



# Transcript

The Ohio Department of Transportation Employee Newsletter  
December 2002

*Tornado 2002*





# Strategic Initiative 5

## ODOT leaves no community behind

**John Hackley**  
Central Office

As motorists drive through Ohio, their car travels from interstates or state routes onto city or county roads with little interruption. However, at times the process to improve these routes by state or local officials can be a bit bumpy.

This year ODOT's Strategic Initiative Five focuses on strategies to improve the condition of the transportation network throughout all of Ohio. Through this initiative, ODOT will work with local partners to improve the condition of the local road, bridge, airport and transit infrastructure concentrating on project selection and project delivery.

Ohio is one of a handful of states that allow local governments to administer federal transportation funds. However, this can be difficult for local officials because of their unfamiliarity with complicated federal requirements.

The amount of assistance ODOT provides is determined at the district level by the size of work performed by the local government on past federal projects or projects they have completed using other sources of transportation funding such as Issue Two - a one cent gasoline tax allocated through the Ohio Public Works Commission.

"We feel pretty privileged to have this type of program in Ohio because there have been cases where the locals can design a project and sell it in a shorter period of time," said ODOT Deputy Director of Local Projects Carla Cefaratti. "However, when a community needs assistance ODOT is available to provide it."

Assistance at the district level is provided by a designated Local Public Agency (LPA) Coordinator who acts as a liaison between ODOT and the local representative. Because environmental and right of way issues are often a cause of concern for county engineers, ODOT has hired consultants to guide them through those processes if needed. This strategy may eventually be expanded to assist other local officials.

"When the local hits a snag, the LPA Coordinators are the single point of contact, and they have the resources of the entire district office behind them," said

Cefaratti. "Many of these federal regulations can seem daunting, but the fear of the requirement is sometimes greater than what it takes to comply with it. Because of our experience in this area, we can help to break down these tasks and make them more manageable for the locals."

In addition to the personnel assigned to assist local governments, ODOT offers training to explain the process of administering federally funded transportation projects and has developed a manual that illustrates the process.

"Our eventual goal is to create consistent quality across the state so motorists can expect the same level of performance wherever they travel," said Cefaratti. "Although there is no requirement to do this, we want to do it because it's good government."

ODOT has already compiled an assessment of local bridge conditions and is devising a system to monitor local pavement conditions. These assessments which would be similar to ODOT's pavement and bridge condition ratings could be used to prioritize projects that address the worst conditions first.



*The Ohio State University/Lane Avenue bridge project is an example of a local project using federal money.*

Photo / Angie Cope

# ODOT workers lend helping hand to tornado victims

**Rhonda Pees**  
*District 1*

It was the kind of storm destruction you see on the evening news that always happens somewhere else. This time it happened here.

Four District 1 counties were declared disaster areas by Gov. Bob Taft after a storm system ripped through Ohio on Sunday, November 10, spawning as many as 15 possible tornados, several of which found their way to Van Wert, Paulding, Putnam and Hancock counties

Two people in Putnam County were killed in the storm. Two people in Van Wert County were killed and one in Seneca County near the Hancock County line. Several were injured. Of the district counties affected, Van Wert County suffered the most damage.

The tornado through Van Wert County cut a 14-mile path and was estimated to be a half mile wide, said Don Taylor, Van Wert County manager. The tornado came within a half mile of the Van Wert County ODOT garage, he said.

"It's a good thing we had a 28-minute warning," said Taylor, complimenting the Emergency Management Agency in Van Wert County for alerting the community. "They did their job."

Taylor said approximately 20 utility poles downed by the storm caused the closure of U.S. Route 127. U.S. Route 224 was also closed because of storm damage. "Our first objective was to get our roads cleared and open," he said.

Taylor offered the state's equipment and personnel immediately. "I told them at a drop of a hat we'll have as much equip-

ment as they want." Doug Smalley, district quality assurance technician, helped with coordinating ODOT's equipment.

"We were there to help immediately and we were glad to do so. Helping when we can is our responsibility to the communities we serve," said Norman R. Redick, District 1 deputy director.

