

TRANSPORTATION



The Ohio Department of Transportation Employee Newsletter

August 2001

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***God Bless America;
Land that I Love***

On Tuesday September 11, 2001 the United States came under attack by what has been described as a nameless, faceless coward. Americans and people from other nationalities numbering in the thousands were killed and injured when a total of four hijacked airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington D.C. and in a field in western Pennsylvania. Gov. Bob Taft said during a memorial service in Columbus on Sept. 12, "Today, we mourn for the victims....we pray for them and their families."

While it maybe difficult to understand and explain the hatred that led to this death and destruction – it is not difficult to rekindle the passion and patriotism that has made this country great. It is a time to embrace families, neighbors, and all Americans to begin healing this open wound. This diversity of this country is the basis of its great power. This country was born as a place for all to come to live without fear or oppression. In this time of tragedy, this diversity needs to be built upon, not torn down. The backbone of this country is not a physical structure but and intrinsic belief – a belief of freedom, justice, and liberty for all.

***Stand beside her, and guide her
Thru the night with a light from above.***

As Reverend Aaron Wheeler, Sr. said during the memorial service in Columbus, "We must ask, what can we do to make it a beautiful America once again." So how in this time of despair do we move on? Whether it is faith, family or friends, it is important that everyone look within themselves to help this country heal. Wheeler said, "We are one America, it's not what's on the outside, it's what's on the inside."

***From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans, white with foam.***

Each person has a responsibility to this country – our country, the home of the free and the brave. Americans are the ones that must continue the traditions of this great nation. It is an individual responsibility to help fellow Americans cope with these terrible events, rebuild their lives, and begin the rebirth of this nation.

As the visions of the tragic day fade, they must not be forgotten, the country must learn from them and must Unite as One Nation Under God.

Stand Tall. Stand Proud.

***God Bless America
My home sweet home!***

Strategic Initiative Three

Ellis System Continues Its Development

Ronald Poole

Central Office

ODOT's 2001 Initiatives include the continuation of last year's goal of developing a new computer system for managing and tracking construction projects. Sponsored by the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) Director Shobna Varma, ODOT has been designing a web-based system focused on the needs of state users.

ODOT employees have used the mainframe-based Project Delivery Management System (PDMS) to keep track of the major milestones of construction projects since 1988, and adding new information has proven to be difficult. PDMS also can not be adopted to track new ODOT business methods, like Design-Build projects or multi-lane forecasting.

Discussions of these problems at the annual Deer Creek Executive Management Meeting in 2000 led to the formation of a technical team committed to replacing PDMS with a web-based application that would be easier to use and more adaptable. This opened the door to the development of Ellis.

The Ellis project has a large development team comprised of both internal resources and external consultants. These DoIT employees are actively benefitting from a close mentoring relationship with the consultant staff. These resources are also serving double duty working on Ellis while actively developing the Project Accounting System (PAS). PAS and Ellis are sharing project resources due to the close relationship between the two applications.

Consultant Tom Acree is leading the development and business analysis of Ellis. Consultant Jim Cook is the architect for both Ellis and PAS and is also the

project lead for the PAS project. Under the guidance of these two individuals are three development efforts. Each of these three tasks are being coordinated by Adam Frumkin, a consulting project manager.

The first development effort involves the creation of the system infrastructure and implementation of the systems business rules. The DoIT team consists of Dave Ferguson and Dan Male who are receiving one-on-one mentoring by consultants Joel Peach and Mike Wolf. Another consultant, Brian Campbell is also involved



with this portion of the project.

The second effort is focused on crafting the graphical user interface. Ellis will be developed as a web application, with Tom Acree and Jon Ardnt designing the system. DoIT employees Zack Mancini and Katie Stevens are receiving first-class training from Jon during this process.

Lastly, the PAS development effort involves a rewrite of the Current Bill System, and is led by DoIT employee Scott Stillion and Greg Alfred, a consultant. Stillion and Alfred are revamping the billing system

into a more simplified and flexible approach under the guidance of Jim Cook.

Much of the business analysis to this point has been actively facilitated by Tom Acree working closely with Tony Goddard. Goddard has coordinated with many ODOT staff members, especially two volunteers: District 1 Planning and Programs Administrator Kirk Slusher, and District 8 Production Administrator Rex Dickey. Their opinions helped the system engineers design the program to answer the customer's needs.

Under the direct supervision of Shobna and Capital Programs Management Administrator Tony Goddard, the development of Ellis has entered a new phase. DoIT members reviewed a prototype for Ellis last month, and are working on making changes based on their preliminary tests. Soon, larger groups of ODOT employees will be brought in to test the application and be used to make further refinements. Ellis will have an initial roll-out in June 2002, with some selected users trying the system. Ellis will be made available to all of the department the following

August.

