The signs, they are a-changing

Joe Rutherford, District 5

In my opinion, next to placing traffic control devices and setting speed limits, the use of “Prepare to Stop When Flashing” (PTSWF) lights is one of the top things ODOT does that generates controversy with the public. I’m originally from northwest Ohio, where the generally flat topography and very good sight distances means little use of PTSWF lights. I first encountered these signals visiting Columbus, where I was amazed as these flashing lights caused about half the traffic to slow down to a stop and the other half to speed up trying to beat them.

The use of PTSWF lights was intended to have a limited purpose. A 1992 Transportation Review Board study recommended their use only in certain defined situations, such as at signalized intersections where there is limited sight distance. In fact, the study recommended that PTSWF lights “should be particularly discouraged at high-speed signalized intersections with a tangent approach;” that they “seemed to encourage high speed during the yellow interval and also increased the vehicle conflict rate.”

U.S. Route 33 in Fairfield County is a four-lane divided highway where none of these signals met the criteria. Yet when District 5 turned off the PTSWF light at the US 33/Pickerington Road intersection last year, the public demanded its return. But I believe this was due to us not doing a good job informing our customers about the reasons why.

District 5 will remove the remaining two PTSWF lights on U.S. 33 later this spring, after we’ve properly informed the public of the impending changes. New, state-of-the-art zone detectors are being put up at all three intersections. We will monitor traffic safety, and remove any other PTSWF lights on other routes if needed.

We are not second-guessing previous decisions or playing Monday morning quarterback. ODOT is taking an objective look at a very old technology whose use has proliferated far beyond its original purpose.

About the author

Joe Rutherford is deputy director of District 5. Prior to this appointment in 2011, he served ODOT in numerous management capacities in Data Systems, Planning, Operations, and Communications, and was also Lucas County manager.
Cyclist, author finds his path

Ron Poole, Central Office

TRANSPORTATION technician with Aerial Engineering, Shawn Richardson is also an avid bicyclist who loves exploring and photographing the bike trails of Ohio. In recent years he has authored five books on bike paths. His latest edition of "Biking Ohio's Rail-Trails: Where to Go, What to Expect, How to Get There," will be available in May.

"I started exploring bike paths in the state on my vacation in 1980," he recalled. "I became a member of the national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy when it started in 1986, and published my first book in 1996."

The Washington, D.C.-based Rails-to-Trails Conservancy was founded to create a nationwide network of trails out of abandoned rail lines. Richardson encourages everyone and their families to discover the natural beauty and wildlife from these trails.

Strong words, to be sure, but the sentiment is all-too true. Litter is a never-ending nuisance that is prevalent in nearly every corner of the state, and yet, unlike so many other maintenance concerns, it is a preventable problem.

Of course, ODOT does much to promote highway beautification and roadway clean-up. Together with organizations like Keep Ohio Beautiful, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, and local sheriffs' offices, they work to educate, enforce and encourage responsible stewardship.

Hundreds of volunteer groups throughout the state serve to help the department in its fight against litter. Through the Adopt-A-Highway program, ODOT has more than 1,400 groups—with at least one group in each county—who have adopted a two-mile section or an interchange along the state highway system, picking up litter and debris a minimum of four times each year. These volunteers help save thousands of taxpayer dollars and demonstrate that a clean environment is a shared responsibility.

Certainly, ODOT's greatest task is to provide a safe and efficient transportation system that allows traffic to move with ease. However, it is also necessary to provide an inviting and appealing environment in which to do so. And while ODOT crews do a lot to clean and beautify Ohio's nearly 49,000 lane miles of roadway, it is through community service programs that the department's maintenance forces can focus more of their efforts on roadway repair and maintenance.

"Environmental damage such as graffiti, fly-posting and general littering is a menace that is becoming all too prevalent, not just in inner cities but in many communities—urban and rural."

— Margaret Beckett
Member of Parliament and former
Foreign Secretary of Great Britain

ODOT, volunteers collect litter

Kathleen Fuller, District 9

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Operation feed knocks out hunger
Carolyn Kirkland, Central Office

E ach year, the Mid-Ohio Foodbank joins forces with hundreds of volunteer community members to raise donations in a community-wide drive called Operation Feed.

Food and dollar donations are measured in meals: One dollar equals three meals; one pound of food equals one meal. ODOT is committed to participating with other state agencies and private businesses in reaching a goal of 58,000 meals, or almost $20,000.

The 2012 drive continues until the end of June. Employees interested in making an impact can contact their division or district coordinators.

Shannon Slavin with the Office of Health and Safety in Central Office is serving as statewide coordinator and is available to answer questions. Cash or check donations are always welcomed.

Please join the fight against hunger.

Work zone fatalities nearly double in 2011
Joel Hunt, Central Office

A &A Safety’s Greg Wood can clearly describe being hit by a speeding car while on foot in an ODOT work zone in March 2009, when he was thrown 26 feet in the air into oncoming traffic by a driver traveling 80 mph in a 50 mph zone.

