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There's an app for that!
LOCATING A WORK ZONE? THERE’S AN APP FOR THAT

Pieter Wykoff, Central Office

When working in the field, it’s critical to know how to find exact locations. But most GPS systems will only report the latitude and longitude, while ODOT personnel and other state workers tend to rely on mile markers. District 5 Licking County Manager Loren Dobbins identified this as a problem related to logging roadway deficiencies.

In District 11, Network Administrator Mike Dotts developed an engine that could convert latitude and longitude to ODOT’s classification system. In Central Office, an IT team led by Software Developer Todd Duncan made Dotts’ engine accessible to the public. Finally, Traffic Operations Traffic Engineer John MacAdam was able to develop an app of the system for the iPhone.

“All of us worked together to make this happen” he said. “The ODOT Location Finder has been installed on over 2500 devices.”

He says the app is available in the App Store for iPhones and Google Play for Android phones. It is being used by the 20 trucks in ODOT’s State Farm Freeway Service Patrol. It is also being used by the Highway Patrol to improve crash reporting accuracy.

Field employees benefit from system upgrade

Joel Hunt, Central Office

ODOT’S DIVISION OF Planning and Office of Technical Services have released a major upgrade to the Transportation Information Mapping System (TIMS). TIMS is ODOT’s web-mapping portal where visitors can discover and share information about Ohio’s transportation system and create maps.

The upgrade includes more data, mobile phone and tablet access, ELLIS project search tools, standard PDF maps and improved performance and functionality.

“People in the field need fast access to information about Ohio’s roads and bridges,” said GIMS Systems Administrator Ian Kidner. “A lot of it was already out there, but you had to go to multiple places to get it.”

The data available in TIMS has been collected from across several offices at ODOT. Each office provided input as to what should be included, and how often the data should be updated. TIMS organizes this information into data groupings. Highlights of the application include:

- **Road Inventory** details the physical characteristics of the road network, such as the location of new roads, number of lanes, roadway width, median types and many more. It also includes roadway designations such as Federal Aid routes, Intermodal Connector Routes and the National Highway System.
- **Traffic Counts** includes information about the volume of traffic along Ohio’s roadways.
- **Safety** contains information about crashes that can be located on all public roads in Ohio. This data includes information pertaining to the crashes collected by officers such as time of day, weather condition and light conditions, as well as ODOT generated fields such as crash type.
- **PathWeb** shows photo logs of areas on interstate, US and state routes throughout Ohio.

TIMS can be found at www.gis.dot.state.oh.us/tims and is free to the public.

ON THE COVER When he’s not flying a plane for ODOT, pilot Andrew Doll is likely doing another kind of flying: his hobby is rebuilding and racing a vintage 1970 Datsun 240Z. See story on page 8.
I’ve learned a lot from the DAS training series for supervisors. I think it should be required. I intend to devote more time to employee development.”

Training is critical for our department, particularly for our 850 supervisors. It is an investment in our greatest resource: our people. We have several new training initiatives underway for supervisors. This month we are launching our Management Development Program. This program is primarily aimed at new exempt employees who manage people, though existing managers can enroll to refresh their knowledge. Topics include leadership principles, Lean, change management, communications and conflict resolution. The goal of the program is to provide new managers with a foundation of information they will need to become a successful manager.

We also plan to have all of our managers who supervise at least two people to take the DAS Lead Ohio: Foundation of Supervision Program, which was recently launched. This is a statewide initiative that will help provide supervisors with the confidence, tools and knowledge they need to be successful. This is a series of eight courses. The first course is an introduction to the DISC Behavioral Assessment. This will help supervisors better understand themselves and their direct reports by recognizing four distinct behavioral styles: dominance, influence, steadiness, and compliance.

The other seven courses will focus on labor relations, communications, coaching, goal setting, evaluations, and leadership skills.

People from our Office of Employee Development and Lean have already begun to take the courses. Our goal is to have them trained to develop ODOT-centric versions of the courses and have them train the rest of our supervisors.

I can’t underscore the importance of these training initiatives enough. They will be mandatory for all new supervisors, but even experienced managers who want to grow professionally can benefit from them. — Director Jerry Wray

The ODOT News Fast Five

1. **TRAC APPROVES LIST OF JOBS AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROJECTS**
   TRAC approved more than $2 billion for Gov. John R. Kasich’s Jobs and Transportation Plan. Projects included in the plan are a new interchange at SR 16 and Cherry Valley Rd. in Licking County; advancement of the next phase of the I-270/SR 315/U.S. Route 23 reconstruction in Franklin County; and the addition of a third lane on I-70 from U.S. Route 68 and SR 72 in Clark County.

