KEEP DRY AND CARRY ON

A LITTLE WATER CAN’T KEEP THIS DISTRICT DOWN

PG 3
“Although we have been told what the mission is, I suppose I don’t see ODOT doing much that really supports the mission. Although we are measuring stuff we seem to be measuring the wrong things. That results in doing dumb things to get good numbers.”

“Every organization, large or small, public or private, including every work unit within ODOT has a mission and has the ability to establish their own metrics and set their own goals. The reason it’s important is to be able to understand the quality of performance and level of production as they complete the mission. It is my hope and expectation that throughout ODOT, we are involving people in defining metrics and setting goals that align with our overall Critical Success Factors. If we do that, then everyone can enjoy the challenge and satisfaction that comes from accomplishment and achievement.

The measurements, ratios, ratings and indexes associated with our Critical Success Factors are intended to provide macro, high-level indications of how we are performing and producing as a department. “People” involves our annual Quality of Work Life survey and the number of workforce injuries and crashes. “System Conditions” include the appraisal of our bridges and our pavement conditions. We also measure travel time reliability and snow and ice response. “Safety” looks at fatalities, serious injuries, and crashes on our highway system. For our “Capital Program” we look at production volume and rate.

All of these metrics indicate trends, successes, and where we need to improve. If you don’t have some system of metrics, how do you set priorities or goals? How do you know if you are getting better or falling behind? Without indicators and goals, work is reduced to meaningless activity and eventually drudgery.

Our stated mission is to provide easy movement of people and goods from place to place. In order to do so, we will take care of what we have, make our system work better, improve safety and enhance capacity. If there is confusion or lack of understanding of what we are measuring and more importantly why, then we (leadership) need to reinforce it better.

Our operations staff works year-round to maintain and improve our system. Our planners are always looking for ways to improve and upgrade access and mobility. Our safety program is one of the largest state DOT safety programs in the country. In the past two fiscal years, we have had back-to-back capital construction programs that total $4.8 billion dollars. All of these projects improve safety, enhance capacity, and help make our system work better.”
District 1 Employees Arrived at Work at 6 a.m. on a Hot June Morning to Find as Much as Three Inches of Water Throughout a Large Section of Their District Office. It was the Aftermath of a Heavy Rainfall the Previous Night Flooding a Nearby Parking Lot and Flowing into the Building.

Like an ant hill that had been stepped on, the office erupted into organized chaos and quick mobilization; the dry and available sections of adjoining buildings were converted into a temporary district headquarters.

The information technology department embarked on a rescue mission to salvage what computer equipment they could. According to Jody Slemmons, information technology manager, 36 computer towers had to be drained of water, placed in the roadway services garage and dried for two days using fans. He estimated that as many as 13 were complete losses, with more to follow—even some that were working for the time being.

“We plugged some in and they smoked,” recalled Slemmons. “You might plug them in, and they’ll just work for a week.”

The electronic carnage was extensive. Numerous power supplies for phones and laptops, boxes of wire, 100 or so surge protectors and about seven battery back-up units for computers were lost. Fortunately, the main computer room with its raised floor had only a little puddle in a corner.

In order to establish some semblance of a network, the district information technology department worked with Central Office DoIT to set up temporary network switches and to configure one especially for the planning and engineering department. Kelly Stiles of DoIT spearheaded an effort to have 26 personal computers imaged and delivered to the district, along with 50 surge protectors.

The equipment was driven to the district by Rusty Walter, also of DoIT.

Serve Pro, a disaster recovery company from the Dayton area, was on the scene immediately, facilitating the removal of water, carpet and damaged items.

Mike Murphy labeled file boxes to be shipped for restoration. Several pallets of water-damaged documents were shipped to Texas, where they’ll be freeze dried and returned to the district.

Several offices were relocated to the break room, where they were nicknamed with signs reading “Fantasy Island,” “Gilligan’s Island,” and “Treasure Island.” Throughout the inconvenience, a sense of humor kept employees going.

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After torrential rains the night before, District 1 employees arrived at their headquarters on June 16 to find much of the building saturated in as much as three inches of standing water.

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Keep Dry and Carry On

Rhonda Pees, District 1
District 3 Deputy Director Butch Huebner got his start in the mail room

Pieter Wykoff, Central Office

Howard “Butch” Huebner became ODOT District 3 Deputy Director in July, but he has worked for ODOT since July 1978. This is his seventh promotion. We asked him to talk about his lengthy career at ODOT.

ON HIS START AT ODOT AT 18 YEARS OF AGE
“"I was hired as a delivery worker. I delivered mail and parts. I spent my first day driving around to project sites and maintenance facilities. I thought, ‘Wow, this is a big organization,’ and I was only looking at the three counties. I was kind of in awe.”

ON EARLY CAREER PLANS
“I wanted to be in a rock band. That was my goal.”

ON THE CHANGES HE’S SEEN AT ODOT SINCE THE LATE 70S AND EARLY 80S
“I became a manager of a maintenance facility when I was 20. Back then, you did what you were told. You sat there, you waited for your orders, no questions. Nobody asked the people where the rubber hits the road what their opinion was of anything.

Many years ago, when the evaluation process was a series of performance criteria, some less savory supervisors tried to take advantage. They allowed you to raise your score if you paid them $1.00 per point. I didn’t, and got a 37 out of 100 on my evaluation.

But it was constant change for the good in the early nineties. They asked people what they felt and tried to make improvements based on what they were hearing.”

