

Transcript

The Ohio Department of Transportation Employee Newsletter

May 2002

WASHINGTON
EAST VIRGINIA
WITH
GENERAL
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CONFEDERATE
RAIDERS

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New Strategic Initiatives Focus On Technology, Efficiency

Joel Hunt
Central Office

It has been said that opportunity without strategy is a distraction. That is why, for the last several years, ODOT has developed strategic initiatives to strengthen the department's current operations and introduce new and innovative processes into its day-to-day operations.

Last month at the annual executive leadership conference, ODOT unveiled its 13 strategic initiatives for fiscal year (FY) 2003. Six are a continuation of last year's initiatives and seven aim at strengthening other areas of ODOT's day-to-day operations. Each will be the subject of an in-depth article in an upcoming issue of Transcript. A complete listing of the FY 2003 Strategic Initiatives will be available on ODOT's Web site later this month.

Strategic Initiative One: *Implement a modern, customer-friendly project management system and the Associated Business Rules (continued from FY 2002).* Still scheduled for early FY 2003, ODOT's computerized Project Development Management System (PDMS) will be replaced with a completely updated and Web-based version known as Ellis. This first phase of Ellis will provide a customer friendly and flexible platform that can be easily altered to include new information to meet future needs within the department's program planning and project delivery processes.

As with any information management system, Ellis will only be as good as the data entered into it. As such, a Policy and Business Rules document aimed at governing program and project development processes and their interrelated use of Ellis will be issued at the same time.

Strategic Initiative Two: *Implement strategies to maximize traffic flow on the state highway system.* At the heart of this initiative is a congestion management system, driven by a cyclical assessment of the highway system's level of service. The system identifies the worst-congested locations in Ohio, which the department will then use to inform capital program development and operations activities.

Much of the work will require partnership with local public agencies. In the largest urban areas, metropolitan planning organizations pursue congestion management on a regional level. The department will coordinate its efforts with these organizations to ensure public resources are spent to the greatest effect. On the most congested segments of the highway system, ODOT will implement real-time traffic operations and management strategies to maximize the throughput of congested corridors.

Strategic Initiative Three: *Develop a sound, effective crash reporting and analysis system for safety.* The crash system will support information needed to effectively and efficiently reduce the frequency and severity of crashes across Ohio. The system will provide weekly crash trends and crash analysis which will alert areas of concern to key individuals in the department.

Strategic Initiative Four: *Update Access Ohio (continued from FY 2002).* The updated Access Ohio will identify changes in traffic volumes, mobility, and population that have occurred since 1995, and that are projected to occur to the year 2030. It will include bridge and pavement conditions, sufficiency analyses, new corridor analyses, freight

analysis, congestion analysis, and other system analysis. Many of these projects are in the planning stages and will be implemented according to the availability of financial resources.

Strategic Initiative Five: *ODOT will enhance its partnership with local governments to improve Ohio's transportation system.* ODOT will work with local partners to develop an overall strategy to improve the condition of the local road, bridge, airport and transit infrastructure concentrating on project selection and delivery.

Strategic Initiative Six: *ODOT will improve the quality of its construction plans (continued from FY 2002).* Modifications to construction plans during development, i.e. construction, design, environmental or planning, can be costly and can cause delays as well as disruptions to the traveling public and communities. The establishment of "constructibility" reviews will ensure the department's plans provide contractors with clear, concise information that can be used to prepare a competitive, cost-effective bid. The constructibility review will be conducted by an ODOT team on all major new, multi-lane and complex projects early in the design stages to ensure the projects are biddable, buildable, and cost-effective.

Strategic Initiative Seven: *Redefining county priorities (continued from FY 2002).* This initiative started as a way to bring focus and direction to the department's county maintenance efforts. The task now is to build a history of cost information to enable the county managers and highway management



administrators to make informed decisions about operations. The decision of what to perform in-house versus contracting should become evident.

