

Transcript

Ohio Department of Transportation ★ Employee Newsletter

October 2005

ODOT Casts a Long Shadow at 2005 Quality Conference

Ron Poole, Central Office

ATENDANTS AND GUEST SPEAKERS could not help but notice the presence of ODOT employees at the sixth annual “Quest for Success” conference sponsored by The Ohio Partnership for Excellence (OPE) on Sept. 15 and 16 in Columbus.

Six ODOT offices were recognized in three out of four possible categories for awards. The conference’s only Level IV awards, the highest level of recognition for both public and private organizations, went to ODOT District 10 and District 12. ODOT Director Gordon Proctor also addressed the conference as the representative for Gov. Bob Taft.

“We (ODOT) have been deeply involved in quality efforts since their beginning in state government,” said Proctor. “As a direct result, the state has become a much better place to work. I have seen the attitudes of the legislature toward ODOT and other state agencies change from negative to far more positive due largely to our use of quality principles.”

The OPE is a non-profit organization that works with both public and

private sector agencies to become better at what they do. Many organizations see lowered costs, improved productivity, increased profitability and rises in both employee and customer satisfaction after working with the OPE. Each year, the OPE formally recognizes Ohio-based organizations that practice measurable, continuous improvement and utilize outstanding processes to achieve customer-focused performance excellence.

OPE examiners evaluate an organization’s practices and processes for recognition at four levels, with the fourth

level representing the highest standard of achievement. The panel uses the standards of Leadership, Strategic Planning, Customer/Market Focus, Measurement Analysis and Knowledge Management, Human Resource Focus, Process Management and Organizational Performance Results.

This year’s award recipients included Riverside Methodist Hospital, Goodrich Aerospace Wheels and Brakes and Aurora City Schools. ODOT districts 2 and 5 were recognized at Level I, while District 11 reached Level II. For the first time, ODOT Central Office applied for recognition and also reached Level II status. With this first award, Central Office plans to keep applying



Two ODOT Districts score top honors: the sole recipients of this year’s Level IV Ohio Partnership for Excellence awards were District 10 (above) and District 12 (below).

under the OPE to lead the entire department in an on-going process of learning and change.

District Deputy Director George Collins from 10 and District Deputy Director David Coyle from 12 were on hand to accept the award along with many of their employees who worked on the application process. Both directors credited the achievement of their awards to the hard work, dedication and team-work of their respective district offices.



photos by Leslie Dellovade, Central Office

(see **OPE** on page 8)

The Employee Satisfaction Survey: a new benchmark for ODOT

Ron Poole, Central Office

ANYONE WHO HAS EVER HAD A JOB has been asked the question more than once: "So, how are things at work?"

The people who usually ask do so just to make conversation. But every once in a while, someone genuinely wants to know the answer.

This is one of those times. This month, every full-time and part-time ODOT employee is being asked about how things are at work through the Employee Satisfaction Survey (ESS). Prepared by the Leadership Factor, a private consultant specializing in such activities, the ESS will differ from previous efforts in how the results will be analyzed and ultimately used for the improvement of the department.

"This survey can provide valuable information to be used in our efforts to continuously improve ODOT," said ODOT Director Gordon Proctor. "It represents our commitment to listening to the needs of our employees."

When the surveys are completed, the Leadership Factor will provide statistically valid results and specific suggestions for making improvements based on those results. The firm will provide the means to benchmark employee satisfaction at ODOT with that of employees from up to 150 companies.

More importantly, ODOT will use the results to identify a course of action for addressing problems – complete with

short-term and long-term goals, ways for achieving those goals and a system for monitoring the results of actions taken. The development of an accurate instrument depends on getting feedback from a broad base of employees.

In September, the Leadership Factor conducted focus groups made up of a cross-section of ODOT employees to determine what was important to them at work. The Leadership Factor used this information to create scientifically designed, unbiased questions that will produce actionable feedback.

The feeling that the time had come for a survey grew after the Central Office assessment for the Ohio Partnership for Excel-

lence in February of this year. One of the areas identified for improvement was feedback from employees concerning their work environment.

