I actively look for ways to perform my job more effectively.

I often do more than expected while working.

My coworkers insist we work safely.

The districts and central office are working together to become one ODOT.

Plus! The latest critical success factors insert.
2013 Quality of Worklife Survey – The Results

WHEN did the survey happen?
The survey was distributed to all ODOT employees at the end of 2013 to gain feedback on their satisfaction in the following areas (remember these areas for later):
- Employee Satisfaction (how happy you are here at ODOT)
- Strategic Issues (how well you understand and believe in our direction)
- Working Environment (how satisfied you are with your working conditions)

WHO responded to the survey?
2,486 employees from all twelve districts and Central Office completed the survey. Those 2,486 employees represent 50 percent of all ODOT people*. Out of the people who responded:
- 64 percent were in the Bargaining Unit, while 36 percent were not
- 23 percent had 25 or more years of service, and 21 percent had 5 or less years (these two groups were the highest responders out of all ODOT people)
- Central Office people completed the survey the most – out of the 2,486 employees, 15 percent of them were Central Office – while District 5 responded the least (5 percent of 2,486 employees statewide)

WHERE did the results fall?
Positive responses included:
- Most people see purpose in what they do at work
- Most people like the work they do
- Most people actively look for ways to perform their jobs more effectively
- Most people have good relationships with their coworkers
- Most people like working for ODOT

Areas of concern included:
- Many people aren’t sure whether the Districts and Central Office are working together to become one ODOT
- Many people don’t sense a strong feeling of teamwork and cooperation at ODOT statewide
- Many people disagree on whether or not Kronos is making timekeeping easier
- Many people aren’t sure whether ODOT is moving closer to our vision of becoming a long term, reliable, professional, and highly productive organization
- Many people aren’t sure about their confidence in the decisions made by ODOT Senior Leadership

Overall, the following statements got the following average scores (on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 = “Strongly Agree,” and 1 = “Strongly Disagree”):
- “Overall, I am satisfied with my experience as an ODOT employee” – Agree! (3.92)**
- “Overall, I am satisfied with the current strategic direction of ODOT” – No opinion (3.21)***
- “Overall, I am satisfied with the working environment at ODOT” – Agree! (3.67)****

On the cover: Richland County Highway Technician Lance McGinty.
Photo by Joyce Miller, District 3
WHAT does it all mean?
ODOT grades itself on our overall Work Life Index, which is basically a score or grade we get that is measured based on our overall satisfaction in the following previously noted areas:
- Employee satisfaction
- Strategic issues
- Working environment

This year, based on the 2013 Quality of Work Life Survey, ODOT has earned an Index of 72 percent, an increase of 2 percent over last year’s score. Studies show that industry averages range from the low 60s to 80 percent. Based on this statistical curve, ODOT’s Work Life Index goal is 75 percent, which is well within the industry scores.

HOW did the last survey results change ODOT?
These were Director Wray’s 2013 plans:
- ODOT created a new internal communication plan, which included a revamped Transcript newsletter, pre-taped messages for ODOT people, digital signage monitors in ODOT facilities, and a weekly ODOT News email. The plan was implemented and continues to develop.
- To emphasize the importance of holding all employees—whether they are Union or Management—accountable, several management workshops and leadership training sessions were held for managers. In addition, ODOT instigated more disciplines and terminations in 2013.
- All Deputy Directors were tasked with communicating the details of the Strategic Plan to ODOT people and explaining how people then fit into that plan. The department created the Results over Resources books, and distributed them to all ODOT employees. District and division leaders made presentations about the plan to their staff members.
- The Quality of Work Life survey will be administered each year to monitor any progress made in Work Life Index score. The scores from 2013, compared to the last survey, indicates progress has been made.

HOW does ODOT leadership plan to take action in 2014?
The plans in regards to these latest results include:
- Development of an all-inclusive Intranet that will help drive colleagues around the state to the same information and provide important updates to help people work together and become one department
- Continue to form improvement teams with representatives from all districts and Central Office to better department processes while promoting teamwork and cooperation
- Suggestions from an Employee Improvement Team will be used to develop timekeeping processes in relation to Kronos
- Regular reporting of how the organization is doing by publishing the Critical Success Factor Dashboard, as well as metric spotlights to further explain what is being measured and why
- ODOT developed Upward Feedback surveys, which allow managers to be evaluated by their own employees, and are expected to roll them out in 2014

* This is increased from a 44 percent response rate in 2012
** This is increased from an average of 3.67 in 2012
*** This is about the same as 2012 (average of 3.23)
**** This is increased from an average of 3.59 in 2012
Local News

One Goal—two counties—Outstanding!