Strategic Initiative Eight: *Continue to improve snow and ice control.* Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of ODOT's snow and ice control operations must continue each year. By taking advantage of new technologies, the department will be a national leader in the practice.

Strategic Initiative Nine: *Build bridges faster, smarter, better (continued from FY 2002).* This initiative will result in a toolbox of techniques that can be applied to projects early in the design process to reduce the length of time it takes to construct a bridge, thereby shortening the overall time of construction.

Strategic Initiative Ten: *Improve construction administration (continued from FY 2002).* Initiatives 7-10 from 2002 will continue the emphasis on culture change with both ODOT and the construction industry. By working together toward successful completion of projects, both entities can benefit. Quicker project completion and fewer claims are the desired outcomes.

Strategic Initiative Eleven: *Develop a strategy to better communicate and implement "ODOT Way" to all levels of the organization.* Some of the most successful large organizations such as Hewlett-Packard, Honda, and Smuckers often talk about the "Corporate Way." There is also an "ODOT Way," but it has not been clearly articulated or implemented throughout the organization.

When completed, this initiative should have clarified, on a total organizational ba-

sis, what ODOT does, why ODOT does it, what the measures of success are and how ODOT will continue to improve to make it better. Each departmental employee should be able to clearly articulate what their role is, how their success is measured, and how well ODOT is doing to achieve the stated goals.

Strategic Initiative Twelve: *Customer focus.* There are many forms by which ODOT gathers information from its external customers and reflects their needs into the department's day-to-day processes. There have been many methods used to gather customer input and incorporate the results into departmental goals, values, strategic initiatives and operating performance measures. However, the independent evaluation of ODOT's quality status in terms of the Ohio Award for Excellence identified areas where the department can improve its processes for both internal and external customer input.

Strategic Initiative Thirteen: *Improve ODOT's accounting information system for more effective decision making.* ODOT spends more than \$500 million annually on labor and operating costs to carry out ODOT's core business functions. It is critical the department effectively and efficiently manage these valuable resources to maximum benefit of the transportation system.

This initiative will improve ODOT's recording and use of the department's activity based cost accounting information in the following core business process areas: Production, Real Estate, Construction Inspection and Highway Management.

All ODOT employees will receive a 2003 Strategic Initiatives book at their respective Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting schedule is as follows:

May 23 - District 3 and District 6

June 12 - District 7 and District 8

June 27 - District 9 and District 10

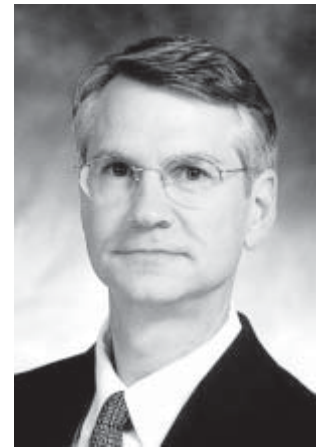
July 10 - District 12

July 25 - District 5 and District 11

July 30 - District 4

Quiet Contributions Impact Ohio

by Gordon Proctor



In a tray within a dark, cavernous machine shop lie small metal plates produced by ODOT machinist Paul Pittman. He takes out a plate and holds it easily in the palm of his hand while explaining it is a small welding gauge, used like a ruler, when measuring a weld. Off the shelf, a packet costs up to \$40. He produces them from scrap for a pittance. Between larger assignments, he fabricates them to keep busy and to save ODOT money.

Down in Athens County, a giant piece of metal is at work. It is a massive front loader brought in from a Minnesota iron mine to make the huge cuts in the Appalachian hills for the Athens-Meigs 33 project. Project engineer Pete Stanforth oversees the work of the loader, which is one of only four such machines in the world. Each scoop of the huge bucket picks up 22 tons of rock, shale and dirt 20 hours a day, six days a week. Each day it cuts 45,000 yards for the 12-mile corridor job.