“I was lying with my back to live traffic,” he recalled to local media and others attending the ODOT Work Zone Safety Awareness Week news conference in Columbus. “Traffic was coming quickly. I couldn’t move. I couldn’t see them. I couldn’t even hear them.”

Wood suffered broken legs, ribs, a broken hip, tailbone, and shoulder, among others injuries. Although it took him more than three months in a hospital bed to recover, he was one of the lucky ones.

There has been an average of 16 fatal work zone crashes each year since 2002.

“There are two parts to the safe work zone equation,” Wood said. “Workers can only do so much. More needs to be done to train motorists of their responsibility in work zones.”

In recent years the department has been working to make work zones safer by increasing visibility of vehicles, making near real-time safety enhancements to existing work zones and improving work zone access for heavy equipment.

“Having survived this accident I admonish you all to remember, safety is a two-way street. Do your part. Please, don’t barrel through work zones.”
When an EF3 tornado ripped through the southeastern corner of Clermont County the afternoon of March 2, the response by District 8’s forces was immediate: Clermont County Manager Josh Wallace was driving home at the end of his work day when he received word that a tornado had crossed into Clermont County. He immediately changed direction and headed toward the Ohio River.

After calling in his county forces, Wallace and crew worked overnight to clear trees and debris from several state routes to reopen them.

At the same time, the State Emergency Operations Center was activated to coordinate response and recovery efforts of state agencies, including ODOT, led by Emergency Management Coordinator Al Phillips and District 8 Incident Manager Chuck Hecht.

Through the weekend, ODOT personnel, including District 8 Engineer Kelly Wessels, coordinated debris management efforts with the Clermont County Emergency Management Agency.

Of all the areas in Ohio affected, Clermont County, and especially the village of Moscow, received the most extensive tornado damage. At least half of the homes in Moscow were damaged or destroyed by the deadly twister, and three deaths were attributed to it. The village of Bethel also reported extensive damage.

On Tuesday, April 6, ODOT, along with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Ohio National Guard, accepted three missions for storm cleanup.

One was for debris removal along public right of way in the village of Moscow; a second for debris removal along right of way in Franklin Township; and a third to relocate debris from a staging area in Moscow to a Newtown landfill in Hamilton County.

In addition to personnel, ODOT provided equipment, including chainsaws, a chipper, track hoe, dump trucks and pickup trucks.

Through the next two weeks, Wallace directed Clermont and Hamilton county forces on these debris removal missions.

“Our track hoe can grab huge amounts of brush and trees all at one time and pick them up and bring them to the truck. It would take people hours just to cut up the wood small enough to be able to handle,” Wallace said.

State agencies providing assistance included ODOT, State Highway Patrol, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, ODNR, the Ohio National Guard, the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the Ohio Department of Environmental Protection.

That assistance to the public is “what we’re here for,” said Wallace. “We’re all part of one community. Everyone is extremely thankful we showed up.”
Employee actions above and beyond call of duty
Brent Kovacs, District 4

Saturday, March 3, began like any other night shift for Highway Technician Steve MacAdam. Based out of the Boston Heights garage in Summit County, MacAdam knew that pavement temperatures were dropping and the threat of snow and ice would be increasing throughout his shift.

As one of a handful of drivers operating the EPOKE salt hopper, District 4’s newest weapon against snow and ice, MacAdam prepped the device with salt and brine, and then headed out to check pavement conditions on his route around 3:00 a.m. He was traveling north on State Route 8, just north of State Route 82, when the routine took a surprising turn.

Suddenly, a southbound car swerved to the left as he approached. MacAdam realized the car was driving in the median, and before he knew it, it struck an emergency turnaround and flipped several times, sliding toward him. MacAdam slammed on his brakes to avoid colliding with the car, which came to a stop only feet in front of his plow.

MacAdam quickly called for police and an ambulance and jumped out of his truck, fearing the worst. Car parts were strewn everywhere. He ran to the vehicle—a black Jeep Liberty—but found no one inside.

MacAdam rushed north on foot, realizing the driver had been ejected.

“My heart was racing as I frantically looked everywhere for the driver,” he recalled.

“I turned around and headed southbound, when I found a woman in the median, about 15 to 20 yards past the Jeep,” said MacAdam.

The woman was unconscious, lying face down in several inches of water. MacAdam cautiously turned the woman over on her back to get her out the water. When she awakened on her own, MacAdam took off his jacket and put it around her. He continued to comfort the driver, holding her hand and talking to her to keep her awake.

Several minutes later, emergency personnel arrived along with another highway technician from Summit County who closed down S.R. 8 so the woman could be flown to the hospital.

Later, after he had recovered from the nerve-wracking experience himself, MacAdam went and visited the motorist at the hospital. He’s happy to report she is on the road to recovery. ☺
For Steve Mary, becoming District 8 deputy director in 2011 was very much a homecoming, having begun his service at ODOT as an engineer-in-training with the district in 1982 following his graduation from the University of Cincinnati. He also spent time in the planning, survey and construction divisions there.

