

Transcript

Ohio Department of Transportation
Employee Newsletter
October 2003



Celebrating the Opening of I-670
in Downtown Columbus

Via Colori!

I-670 Becomes Canvas for Via Colori

Before the first tire hit the road, almost 200 artists used the fresh "canvas" of Interstate 670 to create art and celebrate the completion of the new route in downtown Columbus. The Short North Arts District, in conjunction with ODOT, hosted Via Colori on Sept. 13 and 14.



The End of an Era

I-670 Completes Ohio's Interstate Highway System

Michelle May
Central Office

IT IS THE END OF ERA IN OHIO'S HISTORY. ON SEPT. 19, Gov. Bob Taft and the Ohio Department of Transportation opened the final link of Interstate 670 in downtown Columbus. The project marks the completion of Ohio's interstate highway system and the long-awaited Spring-Sandusky Interchange.

The \$57 million project was completed two weeks ahead of schedule.

"Thousands of people will benefit from this new highway," Taft said. "It will make commuting safer and easier, generate new jobs and help revitalize downtown Columbus."

In 17 months, ODOT District 6 worked with contractors to construct or rebuild 21 bridges, 10 ramps and almost two

miles of highway through the heart of downtown Columbus. The new highway is wider and safer than its 1960s predecessor, and completes the missing I-670 link between the west and east sides of Columbus.

The project also completes the last segment of the Spring-Sandusky Interchange, which has been under development for almost four decades. The 15-phase, \$225 million project rebuilt the junction where I-670, State Route 315 and U.S. Route 33 meet.

In the 15 years Brian Hupp and Jim Welter have worked at ODOT, they can hardly remember a time when they were not working on a project related to I-670 or the Spring-Sandusky Interchange. Between the two District 6 project engineers, they have helped build at least five miles associated with the projects.

"It's a good feeling to know the final segments are complete and everything is finally linked together," Hupp said.

During the 17 months of construction, residents of Westminster Thurber Tower have been watching the progress from their terrace apartments above the new roadway.

"Being able to watch made us much more appreciative of what goes into the construction," said resident Charles Lindabury. "The artistry involved was awesome. We got to watch everything from people operat-

ing equipment to how the materials always arrived right when they needed them."

The reviews from motorists have been equally encouraging.

"Congratulations on opening I-670," said David Roseman in an e-mail to ODOT. "I recently drove it over the weekend and enjoyed the ride."

I-670 Cap Beacon of Downtown Revitalization

Joel Hunt
Central Office

WHEN INTERSTATE 670 OPENED through downtown Columbus last month, construction of retail shops above the freeway was well underway. That is because ODOT, the city of Columbus and real estate developer Jack Lucks "capped" the freeway to encourage foot traffic between downtown businesses and the city's arts district.

The Cap is a platform – a bridge really – on which shops are being built. Its arches and vaulted ceiling have changed the face of High Street and the entire Victorian Village area. ODOT and the city of Columbus spent \$3.5 million on the Cap, the adjacent Neil Avenue bridge and aesthetic improvements, such as decorative fencing, as part of the I-670 reconstruction project. An additional \$3 million will be spent on landscaping this area.

Because of its enormous size, more than 1,300 luminaries light the 600-foot-long tunnel created by the Cap.

The Columbus Cap is the first in the country to incorporate retail development. These shops are expected to be opened in March. The first freeway Cap, built in the 1980s in Atlanta's financial district, is occupied by office space.



Ohio Gov. Bob Taft greets visitors attending the I-670 highway opening held on Sept. 19.

Expanded Training Key to Local Roads Improvement

Ron Poole
Central Office

THE MERGER OF THE LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LTAP) with ODOT operations this year has doubled training opportunities available to Ohio's local transportation agencies.

The growth in the training has been aided by the expanded resources and equipment ODOT has made available to LTAP. By the end of 2003, the program expects to conduct nearly 60 training sessions compared to its annual average of 25 to 30 for previous years.

"Typically, our regional workshops and on-site classes provide training to more than 1,500 employees who maintain or manage local roadway systems," said Mike Fitch, a program manager with LTAP. "We plan to recruit ODOT district personnel to serve as instructors in these courses. It is a chance to help improve the quality and safety of our local roads."

