

Macon County Road Supervisor, Audie Cook, told those gathered at the Macon County at the Macon County Committee of the Whole meeting that the county highway department that “as of now, there is no salt” and winter has yet to begin.

But the problem is not just here, nationwide, a salt shortage exists.

“We have only five to ten tons,” said Regina Flippin, Secretary at the highway department, about the county’s supply left over from last year.

North American Salt Company, the only provider in the region, sends salt up by barge to Nashville, where county employees must go to pick it up. The county is currently on a waiting list. “We have been asked to check back the second week in January,” said Flippin. The salt company blames the shortage on a severe winter last year.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation uses a brine solution and has more than 1.6 million gallons ready for use and they also have more than 200,000 tons of salt.

According to a TDOT release their department dedicates more than \$10 million a year to snow and ice removal operations across the state. During a typical snow event, crews begin by first applying anti-icing brine to roadways. Sand, salt and calcium chloride may then be used to remove any accumulating snow and ice.

The state department has the first priority for available supply. The cost for salt has skyrocketed and the same supply that cost the county \$4,000 last year would cost \$16,000 this year, according to Cook.

Macon County uses spreaders attached to dump trucks to distribute the salt over roadways. They do not have the equipment and holding tanks that mixes or stores a liquid brine solution.