Up in Allen County Kevin Wilson demonstrates his crew's new compressor and paint trailer. The crew cleans spalling concrete off of ODOT bridges, repairs it and reseals it to keep salt from penetrating the bridge. They add a soft, neutral almond color to the sealer so when they are done the bridge has clean, painted appearance and resists salt corrosion.

These people are just three selected at random from my visits around ODOT in only one week. I doubt they have ever met but they share a lot in common. They are among the 6,000 people of ODOT who quietly go about their jobs but who make their own contributions to Ohio.

The size, breadth, diversity and complexity of ODOT is amazing. The people of ODOT operate equipment, design construction plans, conduct biological and archaeological studies, produce Web sites, appraise property, promote transit ridership, fly airplanes, predict traffic volumes and perform other jobs the public never imagines. Despite their diversity they have one thing in common, they provide safety, convenience and efficiency to Ohio.

I've been asked to begin writing a monthly column for the *Transcript*. It is hard to do. There is so much to write about. The magnitude of our jobs and the amazing ingenuity with which 6,000 people approach them is enough to fill several books. My few words each month will only provide the palest shadow of what all really is accomplished here at ODOT.

We are responsible for 45,000 lane miles of highway, nearly 15,000 bridges, we assist with the nation's fifth largest bus fleet, we oversee one of the largest public airport networks in the country, we manage the country's fifth highest volume of traffic and the nation's third highest value of truck freight. We move Ohio, a state that if it were a sovereign nation would have the world's 14th largest economy.

In this column each month I want to focus on the challenges we face and how people such as Paul, Pete and Kevin overcome those challenges. I'll never run short of material.



HELPING THE HELPERS

ODOT Provides Training to Other Agencies Serving the Public

Ron Poole
Central Office

On a daily basis, members of the public call ODOT to find out if the department can aid them with some situation concerning a street in their hometown or city. Now, the department has found a new way to contribute to the services of cities and towns by providing training for municipal workers. ODOT has been creating and teaching courses in snow removal and the operation of heavy equipment.

ODOT has been partnering with other municipalities in order to share knowledge and increase service since last year. In fact, such partnerships have been a statewide effort supported by the Governor's Office. With this spirit in mind, officials from the city of Toledo approached department members about training some of their street workers in 2001. Officials saw the training as a way to encourage their employees to remain safe on the job, reduce traffic accidents and save money by reducing repair bills due to equipment misuse.

Brad Boseker, training supervisor with ODOT's Office of Quality and Organizational Development, was one of the employees first approached about this possibility. Boseker brought the idea to Anne Fornshell, then administrator of the office.

"I saw it as a great opportunity," Fornshell said. "Partnering with other governmental agencies to improve equipment operator skills benefits both the work force and the traveling public."

The training classes were set-up as a joint partnership, with the city of Toledo covering the students, equipment and expenses: ODOT supplying the instructors and course materials and Owens College - an area university - providing the location for classes.

According to Boseker, Toledo personnel have benefitted from two kinds of training this year:

"We modified our existing truck and



Pictured are the Northwest Regional Training Facility trainers. From left to right - Courtney Gaiter, Ed Bigger (in grader) Art Zimpfer and Jim Kleman. Photo by Rhonda Pees, District 1.

loader course for their benefit," he said. "Their snow plow operators received instruction, followed by a battery of tests given both in the classroom and on a controlled course. The second course trained heavy-equipment operators in the use of vehicles like the 25-ton steel wheel compactor and 20-ton dump trucks used for landfill operations. We also trained them on the Cat 950 front end loader and on Caterpillar D-7 and D-8 excavators for loading dump trucks."

ODOT trainers worked to increase their pupils' skill levels and depth perception while handling complex equipment. Courtney Gaiter, a regional equipment training specialist with the Office of Quality and Organizational Development, set up the courses and worked with the city workers. He found the experience to be rewarding.

"They were very receptive to us," said Gaiter. "The city had been looking for this kind of training from outside sources that would have charged them a great deal. By partnering we were able to train their employees and build their skills to conduct this type of training in the future."