Ohio LTAP provides technical workshops, on-site classes, instructional videos, and reference publications to the state's nearly 2,000 local governments to help them improve their local roads and bridges. The training courses cover a variety of areas, including safe roadway work zone set ups, proper snow plow procedures and preventive maintenance.

The program will draw on the experience of departmental, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and transporta-

tion industry experts regarding state and federal construction related standards.

According to Leonard E. Brown, the deputy director for the program, LTAP faces a continuous challenge of connecting with its customer's needs.

"Outreach and responding to local needs are the keys to success in Ohio LTAP," said Brown. "I see the program as an opportunity to be creative and innova-

tion on certain pieces of equipment," said Nemec. "We see this as an opportunity to provide experienced and beneficial instruction for all of our field staff."

Although the program's focus is to aid local governments, ODOT employees also have the opportunity to attend some of the training sessions. Ohio LTAP recently conducted a training needs survey of local entities to identify new opportunities

to expand the training program in the future.

"We try to have a passion for our responsibilities," said Brown. "You must believe, take action and persevere to gain results. That is what we try to help our customers accomplish."

The Ohio LTAP functions were transferred from the Civil Engineering Department at The Ohio State University to ODOT in January. Nationally, the program was created in 1982 by the FHWA to assist local governments with the maintenance and management of pavements, bridges and traffic control devices. LTAP provides additional re-

sources to these groups in their effort to meet technical and legal standards required for a safe and functional roadway system. Throughout the country more than 38,000 local governments responsible for roughly three million miles of road and 300,000 bridges can take advantage of LTAP's services.



Members of Ohio's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), now located in Central Office, are as follows (l-r): Mike Fitch, Leonard Brown, Jerry Garrison, Karen Cassidy and Sarah McNeal.

tive, to always search for cutting-edge information and ideas."

Mark Nemec, director of Public Service for the village of New Albany recently registered his agency for two training courses in bucket trucks and road side moving.

"For some time now, our newer employees have had a need for professional

Innovative Trucks

Save Time, Money

Michelle Proctor
District 12

THE VERSATILITY OF SEVEN CUSTOM-BUILT trucks will save ODOT's District 12 office approximately \$75,000 annually by enabling workers to tackle multiple field tasks with one vehicle.

The need for several trucks to complete highway maintenance activities is eliminated as the new trucks contain hydraulic tools, water pumps, chain saws, a removable unit for spreading salt or brine, and a crane.

The new trucks, to be unveiled in late October, are a first for Ohio and among the first in the nation. They were adapted from a Colorado Department of Transportation design.

These innovative trucks, which can be used throughout the year, are expected to have a life span of 15 years, exceeding the district's 10-year replacement goal for snow and ice vehicles.

While each new truck costs approximately \$25,000 more than a regular salt truck, the additional expense is expected to be recovered by modernizing the fleet, improving repair time, and reducing employee hours to complete a task. The multi-use trucks will each replace a salt



New trucks to be used by District 12 this year are expected to improve efficiency in conducting field work and will save the district approximately \$75,000 annually.

truck and a stake-bed truck.

"We expect to see a quick return on our investment in these new trucks," said Howard Huebner, a district roadway services manager. "The versatility of the new trucks will significantly streamline our operations."

Terry Kosmata, District 12 equipment superintendent, worked with various Ohio dealers to outfit the trucks with special equipment. The trucks can be fully operational in approximately three months.

"Each new piece was designed with safety and durability in mind," said Kosmata "We used stainless steel as much as possible to limit on-going maintenance requirements which will help to extend the life span of the trucks."

The crews for the trucks must be trained in crane operation. The crane has a 360-degree turning radius and is one of the features that make these trucks truly unique.

It can be used to lift the salt and brine unit off of the flat bed to convert the vehicle into a hauling truck in a matter of minutes.

These versatile trucks can more efficiently tackle a job. For example, one truck could handle an entire sign replacement including hauling the material, pounding the posts, become the power source for hydraulic wrenches and impact tools, lifting the new sign into place, pulling out the existing sign posts, and hauling away the old material.

"We tried to imagine any possible situation we would run into on the road and prepared the truck to handle it," said Kosmata.

The seven new trucks will be a part of the district's dry run exercises this fall and are expected to be in full use this winter – five in Cuyahoga County and one each in Lake and Geauga counties.