Central Office took note of a survey conducted last year in District 12 on their work place and decided such an assessment might be valuable for the entire organization. District 12 has become the model for the rest of the department when it comes to the ESS. The District 12 survey had a 99 percent return rate.

"Last year, District 12 worked with the

Leadership Factor to do a pilot survey for their employees," said Steve Wall, deputy director for the Office of Quality and Organizational Development. "I was very impressed with this assessment, because it marked a clear improvement in the way ODOT surveys employees. The design of the questions, the in-depth statistical analysis and the ability to benchmark with other organizations all make it easier to target effective improvement plans where it matters most."

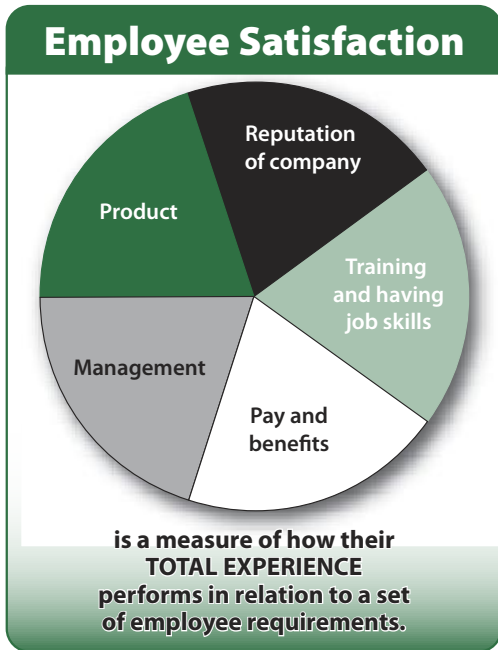
"The union is actively involved and supports this effort," said Willa O'Neil, union quality coordinator with the Office of Quality and Organizational Development, "because we believe it is being done the right way, and that it offers a real opportunity to make improvements based on the voice of employees. The survey will be 100 percent confidential, with the information counted and analyzed by an independent outside expert."

The current plan is to follow the District 12 pattern: give the survey every other year, using the time between surveys to implement improvements. This first department-wide ESS is being rolled out the last three weeks of October, with the results analysis expected to be available by January 2006. Both union and non-union ODOT volunteers have been trained to administer the survey.

"As an organization ODOT realizes

there is a real link between employee satisfaction and performance. We want this survey to truly reveal how our members feel about their work life. High employee response rate and

honest feedback are key to how successful we are going to be," Proctor said. ☛



OTEC Offers Good Information to All Who Attend

Ryan Larzelere, *Central Office*

THE OHIO TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING Conference (OTEC) will celebrate 59 years of bringing engineering professionals together to address policy and technical information and share new ideas in transportation management on Oct. 27 and 28.

The theme for this year's conference is "Achieving Safer Roadways Through Engineering, Enforcement, Education and Emergency Services." It was selected to emphasize efficient and effective enforcement on our roadways, educating motorists on responsible driving behavior and ensuring emergency medical services have adequate access to medical emergency routes.

The annual gathering at the Greater Columbus Convention Center is co-sponsored by ODOT and the Ohio State University and is expected to draw thousands of attendees as well as more than 200 commercial exhibitors.

"Last year we had approximately 2,100 attendees, including a great number of college students at the conference," said Terri Barnhart, OTEC administrator. "We're looking to exceed that number for OTEC 2005."

Participants consist primarily of college students, engineers, government officials, professors, regional planners and anyone generally interested in transportation.

An added bonus at this year's conference is the many technical sessions to be attended. These technical sessions cover a wide spectrum of topics for encouraging information sharing. The technical sessions are led by ODOT employees and other engineering professionals from outside firms and include topics such as innovative interchange design, mechanically stabilized earth walls, women in engineering and continuing education

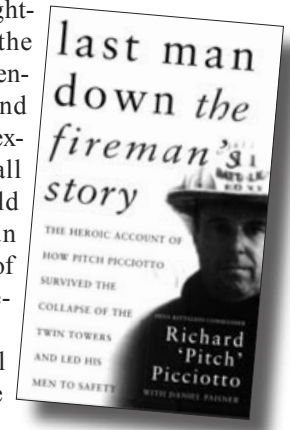
for Ohio Professional Engineers. There will be 56 technical sessions throughout the convention center.

