

## **The Deschutes County Road Department does not plow snow on Local Access Roads**

### **What is a Local Access Road?**

A local access road or LAR is a road that the public has right to use, but is not maintained by Deschutes County or any other government agency. Many roads within rural subdivisions in Deschutes County are LARs. Prior to the creation of land use laws in the 1970s, developers of land were free to build whatever type of road they wanted. In many cases, roads were roughed in with a bulldozer and minimally surfaced with a thin layer of cinders or gravel. These roads were dedicated for public use through subdivision platting, but since they were not built to County standards, they were not accepted by Deschutes County as county maintained facilities. The developers were aware of the fact that if their subdivision roads were not built to County standards, maintenance of these roads would be the responsibility of the land owners along the LARs.

There are over 383 miles of LARs in Deschutes County; that is almost equivalent to the mileage of local residential roads maintained by the County.

### **Why can't Deschutes County maintain or plow Local Access Roads?**

Due to the fiscal burden that would be placed on county road departments to maintain significant mileage of sub-standard road construction, **state law restricts the ability of counties to spend road funds (fuel tax and DMV fee revenue) on LARs.** State law also restricts the ability of counties to spend property taxes on road maintenance, therefore Deschutes County does not use property tax revenue to improve or maintain county roads.

### **How are Local Access Roads maintained?**

LARs are typically maintained by adjacent property owners and road users. This usually occurs in one of three ways:

1. Informally: In which neighbors work together to hire a contractor or self-perform maintenance and "pass-the-hat" to share in the cost.
2. Formally: Through home owners associations (HOAs) or other formal agreements to share in the cost of maintenance.
3. Special Road Districts: In which area residents vote to establish a district which levies a property tax to fund maintenance.

### **How do I go about maintaining or plowing my Local Access Road?**

Snow plowing and removal is best performed by a competent contractor with sufficient snow plowing equipment and experience. Outside of a Special Road District or homeowners association, the sharing in the cost of road maintenance is best accomplished through **good neighbor-to-neighbor communication**

**and understanding of a collective maintenance responsibility.** In other words, the cost is shared between the neighbors who benefit from the service.

Deschutes County cannot recommend a specific contractor to provide snow plowing services. Many contractors advertise locally for these services.

**How can I tell if my road is a Local Access Road?**

Deschutes County's interactive mapping tool (<http://dial.deschutes.org/Real/InteractiveMap>) can be used to determine road jurisdiction. Open the link and select the "Add Layers" tab. Select the "Roads-Ownership" layer and zoom to the road in question. Roads labeled "Local Access Road" are not maintained by Deschutes County.