Deputy Director Mary began his career with the Hamilton County Engineer's office in 1985, where he worked in the bridge department. He went on to hold several appointed engineering positions within the office over a span of 25 years.

He and his wife, Nancy, are the parents of five children. When asked what other job or profession he would most like to try, Mary replied he would like to be a jockey, but acknowledges it would be impracticable now.

“I outgrew that profession when I was in the fifth grade,” he said.

In memoriam | Rigel Lee

Those who knew Rigel Lee will forever be graced by her unyielding strength and loving spirit. Lee, a fiscal specialist in the Office of Estimating, passed away on April 18, 2012.

Lee began her 18-year ODOT career in the Office of Information Technology at the State of Ohio Computer Center, eventually moving to Finance and then to Estimating, where she worked on project funding.

Supervisor Jeff Hisem says of her, “Rigel had such a positive attitude about what she wanted and where she wanted to go. She was truly an inspiration to the people she worked with and to anyone who knew her.”

Lee and her family took a much anticipated trip to Myrtle Beach in early April of this year, where she enjoyed the sun, sand and surf with her husband Brian, son Alexander, and daughter Breann.

A recent post to her Facebook page shared a poem by Mary Elizabeth Frye titled “Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep,” which is reprinted here, in her memory:

Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there; I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow,
I am the sun on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning’s hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circling flight.
I am the soft star-shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there; I did not die.
Ed Yetzer, **Project Engineer**

Ron Poole, Central Office

A 23-year ODOT veteran, Ed Yetzer often manages projects which involve removing existing surfaces and structures, and replacing them with more modern ones.

“It is satisfying to tear out the old, worn down structures—roadways, bridges—and replace them with something new the public can be proud of,” he said. “For me, the most satisfying part of my job is being able to remove the barrels and turn the roadway over to the public.”

Yetzer stated that working with his team in District 3 is a key reason he enjoys his duties at ODOT.

“I think the highway techs, inspectors and others I work with in District 3 are among the most experienced professionals you will find working anywhere,” he said. “They make it easy to come to work every day.”

Away from ODOT, Yetzer enjoys working as an assistant football coach at Hillsdale High School near his home.

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### Health and Wellness Corner

**Carolyn Kirkland, Central Office**

**Summer Squash Spaghetti**

1 slice day-old whole-grain bread (make into bread crumbs)
2½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1½ tablespoons finely chopped walnuts
¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 small yellow squash, cut
1 small zucchini, cut
1 cup shredded carrots
1 small red bell pepper, cut
¼ cup diced yellow bell pepper
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon salt
½ pound whole-wheat spaghetti

First, sauté the garlic in ½ a tablespoon of oil until lightly golden; Stir in the bread crumbs and cook until crunchy, about 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and stir in the walnuts, parsley and ½ teaspoon of the salt.

Next, add 2 tablespoons of oil to the pan and sauté the vegetables until they are tender-crisp, about 5 minutes. Stir in ½ teaspoon salt and the pepper.

In a warmed shallow serving bowl, toss the spaghetti, vegetables and bread crumb mixture and enjoy!

Serves: 4

More healthy recipes can be found at www.mayoclinic.com/health/healthy-recipes/RecipeIndex.
ON JUNE 17, ALL ODOT EMPLOYEES WILL BEGIN managing their timesheets differently—electronically, to be exact.

Some will use their office computers; some will use their ID badges at electronic “InTouch” devices; some will use their telephone to dial in their time; and some will use a smart phone application.

The system everyone will be using is called Kronos and it will replace outdated paper timesheets with a user-friendly, reliable, electronic system, saving employees time and the department money.

HISTORY
More than 10 years ago, ODOT built a series of applications and databases to track human resources, payroll, leave, labor and activities as well as the overall cost of doing business.

Having a series of systems results in ODOT employees having to track their time worked in several formats and systems. As a process, it’s inefficient, prone to errors, labor-intensive and can result in systems being out of sync.

“At the beginning of the project, we spent time with other state agencies determining how they processed payroll,” said Spencer Wood, deputy director of the Division of Information Technology. “Early on in the process it became very apparent that we needed to remove paperwork to reduce costly errors and gain access to advanced reporting.”

WHY KRONOS?
Kronos can handle all time and labor tracking, along with leave requests and activities performed by employees. This allows employees to focus on everyday duties instead of extra paperwork.

TRAINING
Each employee will be trained on how to use Kronos. Whether classroom style, a self-paced computer program, or one-on-one with their supervisor, everyone will have an opportunity to learn how to use the system before it goes live on June 17.

TIMELINE

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
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<td>May 6</td>
<td>Pilot training begins in Central Office DoIT and Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 20</td>
<td>Pilot begins in District 5 and Central Office Human Resources and Engineering</td>
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<td>May 31</td>
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<tr>
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PHOTOS BY SCOTT BUMGARDNER, CENTRAL OFFICE