

NAMPA HIGHWAY DISTRICT NO. 1

Commissioners: Dick Smith, Randy Noble, Bryce D. Millar

July 10, 2017

Editor
Idaho Press-Tribune
Nampa, Idaho
(submitted on-line)

Subject: **Letter to the Editor – Chip Seals**

Dear Editor:

Summer is when the Nampa Highway District, and other road agencies, chip seals its roads. So I hope to answer the often asked question: “Why are you pouring gravel on a perfectly good road?”

A “chip seal” is a film of oil sprayed over the road surface, with a layer of crushed gravel spread over the oil, and another coat of oil sprayed over the gravel. The process only works in hot dry weather.

Chip sealing is like painting a house. It extends pavement life by sealing out moisture and the sun’s ultra violet rays. It also protects pavement from wear and provides needed traction for vehicles.

When a road is newly paved, we wait one to two years before sealing to allow the new asphalt to properly cure. But afterwards, it needs to be sealed and periodically resealed to prevent deterioration.

Our goal is to chip seal main roads every seven years, and subdivisions every ten. This is limited by funding, however, with higher-use roads getting higher priority. The district has 367 miles of roads, and chip seals about 45 miles per year.

The per-mile cost of chip sealing is \$35,000, compared to \$165,000 for repaving, and \$250,000 for a complete rebuild. Properly sealed and maintained pavements last more than 25 years, but non-sealed pavements can fall apart in ten.

The district uses several practices to minimize public inconvenience when chip sealing, but we are always looking for improvements. The public is invited to call me with any questions or suggestions at 467-6576.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)
ERIC R. SHANNON, P.E.
District Engineer

