Are you Ready to ‘Rubble?’
What is the Transportation Systems Management (TSMO) Plan and what does it mean for ODOT?

ODOT’s mission is critical to the welfare and prosperity of this state. We’re not only responsible for ensuring a safe and reliable transportation system, we also impact the quality of life for those who live and work in Ohio. Over the past few years we’ve developed strategies and initiatives to achieve this mission, such as Asset Management, which focuses on making wiser investments into maintaining current infrastructure. And DriveOhio, the state’s one-stop shop for developing, testing and deploying advanced mobility solutions in Ohio.

The new TSMO plan represents an approach to increase safety and reliability, from merely monitoring traffic to proactively managing congestion — utilizing a variety of strategies, new technologies and updated practices. This isn’t just a new philosophy; it’s a reality. I’ve said it before, we cannot build our way out of congestion. It’s too expensive, often leads to more congestion and takes too long. No longer will we focus efforts on just maintenance and construction activities. Instead, the TSMO approach is to look at managing daily operational needs from a holistic perspective, using all department disciplines.

For example, using technology and real-time data, we’ll be able to make better and faster decisions during planning, construction, operations and maintenance. The TSMO plan takes advantage of wireless communications, traffic cameras, and data from connected and autonomous vehicles, coordinated signal systems and variable speed limits — allowing us to better manage traffic flow. This is a new approach. Never before have we been able to implement a congestion solution in real-time. For the first time, technologies give us the tools to do just that.

TSMO strategies will also help drivers and managers clear routes faster and more efficiently. With effective partnership planning and resource sharing during incident management operations, we will improve highway worker and driver safety. I encourage you to revisit ODOT Messenger about TSMO and take some time to read more about our goals, objectives and action plan.

In Memoriam
John Pasko (1964-2018)

On March 15, 2018, John Pasko of Mahoning County ODOT was struck and killed while performing a brush-clearing operation. John was a hard-working public servant and was well-respected by his coworkers. He excelled at snow and ice removal, and even assisted in the District Construction Department. He began his ODOT career as a seasonal employee in 2013 and again in 2014, and was hired full time as a highway technician in January 2015. He became a highway technician 2 in October 2016 and was four credits shy of becoming a highway technician 3.

You will be truly missed, John.

A heroic action
Mandi Dillon, District 7

It was 4:40 am in the morning when ODOT District 7 driver Jack Homan was traveling through Celina to continue his snow and ice route in Mercer County. His shift that day would prove to be anything but routine. When he saw a lady in the middle of the road waving her arms feverishly and yelling for help.

He quickly pulled his plow to the side of the road, called the garage and told them to contact 9-1-1. The woman frantically asked Homan to find her children. The family car was smashed against a tree with the side dented into the center console and only the woman and her husband nearby.

Homan eventually discovered two little girls in the snow. Both had been ejected from the car, injured, but alert and shivering from the cold. Homan quickly got the girls into the cab of his truck to warm up. “I laid one in the seat and one on the floor on my coat and tuned the heater on,” Homan said. “With no other traffic on the road at that hour, the family could have been there a while before someone else would have seen them. I just knew I had to get them out of the snow and get them into a warm vehicle because it was 14 below.”

Homan’s manager, Jeff Whetstone, said he handled the situation like a pro. “I couldn’t be prouder of Jack and his actions. He acted professional and did exactly what needed to be done.”

Chris Hughes has the perfect résumé for his new job in District 1. Named the district’s capital programs administrator last year, he’s a Don Conaway Partnering Award winner known for his skills in bringing people together toward a common goal. His position merges the construction and planning and engineering departments beneath one administrative umbrella. The change allows the administrative area to oversee a project from cradle to grave, replacing the former practice of handling a project from department to department at each stage. The capital programs administrator position has been introduced in every ODOT district.

“We used to see work on projects in separate silos. Departments would work on the project separately and pass it on,” Hughes said. “Capital programs keeps everyone involved during every step of the process and better overall project delivery. We’ve torn down barriers and are able to shift engineering resources between planning, design and construction as needed.”

Hughes lives in rural Van Wert County with his wife, Tricia, and three daughters, Beth, Ila and Maggie. He graduated from The Ohio State University in 2006 with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering. The same year, he began work as an engineer-in-training in District 1’s planning department. He moved to construction a year later and worked in that department until being named capital programs administrator.
Within hours of the incident, our maintenance crews from the Lawrence County facility were working alongside crews from DGM, Inc. to break up and haul away the boulders.

PHOTO BY KATHLEEN FULLER, DISTRICT 9

During the morning hours of Monday, February 26, two massive boulders and several smaller, yet still large, rocks fell from hillside at Chesapeake in Lawrence County. They landed on State Route 7, between the U.S. Route 52 interchange and State Route 527. After being notified by law enforcement, ODOT crews were dispatched to close the four-lane, heavily traveled roadway and begin what would become a massive cleanup effort.