ODOT crews and equipment from Van Wert County went to work immediately with clearing debris from state routes and assisting the county and townships with closing their roads. ODOT personnel from neighboring Allen County assisted as well.

From November 10-16, Van Wert ODOT personnel logged 446 hours of overtime, and as of November 19 had hauled 226 loads of debris to the recycling plant. ODOT personnel worked from 7:30 a.m. until dark for more than a week on cleanup, said Taylor.

The majority of the damage in Putnam County occurred near the Continental area said Joe Schumaker, assistant Putnam County manager. U.S. 224 at Ottoville was closed for a short while because of storm debris.

In Paulding County the storm clipped the east corner of Grover Hill and completely destroyed the burg of Roselms said

Marshall Davis, Paulding County manager. "Roselms is gone," he said. A church in Roselms was destroyed along with the township house, maintenance building and several houses.

There were no state routes closed in Paulding County as a result of the storm. ODOT forces worked throughout the week with the county and township forces to clear debris from roadways, said Davis. "We'll be picking this stuff up next year."

The traffic from people driving through wishing to see storm damage hampered cleanup efforts. "It's been a nightmare with all the sightseers," said Davis.

The heavy steel I-beam posts which once held three large informational highway signs had some of the most notable damage. "The I-beams were like pretzels," said Mike Halker, district traffic manager. "A section of one of the signs was found approximately 20 miles away."

"We cleaned up all of our right of way in one day," said Ron Kear, Hancock County manager. The majority of the damage was centered within the city of Fostoria where a school and the hospital were damaged.

The Van Wert County ODOT garage was the staging area where volunteers and workers gathered each morning to receive the day's agenda. "The volunteer response has been tremendous," said Taylor. "They came from as far away as Michigan. Buses from local schools were used in between their routes to shuffle volunteers from the garage out to the cleanup areas."



*ODOT trucks line up to aid in the cleanup of the destruction site.*

*Photo / Rhonda Pees*



# Director's Column

## Tornado destroys towns, not spirits

**Gordon Proctor**

Monday morning, at 7:00 a.m., Nov. 11, the sun rose over Van Wert to reveal a tattered and torn American flag flapping in front of two-stories of tangled sheet metal and insulation. The day before the pile of rubble had been a factory in Van Wert's busy industrial park. Now, it was one more frightening reminder of a tornado's fury.

County Manager Don Taylor stood and chatted in the raw morning wind with the county's emergency management coordinator. The fire chief came by and compared notes. The local State Patrol lieutenant visited with Don and soon the county engineer came by. The engineer's two-building complex was destroyed down the road. Two large piles of metal collapsed upon his dump trucks housed inside.

Before the sun had fully risen to reveal the extent of the damage, the ODOT county manager had touched based with nearly every local emergency responder. Don had been up and on the job at 6 a.m. even though he and his crews had not stopped the night before 1 a.m. Once home, he had been too hopped up to sleep and Don was up again with maybe two hours' rest. The fatigue wasn't too bad in the early sunlight, but by noon Don knew he'd be dragging.

In Van Wert, in Continental in Putnam County and Port Clinton in Ottawa County the freakish twisters ripped through late Sunday afternoon. As so often happens with tornadoes, nightfall soon comes. Friends, families and neighbors are searching desperately through the night for survivors. Deadly power lines block roads, every abandoned car could hold a victim and every destroyed house may hold a tragedy.

Don heard the sirens the afternoon before and huddled his family and neighbors in his basement. As soon as the storm passed, he headed for work. He called in a couple of crews and they spent the night erecting barricades on all local roads. Downed power lines, trees, wrecked cars and debris made roads impassable. The local police and sheriff asked ODOT to barricade the roads to prevent electrocutions, accidents or looting. The ODOT crews soon exhausted their supply of barricades and borrowed what ever they could find to close all the roads. They worked until 1 a.m. and then went home awaiting further requests.

The next morning, the local police, sheriff and state patrol thanked Don for handling that task. It allowed them to search for victims, aid the injured and coordinate rescues. Next, Don offered whatever service was needed. Clear the roads, move downed trees, loan equipment, you name it and we'll help, he offered.