Becky Giauque, District 11

"My co-workers insist we work safely." This Quality of Work Life Survey statement most likely garnered high scores from the employees of two District 11 counties, who are excellent examples of what can be achieved through this kind of teamwork. The work units from Harrison and Holmes counties have both now gone without a single medical injury for two entire years. These are the only two counties in Ohio that can make this claim.

Both county work forces have found that safety is the result of a lot of things put together, but it’s mostly about a caring and conscientious workforce. Work crews hold weekly tailgate talks, share safety tips with one another, and constantly reinforce and remind each other to be safe.

Harrison County Transportation Manager Jim Zupko put it simply, “Everyone here looks out for each other. We all want to go home at the end of the day.”

The employees of Holmes County, pictured here, put safety first.

Paperless Accounting – Doing the job more effectively

Deb Pine, District 2

Fiscal Specialist

Brandy Johnson of District 2 is a testament to the statement “I actively look for ways to perform my job more effectively,” which appeared in the top five areas of satisfaction in the Quality of Work Life Survey results. Recently, Johnson came up with a new method for dealing with roadway-damaging accidents that saves both time and paper.

Accidents causing damage to ODOT signs, pavements, guardrails, and the like occur about 75 times a month on state highways. In order for the districts to be reimbursed, their accounting departments must invoice the responsible drivers. The process involves long paper trails of accident reports involving ODOT property sent from Central Office, printed out, sorted by county, and finally distributed to those reporting counties via the pony.

From there, the counties determine if damage occurred, fill out a property damage report, and send the report back to accounting, where an invoice is generated for the costs of the damage.

Taking it upon herself to create a more efficient, effective way of completing this process, Johnson used SharePoint and began a paperless accident reporting process. She designed the page to be a one-stop shop where counties can review costs and fill out a blank property damage report. Once completed, accounting is immediately alerted to generate an invoice to the driver if needed.

Without people like Johnson, who “actively look for ways to perform their jobs more effectively,” everyday processes would never improve. At ODOT, people regularly strive to make these improvements, which shows in the high average score of this survey statement.
CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS UPDATE

Published once each quarter, the Critical Success Factors Update is designed to report on the Results Over Resources program and spotlight one of the several factors that measures ODOT’s success. Results reported in this issue measure progress through March 31, 2014.

CSF SPOTLIGHT:

PEOPLE

Work Life Index
How ODOT measures employees’ overall satisfaction with their working experience (below)

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:
The Purpose of Critical Success Factors (page 3) 
The Critical Success Factor Dashboard (page 4)

CSF SPOTLIGHT:

A Great Place to Work

If people are treated with respect, if they’re given the proper tools and empowered to work up to their abilities, if their work experiences are satisfying, and they know their efforts are important and value-added, it naturally follows they will be more productive. They will have a greater sense of pride in what they do and where they work. Making ODOT a great place to work is our number one goal.” – Director Jerry Wray

This quarter’s featured metric, the Work Life Index, is a part of the People Critical Success Factor based on the statement above – it was created and put in place to make sure the Department is actively and aggressively working to provide an environment that fosters this fulfillment. “It’s about people not only working with ODOT, but on ODOT – to make it a better organization,” says Wray.

(continued on page 2)
A Great Place to Work (cont.)

Using the annual Quality of Work Life Survey as its data source, the Index measures peoples’ overall satisfaction in three important areas: Employee Satisfaction, Working Environment, and Strategic Issues.

The survey, distributed at the end of each calendar year to all ODOT people, asks responders to rate how much they agree or disagree with statements falling within each of the three main areas. With a rating scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree,” typical statements include, “My supervisor values my opinions,” “My work unit functions well as a team,” and “I have a clear understanding of the current mission of ODOT.”

HOW IS IT CALCULATED?

Arriving at the Work Life Index is simple. While some statements differ from one year’s survey to the next, people who responded will remember three statements that appeared in both 2012 and 2013’s surveys:

- “Overall I am satisfied with my experience as an ODOT employee.”
- “Overall I am satisfied with the working environment at ODOT.”
- “Overall I am satisfied with the current strategic direction of ODOT.”

