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The OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

Critical Success Factor: People You are a measure for success

Ron Poole, Central Office



THE FIRST CRITICAL success factor of ODOT's new strategic plan, *people*, has a direct connection to two of the plan's guiding principles: **We will value the diversity of all ODOT people, and We will work together...one team...the Ohio Department of Transportation.**

This emphasis on the workforce, the men and women who make the department what it is, is not by chance. It recognizes that everyone has a role to play and a stake in ODOT's success. Making certain everyone has a meaningful role with the department is one of the challenges we must face as a team. ODOT is facing a reduction in size, which we will achieve through the process of attrition. As many long-time

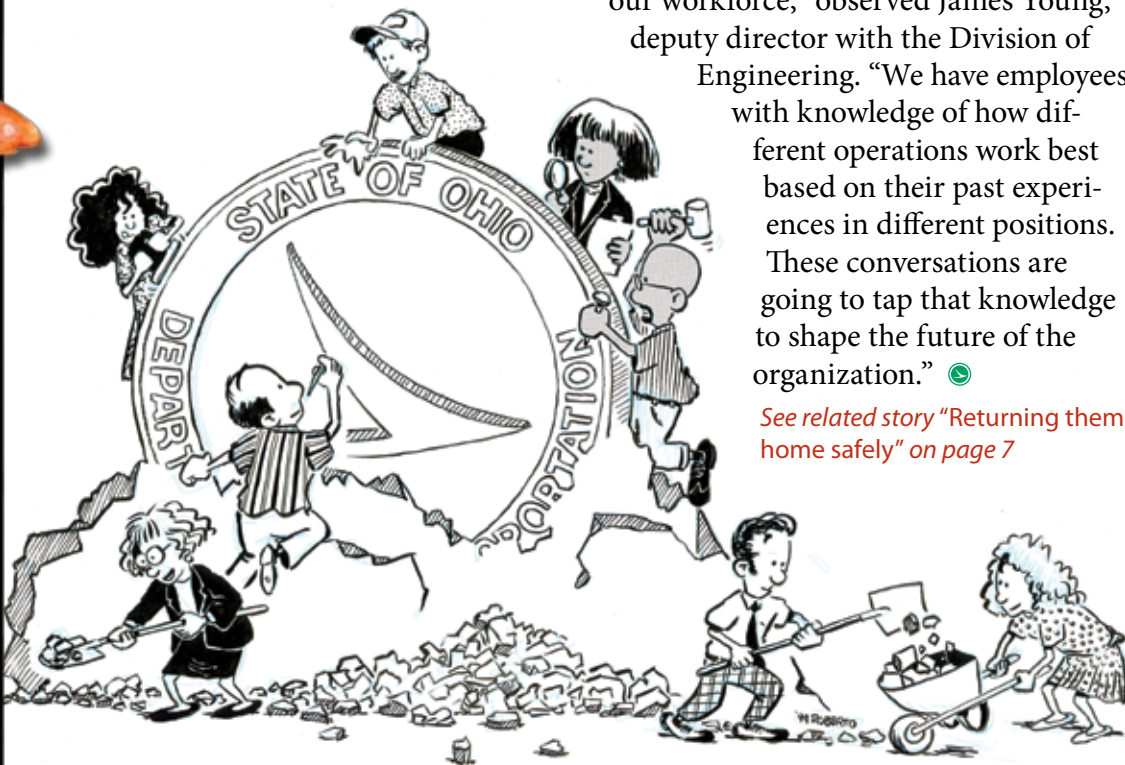
employees retire over the next two years, the department will take the opportunity to reorganize, accomplishing core duties through a leaner and more efficient organization.

This change could shift some employee assignments, but the department is committed to giving every employee an opportunity to find meaningful work while serving its customers.

To keep a high level of service with fewer employees, ODOT will need the knowledge and experience of its workforce. In the coming months, employees will sit down with their supervisors and have in-depth conversations about ways to improve operations in their offices.