Day two of the conference will include a presentation geared toward responding to major disasters. During lunch, Chief Richard Picciotto of the New York Fire Department will give a

presentation based on his best-selling book, "*Last Man Down: The Fireman's Story*." Chief Picciotto is the highest

ranking firefighter to survive the World Trade Center collapse and will share his experiences for all in what should prove to be an inspiring tale of courage and determination.

There will be no shortage of things to learn at OTEC 2005. The opportunity to explore new engineering interests is what makes OTEC one of the premier conferences of its kind in the nation. ☺



Bridge Sessions Popular at OTEC

Joel Hunt, *Central Office*

OHIO HAS THE SECOND-LARGEST inventory of bridges in the nation and preserves 2,863 historic bridges – including 135 covered bridges - dating as far back as 1850. It's no surprise, then, that bridge sessions remain the most attended at the Ohio Transportation Engineering Conference (OTEC) each year.

"For two days, attendees hear case studies and testimonials on everything from pavement design to construction management," said Terri Barnhart, OTEC administrator. "But the largest draw

is always structural engineering. They command the largest space."

According to Tim Keller, state bridge engineer, every spring bridge experts from around the country contact the OTEC Steering Committee in hopes of locking in one of the structural engineering sessions at the next conference. "There are inevitably more worthy can-

didates than sessions, so we unfortunately have to turn some away."

This year's OTEC sessions on structural engineering include Bridge Type Selection for the Ironton Russell Bridge, Bridge Construction Round Table, Prestressed Concrete I-beam Bridges, Preservation and Restoration of Historic Bridges and Bridge Maintenance.

"OTEC is known as being one of the best DOT engineering conferences

in the entire nation for bridge engineers," said Rick Engel, director of engineering at E. L. Robinson Engineering



of Ohio, a retired structural engineer from ODOT and a member of the OTEC Steering Committee. "Much of the information being presented at this conference is associated with recent innovative design projects. The results of transportation research projects are always an interesting component of the program." ☺

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE TWO MOVES FORWARD



ODOT HAS HAD RECORD SUCCESS IN THE PAST BIENNIUM WITH ITS SAFETY WORK PLAN EFFORTS. Ohio's fatality rate fell from 1.31 to 1.16 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel. Ohio's national fatality rate went from 21st best to 9th best during the biennium. The department delivered more than 700 low-cost safety projects, doubled its high-crash program and county forces achieved all their roadway improvement goals.

But there is more work to be done. ODOT must continue to find strategies to further reduce crashes. ODOT's long-term strategic safety goals are to:

- Reduce crash frequency by 10 percent by 2015;
- Reduce rear-end crashes by 25 percent by 2015; and,
- Reduce the state fatality rate to 1.0 per 100 million vehicle miles of travel by 2008.

The following reports detail part of ODOT's plan to achieve its long-term goals. *Transcript* will continue to report progress on this and other Strategic Initiatives in future editions. ●

A Roadmap to Fewer Fatalities

Ron Poole and Michelle May, *Central Office*

IN AN EFFORT TO DECREASE THE NUMBER of serious injuries and fatalities that occur on Ohio roadways, ODOT is working with federal, state and local organizations to develop the Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan targeting the most dangerous types of crashes. The plan identifies engineering, enforcement and driver education strategies that will have the greatest impact in preventing injuries and saving lives.

In 2004, 381,000 people were involved in crashes, with 1,284 people losing their lives on Ohio roadways. About 53 percent of the fatal crashes were on the state highway system and 47 percent were on the local roadway network. ODOT's goal is to reduce the number of fatalities to less than 1,100 deaths by 2008.

"Reaching this goal will require working across jurisdictional boundaries to make sure we're dedicating the right resources to the right crash problems," said Jennifer Townley, administrator of ODOT's Office of Roadway Safety and Mobility. "This document identifies

where our safety priorities must be to save the most lives."