ON WHAT ODOT IS LIKE TODAY
“The one thing I’ve learned is nobody works for me. I work for them. My job is to make sure they have everything they need to get their job done. There’s way too much going on in a day for me to worry about how they do their job. That’s what they do best.”

ADVICE HE’D GIVE ANY NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR
“Listen. Honestly. You have to listen. Every time you go into a new position, if you just listen to what the people have to say, if you listen to where the organization is moving, it’s very easy to pick up the culture and define where you want it to go. If you walk in on day one and set goals that are unattainable, people will shut down.”

We knew the DDD when he used to rock-n-roll. — Butch Huebner

PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE MYERS, DISTRICT 3

4 • Transcript, Sept. 2015
The 2015 Quality of Work Life survey was distributed in the beginning of the year, and results came out this summer. Leadership is expected to present the findings to employees over the coming weeks. Here are some highlights from the report!

Fulfilling ODOT’s mission to improve safety has been in full force with a statewide campaign involving the digital message boards on Ohio’s highways. Slogans like “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” and “Slow for Workers” have been appearing along with traffic fatality numbers to remind drivers to keep safety in mind. The fatality statistics are updated and shown each weekend throughout the summer. At press time, traffic deaths were up 16 percent from the same time last year.
THE SOUTH OHIO VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY IS A $634 million, 16-mile, four-lane, limited-access highway from U.S. Route 23 at Lucasville to U.S. 52 near Sciotoville in Scioto County. Designated as State Route 823, the project will improve travel times up to 16 minutes per trip by allowing motorists to avoid traffic signals and intersections on the current 26-mile route. It is the first ODOT project developed as a public-private partnership, which allowed its construction to be accelerated by decades. It is also the department’s largest modern earthwork project to date. Other project highlights include:

- 2.8 million dump truck loads of earth moved.
- 20 million cubic yards of excavation, enough to fill a football field’s area eight times the height of the Empire State Building.
- 72 new lane miles, including 9.8 miles of ramps on four interchanges.
- 400 semi-truck loads, about 16 million pounds, of explosives will be used.
- 402,182 tons of asphalt pavement, equivalent to a 10-foot square area 10.28 miles high.
- 24,520 cubic yards of concrete and 4.4 million pounds of reinforcing steel will be used to build 22 bridges.
- A total bridge area of 329,550 square feet, and crossing the Little Scioto River, the tallest bridge is 124 feet.
- 85 culverts, with a combined total length of 4.8 miles.
LEADERSHIP training has been available to district transportation managers before. District 7 Highway Management Administrator Scott Kasler thought the same kind of training could benefit highway technicians as well. "We have never offered comprehensive crew leader training, even though we expect many of our HTs to lead teams on a daily basis," said Kasler.

Thus was born District 7’s recent crew leader training to improve the success of county maintenance operations. Attendees of the three-day course, hosted by Ashland County West Holmes Career Center, included all HT 3s and any interested HT 2s. The goal: Creating better working relationships and helping crew leaders become more effective in working with their managers and crews.

GETTING A HANDLE ON: HERBICIDAL SPRAYING RESEARCH
Brent Kovacs, District 4

THE QUESTION Can chemical herbicides be used to effectively control and remove vegetation along the roads?

HOW IT WORKS NOW Cutting down the vegetation around cable medians or guardrails requires the use of gas powered string trimmers. It takes a lot of time.

THE NEW IDEA Use a modified F-450 one-ton dump truck to hold a 400-gallon tank containing various liquid herbicides. Each one of three sprayers can deliver the liquid up to 22 feet.

HOW IT IS USED Bare ground or non-selective herbicides are used to kill all vegetation around hard to mow areas. Selective herbicides target invasive weeds that can grow up to nine feet tall. Growth regulators are combined with selective herbicide to reduce the growth rate of roadside grass.

WHERE IT IS BEING TRIED On test plots along roadways in Summit, Medina and Stark counties. Districts 3, 4, and Central Office have monthly field visits to review the test plots.

WHY DO IT “Learning how we can efficiently regulate vegetation growth along the road chemically versus mechanically will help to control the areas of the roadway that often have sight distance problems,” says Stark County HT Mike Bondoni.

THE FUTURE Research is ongoing, but better utilizing chemical herbicides saves time while increasing highway safety.
D I S T R I C T 1 1 H A S A L O T O F G O L F E N T H U S I A S T S — serious golfers, former college golfers, wannabe golfers, some not-so-good golfers, and even a former golf pro on staff. They all golf individually for fun, in leagues, with their friends, and even have regular in-house matches among coworkers, but once a year, they all come together (off the clock, of course!) for Ohio’s Combined Charitable Campaign.

This August was District 11’s 3rd Annual CCC Golf Scramble. The district’s first inaugural golf scramble fundraiser was held in 2013 with 80 golfers, raising $1,850. In 2014, 72 golfers participated, including ODOT retirees and friends from Central Office and other districts. Together they raised $2,350.

District 4 is also home to an avid group of golfers, with many employees participating in local leagues throughout the summer months. They sponsor two annual charity golf events at the Mayfair Country Club in Summit County. The day-long events include breakfast, lunch, gifts, and 18 holes of golf with coworkers.

Last year, more than $600 was raised in support of the Combined Charitable Campaign and the District 4 Roadeo. Golf is just a small way that District 4 supports a great charity. ☺