Ohio Hosts International Paving Conference

Joel Hunt
Central Office

FOR NEARLY A DECADE, STATE DEPARTMENTS of transportation and the Federal Highway Administration have studied the impact of climate and traffic on pavement performance at test sites like the Ohio Strategic Highway Research Project (SHRP) on U.S. Route 23 north of Delaware. The findings have resulted in low-cost, long-lasting pavement and have drawn the interest of pavement engineers and researchers from around the world.

Results from the SHRP test were among the topics discussed at the International Conference on Highway Pavement Data, Analysis and Mechanistic Design Applications held in Columbus last month. The

conference was hosted by the Ohio Research Institute for Transportation and the Environment, the FHWA, pavement trade groups, the Transportation Research Board and seven state DOTs. The four-day conference brought engineers and researchers from eight countries, 21 DOTs, and 27 universities.

According to David Humphrey, administrator of ODOT's Office of Pavement Engineering, the conference included discussions of technologies related to pavement testing and monitoring and the sharing of current activities, findings, experiences, and pavement research.

"The performance of highway pave-

ments has always been a concern in Ohio," Humphrey said. "Ohio is located within 600 miles of most of North America's manufacturing capacity. A great deal of these finished goods are transported by trucks through Ohio to destinations across the country. With all of this truck traffic and environmental factors wearing down our highways, we need to understand how pavements should be designed, constructed, and maintained to withstand their effects."

The conference included presentations of more than 70 technical papers and site visits to pavement research projects in the cities of Delaware and Lancaster.



Pavement engineers and researchers from around the world had the opportunity to view transportation related displays and visited the Ohio Strategic Highway Research project north of Delaware during last month's International Pavement Conference held in Columbus.

2003 Director's Cup Rodeo

ODOT Assistant Director Rich Martinko and President of the Ohio Assembly of AFSCME Dozier Taylor recognized the top-scoring drivers at this years Director's Cup Rodeo held in September.

The following drivers received U.S. Savings Bonds in recognition of their effort:

Truck:

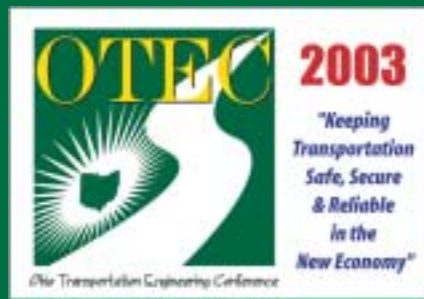
- Ryne Dangler, District 1, Paulding County - First Place - \$300 Bond
- Tony Seibert, District 8, Clermont County - Second Place - \$250 Bond
- John Rinker, District 1, Hancock County - Third Place - \$200 Bond
- "Rip" Van Winkle, District 8, Preble County - Fourth Place - \$150 Bond

Loader:

- Tony Seibert, District 8, Clermont County - First Place - \$250 Bond
- Scott Meadows, District 10, Morgan County - Second Place - \$200 Bond
- Dan Short, District 2, Williams County - Third Place - \$150 Bond
- Ryne Dangler, District 1, Paulding County - Fourth Place - \$100 Bond



FYI



DO NOT MISS THE OHIO TRANSPORTATION Engineering Conference November 5 and 6 in Columbus. One of the nation's largest transportation conferences, OTEC features 55 break-out sessions and more than 150 speakers, including Congressman Steve LaTourette and former Director of Communications at Harley-Davidson Motor Company, Ken Schmidt. Visit www.otecohio.org for registration information.

Central Office's New Deputy Director of Quality and Human Resources

IN JUNE, CHRISTINE DIETSCH JOINED CENTRAL OFFICE AS THE NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR THE OFFICE OF Quality and Human Resources, replacing Anne Fornshell who is now with the Ohio Turnpike Commission.



Dietsch joins the Central Office after serving as a labor relations officer in District 2. She has a Bachelor's degree in Social Work and a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling from Wright State University. Dietsch is a Licensed Professional Counselor, a certified professional in economic development finance, and is certified through the Office of Collective Bargaining as an Advocate for Expedited Arbitration.

"Coming to Central Office with a district perspective has been a valuable resource, especially as we tackle an extensive Human Resources Plan for the entire ODOT system," said Dietsch. "I find it exhilarating and challenging to work with such a professional and dedicated group of people. ODOT is a wonderful place to work."

Transcript

Visit our Web site at:
www.dot.state.oh.us



Bob Taft,
Governor

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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.