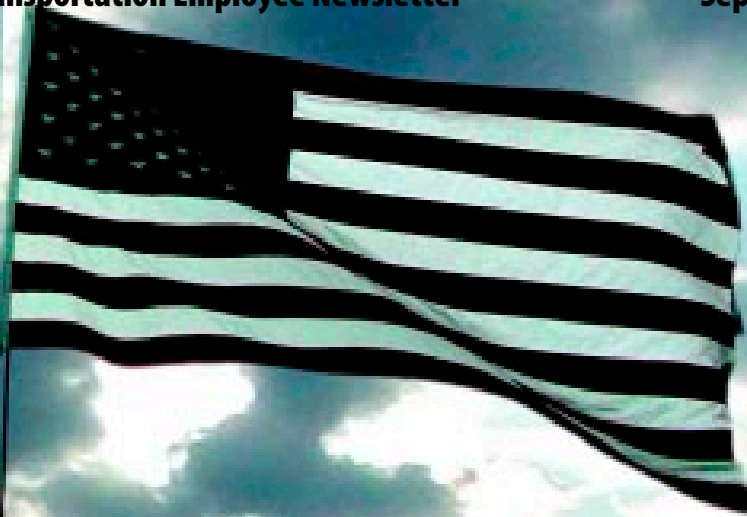


# Transcript

The Ohio Department of Transportation Employee Newsletter

September 2001



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

On Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001 the United States came under attack by what has been described as a nameless, faceless coward. Americans and people from other nations numbering in the thousands were killed and injured when hijacked airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington D.C. and 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 may be 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 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 an 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. "We are one America, it's not what's on the outside, it's what's on the inside," said Wheeler.

***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 who 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 re-birth of this nation.

As the visions of the tragic day fade, they must not be forgotten. The country must learn from them and 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. Under the guidance of the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) Director Shobna Varma, ODOT has been designing a web-based system focused on the needs of state users.

The mainframe-based Project Delivery Management System (PDMS) has been used to keep track of the major milestones of construction projects since 1988, but the system has its setbacks. Adding new information has proven to be difficult, and PDMS can not be adopted to track new ODOT business method, 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 more adaptable and easier to use. This opened the door to the development of Ellis.

The Ellis project has a large development team comprised of internal employees and external consultants, with both sides benefiting from a close working relationship. Team members are serving double duty: working on Ellis while developing the Project Accounting System (PAS). Both systems are sharing the same project resources.

Consultant Tom Acree, with Tracer Information Systems, leading the development and business analysis of Ellis. Jim Cook, with Compuware Corp., is the architect for both Ellis and PAS, and is also the project lead for the PAS project. Under their guidance are three development efforts, each coordinated by Consulting Project Manager Adam Frumkin with Netwave.

The first development effort involves the creation of the system infrastructure and implementation of the systems' business rules. A DoIT team consisting of Dave Ferguson and Dan Male are working one-on-one with consultants Joel Peach and Mike Wolf, both with Tracer. Another consultant, Brian Campbell, with L3com, Inc., 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 Acree and Jon Ardnt, with Tracer, designing the

system. DoIT employees Zack Mancini and Katie Stevens are receiving guidance in user interface design from Ardnt.

Lastly, the PAS development effort involves a rewrite of the current Bill System, and is led by DoIT employee Scott Stillion and Greg Alfred from Compuware. Stillion and Alfred are re-vamping the billing system into a more simplified and flexible approach under the guidance of Cook.

Much of the business analysis to this point has been actively facilitated by Acree working closely with Capital Programs Management Administrator 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 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 next June, with some selected users trying the system. The system will be made available to all of the department in August 2002.

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



*Andy Eline/Central Office*

# Job Profile



Meghan Martindale/Central Office

## Sara Davis and Meghan Martindale

Central Office

Edward Kroman has had a bird's-eye view of Ohio 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. He schedules and maps 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 and the public," he said. Outside agencies rely on archived photographs to reveal items that could impact future development in the area. Currently, there are 2,100 rolls of film, collected since 1936, are in the Office of Aerial Engineering archives.

Getting a good photograph is often difficult. Obstacles such as weather affect the quality of photographs. The skies must be clear before Kroman takes 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 photographs is very small, so we find ourselves extremely busy with projects when we do have a good day." He usually shoots 200 projects



Ed Kroman checks his location during an aerial photography shoot.

Meghan Martindale/Central Office

a year.

Kroman uses a variety of film to capture the perfect shot for each project. If he is mapping, the best film 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 impacted the aerial photography industry, but finding the right spot for the shot hasn't changed much. Kroman still uses a map as well as landmarks to find the location before shooting the photograph.