To accomplish this, the Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan identifies causes specific to Ohio's fatal crashes and proactively targets those areas posing a growing threat to highway safety. This allows safety organizations to make critical decisions about where to invest limited time, money and resources.

The draft document identifies and emphasizes five diverse areas of study and improvement for reducing crashes throughout the state. The plan calls for improvement in the timeliness, accuracy and integration of crash data so that it can be more easily analyzed and shared among agencies. High-risk drivers, such as the very young and older operators or those driving while impaired, will also be studied. The plan targets serious types of crashes, such as head-on collisions and accidents at intersections, and special roadway users like commercial vehicles and motorcycles. Finally, incident-related crashes including rear-end and work-zone

crashes will also be examined.

The strategies for addressing these varied causes are equally broad-based. In some cases, the document encourages the use of innovative engineering techniques like cable barriers to reduce cross-over crashes. In other instances, the document calls upon several federal and state agencies to expand their use of electronic crash data collection.

Encouraging motorist responsibility is also central to the plan. Many life-saving strategies include increased law enforcement to target seat belt use and alcohol impaired drivers and the expansion of educational programs that target teen and motorcycle drivers.

Once the final plan has been completed in December, ODOT will be meeting with various outside partners to discuss it in detail. But in many ways, the completion of the initial plan is only the beginning of the effort.

"We want this to be a living document," said Townley. "As we begin to work with different groups and examine our results, the plan is going to be continually updated and changed. The ultimate goal will be saving lives on Ohio's highways." ●

Campaign Aims for 'Day with Zero Traffic Fatalities'

Joel Hunt, *Central Office*

ODOT AND TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATIONS around the country plead with the public for a day with zero traffic deaths Oct. 10 as part of the "Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day" campaign.

"Motor vehicle fatalities are the lead-

ing cause of death for all Americans from six to 33 years old," said ODOT Director Gordon Proctor. "Whether we are drivers, passengers, pedestrians or cyclists, we all can work together to save lives on our nation's roads."

By taking pro-active steps, the public can greatly reduce the odds of adding to

the tragic statistics.

"First and foremost, drive as if your life depends on it," said Jennifer Townley, administrator of ODOT's Office of Roadway Safety and Mobility. "Driving defensively, obeying the posted speed limits, slowing down in bad



State Seeks Input on Corridor Crash Problems

Seven Highway Corridors Under Study for Safety Improvements

Michelle May, Central Office

weather – especially in construction and school zones – and not drinking and driving are just a few examples of how drivers can reduce their chances of being in a crash.”

Other important safety practices include buckling up every time on every trip; using appropriate child safety seats; wearing a helmet when cycling or skating; and crossing the street in crosswalks, Townley said.

In 2003, speed was a contributing factor in 31 percent of all fatal crashes – with 13,380 lives lost in such crashes. The economic cost of speed-related crashes in the U.S. is estimated to be \$40.4 billion per year.

Teen-agers have the highest death rate in motor-vehicle crashes of any age group. Motor-vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 16-to-20-year-olds in the U.S., and in 2003, 5,240 16-to-20-year-olds were killed in passenger-vehicles. Although driving inexperience and engagement in high-risk behavior play a role, a major reason for the high teen death rate is their failure to use seat belts. Two-thirds of those who died in 2003 were not buckled up.

Proper vehicle maintenance also plays an important role in reducing crashes. Tires should be checked for proper inflation pressure, tread wear and alignment. Vehicles should be winterized in cold climates. Worn windshield wipers should be replaced. If vehicles have antilock brakes, they should be operated correctly by “stomping and steering” rather than pumping. If someone is buying a new vehicle, they should consider safety devices and safety ratings as a top priority. Check out the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov for vehicle safety ratings.

Put The Brakes On Fatalities Day is coordinated by a coalition of more than 40 national safety organizations, federal, state and local government agencies and private sector companies working together to reduce the death and injury toll of motor vehicle crashes.