Last month, ODOT received a letter of appreciation from the Human Resources department with the city praising the department's most recent heavy machinery class. The city already wants to hold additional training sessions with the department to help improve service further. And they are not the only ones: During this current fiscal year, the department has provided training to eight other agencies, including the city of Columbus and the Allen County Engineers Office. The department will continue to provide training as opportunities present themselves.

A Sunday Drive Any Day

By Paul Staley
Central Office

Imagine you are a contestant on the game show "The Weakest Link." Could you name a program at ODOT that combines scenic, cultural, historic, recreational, archeological and natural qualities?

If you answered the Ohio Scenic Byway Program then you are correct. If not, then you are the weakest link - good bye!

The Scenic Byway Program was created in 1991 by the Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. This federal legislation replaced the old scenic highway program created during the 1960s. ODOT officially established Ohio's program in 1994. Since then, ODOT has designated 14 byways in 44 counties that consist of more than 1,000 miles of roadway.

Two byways - CanalWay, along the Ohio-Erie Canal in northeast Ohio and the Ohio River Scenic Byway, which starts in Hamilton County and ends in Columbiana County, are designated national scenic byways by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This year the National Road Scenic Byways (U.S. Route 40) and Ohio's Amish County Scenic Byway in Holmes County have applied to FHWA for All-American Scenic Byway designation, the highest designation a byway can receive. A decision from FHWA is expected in June.

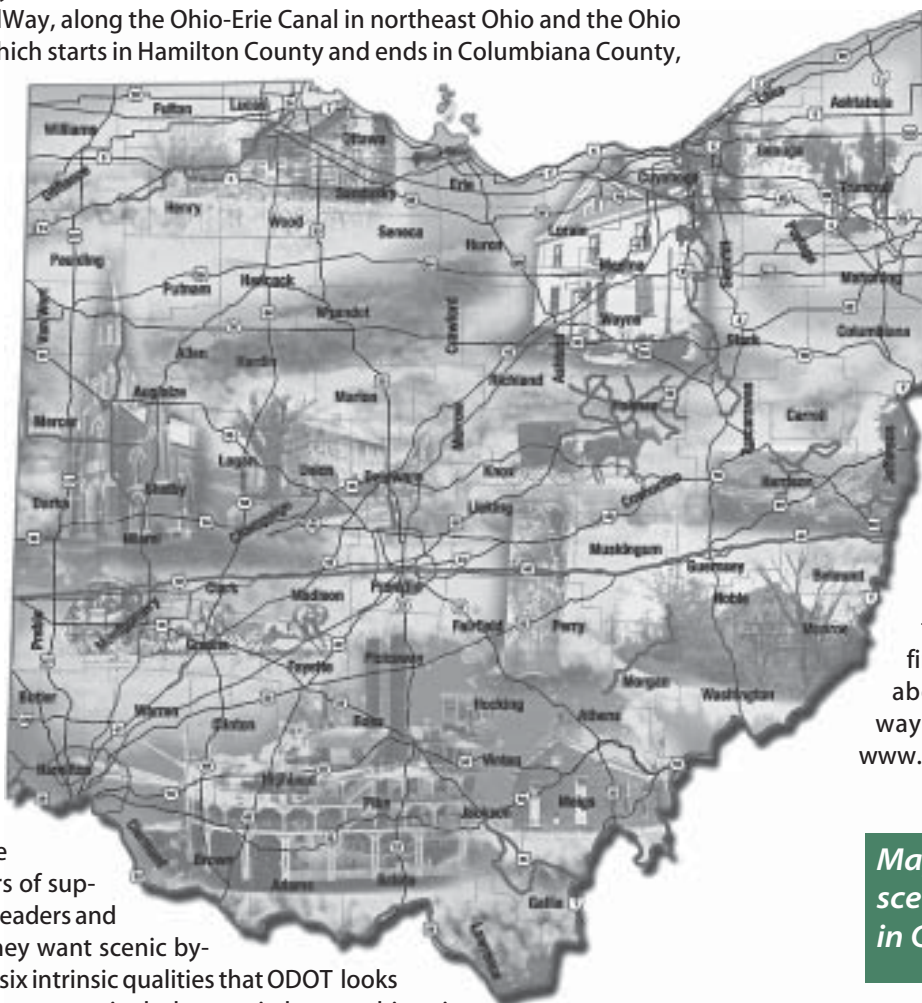
The program is grass-roots driven and requires communities to submit an initial application with maps of the proposed route, letters of support from community leaders and a statement of why they want scenic byway designation. The six intrinsic qualities that ODOT looks for in the application process include: scenic beauty, historic structures, cultural identity, archeological sites,