The county engineer soon asked to use the old ODOT county garage because his facility was destroyed. No problem. Someone called to say a stop sign was down. I'll get on the radio, he said. At the 10 a.m. coordination meeting of all emergency responders, local officials asked if ODOT could provide equipment and personnel. Let us know what you need, Don said.

So it went all day and all week in Van Wert, Paulding, Putnam and Ottawa coun-

ties. Lending help, providing crews, pitching in wherever it was requested. ODOT quietly provided whatever it could to help communities get back on their feet.

ODOT is a tremendous resource in times like these. We respond immediately. Our people know their jobs. They live in the community and they know what is needed. Everybody knows the ODOT personnel and know they can depend upon them. The county garage becomes an integral part of the rescue effort.

After a tornado, searching for and rescuing victims always is the first task. Clearing the roads is the second. Until the roads are open, people can't get back to their homes. Their friends can't help them salvage belongings. Insurance adjusters can't arrive. Nothing happens until the roads open.

Once the roads open, the locals spend a day in dazed assessment. They stumble through their rubble. Friends come by and cry on shoulders. They talk about their near misses and how lucky they've been. The cry for those who lost more than possessions.

After a couple of days, the locals ask for help in clearing the final trees, hauling debris and making emergency road and sign repairs. ODOT pitches in and provides much needed manpower and equipment. By the third and fourth days, people are tired. The adrenaline is gone and fatigue remains. Then, the extra help from ODOT is really appreciated.

Generally, after a week, the emergency clean up winds down and the ODOT crews return to their regular duties. Until they are needed again.

# Job Profile: No Magic Here....

## ODOT's office of payroll help employees get their money

**Ron Poole**  
Central Office

Contrary to popular belief, paychecks do not materialize out of thin air every two weeks. Shocking, yes, but true. The process by which ODOT employees get their salaries does not involve the skills of a conjurer ala Harry Potter, but through the dedicated service of members of the Office of Payroll. For more than 1,300 workers who call Central Office home away from home, account clerks Rosanne Dixon, Deb Moffitt, Tim Vann, Debbie Speakman and Administrative Assistant Gina Macioce are the people making sure salaries and benefits are paid accurately and on time.

This group runs a two-week marathon, with the kick-off starting every Monday following payday Fridays. Payroll collects the time sheets from each cost center (office or division) with batch sheets showing their totals in numbers of both time

sheets and monetary amounts. The time sheets go to DoIT where all the hours, rates, codes, social security numbers, disability benefits and other designated information for everyone at Central Office is keyed into a computer system. Vouchers for people being paid for their land use by the department are also processed. Payroll aids things by running their own reports to find errors in time sheets. Payroll personnel must investigate and correct any errors or omitted data. All the information is in the system by mid-Tuesday. As with all tasks involved in payroll and benefits, the deadlines are inflexible and rather unforgiving of mistakes.

The time sheet information is sent to the Department of Administrative Services for the authorization of all salaries. But just the fact the money is coming does not end things for the accountants.

"I know people think we're only busy at the start of each pay cycle, but they have no idea," said Moffitt. "We are responsible for a number of functions based on the information we handle, and any problem we have at a certain point affects every other process following it."

Payroll handles the processing of information in each of the following actions: calculating the payment for disability and childbirth leave; entering health insurance as well as dental and vision insurance to the DAS system for regular employees during open enrollment, and for new employees throughout the year; working with the Office of Personnel on Workers Compensation benefits; processing dependant care and payroll deductions; working with Deferred Compensation; verifying employees' final pay and other research requested by PERS; and performing Quality Assurance Reviews. They also handle time sheet information for each of the 12 districts.

Adding to the stress and responsibilities of these tasks are their restrictions. Payroll accountants must take turns from year to year to be with their families during holidays and are expected to come in during emergencies. They think of the job first even when they are sick. And while there is not a lot of recognition when things go smoothly, there's plenty of attention when things go wrong.