"We value the institutional diversity, as well as the cultural diversity, of our workforce," observed James Young, deputy director with the Division of Engineering. "We have employees with knowledge of how different operations work best based on their past experiences in different positions. These conversations are going to tap that knowledge to shape the future of the organization." ●

See related story "Returning them home safely" on page 7



transcript

Observing the science of safe driving

Ron Poole, Central Office



FOR A MOMENT, SITING IN THE large, glass-encased room that is the Statewide Traffic Management Center, or TMC, in Central Office feels like I am eight years old and watching the “Mr. Wizard” show on TV: I view everything with awe. Flat-screens everywhere I look show highway traffic all over the state, while other screens display data: traffic speeds, weather, and even road conditions. And all of it happens in real time, as I sit there and watch. It seems as if I am watching the world pass by.

In operation since January, the center is still adding to its monitoring duties as part of the Intelligent Transportation System. The ITS reveals highway problems, most commonly crashes, causing traffic tie-ups. TMC employees can then

get that information out to the public through multiple outlets (message boards, radio broadcasts, e-mails, websites) so drivers can avoid congestion or secondary crashes.

The TMC provides a different viewpoint for someone like George Saylor, senior ITS engineer. An entire highway system can be seen at once as it is being used. I ask him, both as an engineer and driver, if he has learned anything about traffic crashes.

“People can’t beat the laws of science,” he said. “From the data we are collecting in the center we know there can be many causes of collisions, but drivers contribute by not observing certain realities.”

I think of some recent travel statistics related to

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We can stop diabetes dead in its tracks

Carrie Kirkland, Central Office



DIABETES KILLS MORE PEOPLE than breast cancer and AIDS combined. In fact, recent studies project that as many as one in three American adults will develop diabetes by the year 2050 unless preventative steps are taken.

KNOW YOUR RISK FACTORS

It is important to know common risk factors for developing diabetes: diabetes during a previous pregnancy, having given birth to a baby weighing more than nine pounds, excess body weight, and/or a family history of the disease. Age also plays a crucial role, and adults over the age of 45 are considered more at risk.

TAKE CONTROL

Adults may prevent or delay the onset of the most common form of diabetes, type 2, by

following a healthy lifestyle.

Become more active, and maintain a healthy, balanced diet of complex carbohydrates (those found in fruit, vegetables, and whole-grain foods), proteins and fats. Avoid overloading on simple carbohydrates (commonly found in white-flour breads and pastries, sugary beverages, and candy); they raise blood glucose levels that may cause diabetes to develop. Go online to www.MyPyramid.gov to learn more about maintaining a healthy diet.

Talk to your health care provider if you notice these warning signs of diabetes: increased fatigue, increased thirst, sudden weight loss, blurry vision, increased hunger, and tingling in your hands and feet.

Screening is recommended for overweight adults with accompanying risk factors, and for all adults over the age of 45 every 3 years. 🔄

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The science of safe driving

the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday travel period which prove his point: Last year Ohio had 3,229 collisions starting Wednesday evening of the holiday through Sunday, with 83 injuries and 16 fatalities. The total crashes for the holiday in 2010 rose from the 2009 total. Notably, when looking at the total collisions during Thanksgivings from 2006 to 2010, more than half were caused by driver behavior, such as becoming distracted or following too closely.

“That’s where the laws of science come in,” states Saylor. “A vehicle traveling at a certain speed needs a specific distance or space to come to a stop. Related to that, the human brain needs time to process changes in order to react and stop when needed. When drivers follow too closely, they are not giving themselves the space and time to stop when needed and they can become a danger to themselves and others.”

He thought for a moment, and then continued:

“Cause and effect is another law at work. We see at the center how a crash in one location can cause problems for two miles behind it, like a ripple