Wanting to expedite efforts to reopen the route, District 9 issued an emergency contract with DGM, Inc. that same day, and their crews were mobilized by early afternoon. Working in tandem, the maintenance crews and the contractors worked around the clock, and they were able to return both lanes of S.R. 7 east to traffic the following day.

The route’s westbound lanes, however, remained closed while crews cleared nearly 2,145 tons of rock. Over the next two weeks, the contractors scaled the adjacent hillside to remove additional loose rock and repair the severely damaged pavement. Both lanes of S.R. 7 west were opened to traffic on Thursday, March 15.

A big thank you goes out to everyone from our team whose tireless dedication did not go unnoticed:

Mark Gleichauf, Lawrence County TA
Bill Akers, Lawrence County TM
Brandon Shamhart, Lawrence County TM
Kyle Hankins, Lawrence County AC
Lawrence County Hfs: Grant Lunsford, Joe Patterson, Garold Cox, Dave Jenkins, Paul Herrell, Steve Bishop, John Kelley, Lindsey Pembroton, Tim Bentley, Donald Christian, Blaine Kidd, Charles Boothe, Arthur Bryant, Billy Huff, Mike Martin, Nate Pinkerman, Richard Kelley, Ralph Fitzgerald, Alvin Nicely, James Gibbs

Chris Pridemore, D9 CPA
Paul Maravy, D9 Construction Engineer
Dave Bame, D9 Area Field Engineer
D9 TEs (Construction) - Nathan Wagner, Chris Capper
Mike Dombrowski, D9 HMA
Dave Walton, D9 Roadway Services Manager

Thank you also go out to Rex Leist & the work crews of DGM, Inc.; WV DOT, for assistance with the detour through and around Huntington; and OHSP Ironton Post for assistance with traffic control and safety.
So you were pretty busy, even before you joined the Department?

I earned my civil engineering degree in 1985 at the University of Akron, which included working with the city of Akron. I worked for four different design consultants and for the Summit County Engineers Office. I was a full-time professor at Kent State, and I owned my own engineering company for ten years. I joined ODOT in 1997.

What was your first ODOT job?

I started as a transportation engineer 3, reviewing construction plans. I took other leadership positions, primarily in District 11. I was promoted to District 11 Deputy Director in 2011.

What are your new duties, as you see them?

I oversee the Planning, Engineering and Construction divisions, delivering ODOT’s capital program. This year we have a capital budget of $2.4 billion, so we will all need to pull together to deliver this impressive program.

What are you most looking forward to as you assume your new role?

Working with all of the experts in my three divisions. We have some talented and highly experienced people, and I am looking forward to getting to know and working alongside them.

What is your work philosophy?

That you can’t do anything without people. I’m comfortable with taking this new position because I know Director Wray feels the same way. As DDD in District 11, I would set aside days to work alongside members of each of my work groups. I would ask them for suggestions on how to improve things, and implement as much of what they gave me as I could. People do not care how much you know; they want to know how much you care.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I’m an avid gardener, and I love to play golf. I am an outdoorsman who hunts deer and turkey on my 12-acre property in Tuscarawas County. Most of all, I love spending time with my growing family.

“People do not care how much you know, they want to know how much you care.”
Excellence in Government

Seeing past walls
Rhonda Pees, District 1

For two years, Terri Barnhart’s heart and thoughts have been with those behind bars. Barnhart, who is the executive assistant to ODOT Director Jerry Wray, has worked in partnership with the Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville. The relationship began when she organized a meeting for ODOT senior leadership at the facility. “The opportunity that the ladies have to help them get on the right path, to help them change their lives is what hooked me,” said Barnhart.

At the reformatory, inmates learn skills such as cosmetology and culinary arts. It employs the women in making eyeglasses for fellow inmates, handmade jewelry, and in making all state flags flown on state property. The women weave sleep mats for the homeless and crochet hats and blankets for foster children.

Barnhart has spearheaded toy collections for the facility’s Mom and Kids Day for Christmas event, providing toys to the children of those incarcerated. ODOT is one of the top two donators to the cause. ODOT employee donations include items for the prison’s nursery.

“This is the second year those children have been able to get two gifts,” said Barnhart.

Overall, ODOT is now working to provide possible employment opportunities for former inmates. And Barnhart is currently serving on a committee for the reformatory’s upcoming new nursery construction project. She intends to stay engaged in the partnership.

“I’m very fortunate that Director Wray allows me to represent ODOT in this way. I just truly have a passion for it, I really do.”