Updates on the Ellis Project can be found on the Web at : <http://itcfs002/ellis/default.htm>.



Meg Martindale/Central Office

Sara Davis and Meghan Martindale

Central Office

Edward Kroman has been snapping photos from a bird's-eye view for ODOT since 1991, spending his days as an Aerial Photographer in the Office of Aerial Engineering.

His job consists of taking aerial photos for ODOT's districts and Central Office. His duties also include scheduling and mapping the course of his flights. He processes and annotates the film, and then archives the negatives from his pictures.

Archiving has become an important aspect of the job – one Kroman is quite proud of. "We all have worked very hard to keep up these archives and have them available to not only ODOT, but other agencies," he said. Outside agencies rely on archived photographs to reveal items that could impact future development in the area. There are 2,100 rolls of film in the Office of Aerial Engineering archives which have been shot since 1936.

Getting a good photograph is often difficult. Obstacles such as weather affect the quality of photographs. The skies must be clear before Kroman take flight, and he said the right conditions are hard to come by. A perfect flying day is typically found in summer months. Mapping season, however is in the winter because there are fewer leaves on the trees. "The

window of opportunity we have to get good pictures is very small, so we find ourselves extremely busy with projects when we do have a good day." He usually shoots 200 projects a year.

Kroman uses a variety of film to capture the perfect shot for each project. If he is mapping, the best film to use is black and white. Color film is used to recognize locations and display shots. Infrared film is used to show natural gas lines and growth of vegetation. "The right film, can either make or break a shot," said Kroman.

Advancements in technology have greatly impacted the aerial photography industry, however finding the right spot for the shot hasn't changed too much. Kroman still uses a map as well as landmarks to find the location before snapping the photo through his camera.

Kroman uses the Global Positioning System (GPS) to assist him in finding sites he is to photograph. GPS is a worldwide radio-navigation system formed from a constellation of 24 satellites and their ground stations. It uses these "man-made stars" as reference points to calculate positions accurate to a matter of meters. Markers placed on the ground by engineers send signals to Kroman's computer

in the plane above to let him know he is on

Not only have the advancements with the aerial photography industry, but the equipment use of digital cameras and computers have

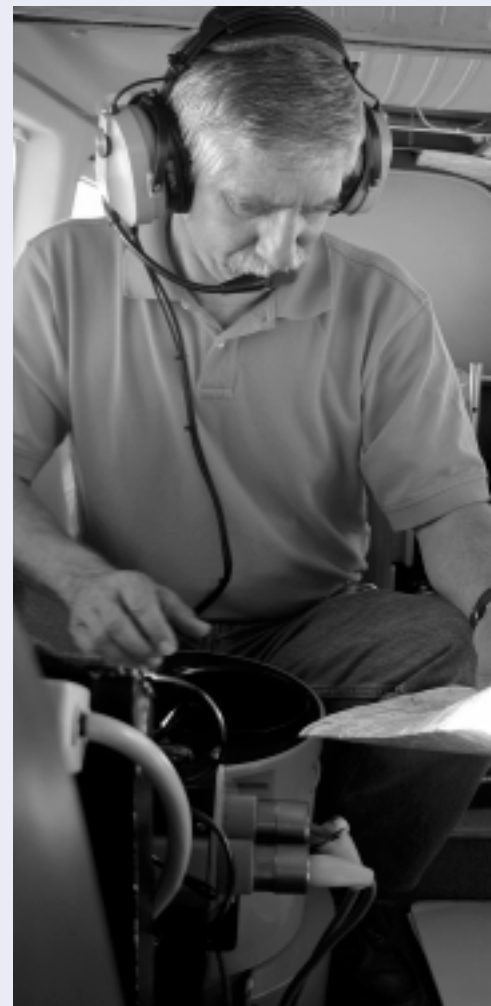
Kroman was born in Argentina and got his military training in the Argentine Air Force before moving to the U.S. in 1981. Before he worked as a surveyor in New York and got his

Kroman's love for flying extends beyond his job. When he isn't working you can catch him in the sky flying a small plane.

Kroman resides in Hilliard with his wife and two children. He is an Aerial Engineer, and their 12-year-old son

Kroman enjoys his job and the constant challenge it presents.

"I love my job. It is so refreshing to see an aerial view of the world every day."



Ed Kroman up in an airplane---need caption

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Meg Martindale/Central Office

Andrea L. Hernandez

District 6 PIO

When people say District 6's Jerry Lookabaugh's life has gone to the dogs, they are telling the truth. The 19-year Roadside Department veteran and wife Annette have literally given their lives to rescue lost or homeless canines.