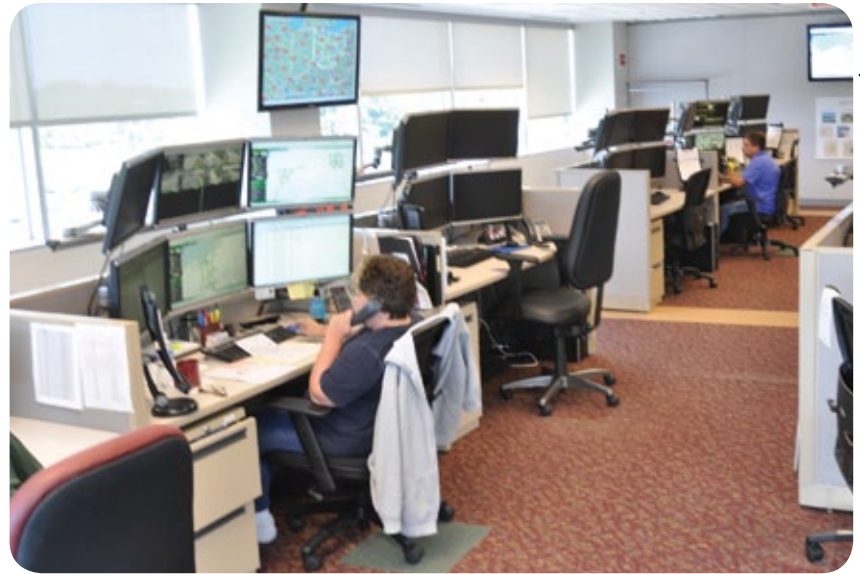


Photo by David Rose, Central Office

effect. A crash caused by driver error can lead to another and another, resulting in more damage and more victims in secondary crashes. Then there are the laws of motion: without your seat belt on, your body will continue in motion and through a windshield even as a collision stops your vehicle.”

I look again at the monitors, watch people speed along, and think how simple the rules of safety seem from this

view: Give yourself space and time to react by paying full attention and driving properly; know that the harm you cause can affect others; keep your seat belt on to keep you in the car in the event of a crash. In the end, so little is needed to protect yourself and others. 🌱

Computer operators **Victoria Sansom-Moore** and **Dave Kalb** monitor traffic within the TMC during the morning shift. Sansom-Moore oversees the Cleveland/Akron-Canton Region, while Kalb monitors the Columbus and Dayton/Springfield Region.

“People can’t beat the laws of science . . . there can be many causes of collisions, but drivers contribute by not observing certain realities.”

— George Saylor
ITS engineer

Winter takes toll on snowplow drivers, mechanics

New technology improves safety and efficiency, reduces waste

Joel Hunt, Central Office

As winter storms roll in, snowplow drivers like



Mechanic John Keeney examines equipment at the District 4 garage.

Photos by Brent Kovacs, District 4

Prother Cole know good sleep, hot meals and time with family come second to keeping Ohio's roads safe and passable.

"Gray October skies tell me winter is coming," Cole said. "It's around then I start waiting for the call to come in."

A six-year veteran of ODOT, Cole has plowed snow in Columbus since he began. In that time, he has learned a thing or two about long hours plowing snow.

"Even though I have to sacrifice time with my kids, I know other people need me out there," Cole said. "Other people have kids, too. The benefits are worth the sacrifices."

Last year, ODOT snowplow drivers spent 700,000 hours plowing and treating Ohio's roadways and bridges—the equivalent of 29,000 days!

While Cole and ODOT's 3,000 other snowplow drivers are on the front lines of the ice and snow battle, ODOT's 267 mechanics keep the equipment running.

MECHANICS GEAR UP FOR WINTER SNOWFALL

Mike Elliott, Fayette County manager and former District 9 equipment manager, said drivers may get to rest, but the equipment doesn't. "Our equipment takes a beating during winter storms. Hydraulic hoses blow and plow blades wear down. When trucks go down, our level of service suffers. We can never give enough credit to mechanics for keeping our fleet moving."

Around the state this fall, drivers and mechanics alike have been inspecting, checking, and fine-tuning snow removal equipment as part of ODOT's Operational Readiness events. During the events, mechanics and snowplow drivers conduct 100-point inspections, sometimes more, ranging from horns to hydraulics.

Operational Readiness events are held early in the fall, allowing mechanics time to repair broken equipment before snow starts to fly.

New this winter, District 4 will test a salt spreader, called EPOKE, which promises to save salt and money.

NEW SALT SPREADERS IMPROVE DE-ICING

Unlike ODOT's current salt spreaders, which spread dry salt, EPOKE produces a slurry mixture onboard at 90 gallons of brine to one ton of salt.

"Pre-wet salt spreading is becoming the accepted method of winter maintenance," said Scott Lucas, statewide snow and ice coordinator. "Dry salt is susceptible to blowing and bouncing off the road. EPOKE promises to keep salt on the road, reducing waste and saving money."

EPOKE also allows snowplow drivers to spread the slurry while traveling approximately 55 mph compared to a conventional system where drivers are traveling approximately 35 mph.

TOW PLOW SERVICE EXPANDED

Building on the successful test of its tow plow last year, District 4 will expand the plow's service to Interstate 90 in District 12's Lake County.