For more traffic safety tips and information, log on to the Put The Brakes On Fatalities Day Web site at: www.brakesonfatalities.org ☺

THIS SUMMER AND FALL, ODOT BEGAN a partnership with the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) and the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) to implement a safety corridor program. The program will determine whether high numbers of crashes are occurring over long corridors.

Ohio’s new Corridor Safety Program was initiated by Governor Bob Taft in January 2005. The program uses crash data to identify longer highway corridors with crashes and fatalities above the state-wide average. Locations with the highest density of fatal crashes are studied and addressed using a cross-jurisdictional approach that combines engineering, enforcement, motorist education and public input to reduce crashes and save lives.

“Our previous method of studying high crash spot locations has addressed hundreds of our most congested, high-crash locations across the state,” said Jennifer Townley, administrator of ODOT’s Office of Roadway Safety and Mobility. “We will continue to study these spot locations, but the addition of the safety corridors is one more measure we can take to identify safety emphasis areas that need to be addressed.”

Throughout August, September and October, ODOT, ODPS and OSHP have been seeking the public’s input on seven highway corridors with crashes and fatalities above the statewide average. The corridors are being studied to determine the causes of crashes and develop strategies to prevent injuries and save lives.

The corridors under study (see map accompanying this article) accounted for 177 fatalities between 1999 and 2003.

The state has held several public meetings across Ohio to exchange information and ideas. People can continue to comment on these corridors by visiting the Web site at: www.corridorsafety.ohio.gov.

“Some of the best suggestions for proving safety come from the people who live and work along our highways

ODOT Director Gordon Proctor. “The Web site provides another opportunity for the public to learn more about the types of crashes occurring in the area and share their personal experiences and ideas.”

Colonel Paul D. McClellan, superintendent of the Ohio State Highway Patrol, said an ambitious goal to significantly reduce traffic crash fatalities has been set. “We believe the motoring public can play an integral role by assisting us with identifying where, when, and why problem areas exist, so we can deploy resources to ensure those dangerous behaviors are appropriately addressed,” he said.

ODPS Director Kenneth Morckel added that many fatal and serious injury crashes can be prevented by convincing motorists to wear their seatbelts, drive sober and obey the speed limits.

In analyzing the corridors, state agencies determined that many crashes could be linked to:

- Driver Behavior – motorists traveling too fast for weather or roadway conditions, not wearing a safety belt and driving while intoxicated
- Roadway Conditions – sharp curves or slopes, objects too close to the roadway, etc.
- Growth and Development – new homes and businesses that add more driveways and vehicles to the roadway ☺



Homes Taken to Build Highways Benefit Charity

Joel Hunt, Central Office

HOMES AND BUSINESSES ACQUIRED for road construction were once torn down and taken to local landfills. But for nearly two years, five ODOT district offices and Habitat for Humanity have worked together to salvage windows, doors, furnaces, sinks and woodwork from these structures before they are razed. The items are then sold at Habitat for Humanity's store, with profits going toward building new homes for the needy.

Stephen Cheek, property management administrator in the Office of Real Estate, says homes and businesses scheduled for demolition could yield between \$1.21 and \$1.3 million for the charity over the next year. Habitat for Humanity receives approximately \$9,000 from the resale of contents for homes valued at \$150,000 and \$19,000 for homes valued between \$300,000 and \$400,000.

Districts 2, 3, 6, 10 and 12 have dismantled an average of two structures per month, or a total of 41 so far this year. Another 81 structures, including two restaurants, are scheduled for dismantling soon. District 10 donated the contents of 21 structures in its first year alone and has donated the most of any of

the participating districts.

"When planning for new construction projects, ODOT closely examines the effects on local lands and residents," Cheek said. "Unfortunately, there are cases when the acquisition of property is necessary, and this partnership reduces the waste associated with the demolition of property."

District 6 was the first district to dismantle a home in 2004 when it acquired a home on Sunbury Road for the Interstate 270/State Route 161/Sunbury Road construction project in Columbus. This summer, the district dismantled its second structure under the partnership. The house in Groveport was acquired for the upcoming U.S. Route 33/Ebright Road overpass construction project.