2. **FEBRUARY STORMS DRIVE UP SNOW AND ICE COSTS**
   ODOT exceeded the $100 million mark on snow and ice control for winter 2014/2015. February storms pushed labor, equipment and material costs up to $110.5 million — higher than any year since 2005, excluding last year’s record-setting winter.

3. **HT WINS ROADEO, RECEIVES NEW TRUCK**
   Meigs County Highway Technician Dan Davis received his very own customized dump truck for winning District 10’s 2013 Truck Roadeo competition. The larger, tandem axle truck was ordered to accommodate his four-lane route on U.S. Route 33, and his truck includes the district’s first-ever wing plow.

4. **NATIONAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN OHIO**
   ODOT will host the national Safe Routes to School conference in April 2016. Attendees from around the country will come to Columbus to discuss opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from school.

5. **FLEXIBLE PAVEMENT AWARD WINNERS**
   Seven districts won a total of eight Quality Asphalt Paving Awards from Flexible Pavements of Ohio at the Ohio Asphalt Expo in Columbus. Districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11 were recognized for work performed during 2014 that represent the highest quality in asphalt paving.
ODOT and five Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) received the 2014 Excellence in Regional Transportation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations for ODOT’s RTPO pilot program.

Office of Statewide Planning and Research Administrator Scott Phinney said the goals of the program include establishing a transportation planning process in Ohio’s rural regions; positioning rural communities to compete for transportation project funding; and facilitating collaboration between ODOT and Ohio’s rural communities.

“Such initiatives are central to fostering quality of place and facilitates economic vitality in our nation’s communities by promoting effective transportation networks,” said NADO President Terry Bobrowski.

According to Jeannette Wierzbicki, a transportation planner at the Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association, “The RTPO program has provided our region with a voice to participate in transportation decisions, and we look forward to implementing our plan recommendations in the coming years.”

ODOT’s RTPO pilot program was launched in July 2013. The program ensures that traditionally underserved rural communities have an active role in regional and statewide transportation decisions.
PHIL LANCE, Highway Technician 3 in Trumbull County, has been plowing snow in northeast Ohio for more than 40 years. That’s about 10 years longer than anyone else in his district. Needless to say, he has some stories to tell.

He remembers blizzards in the late 70s when the National Guard and private contractors had to pitch in to help state forces clear roadways. They used graders, loaders—just about anything they could get their hands on—to remove the snow.

During one memorable season, Lance was called on to help rescue five cars stuck on a ramp. He came up with a plan.

“I can get you out of this,” he told the drivers, “if we all work together.”

He plowed behind the first car, then everyone helped push that car out. Then, one by one, he freed all five cars and then cleared the ramp.

Lance was out tackling the job before much of the innovative equipment now in use was implemented. He has a definite opinion on what the biggest improvement in technology has been to the equipment he uses to clear winter highways.

“Diesel plow trucks,” he says simply. “The old gas trucks were underpowered and could get stuck on the roads. The diesel plow trucks have a lot more power to push snow and not get stuck.”

Lance is always aware of the difference safe driving can make in winter travel.

“Make sure to slow down and give yourself extra time to get to work,” he said. “And clean your car off so the plow drivers can see your head lights.”

PHOTO BY BRENT KOVACS, DISTRICT 4

Phil Lance plowing snow in Trumbull County.

EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT

Winter then & now

1926-27

2014-15
District 4 assists Portage County engineer with brine program

Justin Chesnic, District 4

With the price of salt increasing this past year, municipalities have been looking for other ways to properly treat roadways during snow and ice events. In a strong show of outreach to their partners in local government, District 4’s Portage County crews have been assisting the Portage County Engineer’s Office in the process of making and applying salt brine to their roadway system. The efforts started in the fall when the engineer’s office reached out to ODOT to discuss the possibility of starting brine production.

ODOT crews supplied the county engineer with four rear brine tanks to be used on single-axle trucks that were no longer in use. Since the county engineer’s office was not able to produce brine, ODOT assisted with supplying brine and provided training to employees on how to use brine pumps and what safety equipment to use while filling their tanks.

“We met with them to give them some basic advice on how we equip trucks with tanks and the necessary plumbing,” said Portage County Transportation Administrator Mark Griffiths.

