projects, testing new technologies that allow the road infrastructure to communicate with vehicles.

The projects have included partners such as the Federal Highway Administration, most major automotive manufacturers, many top tier auto suppliers and transportation technology manufacturers and consultants as well the Michigan Department of Transportation. She has also been active with the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), Advancing Women in Transportation (WTS), the federal Transportation Research Board and the Intelligent Transportation Society of Michigan (ITS Michigan).

## **QUARLES — CONT'D FROM FRONT**

Operating Engineers Local 324 of Michigan, where she has worked for 13 years, and is a graduate of Kalamazoo College. She joined the RCOC Board in January 2019.

The third member of the Board is Commissioner Ron Fowkes who has served on the RCOC Board since 2011. A resident of the Village of Milford, he has frequently advocated for better roads and highways in Oakland County and served on the Milford Village Council from 1999 through 2006, including as its president in 2003.

Road Commissioner Quarles replaced Greg Jamian, who served on the Board for 12 years.

### **RCOC to start latest round of Strategic Planning meetings with community leaders**

Despite the limitations imposed by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the Road Commission for Oakland County leadership is preparing to start the latest round of its biennial Strategic Planning meetings with the officials of virtually every community in the county.

The agency has conducted the meetings every other year since 1985 as a way to get feedback from the community leaders, learn about new or anticipated development in the communities, share news about the Road Commission and build and maintain relationships between Road Commission and community leaders. Following the meetings, the Road Commission publishes a report summarizing what was learned from each community and reiterating the key messages shared by the Road Commission with the local leaders.

While the meetings have historically always been in person, with Road Commission leaders visiting the community leaders at their offices, the pandemic has changed things a bit. “This year, we are offering the community leaders the opportunity to meet in person, or, if they would prefer, to meet virtually,” explained RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar.

The meetings are expected to be scheduled beginning in March and concluding in late spring or early summer.

### **RCOC Board honors Parks & Rec’s Jim Dunleavy**

The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) and the Oakland County Parks department have always had a good relationship. Recently, though, the RCOC Board formally honored one Parks employee who has been particularly helpful to the Road Commission over many years.

In December, the RCOC Board approved a resolution honoring James Dunleavy, Oakland County Parks’ chief of parks operations and maintenance. The resolution notes that for more than 20 years, Dunleavy has assisted the Road Commission by lending the agency tents to use at RCOC ground-breaking and ribbon-cutting ceremonies for road projects around the county.

“Jim has helped us every time we have asked,” RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar noted. “Most of the time, he has also personally coordinated tent deliver as well helped out with the set-up and take-down of the tents.”

Kolar noted these tents have been critical, since ground-breaking and ribbon-cutting ceremonies often occur in either the spring or fall, when the weather is unpredictable, and rain and snowstorms are not unusual. “Since we often invite public officials to comment during these events, and members of the media and the public often attend, these tents have made these events possible. We really appreciate Jim’s help over these many years.”

31001 Lahser Road  
Beverly Hills, MI 48025

## RCOC starts work on first completely new building since 1970s

Work on the Road Commission for Oakland County's (RCOC) new electrical shop building is now underway on the grounds of the agency's Paul Van Roeckel Service Center on Pontiac Lake Road in Waterford Township.



*The existing "District 8" building.*

The electrical shop, internally known as "District 8," builds and maintains all the RCOC traffic signals and controllers (the computers that operate each signal) as well as all other agency electronic devices, such as cross-walk signals, electronic school zone signs, etc. For years, the division has been housed in cramped, outdated space in a 1950s era building on the campus, with division offices housed in a racoon-infested and deteriorating "temporary" building erected many years ago.

The construction of the new, state-of-the-art electrical shop will then open space in the existing building which will be renovated to provide expanded room for RCOC's sign shop, Materials Testing Lab and testing division offices.

"This is something we have been looking forward to for a long time," RCOC Managing Director

Dennis Kolar said of the new building. "All of these divisions need adequate and modern space to be able to perform their jobs efficiently."

I am pleased we will be able to provide District 8 staff

with a state-of-the-art facility – something they deserve. Also I am pleased we can finally provide a new Materials Testing Lab and Testing Division offices – another improvement I have long sought."

The renovation of the old District 8 space cannot begin until the new building is completed, so the entire project is not expected to be finished until spring 2022.

The building project is expected to cost \$3.2 million, including construction and design. None of the funds that will pay for the building are coming from dollars that would be spent on the roads.

Instead, the funding is coming from RCOC's Building Fund, which is made up of non-road-funding revenues, such as permit fees, revenue from auctioning old equipment, leasing space to telecommunications companies in RCOC right of way, etc.

## Contacting RCOC

If your constituents need information about a road project or want to report a pothole, traffic-signal problem or other road issue, they should call RCOC's **Department of Customer Services** toll free at:

**(877) 858-4804**

**OR**

**Fill out a report via the RCOC Web site:**  
**[www.rcocweb.org](http://www.rcocweb.org)**

## ROAD REPORT

*Road Report* is published quarterly by the Road Commission for Oakland County. Have a question or comment about **Road Report**? Call Senior Communications Manager Craig Bryson at (248) 645-2000, ext. 2202.

### Board of Road Commissioners:

**Andrea LaLonde, Chair**  
**Nancy Quarles, Vice Chair**  
**Ronald J. Fowkes, Commissioner**

**Dennis G. Kolar, PE, Managing Director**  
**Gary Piotrowicz, PE, PTOE, Dep. Managing Dir./County Highway Engineer**