"Our partnership with Habitat for Humanity goes a long way toward ensuring materials that would otherwise end up in a landfill are put to good use elsewhere," said District 6 Deputy Director Jack Marchbanks. "It's good to know that although ODOT does everything it can to avoid having to acquire a home for highway construction, something positive can come out of it when we do acquire homes."

Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization that builds new, low-cost homes for low income families living in substandard housing. Since 1976, the organization has built more than 50,000 houses throughout the United States and more than 100,000 around the world. ◀

This August, Habitat for Humanity salvaged kitchen items and other fixtures from this house, taken for the U.S. Route 33/Ebright Road project in Districts 5 & 6.



photos by Mike Stout, District 6

Fall Months See Increase in Deer-Related Accidents



Ryan Larzelere, Central Office

EVERY FALL, ODOT SEES A RISE IN THE number of deer-related accidents. Statewide, 29,874 deer-car accidents were reported in 2004. Nearly half of these accidents – 14,913 of them – occurred between October and December. November was the peak month for these occurrences with 6,920.

"Breeding season, as well as fawn dispersal and hunting season all occur in the fall," said Mike Reynolds, wildlife research biologist with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. "Each of these factors leads to an increase in deer movement, which results in more deer-car accidents."

During the final months of the year, fawns leave their mothers to fend for themselves. These young deer tend to wander too near the road and often end up being involved in a collision with a vehicle. Accidents generally happen when the deer are most active, between the hours of 5 p.m. and midnight. Nearly 20 percent occur in the early morning hours.

When deer-vehicle accidents occur, deer carcasses along the roadway must be removed. In 2004, ODOT used 28,994 work hours to handle 15,801 deer at a total cost of nearly \$1.5 million.

Removal of the carcasses is a daunting task. So daunting that ODOT District 3 workers were featured on The Discovery Channel's " ", a show that profiles some of the most unthinkable jobs. In

ODOT Takes Part in Renovating Chilo Lock #34

Paul Staley, Central Office

THANKS TO A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ODOT, the Clermont County Park District and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), a piece of Ohio's history has become a place for learning and exploration.

On the site of an old U.S. Army Corp of Engineers lock and dam for the Ohio River, the Chilo Lock #34 Park Visitor Center and Museum allows visitors to return to life along Ohio's waterways in the 1900s.

"The Ohio River Valley was, and is, a way of life for the communities of this area," said Chris Clingman, director of the Clermont County Park District. "The river provides transportation, supplies and a connection to the natural world."


Transportation along the river was vital to many communities in the early days of Ohio's history. Navigating the Ohio River was necessary and difficult due to natural barriers, such as fluctuating river depths and snags. In 1878, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers initiated construction of the first federally built lock and dam on the Ohio River at Davis Island. Built into the very structure of the river, a lock and

dam helps boats transition between river sections with radically different water levels. A boat enters a lock and dam and waits while water levels beneath it are raised or lowered manually. When the water level matches the level of the next river section, the boat can continue on its way in a smooth progression.

The recently renovated Chilo Lock #34 is one of the last remaining remnants of the old U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wicket Lock and Dam system. It was closed in 1964 and replaced by the newer Meldahl Locks. In 1985, the 14-acre site was purchased by the Clermont County Park District to turn it into an historic site commemorating the importance of locks and dams in the Ohio River region.

The \$1.4 million project called for renovating the lock's former powerhouse into a visitor center and museum. A sum of \$200,000 came from ODOT's Metro Parks Road Fund to help pay for a new entrance from U.S. Route 52 and a new parking lot. The museum also received another \$732,845 as a scenic byway grant from the FHWA. Renovations on the building began in June 2004, and a

(see **CHILO** on page 8)



2004, 3,361 deer-vehicle accidents were reported between October and December in District 3 alone.

Once a carcass has been removed from the road, it must be taken to a proper disposal facility such as a compost site, municipal solid waste landfill or rendering plant. Scott Lucas with the Office of Maintenance Administration says districts are encouraged to compost the carcasses as a means of disposal as it is a fairly clean process.