Because they don’t change from year to year, these survey statements can be used to annually determine and track the Index. The average scores for each of the above statements are averaged together into one number, and then divided by the highest possible score of 5. The Index is determined when the answer is converted to a percentage, arriving at the department’s “grade” for the year.

THE RESULTS

ODOT’s Work Life Index for 2013 is 72 percent, which is an improvement from the previous year and, according to Daveen Goodman, administrator of the Office of Lean, something to celebrate. “While this grade may look like a C-, studies show that industry averages range from 60-80 percent,” she said. “The goal was set at 75 percent, and though we didn’t quite reach it this year, according to respondents, things are improving.”

Goodman’s office facilitates the annual survey and develops a detailed report; complete with data charts, made available on ODOT’s website. Work Life Index-specific charts are provided above to illustrate where the results fell, broken down by category and district or Central Office. “The increase from 2012’s statewide Index is an accomplishment the organization can feel good about,” said Goodman.
In 2013, ODOT unveiled the Results Over Resources program, which is defined chiefly through the Critical Success Factors of people, system conditions, operations, safety and the capital program. Individually and as a group, the critical success factors are designed to...

- **Measure core, tangible results**
  ODOT wants to focus on productivity that truly impacts the transportation infrastructure and makes a positive contribution to the life and welfare of the state and its citizens.

- **Set challenging goals**
  ODOT will always strive to make the Ohio transportation system the best it can be through continuous improvement and diligent maintenance.

- **Save money & time, and increase safety**
  These values will always be at the forefront of every decision the department makes on behalf of the public.

- **Achieve maximum return on investment**
  ODOT will embody efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring the financing contained in the public trust will be spent wisely and with purpose.

### The Purpose of Critical Success Factors

In 2013, ODOT unveiled the Results Over Resources program, which is defined chiefly through the Critical Success Factors of people, system conditions, operations, safety and the capital program. Individually and as a group, the critical success factors are designed to...

- **Measure core, tangible results**
  ODOT wants to focus on productivity that truly impacts the transportation infrastructure and makes a positive contribution to the life and welfare of the state and its citizens.

- **Set challenging goals**
  ODOT will always strive to make the Ohio transportation system the best it can be through continuous improvement and diligent maintenance.

- **Save money & time, and increase safety**
  These values will always be at the forefront of every decision the department makes on behalf of the public.

- **Achieve maximum return on investment**
  ODOT will embody efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring the financing contained in the public trust will be spent wisely and with purpose.

### The Work Life Index Comparison

This table shows the Work Life Index comparison between 2013 and 2012 in descending order for all 12 districts and Central Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>2012 WLI</th>
<th>2013 WLI</th>
<th>Trending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>69.96%</td>
<td>71.95%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>71.64%</td>
<td>73.06%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District WLI</td>
<td>69.62%</td>
<td>71.76%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CSF Category and Metric

