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this year.

...lower snow and ice storms to tackle, townships have most likely emerged from the season with money remaining in their budget.

"Local governments will have to decide what to do with any extra dol-

lars," Albert says of those unspent winter maintenance funds. "They could put them into their roads, save for future projects, address possible equipment needs, or put them back for next year's winter operations."

All in all, 2016 is shaping up to be a good year for township transportation budgets. Finally, after decades of learning to do more with less when it comes to road dollars, townships can breathe a little easier and look forward to a productive road season.

"Municipalities have a lot to be happy about," Albert says, "especially with the funding increases they are getting from Act 89. They should feel that they are finally on a more equitable footing when it comes to road maintenance money, and we may see a lot more projects being done as a result."

With more cash in hand, the question for many townships is how to handle this extra money.

"It's very rare to get new revenue like this," says Greg Primm, manager of Allegheny Township in Westmoreland County. "When you have new money, you have to look at it carefully and decide what to do with it. The decisions you make today will affect what you do tomorrow."

Having more money at their disposal doesn't mean that townships should necessarily change what they do when it comes to public works spending, local government experts say. In fact, townships would be wise to proceed cautiously and continue to seek ways to stretch their dollars.

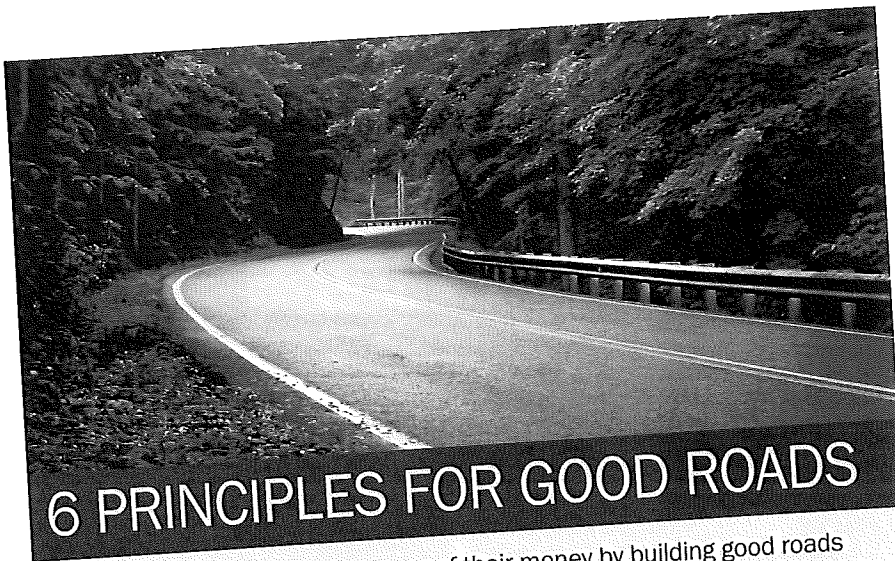
On the next few pages, straight from the experts who make their living advising townships on public works, are snippets for how to make the most of extra cash in a township's road budget.

### Invest wisely

For decades, townships have become accustomed to not having much more to spend on their roads.

"Getting projects done with a finite amount of money is difficult," Primm says, "and townships tend to kick the can down the road when it comes to bigger road projects."

He advises townships to take advantage of any windfalls they receive to fund bigger projects that may have been put on the back burner these past years.



## 6 PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD ROADS

Townships can make the best use of their money by building good roads and keeping them in top condition. Follow these principles to ensure good roads are a reality in your township:

**1. Get water away from the road.** Water can weaken the surface and, when combined with traffic, cause potholes, cracking, and rutting. Building and maintaining a good surface drainage system is the best way to lessen water damage to a road.

**2. Build from the bottom up.** A road wears out from the top but falls apart from the bottom. A good road requires a stable foundation that will support everything above it, including traffic. Start by compacting soils well using rollers, tampers, or vibrators. Improperly compacted soil, compounded by traffic loads, can cause settlement and failure of the road.

By putting down a good base using quality materials, a township can correct weak spots in a road and ensure a sound base on which a hard surface can be applied.

**3. Pave only those roads that are ready.** Paving should only occur once roads have been properly prepared with a good foundation. Remember, the cost of reconstructing a failed road will be much higher than doing it right the first time.

**4. Design for traffic loads and volumes.** A rule of thumb for designing a road is to accommodate the largest vehicle that will use the road under normal operations. As traffic volumes and weights increase, the thickness of pavement should increase, too.

**5. Protect your investment.** Roads and bridges need regular maintenance to keep them from deteriorating. Keep in mind that regular maintenance preserves your investment and prevents costly major rehabilitation later.

**6. Keep good records.** Good recordkeeping will make the job of maintaining roads easier. Inventory your roads and bridges and keep records of all work done on them. Having this information at your fingertips will help guide you in making future decisions.

