

Welcome to Honoco Road

On behalf of the Honoco Road Association we would like to welcome everyone to Honoco Road on beautiful Cayuga Lake. Whether you are a new resident or have been here for decades, we have prepared this handbook of useful information to help you navigate our community and hopefully answer some of your FAQs about our road and your Association.

Brief History of Honoco Road (excerpts from Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society and related internet articles)

Honoco Road and all of its parcels are part of the original right of way of a former Lehigh Valley Railroad (LVRR) branch line which ran from Ithaca to Cayuga and Auburn. Chartered in 1846 to be a transporter of anthracite coal from the coal fields of Pennsylvania, the LVRR grew into a major carrier of both freight and passengers between Jersey City, NJ and Buffalo. Its first connection to the Finger Lakes was in 1871 and during the late 1800's and into the early 1900's the LVRR built and acquired numerous feeder lines in upstate NY. Our road, originally operated as part of the Cayuga Lake Line, opened in 1872. Notable owners over time were Ezra Cornell and J.P. Morgan. Over time the decline of railroads in the 50s was facilitated by the Interstate Highway Act and opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, which led to alternate means of transportation and complete bankruptcy of the LVRR along with many other NY railroads in the early 70s.

For our branch, passenger service was discontinued in 1948 and the tracks north of the Lake Ridge power station all the way to Cayuga were removed in late 1950, and the line was abandoned. The LVRR, however, still owned all of the right of way and quickly began dividing up its lakefront right of way into leases to help defray taxes. It is notable that a few of the original leaseholders and/or their descendants are still on the road today. Honoco Inc. was incorporated as a NYS Not For Profit Corporation in 1955 with a main purpose of managing the affairs and maintenance of the "driveway" for the lessees, primarily acting as a resident landlord for the RR. This relationship continued until 1980, when all of the RR leased properties were sold, mostly to the leaseholders of record at the time.

There was a slight wrinkle with the sales, however. The original railroad leases on Honoco gave each tenant a license to use a defined 12 foot wide driveway to access their leased property, and required (in writing) that the tenant join Honoco Inc. which maintained the road. Unfortunately, when the railroad leases were deeded to private ownership in the 1980s, the license to use the roadway and the requirement to join Honoco, Inc. were NOT converted into an easement to use the roadway nor was there a deed covenant (meaning requirement) to join Honoco Inc. contained in those original deeds. Thus, in contrast to a traditional Homeowner's Association which typically would be deeded the "common elements" (such as the road) and authority to maintain them for the community, Honoco Inc. does not "own" the road or operate with any express authority (other than our own self-imposed Association By-Laws) to maintain it. The Association manages the road mainly through the mutual agreement and cooperation of the Honoco community and six decades of "historical intent" as to its purpose. While the courts would likely legally rule in favor of the Association as to why it exists, and its implied authority to manage the easement, it would take a court case to definitively find out.

“Private Road”

As our sign at the beginning of the road says, Honoco Road is a “Private Road”. For those that might be unfamiliar with the term, a private road is a road or driveway on privately-owned property shared by a group of owners who use and maintain the road without the help from a government entity like a village or town. As you drive around the lake you will find dozens of “private roads” just like Honoco. They are private because many of them started as farm roads, trails, and/or cowpaths which, regardless of their improvement, do not meet the criteria established by transportation law for public use. Local jurisdictions won’t accept them as part of their transportation assets, and won’t maintain them either. In fact, the state has ruled that it is against state law for any jurisdiction to assist in the maintenance or improvement of a private road. It is considered a misuse of public funds.

Nor is our “private road” really private, meaning us owners are not the only ones that can use it. We have all kinds of service providers, real estate agents, potential buyers, contractors, guests, renters, and joyriders that travel the road as needed. Most have “implied permission” to use the road, and it is impossible to police those who might not, so get used to unfamiliar faces and vehicles on the road. Their liability insurance (if they have any) is in effect if they cause damage to the road, properties, or injury.

Private, however, does NOT mean that we are a private community exempt from all jurisdictional regulations. Honoco Road runs through both the Town of Ledyard and the Town of Genoa, and other than the road itself, we are subject to ALL of the jurisdictional requirements of the towns, Cayuga County, and state, DEC, and federal regulations, including building codes, zoning laws, and local ordinances such as leash laws, and no-burn requirements. The “road”, “driveway”, or “right-of-way” on your property is legally recognized as an easement and is covered under the regulations established by NYS easement law.