### People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Previous Period</th>
<th>Current Period</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Life Index</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Calendar Year Annually: 2012, 2013)&lt;br&gt;ODOT Quality of Work Life Survey results, on a scale of 0-100%</td>
<td>69.96%</td>
<td>71.95%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Progress Toward Optimal Structure</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Fiscal Year Quarterly: Q2 2014, Q3 2014)&lt;br&gt;The number of personnel actions required to meet future staffing level goals.</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workforce Injuries</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Calendar Year Annually: 2012, 2013)&lt;br&gt;OSHA guideline for employers assessing incidents occurring for every 100 employees in a year's time</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workforce Crashes</strong></td>
<td>9.07</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### System Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Previous Period</th>
<th>Current Period</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bridges: General Appraisal</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Fiscal Year Annually: 2012, 2013)&lt;br&gt;Statewide average rating of bridge conditions. Each ODOT maintained bridge is rated on a scale of 0-9; 0 = out of service, 9 = new.</td>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pavements: Priority System</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Fiscal Year Annually: 2012, 2013)&lt;br&gt;ODOT measures the average pavement conditions for all Interstates and four-lane divided highways (Priority); rural, two-lane U.S. and State Routes outside of cities (General); and U.S. and State Routes inside of cities (Urban). The ratings are on a scale of 0-100, with 100 being brand new pavement.</td>
<td>87.66</td>
<td>86.38</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pavements: General System</strong></td>
<td>83.58</td>
<td>82.77</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pavements: Urban System</strong></td>
<td>81.32</td>
<td>80.19</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintenance Conditions Ratings</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Twice per Calendar Year: Winter/Spring 2013, Summer/Fall 2013)&lt;br&gt;The actual number of MCR deficiencies from a sampling of our state highway network.</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Previous Period</th>
<th>Current Period</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Labor Ratio</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Fiscal Year Quarterly: Q2 2014, Q3 2014)&lt;br&gt;District direct 'billable' labor hours divided by the total overall number of labor hours for ODOT's core business functions.</td>
<td>65.46%</td>
<td>73.50%</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel Time Reliability Index (TTRI)</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Fiscal Year Quarterly: Q2 2014, Q3 2014)&lt;br&gt;Measures the percentage of time between the 5 a.m.-9 p.m. travellers experience free flow on Ohio's freeways.</td>
<td>85.90%</td>
<td>87.00%</td>
<td>88.00%</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snow &amp; Ice Control</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Fiscal Year Winter Monthly: February 2014, March 2014)&lt;br&gt;The number of state priority routes not reaching expected speeds within 2 hours after a snow event.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Previous Period</th>
<th>Current Period</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fatalities</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Calendar Year Annually: 2012, 2013)&lt;br&gt;Current number of motor vehicle incidents that have occurred on the ODOT System roadways (all Interstates and U.S. or State Routes outside of cities) compared to these metric's five-year average.</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serious Injuries</strong>&lt;br&gt;Current number of motor vehicle incidents that have occurred on the ODOT System roadways (all Interstates and U.S. or State Routes outside of cities) compared to these metric’s five-year average.</td>
<td>3,547</td>
<td>3,357</td>
<td>3,716</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Crashes</strong>&lt;br&gt;Current number of motor vehicle incidents that have occurred on the ODOT System roadways (all Interstates and U.S. or State Routes outside of cities) compared to these metric’s five-year average.</td>
<td>80,231</td>
<td>76,478</td>
<td>83,893</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Capital Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Previous Period</th>
<th>Current Period</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contract Program ($ Billions)</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Fiscal Year Annually: 2012, 2013)&lt;br&gt;Total construction and maintenance contracts awarded and to be awarded for the Fiscal Year on ODOT and local agency projects.</td>
<td>$1.7</td>
<td>$1.8</td>
<td>$1.9</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ODOT Let Projects Awarded On-Time</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Fiscal Year Quarterly: Q2 2014, Q3 2014)&lt;br&gt;Percentage of department or local contract construction projects let by their target date.</td>
<td>89.60%</td>
<td>92.50%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Let Projects Awarded On-Time</strong></td>
<td>94.20%</td>
<td>94.40%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contract Program/Production Costs</strong>&lt;br&gt;Construction costs divided by department costs incurred to create projects.</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complete Construction Projects On Time</strong>&lt;br&gt;Timeliness for the delivery of ODOT projects.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preventable Change Orders</strong>&lt;br&gt;Cumulative dollar amount of preventable change orders over the total construction program dollar amount.</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See ODOT's Critical Success Factors Defined: Metric Appendix online for further details.
IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT SECTION OF THE QUALITY OF WORK LIFE SURVEY, WE WERE ASKED TO RATE WHETHER ODOT WAS PROVIDING US WITH THE RIGHT AMOUNT AND KINDS OF EQUIPMENT. NOW I READ IN TRANScript (MARCH, 2014) ABOUT FLEET REDUCTIONS. HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO OUR JOBS WITHOUT ENOUGH TRUCKS AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT?

WE KNOW FROM THE COMMENTS WE RECEIVED IN THE QUALITY OF WORKLIFE SURVEY THAT THE ISSUES SURROUNDING EQUIPMENT ARE IMPORTANT TO MANY HERE AT ODOT; OUR PEOPLE WROTE ABOUT THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH PURCHASING AND HAVING ENOUGH SUPPLIES. BUT THE ISSUE HERE IS NOT ABOUT WHAT NUMBERS OF WHAT ITEMS WE HAVE IN THE INVENTORY. IT IS ABOUT HAVING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT FOR THE JOB, AND PLANNING FOR AND DEPLOYING THAT EQUIPMENT PROPERLY TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION IN AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT MANNER.

PLANNING AND COOPERATION ACROSS COUNTY AND DISTRICT BOUNDARIES WILL ALLOW US TO USE OUR EQUIPMENT MORE EFFECTIVELY WHILE REDUCING PURCHASING AND MAINTENANCE COSTS. THIS WILL TAKE STRONG COMMUNICATION BETWEEN OUR COUNTY MANAGERS TO ENSURE ALL COUNTIES ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS UNDER THE ANNUAL WORK PLAN. SHARING, PURCHASING AND LEASING EXPENSIVE EQUIPMENT THROUGH A THOUGHTFUL, WELL-PLANNED STRATEGY WILL ALLOW US TO INVEST WISELY WHILE MEETING OUR MAINTENANCE GOALS.