"We answer questions and try to help whenever there is a problem with payment or benefits, but it is not always easy," said Dixon. "We are always under the gun with deadlines, but we do take the time to help an upset visitor."

So it is like this - a handful of employees helps all kinds of people get their needed funds, yet few know or appreciate the miracles they pull off every two weeks. These jobs have their drawbacks, but this group does know how to get through it all.

"We really do work well together," says Moffitt. "We work as a team and make each other laugh, and that helps."



Left to Right: Accountants Tim Vann, Deb Moffitt (seated) and Rosanne Dixon can count on each other to get the job done.

# Secret recipe “steers” District 6 family into being grand champions

**Elana Stoia and Cindy Bridges**

*District 6*

Ed Shonkwiler a highway worker II in Madison county has had an extra bounce in his step since the Franklin County fair. His nine-year-old son Justin's steer won the Grand Champion Award.

This was Justin's first year in the Pleasant Valley 4-H club in Madison County so he had a lot to learn about raising and being a champion. Who better to learn it from than his dad? Ed has been attempting for the past 20 years to reach the prestigious goal that Justin accomplished his first year out. The elder Shonkwiler has been involved in the cattle business since 1972 and has won several awards himself.

“I have had champion females, reserve champion cow and calf, and reserve champion bull but there is no comparison to the feeling you have when your own son has the grand champion steer.”

Not only does Ed work full time at ODOT but he and his family currently own a 50-acre farm where there are lots of chores to be done. Since it was Justin's first year, it was a family effort taking care of the steer. Raising Charlie

was a 12-month commitment that started in October 2001. Justin's routine consisted of exercising the steer by walking him at least one mile, followed by washing and grooming each day. Charlie ate a SPECIAL SECRET feed ration twice a day.

Since Justin had never shown, he and Charlie went to a few steer shows so he could see what went on in the show ring and how the judges view the animals.

Justin's steer was a purebred Shorthorn steer purchased from a breeder in Cadiz, Ohio and weighed 750 pounds at six-months-old. As the Grand Champion Steer Charlie weighed in at 1,310 pounds. Charlie was purchased by B&B Forklift for an undisclosed amount. The amount set a new record at the Franklin County fair.

The competitors ages ranged from nine to 19 years, male and female. Along with showing his steer Justin had to give a presentation to the judges including detailed records of everything that went into raising Charlie.

“Things were not always peachy,” Ed remembers. “Being only nine years old there were times when Justin wanted to go swimming with his friends and taking care of Charlie wasn't as much fun as the pool.” During these times Ed and his wife Kendall had to step in with support and guidance. All of Justin's hard work and dedication paid off when he



*District 6 Highway Worker Ed Shonkwiler's son Justin, won grand champion steer on his first try at the Franklin County Fair.*

*Photo Courtesy of Ed Shonkwiler*

won reserve champion beef feeder, 2<sup>nd</sup> in showmanship class, and class winner with a heifer. Receiving either trophies, cash awards or both.

According to Ed, being part of a 4-H club promotes positive youth development. “Raising Charlie enabled Justin to realize that knowledge, hard work and commitment not only brought out the champion in Charlie but most importantly brought out the champion in himself,” Ed said. “It was a great experience for the whole family... and yes, we have started preparing our next steer for the 2003 show season!”

# ODOT Workers Serve As Resource to Columbus Author

**Michael Cull**  
Central Office

The expertise of two ODOT professionals was helpful in producing a handsome book that celebrates Ohio's rural architecture.



The book – Building Ohio: A Traveler's Guide to Ohio's Rural Architecture – is 417 pages of pictures, drawings and word sketches of court-houses, offices, stores and churches. It also includes tours of hog barns, frat houses and Longaberger's seven story office in the shape of a basket.

Author Jane Ware, who lives in the Columbus suburb of Bexley, credits the dozens of experts who directed her eight years of research. But she has special thoughts for Mary Anne Reeves of Central Office and Wesley Clark of District 10.

In a telephone interview, Ware called Reeves "one of my very original sources...She told me lots of things that ended up in the book. Over seven years, I called her time after time. She is an extremely nice person to work with."

