‘A Great Place to Work’
QUALITY OF WORK LIFE SURVEY RETURNS HIGHEST SCORE EVER
SEE CENTER INSERT
ASK THE DIRECTOR

Q: In the past we primarily focused on construction and maintenance activities, with a limited focus on daily operational needs. That will change in the future. Currently, we are developing a Transportation System Management and Operation Plan, or a TSMO plan.

We can no longer just build our way out of congestion. It’s no longer environmentally or economically feasible. We must better manage the assets we already own. This TSMO plan will develop a formalized structure that will help ODOT do that. It will be a strategic traffic management plan that will integrate all of our traffic management systems, allowing us to continue our transformation into an operations-oriented organization.

Let me give you some examples. The Towing & Recovery Incentive Payment Program or (TRIP) Program pays prequalified heavy-duty towing and recovery companies incentives for the quick clearance of large commercial vehicle incidents on selected, high-importance Ohio roadways. Approximately 1,000 miles of interstates, state routes, and US routes across every region of Ohio will be covered by the TRIP program.

The ODOT QuickClear Program is committed to maintaining the safe and effective flow of traffic during emergencies in order to prevent further damage, injury, or undue delay of the motoring public.

The ODOT Statewide Traffic Management Center or TMC operates traffic management and traveler information systems on Ohio’s interstates, freeways, expressways, and state highways. The mission of the TMC is to increase transportation safety, reduce congestion, and increase efficiency on Ohio’s highways. They manage about 600 traffic cameras along Ohio’s Interstate System in order to keep the state moving.

ODOT has a redesigned new public site for real-time traffic updates — with desktop, tablet and mobile specific interfaces. It’s called OHGO. The public can download this information as they travel.

The goal of the TSMO plan is to create an integrated traffic management system that coordinates all of these programs so they are working together to mitigate the root causes of congestion and unpredictable travel incidents. The result: people and goods will get to their destinations safely and efficiently.

A: It’s said that “every dog has its day.” And Daisy Mae, a 2 ½-year-old Beagle mix, seems to have one of them—comforting patients at Genesis Hospital in Zanesville as a therapy dog. Her pet mom, District 10 Environmental Coordinator Rachel Goodpaster, takes care of her along with ten other dogs in her home.

“She loves kids,” said Goodpaster. “When we go to pediatrics, her tail starts wagging.”

Goodpaster and her husband Casey found Daisy Mae at a rescue center in the Akron area when she was just eight weeks old. While at agility classes, an instructor noted Daisy Mae’s friendliness and gave them information on how she could become a therapy dog. Daisy Mae has since been certified through Therapy Dogs International and has her "AKC Canine Good Citizen Urban and Community" titles. All of this required training and testing.

“It’s basic obedience training, like sit and stay,” she said. “The actual testing took place at a nursing home to show ability to get into an elevator and be around people on crutches and in wheelchairs and not be scared.”

Daisy Mae primarily makes hour-long visits to Genesis Hospital. She brightens the day of patients and brings smiles to the faces of the staff, particularly the emergency room nurses.

“It’s exhausting for her,” said Goodpaster. “I had one person who wanted her to stay there all day. You have people who have their own dogs at home and they miss the interaction.”

The unstoppable economic juggernaut that is IKEA announced it was coming to Columbus, and ODOT had to be ready for the grand opening set for early July. For more than three months, District 6, local law enforcement and local municipalities worked on a traffic control plan for opening day. ODOT focused on how the event would impact traffic on the nearby interstate and surrounding state roads.

The planning paid off when the anticipated day arrived. The traffic management plan included nine message boards warning drivers of traffic, a push for OHGO to assist those trying to avoid the area and a social media campaign used to live tweet the event. Law enforcement stationed officers in more than 40 locations to assist with traffic flow and signal timing. The ODOT State Farm Safety Patrol units were assigned to assist drivers and help keep traffic moving. Even though ODOT and its partners were expecting stopped traffic on I-71, traffic flowed safely which was the best they could have hoped for.

“Months of prior planning helped us develop an extensive traffic management plan that we executed the day of the grand opening,” said Mitch Blackford, District 6 deputy director. “Working with our partners in law enforcement, local municipalities and our State Farm Safety Patrol, our goal was to keep traffic moving and respond to any incidents on our nearby ODOT roadways within seconds not minutes.”

A friendly visit
Ashley Rittenhouse, District 10

It’s said that “every dog has its day.” And Daisy Mae, a 2 ½-year-old Beagle mix, seems to have one of them—comforting patients at Genesis Hospital in Zanesville as a therapy dog. Her pet mom, District 10 Environmental Coordinator Rachel Goodpaster, takes care of her along with ten other dogs in her home.

“She loves kids,” said Goodpaster. “When we go to pediatrics, her tail starts wagging.”