"ASK THE DIRECTOR" IS A TRANSscript FEATURE FOR EMPLOYEES TO SUBMIT ODOT WORK LIFE QUESTIONS TO DIRECTOR JERRY WRAY. QUESTIONS ON ODOT POLICY AND PROCEDURES, FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, SNOW AND ICE CONTROL, AND A VARIETY OF OTHER ISSUES THAT ARE ON THE MINDS OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF ODOT WILL BE CONSIDERED.

SUBMIT QUESTIONS TO ALEX BUEGER IN THE DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS BY EMAIL (ALEXANDRA.BUERGER@DOT.STATE.OH.US), INTEROFFICE MAIL (MAIL STOP 1420), OR BY PHONE AT (614) 387-6225.

DIRECTOR WRAY CHOOSES WHICH QUESTION(S) TO RESPOND TO IN TRANSscript EACH MONTH. YOUR NAME WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL IF REQUESTED.

WATCH AND LEARN

THE OFFICE OF EMPLOYEE HEALTH & SAFETY HELD THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE COMPETENT PERSON TRAINING PROGRAM IN LATE MARCH AT CENTRAL OFFICE. AS PART OF THE CLASS, STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN A HANDS-ON DEMONSTRATION OF SOIL MECHANICS: TRENCHES WERE DUG TO GIVE THE CLASS THE OPPORTUNITY TO WATCH HOW THESE WOULD COLLAPSE.

PHOTO BY BRUCE HULL, CENTRAL OFFICE
A DAY IN THE LIFE

Office of Lean is more than Quality of Work Life Surveys
Joel Hunt, Central Office

Have you ever wondered where your Quality of Work Life Survey goes once you mail it in or click “Submit”? The answer is to Central Office Human Resources, where the Office of Lean resides. Lean is responsible for developing, analyzing, and reporting the results of the survey, which help ODOT leadership pinpoint ways to improve the work environment for employees statewide.

The office carries the Quality of Worklife Survey responsibility because of their expertise with data: the Lean concept uses data to focus key processes around improving customer value. Daveen Goodman, the Office of Lean administrator, fields one question daily: “Did Director Wray create your office to downsize the department?” Her response? “Lean is about improving ODOT’s processes, not downsizing.”

The ultimate goal of a lean organization is to provide value creation processes with zero waste, making things better for the customer and the department. Some examples of “waste” in a work process are excessive inventory, waiting and delays, or forgetting equipment and driving back to the garage to retrieve it. By definition, the purpose of the Office of Lean is to maximize value while minimizing waste.

“Over time our processes get bogged down,” said Goodman. “To eliminate waste, the Office of Lean conducts Lean events—1- to 5-day meetings where teams of employees meet to discuss a problem—then combine their best approaches into a single solution.”

Lean principles have a long history of success, and businesses and governments are using the Lean ideal today to move towards new ways of thinking. It requires a transformation on how an organization conducts business, in the form of big and small wins.

At ODOT, several districts have employees trained in a two-week program provided by LeanOhio, a section within the Ohio Department of Administrative Services. These employees learn how to use tools such as process mapping and how to facilitate teams to find more efficient ways of accomplishing things.

According to Goodman, the Office of Lean is also involved in different programs to help ODOT employees learn and use Lean concepts. This includes offering training to help employees find ways to better interact with one another. The office heads up Team Up ODOT, which encourages people to form teams to discover better processes, as well as the Total ODOT Performance, or TOP, Awards for recognizing the outstanding achievements of those people.

This time of year, however, is devoted to examining the feedback ODOT people provide when filling out the survey. Once averages are calculated for employee satisfaction, strategic issues, and working environment, the office determines the overall Work Life Index, which tracks the department’s annual progress within the People Critical Success Factor (see this quarter’s Critical Success Factor Update for a spotlight on the metric). Results narrowed down to each district and Central Office are used to tailor action plans as a result of the feedback, improving work life and creating an environment where production thrives.

“The days of being in a silo are gone,” Goodman said. “We have to be efficient and effective. We have great people at ODOT and we will do amazing things. The Lean philosophy is all about the process—waste is never defined as people.”