Tow plows are trailers equipped with a snow plow, which is towed behind a tandem axle truck fitted with a front plow. They are similar to a side-mounted wing plow, but are more versatile and offer better operator control than standard wings.

"Tow plows are more effective and efficient than front-mounted plows, reducing overall usage of fuel, labor and materials while providing a higher level of service and safer pavement conditions," said District 4 Deputy Director Anthony Urankar.

While in operation, the trailer swings to the right of the tow vehicle enabling the operator to plow a second lane in addition to the lane plowed by the front-mounted plow.

ODOT'S NEW LOOK ON THE ROAD

Motorists around the state should better recognize ODOT's plow trucks this winter thanks to alternating green and yellow reflective tape in the shape of chevrons on the back. Chevrons are commonly used on fire trucks and ambulances.

Doug Burke, equipment engineer with Central Office, said while ODOT's snowplow trucks have amber strobe lights, so do garbage trucks and tow trucks. "We're trying to get the public to distinguish us from any other vehicle on the road, because we're

not always traveling at highway speed."

"Motorists traveling 65 mph in ice and snow need to start braking 250 feet from the back of our trucks," Burke continued. "By the time they're 70 feet away, it's too late to stop. These chevrons should help them recognize us sooner."

HARNESSING WIND IMPROVES VISION, VISIBILITY

ODOT will also harness the power of the wind this winter by installing air deflectors on trucks. Plow ducts, mounted on snowplows, will redirect snow clouds that would normally fly over the plow, obstructing the vision of snowplow drivers. Air foils, mounted on the backs of snowplow trucks, will blow snow off tailgates and lights, improving the visibility and safety.

Innovation and preparation are important parts of reaching the high level of performance ODOT and Ohio expects, but they are not the key.

"The department has long said we will be second to none in ice and snow control," Lucas said. "Technology helps, but people make the real difference." 🌟



The EPOKE hopper, left, is interchangeable with the usual dump truck bed.

Posing with a truck bearing reflective chevrons are District 6's **Craig Wilson** (left), **Seth Huffman**, **Ed Shonkwiler**, **Colleen Adams**, **Shawn Rostorfer**, and **Scott Hart**.



Photo by Breanna Watzka, District 6

'Iron Triangle' Rail-fan Park coming to Ohio

Stu Nicholson, *Ohio Rail Development Commission*



FOSTORIA IS ONE OF THE BUSIEST railroad junctions in the nation and a world-renowned spot for people who like to watch and photograph trains. Now the city will soon be the home of a new tourist attraction: the Iron Triangle Rail-fan Park.

The park will be built on a reclaimed brownfield site located within a triangle formed by the junctions of the Norfolk Southern and CSX railroads. The new facility will include a covered viewing stand as well as parking for cars and tour buses. More than 100 trains a day pass by the area and it has long drawn fans of rail from as far away as Europe and Asia.

The park is made possible, in large part, because of a federal transportation enhancement grant of more than \$800,000 awarded to the project by ODOT in 2007.

The Fostoria Railroad Historical Society, along



Photo by Stuart Nicholson, Ohio Rail Development Commission

with Mayor John Davoli and other local officials, attended the ground breaking ceremony on Sept. 23.

The completed park will draw visitors to local restaurants, hotels and retail outlets. 🌐

Meet the DDD: Todd Audet, District 2

Theresa Pollick, *District 2*



THIS IS THE SECOND time Todd Audet will be looking after the transportation needs of northwest Ohio as the District 2 deputy director. He previously held the position from 2003 through 2007.

Prior to his return to ODOT, he served as the vice president of operations at Midwest Terminals of Toledo International, gaining valuable knowledge of intermodal transportation and private-sector business.

Audet began his career with ODOT in 1990 as an engineer-

in-training and quickly moved through the ranks to become acting construction engineer.

Today, he also holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force Air National Guard, and in 2010, he received a Masters of Strategic Studies from the Air War College at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

When not working or fulfilling his military duties, Audet enjoys spending time with his wife and two daughters, and reading the political thriller novels of best-selling American author, Vince Flynn. 🌐

Columbus Crossroads project putting Ohioans to work

Steve Faulkner, *Central Office*



THE MID-OCTOBER LAUNCH OF THE first phase of the Columbus Crossroads project was anything but typical.