Road Demographics

Some might think “Honoco” is an old indian name and part of the native American heritage which surrounds our area. Not so. Honoco is a combination of the last names of the first Board of Directors elected in 1955. These three were Chesley **H**oness, Raymond **N**obles, and Ralph **C**ornelius.

Honoco Road is 3.51 miles long, one lane (at best), and dead-ends just south of 1143 Honoco where a large wall blocks the end of the road. Lake Road at the north end of Honoco is our only connection to the public road system. At our last count there are 157 tax parcels (properties) on the road owned by 141 different owners. The smallest parcel is only 10 feet in width, with the largest being 385 feet. The majority of the parcels on the road are either 100 feet or 120 feet wide which was the original standard set by the railroad when leases were created. At last count there were 16 properties listed as “vacant” with little or no improvements. While most of the owners are seasonal, with the majority of them “summer weekenders”, there are roughly 20 or so “summer-stayers” here full-time for the summer, and about the same number of “year-rounder” brave souls with primary residence addresses on the road.

Honoco Inc.

If you had been here in the late 50s, you would have had to “petition” to be a member of Honoco Inc. and “approved” by the BOD before you became a member. Back then it was a big deal, because the RR required each lessee to purchase liability insurance at \$70/yr, which was a lot of money in those days! If

you were fortunate enough to be accepted, you fell under the Honoco Inc. liability agreement with the railroad which let you off the hook for individual liability insurance. However, with the vagueness in the deed description purchases in the 80s, membership in Honoco Inc. no longer appeared to be a deed requirement. And, unfortunately even today we have owners who choose not to participate in the Association or share in its expenses, much to the consternation of most of our community. It is challengeable in court, but currently the community has little appetite or budget for legal confrontation, and unfortunately it is only in the courts where the Association authority ultimately resides.

The Association is governed by a set of By-Laws which are posted on our website www.honoco.org. Everyone on the road is REQUIRED to be a member. The affairs, business, and concerns of the Association are overseen by a Board of Directors. Each year at the Annual Meeting, the Association elects a president, treasurer, and a secretary to staggered three year terms. These are your representatives and available for you to contact if you need assistance, have questions, or concerns. Current BOD members and contact information are posted on the website.

An Annual Meeting is held every year in May where an Annual Road Plan/Budget and other related road concerns are discussed and approved by the attending membership. The date of the meeting as well as a draft of the Annual Plan/Budget is emailed to the membership at least two weeks prior to the meeting. In addition, the BOD has monthly meetings, portions of which are open to the general membership. The monthly BOD meetings minutes as well as other communications outside the Annual Meeting are posted on the website. A monthly newsletter is sent to all the membership via email on a monthly basis. Please make sure your email address remains current with us so you can receive these communications.

The Association has three primary functions: First, within budget constraints, to attempt to provide a year-round “drivable surface” on the road for everyone to reach their properties without having to own a Humvee. This generally means that we attempt to use the best practices developed for gravel roads in order to provide and prolong a passable surface on the road. Second, to provide emergency services to keep the road open following slides and storm blockages as quickly as possible, and third, provide an “all-weather surface” as required by emergency (fire, medical) and service providers (insurance, lenders, etc.). “All weather” includes a snowplowed surface during the winter which is part of your dues expenses even if you are not here.

Website/eMail

The website for the Association is www.honoco.org. This is a blog website where you can post your comments/responses for anyone to read and respond to. In addition, it serves as the main source of historical and current administrative information for the Association as well as the password-required directory for all members on the road and their contact information. The directory is perhaps the most important part of the site as we use the information to maintain primary contact with each member, especially after the summer season if there is an issue which occurs when the owners are not here. Please review your directory information to make sure it is accurate and notify us promptly if any changes are required.

The email address for the organization is honocoinc@gmail.com. The Association uses this address to send out monthly mailings to the membership as well as promptly respond to any member comments/questions. You will note that because of mass mailing restrictions by Google and others, that

we have had to break up the membership into “groups” in order to meet mailing size requirements for our emails. We reach everyone this way, but be advised that if you respond to our email you will only reach the members of your “group”, and not the entire membership of Honoco Inc. There are work-arounds, but to our knowledge they all cost money which we have not opted to spend at this point. If you want to reach everyone, posting on the website might be a better choice.

Dues

The dues established each year as part of the Annual Plan/Budget are voted on and agreed to at the Annual Meeting. Our fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31. Current year dues are due and payable on January 1st and considered delinquent as of March 1st of the current year. In December of each year you will be mailed an invoice which outlines your current dues responsibility as well as any arrears for prior years.