recreational activities or natural features. A designated byway must be at least five miles long and can consist of either county, township or state routes.

Once a byway is designated, the byway organization is eligible to apply for federal scenic byway grants through FHWA. Ohio recently received two grants totaling \$681,000. One grant is for the construction of seven interpre-

tative gazebo welcome centers for the Ohio Amish Country Scenic Byway in Holmes County. The second grant is for the development of a comprehensive marketing plan to promote all 14 scenic byways through print and electronic media.

These grants will make a positive difference to the state of Ohio. To find more information about the scenic byways visit our website: www.ohiobyways.com.



Map illustrates scenic byways in Ohio.

Map provided by City Lights Neon.



Bring Your Child to Work Day 2002



Jim Graham, son Ross and daughter Jane - District 11



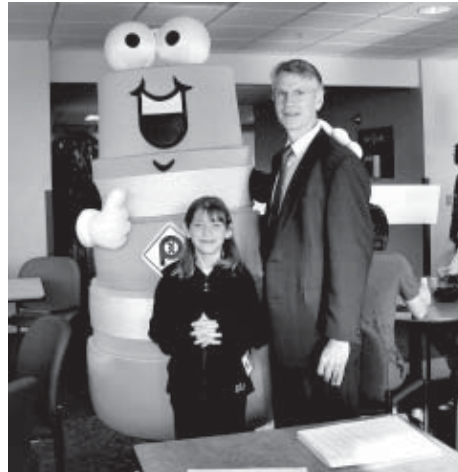
(from left to right) Ron Amstutz's daughters, Ashley and Chelsea, and Susan Goodie's daughters, Paige and Peyton - District 11



Jana Yearout (left), daughter Alex (center) and mother Bonnie Frame (right) - Central Office



Lucas Herron - District 11



Director Proctor and daughter Rachael - Central Office



Noah Valentine, (son of Felicia Valentine) and Kaye Humble - District 9



Madison Valentine (standing), Tanner Dresbach (kneeling), and Jamie Stewart - District 9



Amy Denman and daughter Krista Spencer - Central Office



Laura Baxter and daughter Katie - Central Office



(from left to right) Jeff, Adam, Virginia, and Katie Bonomo - District 11

FYI

Last year, more than half of all Ohioans who died on Ohio roadways in motor vehicle crashes were unbuckled. While a seat belt may not have prevented all of these deaths, experts predict it would have saved many.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety, the Ohio State Highway Patrol and the Governor's Highway Safety Office are teaming with local law enforcement to increase seat belt use. The "What's Holding You Back?" campaign encourages Ohioans to buckle up every trip, every time in an emotional message designed to make people think about life without loved ones who may be lost in vehicle crashes where belts were not used.

Wearing a seat belt and insisting that those who travel with you buckle up is the easiest thing you can do to protect yourself, your friends and your family. Beg, plead, even get mad. Do whatever it takes to change the deadly bad habit of not buckling up every trip, every time. If you don't, "What's holding you back?"



RETIREMENTS

March

Jack Starr - Highway Maintenance Wkr. - Stark County - D-4
Ronald White - Lab Machine Supv. - Materials Management - CO

April - none

May

Robert Craig - Transportation Administrator - Warren County - D-8

Transcript

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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.

Cover/ Bruce Hull