Joined by local, civic and business leaders, ODOT Director Jerry Wray looked out over hundreds of orange grabber cones and construction hard hats representing the jobs directly attributable to the project. It was a strong visual of the positive impact the state's investment is having on local families.

Wray's remarks—delivered on a closed entrance ramp to Interstate 71 as part of the “Rally on the Ramp”—included details of a report showing the state's \$200 million investment in the reconstruction of the I-71/-670 corridor will create or sustain nearly 1,000 jobs and generate \$30 million in state and local tax revenue.

“Major highway projects like this put people to work, improve safety and re-connect local communities that have been separated by geography and infrastructure since the interstate was built in the 1960s,” Wray said. “That's exactly what is happening with the Columbus Crossroads project.”

The I-71/670 Interchange is the first Columbus Crossroads Project, which will add a travel lane

on I-670, construct 22 new bridges and 28 new retaining walls along with partial completion

of two new urban avenues to improve access and mobility. A value based design-build project, the construction and design of the interchange are combined in a single contract, which allows ODOT to deliver better quality results.

According to the report “The Impact of the I-71/670 Interchange Reconstruction Project on the Columbus MSA Economy,” the project is expected to pay \$161.8 million in employee salaries over the next three years, which will yield state and local governments more than \$29 million in additional sales and income tax revenue.

The complete report is located online at: http://www.dot.state.oh.us/projects/71670/Documents/I71-670ImpactStudyResults_Sept2011.pdf. 🌐



Critical Success Factor: People Returning home safely

Ron Poole, *Central Office*

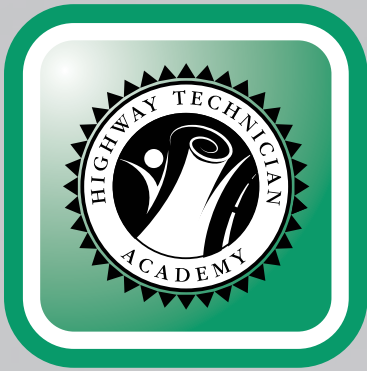


AS MUCH AS WE FOCUS ON SAFETY for the motoring public, workplace safety for our employees is also a key measure of the strategic plan. Valuing our people means sending them home safely to their loved ones when the work day is done.

ODOT will begin focusing on the causes of workplace injuries in order to better reduce their occurrences. Beyond working on cause and effect, the department wants to emphasize a more proactive, behavior-based safety approach.

“It's a state of mind, really,” observed Deb Bateman, ODOT's statewide safety administrator, “and it is one that needs to be embraced by both management and staff. Behavior-based safety happens when everyone keeps an eye out for potential problems in their work place environment and takes the initiative to prevent injuries from occurring.”

Work zone crashes—where ODOT employees often suffer the most serious injuries—are of particular concern. The office of Employee Health and Safety is providing support to districts by reviewing all injury and crash events within 24 hours, and coordinating with the office of Training to establish preventative measures that will make work zones behind the barrels much safer. 🌐



What's in a name?

Alexandra Poczik, Central Office



HIGHWAY TECHNICIAN, OR HT, a term that simply forms a DAS classification, also

happens to refer to an employee who is invaluable to ODOT, and to a group of people who comprise nearly 40 percent of the department's workforce.

First established in November 2003 with the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding, the HT series has embarked on several challenging goals.

"In the field, we had great maintenance and construction operations separately," said Cynthia Lee, program manager for the HT Academy, "but we needed to blend the two together for more flexibility. We needed to create a highly trained, sustainable, credible, and cost-effective workforce."

With its launch came glitches, and a need to revisit the original idea to smooth out the bumps was clear. Upon

his return to ODOT this year, Director Jerry Wray formed a taskforce made up of a diverse group of employees with experience in the HT series. Led by District 10 Deputy Director Steve Williams, the new team began to explore ways to make the enterprise work better for those in the series and for ODOT as an organization.

The taskforce recently submitted its recommendations, but obstacles have arisen over the proposed changes because of the intricacies of the series and its ties to the union contract. This has not discouraged Williams, who is confident the proposed changes will improve the program.

"The future of the series will require training and empowering HTs in a cost-effective manner and with purpose," said Williams. "This will result in employees who will perform our core functions in a lean, efficient and effective manner."

Look for more on the HT Taskforce in a future issue of Transcript. ☺

transcript

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ODOT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER and PROVIDER OF SERVICES