The Association will provide one past due invoice each year to delinquent members and record the accumulated delinquencies in the Corporate Ledgers. Note that in the event of property sales or transfers the Association is contacted regarding arrears and that sales are often delayed/cancelled on the basis of our reporting unless arrears are brought current.

Emergency Services

For any emergencies that develop on the road, **DIAL 911!** You should know that this communication activates a central dispatch that, depending on the nature of the call, activates all of the available police, fire, and medical support services for the area. For fire services depending on your location on the road your primary responder on the road will either be the Aurora VFD or the King Ferry VFD. In most cases regardless of your location on the road, both departments may respond, especially considering we are a dead-end road. The same is true for emergency medical and police responses. If you use a cell phone for the call, the services can usually pinpoint your gps location to determine who is in the best position to respond. Since neither Ledyard, Genoa, nor Aurora have police departments, your responders will either be state police or the Cayuga County Sherriff’s Department. Emergency medical services are generally provided by Southern Cayuga Ambulance or additional backup depending on availability. For **non-emergency** police response (loud parties, disturbing the peace, non-injury accidents, etc.) the 911 service recommends calling the sherriff’s department regular line at **315-253-1222**. This will still get prompt attention but does not tie up the emergency line.

Do NOT expect response in minutes. Depending on where you are on the road and the current condition of the road, and depending on the emergency apparatus involved, response times could be as much as ½ hour! If you have a visitor on the road that has a chronic medical condition you may want to seriously consider if they should be here if an emergency might occur. Likewise, if an accident appears to be serious, you may wish to notify 911 and begin transport of the individual up the road if you can in order to decrease the contact time to emergency responders. Honoco is a wonderful place to be as long as you are aware that critical emergency services help can likely take more time than you might be used to.

Town Jurisdictions

You can lose your Certificate of Occupancy in either Ledyard or Genoa if you don’t follow the regulations for Building Codes or Zoning Laws. These regulations have teeth, and frankly, since neither town has

any public access to the lake, there is some historical resentment regarding us “Lake People”, and little sympathy for not following the town rules. The same is true for the DEC, or Department of Environmental Conservation. It is always a great idea to check with either Ledyard or Genoa before you decide to add or modify things on your property or add, for example, a new sea wall. You may find out there are more requirements than you imagined, and to proceed without finding out might be an expensive mistake. Code officers routinely drive Honoco in search of “code/zoning issues” so go to the town websites and make sure you are in compliance.

Here are links to both the [Town of Ledyard](#) and the [Town of Genoa](#). Please review their sites and become familiar with regulations which might affect you.

Cayuga County Sherriff (CCS)

The CCS is the primary law enforcement for our communities. As long as you recognize that Honoco Road is a TINY piece of county law enforcement, especially when it comes to nuisance complaints, you might come to grips with the fact that your issue may not demand the immediate response that you may be used to at your primary residence. This is especially true when it comes to the perception of speeding on our private road. You should report anything that you believe to be a violation of the law and leave it up to law enforcement to decide what to do about it. Taking what you believe “The Law” into your own hands is not recommended. The primary number for the Cayuga County Sherriff’s Department is **315-253-1222**.

Transfer Facility

There is no trash collection on Honoco Road. Individual owners are accountable for responsible removal of all trash. Personal removal of trash on the road is facilitated by taking the trash to the Ledyard Transfer Facility on Moonshine Road (off of Poplar Ridge at the south end of Aurora) or removing it on your own. At the facility, there are containers for recyclables, garbage, metals, etc. The fee for a 35lb bag of garbage is \$3, and the facility is open Saturdays only from Oct-May from 8-2 and from May-Oct from 7-1. Go on the Ledyard website to determine the accepted items and procedures at the facility.

On the subject of trash, you will often encounter open fires on Honoco attempting to burn household trash. Burning household trash is prohibited statewide in all cases at all times of the year. Open burning in NY is prohibited with exceptions for campfires, small cooking fires, and brush. A complete statewide burn ban is in effect every year from March 16 through May 14. Campfires should also not contain any treated or painted wood. Fires cannot be left unattended and must be fully extinguished. Please abide by these regs. Because of our restricted access, a fire on Honoco could become catastrophic in a short period of time.