Goodpaster and her husband Casey found Daisy Mae at a rescue center in the Akron area when she was just eight weeks old. While at agility classes, an instructor noted Daisy Mae’s friendliness and gave them information on how she could become a therapy dog. Daisy Mae has since been certified through Therapy Dogs International and has her “AKC Canine Good Citizen Urban and Community” titles. All of this required training and testing.

“It’s basic obedience training, like sit and stay,” she said. “The actual testing took place at a nursing home to show ability to get into an elevator and be around people on crutches and in wheelchairs and not be scared.”

Daisy Mae primarily makes hour-long visits to Genesis Hospital. She brightens the day of patients and brings smiles to the faces of the staff, particularly the emergency room nurses.

“It’s exhausting for her,” said Goodpaster. “I had one person who wanted her to stay there all day. You have people who have their own dogs at home and they miss the interaction.”
Making a Great Start
Ron Poole, Central Office

Most people working in large corporations or other operations can spend a career without ever meeting the head of their organization; here at ODOT, new hires are meeting their director face to face within a month of joining the department. Since November of 2016, district employees who have just joined the department are spending a day at Central Office for a new kind of orientation. It has become a regular practice for ODOT Director Jerry Wray to meet each attendee individually, and each new employee gets a picture of themselves sitting at the director’s desk as a souvenir.

“This June, we had 42 new visitors,” noted Madison Johnson with Human Resources and a regular guide for these orientation sessions, “which was a record for us so far. It was suggested by an orientation committee to include a visit to Central Office, and the Director really enjoys getting to know our new employees and asking them about themselves.”

The new orientation includes tours of sections of Central Office, including the Sign Shop, the Test Lab and the garage. Attendees also meet with representatives from OPERS, Deferred Compensation, the Credit Union and Education Assistance. According to Johnson, the tour is geared to two goals. “We want our new people to better understand what Central Office does and how it all works together to support what they do,” she said. “We also want them to know the educational and career opportunities that the department offers. It all helps in building the feeling that we are one ODOT.”

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS UPDATE

CSF SPOTLIGHT:

2017 QWLS Results & Work Life Index Score
The 2017 Quality Work Life Survey was the first time the survey was completely paperless, and marked the first-time ever ODOT achieved its Work Life Index score of 75 percent.

ODOT Is A Great Place to Work

In the March 2017 Transcript, we discussed the three major areas that make up the Work Life Index (Employee Satisfaction, Strategic Direction, and Working Environment) and focused on what ODOT has been doing over the last year to improve those areas. Now, with the final results from the first-ever paperless 2017 QWLS and the new Work Life Index score, we can finally say that ODOT IS a Great Place to Work! Although we will continue to get better, 2017 marked the first time ODOT ever achieved its Work Life Index score with a final tally of 75.3 percent! It’s taken six years to significantly improve the culture at the department but we did it, together, as one ODOT. Which means we are one step closer to our vision of becoming a long-term, reliable, professional and highly productive organization. It’s no easy task. It takes consistent and concerted effort to constantly move towards excellence, a path many take, yet few ever achieve. We have achieved it. We are “Excellence in Government.”
Quality of Work Life Survey Results

In 2017, 4,041 employees took the survey, compared to 3,330 in 2016, an increase of 21.4 percent. The 2017 paperless QWLS response rate is 82.4 percent, up nearly 14 percent from 2016’s score of 68.6 percent. The 2017 Work Life Index is 75.3 percent, up from 72.1 percent in 2016. 2017 was the first year ODOT achieved its Work Life Index CSF Goal of 75 percent.

**OF THE THREE MAJOR AREAS** that make up the Work Life Index, ODOT improved in each category. The following charts represent the percentage of employees which gave low scores in each category. For example, in 2016, 37 percent of employees gave a low score to the question, “I feel respected and valued.” In 2017, 31 percent of employees gave a low score to the same question, a six percent improvement from 2016.

**CONCLUSION**

Since 2012, the first year the QWLS was implemented, ODOT has worked diligently to improve the culture, morale and day-to-day operations of the department. These positive changes are reflected in the 2017 QWLS response rate and Work Life Index – the highest scores ever. One very important item to note is in 2017 employees believe ODOT is becoming a long-term, reliable, professional and highly productive organization. This means the department has done a much better job at communicating the department’s overall vision and connecting strategic decisions and operational changes to the vision.