It all started nine years ago when Annette saw an abandoned Harlequin Great Dane in the back of a Sheriff's car. At the time the Sheriff's Department had to keep local strays in a plywood box at the water plant. Annette told the officer that she would take the dog before she would let it spend the night in that little box. Later that night the officer said that if she showed up the next day, she could have the dog, "papers and all!"

After that, the word spread to local agencies and neighbors that these caring people were taking in dogs. "We have people calling us up for dogs all the time" Jerry said. "We even have some people on a waiting list before we get the dogs!"

For the past nine years the Lookabaughs have picked up or taken in strays for the humane society, city police, county sheriff, and the Ohio State Patrol. "My wife is known as the "Dog Lady" of Richwood. We've been doing this for so long that I guarantee that if a stray shows up she knows who the owner is, not just in Richwood but in all of Union County," he said.

The Union County Humane Society did not have a shelter for its overwhelming population of strays until the winter of 1999. Until that point, the Union County Dog Pound was the only agency responsible for the retrieval of stray dogs. If a dog wasn't claimed by the owner, its fate was sealed.

According to the Union County Humane Society, 1998 figures show that a total of 333 dogs went homeless in Union County that year. For the past three years

the annual figure has nearly doubled to an estimated 600.

Since the Lookabaughs started taking in stray dogs, they have cared for 1,800 dogs. Out of the 1,800 only four had to be put to sleep because they were too mean or out of control.

When thinking of some of the dogs that do come back to the Lookabaugh home, Jerry recalled one that has been reappearing for years. "There is one dog named Mandy that returns to our home every time it storms. I guess she just runs scared from the sound of thunder. We know to expect her. When she shows up



Robert McDannold and Tony Lamey, members of ACE riding Face Off at King's Island.

Family Photo

we let her in and she goes straight to the crate we have for her," he said. "We also expect to get a call from her owner who tells us when he'll come and pick her up, usually after the storm."

He said that he does not charge owners for rescuing or providing them a new pet. He will, however, take donations if anyone wishes to give. "We go through about 300 pounds of dog food every two weeks. Some money comes from donations and some comes from my pocket, but it is a labor of love."

Taft Breaks Ground on US 30 Expansion

Rhonda Pees

District 1 PIO

NEVADA - Out in the middle of a field on a sweltering summer day, Governor Bob Taft stood with Director Gordon Proctor and District Deputy Director Norman R. Redick and tossed a few shovelfuls of ceremonial dirt into the air.

The traditional ground breaking ceremony has been done a million times before, but when it's in your own backyard, it's special.

Taft and Proctor were the speakers for the ceremony which officially began construction of new, four-lane U.S. 30 from Upper Sandusky in Wyandot County to Bucyrus in Crawford County. The event was held on the Wyandot/Crawford County line with more than 100 people attending.

"It's great to be here to help celebrate another major phase of an expanded U.S. 30 which will provide Ohioans with good, safe, efficient travel," said Taft.

Taft commended ODOT and Director Proctor for implementing the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC), a board of Ohio business leaders which determines which major highway construction projects around the state will be awarded construction funding.

Taft also commended Redick, the District 1 staff and Congressman Mike Oxley for their commitment to the project.

Special mention was made by Taft of former district employee Mike Logan "who made the U.S. 30 project the focus of his ODOT career," and Russ Slonecker of the district production department who oversees the U.S. 30 projects. "You are why we are breaking ground today," Taft said.



U.S. Route 23 resurfacing project in Pike County.

There were 72 property owners affected on this stretch of the U.S. 30 project and Taft recognized their sacrifice. "Thank you for your patience and support," he said.

As with any other highway expansion, Taft expects some level of economic development to come to the area as a result of the new U.S. 30. "This project will be a catalyst for economic development," he said.

Proctor finished the ceremony with a promise. "All of U.S. 30 will be widened under the Taft administration except for the Beaverdam stretch," he said.



Research Drives Highway Design Nationwide

Michelle May
Central Office

Although roadway design affects most Ohioians, few of us truly understand how it works.

The curvature of a road, the slope of a lane and the position of a ramp relative to another are all carefully orchestrated based on decades of highway research meant to optimize the comfort, safety and convenience of motorists.

It is a nationwide effort that has evolved over the past 50 years and is embodied in what is widely considered the “Bible” of highway design: the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) “Green Book.”

Since the inception of the interstate highway network, AASHTO has produced the Green Book, which describes how roadway elements such as barrier and shoulder widths are chosen and the research to support it.

