Great progress has been made in highways across the county since pioneer days. The Red River Trail, a north and south route across the county, is the first recognized trail used by whites in the county. Because it was used for the most part by fur traders when the ground was frozen, the trail was not as well marked as the all season Pembina Trail. The Red River Trail paralleled the Red River from Pembina south through the western part of the western border counties toward Lake Traverse before turning southwestward toward Mendota and later St. Paul. This trail was used from 1844 up to about 1860. The trail came from the north near Tabor, south and east of the Marias, and crossed the Red Lake River approximately one mile west of Fisher, thence south-eastward to avoid what was called the swamp to about where Beltrami now stands, thence south. The Pembina Trail, or Ridge Road, was a more or less all season road which followed the Campbell and other higher beaches of the glacial Lake Agassiz from Fertile north and west through Huot, Dorothy and on north and west to Pembina. This trail carried its heaviest traffic during the sixties and in the early seventies when steam boats and railroads took over the hauling of freight. Early settlers used the Ridge Road in Polk County until the township and county roads were developed so that today the identity of the Pembina Trail in Polk County has been quite largely lost. The last trail road of importance in the county, the trail over the gravel ridge east of Crookston through Benoit, Tilden Junction, and Dugdale, was replaced with a straight road to Mentor in 1917-18.

The county is fortunate today in having two transcontinental highways, with concrete paving, crossing the county. U. S. highway No. 2, seventy five miles in length, bisects the county from east to west, entering the county about one-half mile north of Lengby, proceeding west northwest connecting the principal towns of the county paralleling the Great Northern Railway (Duluth branch), through Crookston, and leaving the county at East Grand Forks. U. S. Highway No. 75, a route from Winnipeg, Canada, to the Gulf of Mexico, enters the county from the north some six and one-half miles north of Angus and proceeds south through Crookston and southwest through Climax, leaving the county south of Nielsville.

The first rural concrete paving in Polk County was laid between Crookston and the Northwest School and Experiment Station north of the city. The paving one and one-half miles in length was laid in 1920, which was before the Babcock plan for state highways was adopted. The pavement was paid for by joint assessments against the University of Minnesota, Polk County and the City of Crookston.

The network and condition of the township, county, state aid, state and federal highways in Polk County is a source of pride to the residents of the county. A detailed map of the roads in the county, prepared by the County Engineer, is attach-