Reeves gets a notable amount of ink in Ware's book. On Page 305, Ware writes: "She was the first person to tell me about many of the buildings in this guide, like Barnesville's Presbyterian Church, or the Lock Keeper's House in Marietta, or the town of Shawnee in Perry County.

"But the very first place on her list, the one she talked about the longest, was the Athens Lunatic Asylum, an array of buildings now called The Ridges. Later that day she drove me up the hill so that I could see for myself. She was right. It is an amazing place."

Reeves, a Connecticut native who lives in Athens, has a master's degree in art history from Florida State University. She began work for the Ohio Historical Society's Preservation Office in 1984 and came to work for ODOT in April 2001. Her duties with the Office of Environmental Services – on the Third Floor of Central Office – include checking to see if properties affected by ODOT projects are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Wesley Clarke, who calls himself "an environmental planner" in District 10, gets a mention on Page 342 of



Ware's book for guidance on prehistoric Native American burial mounds in Marietta. "I was happy to help her in any way I could," said Clarke, 50, who has been with the department about 20 years. He recalls talking with Ware on the phone and forwarding research on earthworks. Ware said he was "very helpful" dating Native American sites.



*Building Ohio: a Traveler's Guide to Ohio's Rural Architecture* is Jane Ware's third book.

A previous effort, *Building Ohio, An architectural Guide to Urban Ohio*, was also published by Orange Frazer Press of Wilmington, Ohio. Both books can be ordered from Orange Frazer at 1-(800) 852-9332 or at Box 214, 37 1/2 W. Main St. Wilmington, 45177 or [www.orangefrazer.com](http://www.orangefrazer.com). The books cost \$22 each.

Ware's principal adviser was Douglas Graf, associate professor of architecture at Ohio State University. According to Graf, Ohio was a wealthier state compared to other states in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and money was expended on public squares and public buildings that were more carefully detailed and better built – worthy subjects for an architecture book.

The state never recovered its pre-Depression wealth and importance: In 1929, Ohio's per capita income was 11<sup>th</sup> of 48 states. In 1999, it was 25<sup>th</sup> of 50.

And Ohio's public buildings have declined: "There's a complete abrogation of public responsibility," contends Graf. "We've replaced civic life with shopping. There are no stores, only chains. No builders, only developers. No neighborhoods, only developments. There is no possibility of place."

Photos top to bottom:  
Mary Anne Reeves, Central Office  
Wesley Clark, District 10  
Ware's Book, Building Ohio: A Traveler's Guide to Ohio's Rural Architecture



## FYI

Central Office employees are invited to attend an hour-long presentation on ODOT's finances by Julie Ray, ODOT Deputy Director of Finance, on December 18. This presentation will be the second in a four-part continuing education series on ODOT's core business activities.

All Central Office employees, with supervisor approval, are encouraged to attend the hour-long session which will begin at 1:30 p.m.

On January 15, Matt Selhorst will speak on the state of the transportation system and on February 19, Bill Lozier will conclude the series with an update on the ODOT County Work Plan.

## Correction:

In the "ODOT Ready for Winter Weather" article, which appeared in the October/November issue of Transcript, we mistakenly reported ODOT uses 631,000 tons of salt per year. ODOT actually uses 479,800 tons of salt per year based on the past 10 years. In addition, we reported last year ODOT spent \$45 million and used 720,000 tons of salt when actually ODOT spent \$26 million and used 344,200 tons of salt. We apologize to our readers for the error.



# Transcript

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
1980 W. BROAD ST.  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43223  
(614) 614-466-7170 (FAX) 614-644-8662

Visit our Web site at [www.dot.state.oh.us](http://www.dot.state.oh.us)



Bob Taft, Governor  
Gordon Proctor, ODOT Director

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS  
J. Brian Cunningham, Editor  
Joel Hunt, Managing Editor  
Leslie Dellovade, Layout/Design Editor

PRINTED BY THE ODOT PRINT SHOP

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.

Storm destruction cover photo provided by District 2. See story on page 3.