AASHTO is a national association whose members include state departments of transportation, county engineers, city leaders, and the Federal Highway Administration. These groups working in tandem make roadway design decisions based on volumes of research done each year to improve highway safety.

The book also carries the weight of federal law. Any organization using federal funds for projects must abide by the standards.

The Green Book stresses the relationship between highway design and function. Roadway features such as sight distances at an intersection, the alignment of a road and safety features such as guardrail, are all determined by the functional class or characteristic of a roadway, the design speed, volume of traffic and topography.

Functional class is the hierarchy of streets and highways. Roadways are organized by the type of service they provide from local streets serving local traffic, to collector roads that transition local traffic to arterials, including high-speed, high-volume freeways and interstates. This organization recognizes that individual roads do not serve traffic independently, but move traffic together through a network of roads serving homes, business and long-distance traffic.

Once functional class is determined, design speed, traffic volumes and topography are taken into account. The design speed is the appropriate speed traffic can travel given its topography, nearby land use and functional class. Traffic volumes also play an important role, as design features are also based on 20-year traffic projections. Combined, these elements determine the roadway features motorists see and experience.

“The higher the roadway class, the faster the speed and the higher the traffic volume, the better the roadway features must be to serve motorists,” said Larry Sutherland, ODOT deputy director of Roadway Engineering.

Making decisions about roadway features is a tough business for state transportation departments. While people within a community may think a new interchange will relieve congestion or a new guardrail will prevent accidents, highway designers

need research and data to be sure.

“Things may appear black and white or one dimensional on the surface, but that’s rarely the case in engineering,” said Sutherland. “While you may fix one problem, you could worsen another to the point that you would be better off doing nothing.”

Highway research plays an important role in helping highway officials make responsible decisions. Last year, the federal government sponsored more than \$437 million in research and studies in search of better materials, designs, construction and operational practices on our highways. Millions more are spent by state, local and private entities each

year.

“The hard part of engineering is there are always trade-offs,” said Ray Derr, senior analyst for the National Cooperative Highway Research Program in Washington, D.C. “But the research gives state DOTs the tools to help them make those decisions.”

The research is paying off. Fatalities and accidents on our nation’s roadways have fallen dramatically over the past 60 years. In Ohio, fatalities dropped from about 12 deaths per million vehicle miles traveled in 1940 to about one in 1998.

“The system improves bit by bit,” said Dirk Gross, ODOT senior roadway engineer. “Every time we reconstruct a road, we bring it up to the current standards. It’s a never-ending system of improvements that continues to make our roads safer for all of Ohio’s traveling public.”

“The hard part of engineering is there are always trade-offs.”
Ray Derr, National Cooperative Highway Research Program

FYI Employee Commuter Choice Program Offered

Dave Seech

Central Office

Gov. Taft announced the State of Ohio Commuter Choice Program in Sept. 7.

State workers will benefit from this program by using pretax income to purchase bus passes, offset vanpool costs, or offset parking costs at a facility from which an employee commutes via transit, vanpool, or carpool.

Ohio is the first state in the nation to offer this federally approved Commuter Choice benefit to all State workers. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century significantly changed the Internal Revenue Service Code provision affecting transit and vanpool benefits considered as qualified transportation fringe benefits. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has called this initiative "Commuter Choice."

Here's an example of how a State employee saves money using the program. Jeff normally buys a monthly bus pass for \$50 after cashing his paycheck. However, Jeff decides to register online for the program and the cost of the bus pass is automatically deducted from his gross income. Consequently, Jeff saves on the income and payroll taxes that would have been deducted from the income used to pay for the bus pass. Depending on his tax bracket, Jeff could save up to \$20 by using the program. The pass is also conveniently delivered to his home which saves him the time of purchasing a pass each month.

In order to participate in the program, a State employee can register on-line at www.wageworks.com or call 1-887-924-3967. The registration deadline is the 10th of each month to participate the following month. However, an employee can subscribe for an automatic benefit by checking the "Every Month" button when they sign up. The program offers a great deal of flexibility, convenience, and depending on your tax bracket, can save State employees up to 40 percent of their commuting costs.

The goal of the State of Ohio Employee Commuter Choice Program is to increase transit ridership and serve as a model of inter-agency cooperation. Hopefully, the program will compel State employees to use transit and encourage other public and private sector employers to follow Ohio's example by participating in Commuter Choice. We encourage ODOT employees to consider transit, vanpool and carpool options for their commute to work. For more information on the Commuter Choice Program, you can access FTA's web site at: www.fta.dot.gov/library/policy/cc/cc.html.

Transcript

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Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation system that links Ohio to a global economy while preserving the state's unique character and enhancing its quality of life.

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