County to Consider Moratorium on New Roads

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Due to uncertain road funding, The Board of County Commissioners will consider adopting a policy placing a moratorium on the establishment of any new roads in Deschutes County at their June 7 Board meeting.Today, Deschutes County is responsible for the maintenance of nearly 900 miles of roads in the County. A portion of the funding to maintain these roads comes from federal forest lands revenue in the County.Deschutes County currently receives approximately $3.0 million per year in federal funding under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000 (also known as the Forest Safety-Net) for the improvement and maintenance of County roads. The Forest Safety-Net funding equals over 27% of Deschutes Countyâ€™s annual dedicated road fund revenue.The Forest Safety-Net legislation expires at the end of this federal fiscal year. Reauthorization of the legislation and receipt of any future federal funding is uncertain.Without Forest Safety-Net funding, Deschutes County will not have adequate resources to maintain the existing County road system.Instead of adding road miles to County inventory and accepting the obligation to maintain them, the Board is considering the moratorium until Forest Safety-Net or similar funds are fully restored. The moratorium also applies to the formation of any new local improvement districts and the acceptance of any roads created by new development into the County maintained system.The Deschutes County Board of Commissioners will provide an opportunity for public comment regarding this issue at the June 7 regular Board meeting. The meeting location is the Deschutes Services Center Hearing Room-first floor at 1300 NW Wall in Bend.For more information on the road moratorium, please call the Deschutes County Road Department at 388-6581.