As in 2016, ODOT will have focused Priorities for Improvement in 2017. Below are the areas ODOT will focus on in the coming year:

**Employee Satisfaction**
1. I feel respected and valued at work
2. I have opportunities to showcase my good work
3. I am given the chance to develop
4. I am given the chance to learn

**Strategic Issues**
1. Working together to become one ODOT
2. I have opportunities to showcase my good work
3. I am given the chance to develop
4. I am given the chance to learn

**Workplace Environment**
1. There is a strong feeling of teamwork and cooperation at ODOT
Repaying Nature
Karen Goodwin, Central Office

In northeastern Hocking County sits 3,331 acres of land, through which a stream stretching 119,000 linear feet flows. It represents the largest land acquisition in ODOT’s history. But it will not be the home for a new highway, bridge or other structure. Instead, the land known as the Sunday Creek Coal Company site was donated to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. It will be maintained as a protected wildlife habitat.

The department designated the site to compensate for the environmental disruption caused by the construction of the Nelsonville Bypass. This achievement will serve as a guide for future efforts and result in better land management and project mitigation. The site met the needs of both ODOT and U.S. Fish & Wildlife, but it also meant more work and effort had to go into the management and stewardship of such a large parcel.

Dr. Karen Hallberg, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Michael Pettegrew, now ODOT’s Program Manager at ODNR, believe the agreements will maintain a balanced ecosystem that will benefit everyone.

“We had tremendous support from conservation and environmental groups,” said Pettegrew. “Preservation of high quality streams was essential during the Nelsonville Bypass project. We impacted several streams during the project, and we were required to mitigate those impacts with high quality streams.”

Since 2012, ODOT distributed the Quality of Work Life Survey focusing on three main areas:
1. Employee Satisfaction
2. Strategic Issues
3. Working Environment

WORK LIFE INDEX

WORK LIFE INDEX

Since 2012, ODOT distributed the Quality of Work Life Survey focusing on three main areas:
1. Employee Satisfaction
2. Strategic Issues
3. Working Environment

2017 QWLS RESULTS

70% 72% 72% 71.3% 72.1%
2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017

ODOT is in the TOP 13% of organizations as it relates to employee satisfaction

WHAT EMPLOYEES CARE ABOUT

Work/Family Balance 33.0%
Valuable work 26.7%
Advancement/Growth 26.0%
Being Challenged 6.9%
Independence/Autonomy 4.5%
Recognition/Award 2.9%

MOVING THE DIAL TOWARDS SATISFACTION & ENGAGEMENT

Employee Satisfaction
I feel respected and valued at work.
I have opportunities to showcase my good work.

Strategic Issues
Working together to become one ODOT.
Management involves appropriate people.

Working Environment
There is a strong feeling of teamwork and cooperation at ODOT.

Michael Pettegrew, left, and Karen Hallberg display a map of the Sunday Creek Coal Company Mitigation Project.
PHOTO BY KAREN GOODWIN, CENTRAL OFFICE

A stream running through the mitigation site.
PHOTO COURTESY OF EMH&T, INC.
What do we know?
On August 7, Darla Miller officially became the Deputy Director of ODOT District 10. She follows Steve Williams, who retired in May.

Really? Does she know what she is signing up for?
She should; she was already the acting director following Williams’ departure. She joined District 10 in June 2016 as their Business and Human Resources administrator. For now, she’s serving in both capacities.

Wow. She must have some serious chops.
She does. Miller has ten years of public service experience, including serving as director of Human Resources and Safety with the Washington County Commissioners before coming to ODOT. She was a trainer with the Workforce Development Department at Washington State Community College for 15 years and worked in the private sector for 18 years, primarily in Human Resources at Marietta College.

Does she have strong area ties?
Miller is a proud resident of Marietta, where she has lived with her husband Jim for 35 years. They have two sons, two daughters-in-law and four grandchildren.

How does she feel about the new gig?
“I am humbled and honored to be entrusted with leading District 10,” said Miller. “I am confident that we will continue on the path of success that has already been established. Steve Williams appointed strong leaders and hired the people who have proven to be dedicated to doing what is RIGHT and doing what is BEST for the success of ODOT.”

The department must have a lot of confidence in her.
Director Jerry Wray and all those who know her say she will do an amazing job in helping ODOT become a long-term, reliable, professional, highly productive organization.

No Doubt.
Is anybody listening?
Julia Poling, District 6

Filming for a public service announcement to remind travelers of the Move Over law and of the dangers that can occur if it is not followed was completed in June. The film features various law enforcement and work zone crews doing their job while drivers pay no attention and zoom past, causing a dangerous environment for all parties involved. ODOT partnered with the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Virginia State Police and the Ohio State Highway Patrol to get this message across. This project was funded by a grant from Nationwide Insurance and was shot on a test pavement strip in Delaware County.

The Move Over, Slow Down message is important because many drivers are still unaware that this law refers to all vehicles with flashing lights, not just law enforcement. The safety of roadside workers is a serious concern—last year ODOT crews were struck by vehicles 143 times, and there were 6,041 work zone crashes in the United States.

Look for this important PSA to show up on television channels across Ohio soon.