There are a number of precautions motorists can take to avoid a deer-related accident, or at least minimize damage if they come in contact with a deer. First and foremost, drivers should always adhere to posted speed limits, stay alert when driving and always wear their safety belt. The Ohio Department of Insurance recommends not swerving to avoid hitting a deer. This type of maneuver can cause drivers to lose control of their vehicle and possibly make the situation worse. Drivers should use high beam lights when driving at night, assuming no drivers are oncoming. The high beams will reflect off the eyes of a deer that may be on or near the road, which will afford drivers greater reaction time. And, as a rule of thumb, if drivers see one deer along the side of the road, they should always assume that more deer will follow. 🐾



Opening ceremony participants gathering outside the Chilo Lock #34 Park Visitor Center and Museum in Clermont County on August 27, 2005.

photos courtesy of Keith Robinson, Clermont County Park District

CHILO (from page 7)

grand opening ceremony was held Aug. 27. Several hundred area residents and public officials attended, anxious to be part of the historic occasion.

The visitor center offers more than 3,600 square feet of total exhibit space located on three floors. The highlight of the center is a one-third scale model of a working wicket dam that allows visitors to experience how the wickets worked by trying their hand at the once vital job of either raising or lowering the wickets.

"The visitor center is truly unique and is located right on the banks of the Ohio River," said Clingman. "People can actually look at the exhibits and see what was here and learn how locks and dams operate."

The experience of handling the controls for the lock is something Ralph Lindsey knows well. Once the head lock man and diver at Chilo Lock and Dam from 1947 until it closed, he was thrilled to return as a visitor to the place he worked for 17 years.

"I've never seen such a change in a building in my life, and it's wonderful. This will be something that will be enjoyed for generations," said Lindsey.

The visitor center is located off U.S. 52 near State Route 222 in Chilo. This fall it is open to the public Monday through Saturday, from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. It will be open for reduced hours during the winter.

For more information call 513-876-9013 or visit www.co.clermont.oh.us/parks.

Lake Erie Coastal Trail Becomes National Scenic Byway



Receiving the byway designation plaque: George Schoener - FHWA; Paul Staley - ODOT Scenic Byway Coordinator; Melinda Huntley - Executive Director of Lake Erie Coastal Ohio; Frank Lichtkoppler - Lake Erie Coastal Trail byway chairman and Ohio State University Ohio Sea Grant extension specialist; and Rick Capka - FHWA.

THE LAKE ERIE COASTAL TRAIL (featured in the April/May issue of *Transcript*) was added to the federal government's National Scenic Byways Program on Sept. 22 at a special ceremony in Washington D.C. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) designated the Trail, along with 44 others from around the country, as one of 125 National Scenic Byways across the United States.

The more than 200-mile Lake Erie Coastal Trail begins in Ashtabula County and journeys along Lake Erie, ending in Lucas County. Some of the route's amenities include historic lighthouses

and scores of museums, national parks, wildlife centers, marshes, prairies, state parks, covered bridges and history centers detailing the rich heritage of the communities along the route.

"The Lake Erie Coastal Trail is one of the most impressive byways in Ohio," said Gordon Proctor, director of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). "It is a great honor for Ohio to receive our fifth nationally designated scenic byway."

The National Scenic Byways Program, established by Congress in 1991 and administered by the FHWA, was created to preserve and protect the nation's scenic byways and, at the same time, promote tourism and economic development. ODOT designated the Lake Erie Coastal Trail as an Ohio Scenic Byway this past April.

Ohio has more than 1,500 miles of scenic byways and five nationally recognized roads across more than 45 counties. For more information about Ohio's Byways, visit: www.ohiobyways.com or for National Byways, visit the National Scenic Byways Web site at www.byways.org.

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"We are steadily providing a better and better transportation system," Proctor said. "ODOT's development as an agency has truly been remarkable."

Part of ODOT's development can be measured by the successful delivery of key initiatives like the Safety and Congestion Plan, the Highway Technician Series and the governor's Jobs and Progress Plan.

The improvement process will continue this fall as ODOT unrolls its first Employee Satisfaction Survey in almost 10 years. See related article on page two.

Transcript

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