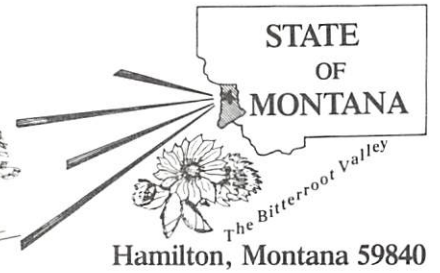
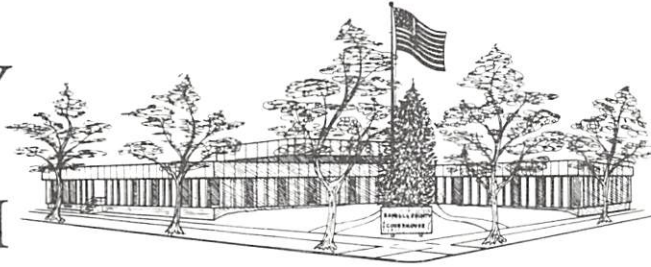


COUNTY OF RAVALLI



Hamilton, Montana 59840

November 05, 2019

Montana Department of Transportation
c/o Mr. Steve Felix
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Mr. Felix,

On October 3, 2019, members of the Stevensville Rural Fire District board of directors met with the Ravalli County Board of County Commissioners (RCBCC) with regard to safety concerns in the area of Bell Crossing/Willoughby Lane and Eastside Highway (Hwy. 269). Representatives of the Montana Department of Transportation were in attendance at this meeting. The RCBCC is aware of the proposed MDT project to improve safety at the intersection in question as well as the Traffic and Engineering study of the intersection of Bell Crossing and U.S. Hwy. 93. We unanimously endorse and appreciate both of these projects.

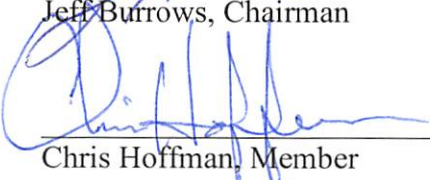
With regard to Bell Crossing/Willoughby and Hwy. 269, and as an outcome of our October 3, 2019, meeting, we are requesting that MDT also take the additional step of conducting a speed study on Hwy. 269 from Pine Hollow Road south to North Birch Creek Road. We also request that the department take a look at the passing lane location just north of Bell Crossing and Willoughby Lane.

Attached please find a more detailed letter from the Stevensville Rural Fire Department.

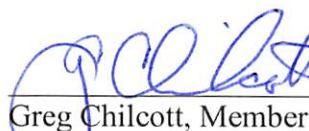
Respectfully,



Jeff Burrows, Chairman



Chris Hoffman, Member



Greg Chilcott, Member



Stevensville Volunteer Fire Department

PO Box 667 Stevensville, MT. 59870

406.777.7033

www.stevensvilleruralfire.com

To: Ravalli County Commissioners & Montana Department of Transportation
215 S 4th St A, Hamilton, MT 59840

From: Stevensville Rural Fire District Board of Directors
PO Box 667 Stevensville, MT 59870

RE: Traffic safety at Eastside Highway 269 and Bell Crossing / Willoughby intersection.

Date: 9/18/2019

The Stevensville Rural Fire District recently relocated our Etna Fire Station from just south of the Bell Crossing / Willoughby intersection on Eastside Highway 269 to a new facility located approximately a quarter mile up Willoughby Lane. With this relocation, a large majority of the fire and EMS calls we respond to require us to navigate the Bell Crossing / Willoughby intersection, both as our responders drive to the Etna Fire Station and as we respond with apparatus to the incident.

The Stevensville Rural Fire District would ask that the traffic speeds be lowered at the intersection of Hwy 269 / Eastside Hwy. and Bell Crossing / Willoughby. Current speed limit of 65mph has and will continue to be a very dangerous. This intersection is highly traveled in all directions. We continue to see significant motor vehicle accidents and we feel it is time to react to this situation to help protect the motorist as well as our first responders who enter on Eastside Highway from our station on Willoughby Lane.

There is a plan in the works to bring the shoulders and ditches up to a state standard due to this section of Hwy 269 being "one of the most dangerous sections of highway in our state" this quote and following statistics came from the letters sent

to residents impacted by the road construction. Between 2003 and 2017 this 5.9 miles of road had 400 collisions, with 6 fatalities and 20 serious injury.

The future work is needed and welcomed and will certainly help the situation along this stretch but with wider shoulders, speeds will not decrease and the intersection at Bell Crossing / Willoughby will be subject to increased traffic and could see higher speeds. This year we have responded to several motor vehicle accidents at this intersection, two resulting in serious injuries that most likely changed the lives of their families.

It is our opinion that this intersection needs to be regulated to allow for increased visibility and better reaction times for motorist. We all understand that a vehicle collision at 45mph is much less substantial then 65mph and a driver's opportunity to react and avoid a collision at 45mph is much greater than at 65mph.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns.

Stevensville Rural Fire District Board of Directors

The Desire To Serve, The Courage To Act and The Ability To Perform.