

VBH BOT FYI RB

From: Robert Kosin [rkosin@barringtonhills-il.gov]
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2010 7:18 AM
To: Dolores Trandel
Cc: Sarah Kenney
Subject: VBH BOT FYI R&B

State's altered weight limit for trucks meets with mixed reviews By JOSEPH BUSTOS - jbustos@nwherald.com April 28, 2010

Reflected in a side mirror, trucks travel April 22 on Route 14 in Crystal Lake. A new state law has increased the weight allowed for trucks on secondary roads (all non-interstate highways) from 73,000 to 80,000 pounds. (H. Rick Bamman - hbamman@nwherald.com)

Last year, when trucking companies had to make a delivery or pickup in Illinois, they had to limit loads to 73,280 pounds per truck.

"When you have a new customer, you have to do your homework to make sure you can get into them legally and adjust your rates accordingly," said Chris Dahm, president of Dahm Trucking Inc., of Woodstock.

The business became a little easier for trucking companies on Jan. 1, when the state increased the weight limits for trucks from 73,280 pounds to 80,000 pounds to match the rest of the country.

"State to state, now it's uniform and makes it easier," Dahm said.

Truck companies will be able to be more efficient. "It makes the load more profitable," said Jim Smith, president of W. Smith Cartage in Crystal Lake.

The change made owners of trucking companies happy because they can have heavier loads and worry less about incurring a fine.

On the other hand, municipal officials long have argued that heavier loads mean more wear and tear on area roads and increased maintenance costs.

According to a report by U.S. Public Interest Research Groups released Wednesday, Illinois has the 10th roughest roads in the country, with 57 percent of the roads in less-than-good condition.

But Illinois Department of Transportation spokeswoman Marisa Kollias said that winters in northern states make a state-by-state comparison unfair.

Dahm pointed out, however, that truckers pay far more than the average motorist for fuel, and therefore contribute more in taxes, Dahm said.

"The trucking industry is paying really high motor fuel taxes and other taxes related to use of roads and haven't been able to get anything back out of it," Dahm said.

There were times when his drivers would have a load heavier than 73,280 pounds not knowing they would be taking a route that would put them in violation of the law.

Truckers caught by law enforcement for having an overweight truck faced a hefty fine.

Smith's company would have to scout out how much it could bring to different locations.

"Once we found out we couldn't get to a delivery or pickup point without being legal, we would not load 80,000 pounds and only load 73,280," Smith said.

However, local municipalities still can designate weight limits on roads, as long as they post them. So this still can be a problem for trucking companies.

"It's a problem for ... truckers who don't know the area," Smith said.

Officials responsible for road maintenance aren't thrilled with the new law.

The heavier truck weight can lead to quicker deterioration and damage to roads, said Jeannine Smith, village administrator for Prairie Grove.

Smith said most trucking companies are good about asking the village about designated truck routes.

In Spring Grove, weight limits long have been a point of complaint for truckers.

"If your [truck is] overweight and you're driving the vehicle, you deserved to be fined," said Mark Eisenberg, Spring Grove village president. "If you're following the laws, then I don't think there will be any issue."

"If you're overweight, you're destroying our roads," he said, "whether they are village roads or state roads."

Eisenberg said he doesn't think the new law would make too much of a difference financially on the village.

The village already has roads posted with lower weights, he said. The biggest concern for the village is during the thaw period at the end of winter and early spring.

"It's usually an issue when the frost is coming out of the ground," Eisenberg said.

He said the village would work with truckers if they call ahead of time and say they need to make a delivery.

Prairie Grove Officer Tony Colatorti said there are some key signs when a truck is overweight.

If a truck is struggling to go up a hill, the tires are bulging, or a truck already is into the fifth gear from a dead stop by the time it's in the middle of an intersection.

"When you put more weight [in it], you're stressing out the vehicle," Colatorti said.

The McHenry Police Department added its truck enforcement program in May 2009. Since then, the department has collected nearly \$12,000 in overweight fines, Sgt. Brian McKeen said.

"The truck unit is in its infancy, but will continue to grow in its effectiveness, ensuring the safety of motorists on the roadways," McKeen said.

The department has seven officers who are trained in truck enforcement. The city uses scales at Meyer Material and other locations around town, until it can obtain portable scales.

"Overloaded or overweight trucks pose a threat to the safety of other motorists, not to mention the impact they have on our roads," McKeen said. "Overweight trucks can and do deplete the longevity of the roadways, adding expense to taxpayers."

What it means

On Jan. 1, a new state law allowed trucks to weigh up to 80,000 pounds when loaded, which matches the law in the rest of the country. Previously, trucks could not exceed 73,280 pounds in the state.

Roads can still have the 73,280-pound weight limits, but they will have to be posted by the local municipality.

Also, fines for overweight trucks doubled at the start of 2010.

VBH BOT FYI RB

Depending on how much overweight the truck is, fines range from \$100 to \$1,500.