Service Providers

It used to be on the road that we had retirees that owned equipment on the road that could clear slides, dig culverts, open up gulleys, and fill in potholes. They were willing to help, enjoyed the time, and, as long as they got paid for fuel, would be right there the next time it was required. Unfortunately our old-timers are gone and the volunteer services they provided now usually cost a minimum of \$125/hr. We have assembled a list of service providers for Honoco. Be advised that this is a difficult destination for

most contractors and that some will either decide not to bid or will charge you extra to come down our road. You are on your own for their services. The Association can provide advice and possible project management, but no financial assistance. We strongly suggest multiple bids and suggest you might want to consult with the Association to get an idea of what might be involved before bidding the job.

If you are going to go ahead with a project, please consider contacting the Association in advance so we can notify the membership of any situations which might impact ingress or egress on the road.

Excavation Contractors

Eric Kessler – **315-879-8522** Septic, Ditches, Gulleys, Culvert Cleanouts/Installs, Stone & Gravel

Bob Munson – **607-327-1656** Ditches, Gulleys, Culvert Cleanouts/Installs, Tree Removals, Stone & Gravel

Ben Shaw – **315-515-9666** Ditches, Gulleys, Culvert Cleanouts/Installs

Scott Hicks – **607-273-0867** Ditches, Gullys, Culvert Cleanouts/Installs

Scott Binns – **315-224-2656** Ditches, Gullys, Culvert Cleanouts/Installs, Seawalls, Stone & Gravel

General Construction

Murphy Brothers-**315-784-5803**

Dave Marion-**315-246-9014**

Septic Pumping Services

Kessler Septic Service- Jerry Kessler-**315-497-3733**

Propane Suppliers

E&V Energy-**315-253-6522**

Griffith Energy-**315-685-5728**

Phelps Sungas-**315-548-8925**

Suburban Propane-**315-255-3301**

DiSanto-**877-275-4827**

Amerigas-**315-497-3140**

Internet/TV

Although a fiber optic line is planned for Honoco, it is not here yet, so currently for “reliable” TV and internet you will have to rely on satellite services. No one has had much success with personal antennas on the road because our local channels originate mostly out of Syracuse and our reception is blocked by our big east side hill from picking up the signals.

Internet is either provided by Hughes or Clarity Connect, and satellite TV either by Direct TV or Dish. There can be frequent weather-related service interruptions, especially during heavy rainstorms. Have a good book handy.

NYSEG

Honoco can occasionally lose power. It can be a very dark road if it happens at night, so please make sure you have adequate powerful flashlights and batteries. During an outage remember that you will generally lose power to your water pump as well, so try to use as little water as possible until power is restored. To report power outages and/or check on status of restoration estimates, you can call the NYSEG power hotline at **1-800-572-1131**.

Mail/FedEx/UPS

There are no postal services on the road. The mailboxes for residents are located on Lake Road across from the entrance to Honoco. Tom Holland, the local carrier for our Aurora postal addresses happens to live on Honoco. You can call Tom at **315-729-2211** for all of your postal questions including procedures for setting up Honoco address mail delivery, mailboxes, etc. You should also note that alternate carriers such as UPS and FedEx generally do NOT provide door delivery service on Honoco. It might be advisable to use your primary residence for deliveries if you do not have a mailbox set up on the road. Packages are usually left at your mailbox location wrapped in a plastic bag. If you are expecting an order, it is a good idea to track shipment, frequently check your mailbox location for delivery, and pick up your package as soon as possible as the mailboxes are unsecured.

Wineries/Restaurants

There are a number of boat-accessible wineries and restaurants on the lake. Many folks don't realize that you can actually leave your dock by boat and travel anywhere in the world! Up to the end of the lake, through the locks, through the St. Lawrence Seaway, into the Atlantic, and you are on your way! Just make sure you have a really big boat and a lot of time on your hands. For those of you who might be a little less adventurous, here are some local boat-accessible wineries and restaurants:

Wineries

Varick-**315-549-8797**

Goose Watch-**315-549-2599**

Thirsty Owl-**866-869-5805**

Sheldrake-**866-743-5372**

Long Point-**315-364-6990**

Restaurants

Omalley's-**607-532-8846**

Wolffy's-**315-257-0077**

Deerhead Lakeside-**315-568-2950**

Boatyard Grill-**607-256-9585**

Fargo-**315-364-8006**

Communication

You can follow the activities of the Association on both the website and our monthly emails to the membership. In the monthly President's email, we include a running financial summary of the Association's monies as well as some brief thoughts on issues we believe might be relevant for the membership to consider. We welcome responses, questions, and your support. Thanks, and welcome to the road!