Carol Schubert (left), Paul Staley, Denae Kotheimer and Daveen Goodman review Quality of Work Life Surveys.
THE QUALITY OF Work Life Survey asked everyone to measure how they felt about the statement, “The districts and Central Office are working together to become one ODOT.” Ideally, it should be, but many commented that they did not think so. Separated by location and district borders, the individual sections which make up the department can seem very different from one another. With each district office “doing its own thing,” it can be hard to find any common ground for working together for mutual benefit.

But with the determination of those who set their minds to it, anything is possible. This February just past, in north-west Ohio, a stretch of highway along northbound Interstate 75 through downtown Toledo had been turned into a minefield of potholes. Both lanes had to be closed, but how to fix the damage? It was still snowing and cold, and routine repair methods like hot mix would not work in these conditions.

District 2 had a problem, and they needed a solution. Perhaps what they were looking for was best expressed in the survey statement in the Employee Satisfaction section: “I actively look for ways to perform my job more effectively.” It would seem that members of the Lucas and Northwood garages responsible for maintaining that Toledo roadway were thinking that way. They came up with a plan and decided to purchase hot mix from a batch plant. But first, they had to open a batch plant!

Northwood Transportation Manager Dave Kanavel took charge of the operation, ignoring district borders and in many ways being the kind of manager the survey referred to: “My supervisor encourages us to work as a team.” Kanavel made arrangements to open an asphalt plant in the Toledo area, then got Hancock County in District 1 to send their paver and three HT’s to help. He then contacted Erie County in District 3 and the city of Toledo who both agreed to provide two hot boxes.

When a break in the weather came on February 17th, District 2 sprang into action: with mix from its own batch plant and the combined resources of other offices, work crews milled and filled the damage along I-75 in downtown Toledo and along sections of Wood I-75 and Lucas Interstate 475 as well. Just over 499 tons of asphalt was in place by the time the mercury fell below 20 degrees, improving safety and capacity and sparing tires and wheel alignments.

The survey statement: “The districts and Central Office are working together to become one ODOT,” can seem like wishful thinking sometimes, but this operation was a step in that direction. The hard work and cooperation between the three districts and Toledo; some help from private contractor Gerken Paving; plus the combined efforts of five garages, the Test Lab and Special Projects sections in District 2; all came together over a four-day period to fix these highways. Now the city of Toledo has been inspired to try this for future operations. And it all happened by working together as one:

“It was a crazy thing, paving while there is still snow on the ground,” said Kanavel, “but everyone worked hard to get it done.”
What matters most
Mandi Dillon, District 7, Brent Kovacs, District 4 and Ron Poole, Central Office

The Quality of Work Life Survey was created to be a measure of the department’s progress each year as it strives to improve as an organization. Creating an environment where employees feel they can do their best work builds a better workforce, a stronger organization, and a world-class transportation system. The individual who feels safe and supported in their job duties can often do more than even they expect. And often, that “more” can be amazing.

Just this past winter, District 7 highway technicians Steve Kinstle and Javier Gallegos helped two teenaged brothers escape a burning home. They spotted the smoke coming from a nearby farmhouse while repairing mailboxes in Auglaize County. Acting quickly, Gallegos called 911 while Kinstle alerted the two brothers and ushered them out of the house to safety before fire crews arrived. For their actions, Kinstle and Gallegos were praised by Ted Hemleben, their county manager, and received a personal handwritten note from Director Wray commending their bravery.

The extreme situation of reacting to a house fire while on the job is maybe not what the Quality of Work Life Survey creators meant when the statement “I often do much more than expected while working,” was included. But that kind of freedom – to take the initiative to do what’s right while having the support of the office to do so is the spirit of the survey. Indeed, it is providing value and meaning to the daily activities of everyone with the department that drives the survey.

It happened a second time, this February: Highway techs Larry Poage and Ed Kane from Mahoning County were performing a berming operation at a flooded section of State Route 165 when they learned from a passing motorist that a car was caught in the water. Though help was coming, both men knew they could not wait. Using their snow plow, they drove into the cold water and with the help of a bystander, removed the driver from her car and got her back on dry land.

Again, when the survey posed the statements, “I have the appropriate amount of independence in my daily work,” and “I have the opportunity to use my skills and abilities at work,” making life and death decisions were probably not the specific intent. But the same spirit is what ODOT values. And with each survey and each response, each improvement and change, that spirit becomes a part of all that the department does.