

Motion to allow OHVs on County Roads

I do not take my responsibility as commissioner and decision maker lightly. This decision has been arrived at with serious consideration of all public input. This has been a difficult process and a tough decision but I've made it with the belief that this is the best solution to the ongoing debate over OHV use in our County. Agree with me or not, please know that I'm doing what I believe to be right and in the best interest of the citizens of Chaffee County.

First and foremost I believe that a properly equipped OHV is a legitimate means of transportation. Use of these vehicles should be allowed on our county roads to access work, business, as well as recreation areas connected to the county road system. Properly equipped OHVs should include: speedometer, head lights, tail lights, and horn. Operators must have a driver's license as well as liability insurance.

Other Considerations:

People involved in agriculture are currently allowed to operate OHVs on our county roads

A number of surrounding counties and towns allow OHV use on their public roads

A number of surrounding states allow OHV use on their public roads

Some states currently license OHVs. These licensed vehicles can be operated legally on Chaffee County roads. It's simply a matter of time before the increasing number of these legally operated OHV users cause the County to re-visit this issue and make local use of OHVs legal on Chaffee County roads. The County should support legislation to register and license OHVs in our State and County.

Chaffee County passed ordinances in 2005 and 2006 allowing OHV use on segments of four Chaffee County roads. These have been used heavily 6 and 7 years without major mishap or issue.

The issues of dust, noise, speed, underage operators, trespass, and damage to USFS and BLM lands are not unique to OHV use. Therefore these have not been considered in my decision.

OHV's are as safe, or as dangerous, as their operator, just as are cars, trucks, off road equipment, equine, pedestrians, and bicycles. There's no good reason that all modes of transportation can't share our County Road system in a reasonable and safe manner.

OHVs are an alternative means of transportation that provides people with limited mobility, disabilities as well as the elderly an opportunity to access some of the more difficult and hard to reach terrain in our county.

Allowing OHVs to use county roads will alleviate most parking issues adjacent to, or on, public lands

Our county road system was developed as a means of transportation for all users. As County Commissioners we have to ability to allow legal use of OHVs on our roads. I think it only fair and proper that we do so.