“This is the perfect example of government agencies working together through our outreach efforts,” added District 4 Deputy Director Tony Urankar. “With our governmental partners, we are accomplishing an important goal of providing an excellent level of service to the motoring public during the winter season.”

A log of brine use is being kept at outposts and the county engineer’s office and the county started pre-treating roads with good results so far.

“If it were not for District 4 and all of the assistance that ODOT has offered us, we would not have been able to brine this year at all,” said Butch Helmling, general superintendent with the Portage County Engineers Office. “They also assisted us in building out our tanks and spreader bars by sharing a lot of their past experiences.”

A Portage County Engineer employee fills up a 1000-gallon brine tank on the back of a single-axle dump truck.
Purchasing made easy

Pieter Wykoff, Central Office

It’s a fact that it is much easier to purchase things for ODOT than it was 10 or even 20 years ago. Back in the day, it could take three or four weeks to get quotes, fill out the paperwork and get it processed even for the smallest dollar amounts. It was so time-consuming, it was almost not worth the effort. Dealing with all of this kept employees from completing tasks in a timely manner.

The answer to this dilemma came in the form of a modern financial purchasing tool. Today, over 700 ODOT employees have payment cards that they use to purchase everything from aggregate to asphalt to office supplies to tools. Charges are made and tracked with statements sent to ODOT for later payment. In State Fiscal Year 2013, ODOT employees spent over $25 million on over 93,000 transactions.

But with speed and convenience came a new problem: state law requires that anything over $50,000 annually with one vendor must be either competitively bid or approved by the State Controlling Board. The Inspector General and state auditors found that ODOT employees were violating the law 15 or 16 times a year. Simply put, there were too many people making too many individual purchases exceeding the spending limit with some vendors.

The Finance Division has developed a system that monitors how much employees spend with each vendor, including multiple vendors owned by the same company. This tracking system allows the agency to be informed weekly of the total spending made with each vendor. Better communication to payment card holders and the commitment of ODOT has greatly improved the problem of overspending.

“In the last fiscal year, we didn’t exceed the $50,000 limit at all,” says Manager of Accounts Payable and Procurement Alana Haberman.

It appears that ODOT, which spends more with payment cards than any other state agency, was not the only department having a problem with exceeding the set limit. Recently, other state agencies asked ODOT finance to present the department’s payment card program as a best practice at the CFO Council quarterly meeting.

“We think the CFOs were impressed,” says Haberman. “Now we are doing training to show other agencies how to implement a reporting process like ours in their fiscal environments.”

The department has offered information to the Ohio Attorney General’s Office and the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services. The Office of Budget and Management has shared ODOT payment card practices with agencies seeking additional guidance on managing a payment card program.

“With this new system, I’m able to monitor our payment card spending on a daily basis, and now remain compliant with Ohio Revised Code” says Ruth Ann Neely, paycard administrator.
The journalist Alexander Chase once wrote that lovers of air travel find it exhilarating to hang poised between the illusion of immortality and the fact of death. ODOT pilot Andrew Doll says that’s an exaggeration.

“It’s more dangerous driving home in your car then it is flying,” Doll says.

He should know. For the past 20 years, he’s flown four Ohio governors and four ODOT directors around the state and the nation. He’s also flown for ODOT’s aerial photography program and done wildlife surveys and animal tracking.

But when he’s not flying, his hobby is rebuilding and racing a vintage 1970 Datsun 240Z at up to 125 miles per hour around race tracks like the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course or Watkins Glen International in New York.

“I’m very fortunate that I get to fly for a living, he says. “I love my job. Race car driving is just a hobby. So is building the car.”

Doll competes in races sponsored by the Sportscar Vintage Racing Association. He says the races are nothing like televised NASCAR races, complete with the car crashes and fist fights.

“It’s more of a social event,” said Doll. “Some of these guys have multi-million-dollar cars. Everybody wants to bring their car home in one piece.”

Doll says the winner of a vintage race doesn’t get anything but a medallion.

“These races are more like a vacation. It’s a gentleman’s race. The people are great and everybody has the same thing in common, a love of vintage cars,” he said.

That, and a need for speed.

After completing a three-day high-performance racing course at Mid-Ohio and a one day Competition School course to get licensed to race, Doll knew he’d achieved his goal.

“I realized that I had built the car, completed the licensing process and become a real racecar driver.”

Andrew Doll

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANDREW DOLL AVIATION