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 few 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 target.

Not only have the advancements with tracking revolutionized the aerial photography industry, but the equipment has also evolved. The use of digital cameras and computers has simplified the process.

Kroman was born in Argentina and got his degree from the Argentinian Navy before moving to the U.S. in 1980. He worked as a surveyor in New York and earned his pilot's license in 1982.

His love for flying extends beyond the work place. When he isn't on the job, you can catch him flying gliders.

Kroman lives in Hilliard with his wife Susan, who also works in Aerial Engineering, and their 12-year-old son Alexander.

Kroman enjoys his job and the constant change that comes with it. "I love my job. It is so refreshing to see and do something different everyday."

## TO THE RESCUE

### Andrea L. Hernandez

District 6

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 dedicated much of their lives to rescue lost or homeless canines.

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 was keeping local strays in a plywood box at the water plant. Annette told the officer that she would take the dog rather than let it spend the night there. 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 Highway 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 respon-

sible 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 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."

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."



Ken Garrison/District 6

Maintenance Repair Worker 3, Jerry Lookabaugh, has been looking after lost or homeless dogs for nearly a decade.

# Taft Breaks Ground on U.S. 30 Expansion

**Rhonda Pees**

*District 1*

NEVADA, Ohio - Out in the middle of a field on a sweltering summer day, Gov. 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 spoke at the ceremony which officially began construction of the new, four-lane U.S. Route 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.



*Gov. Bob Taft speaks to a Crawford County resident during the U.S. 30 ground-breaking ceremony.*

*Angie Cope/Central Office*



*(From left to right), District 3 Deputy Director Tom O'Leary, State Rep. Stephen Reinhard, Director Gordon Proctor, Gov. Bob Taft, District 1 Deputy Director Norman R. Redick, and Jack Ford of Beaver Excavation break ground at the ceremony.*

*Angie Cope/Central Office*

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.

# ODOT

## VICTORIOUS IN LAWSUIT

### Lindsay Mendicino

Central Office

After brief legal scuffle, the Athens-to-Darwin U.S. Route 33 project is finally under way. U.S. District Judge Edmund Sargus gave ODOT the go-ahead this summer to continue improvements on the highway.



Photos/Meghan Martindale/Central Office

Director Gordon Proctor speaks at the U.S. 33 ground-breaking ceremony as Gov. Bob Taft and other officials look on.

The project, in the works since 1993, was delayed when area residents opposed the effort. In 1996, Citizens Against Superfluous Highways (CASH) organized and asserted the new highway was unnecessary, and ODOT did not carefully consider all other alternatives.

"We looked at all the reasonable alternatives to solving the highway problems south of Athens," said Anthony T. Durm, District 10 environmental coordinator. "Many of the alternatives were clearly not feasible. We are pleased with the court's decision. We felt we had done the right things and gone through the right process."

CASH tried to stop the project again in December 2000, when the group filed a motion against ODOT claiming the department did not meet requirements of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). However, ODOT had already conducted the necessary studies to determine what resources were in the area, ranging from prehistoric mounds to historic houses.

Durm said the project was adjusted to impact less than an acre of wetland area and no historic structures of significance. The new highway will pass through an archeological site, but ODOT will perform data recovery activities according to an agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Places. These studies provided enough evidence

to let the project continue.

"We always contended no violations occurred and were confident the court would agree the issues raised by CASH should not stop the U.S. 33 project," said ODOT Director Gordon Proctor. "The court's decision is not only a victory for ODOT, but for all of southeast Ohio."

The plan for the new highway seeks to lower the traffic accident rate by improving the roadway alignment, alleviate flooding problems and provide the capacity for anticipated traffic volumes that will also bring greater economic development to the region.

The area of road in this phase of the project runs from the southern edge of Athens by U.S. 32 and U.S. Route 50, south to Darwin, where the four-lane highway ends.

Durm said ODOT studies showed the existing stretch of road was substandard. "It wiggles back and forth between communities," he said. "It basically went from a game trial to a wagon path, and then got covered in gravel and eventually became U.S. 33."

According to the department's findings, the road receives more traffic than it was built to handle. Durm said it is a safety hazard. Many of the curves require traveling below 35 mph, but the posted speed limit on the road is 55 mph.

After the court decision, ODOT broke ground on Sept. 18.



South East Ohio Regional Council, Steve Story, speaks to the crowd as Gov. Bob Taft and Director Gordon Proctor look on.

# Employee Commuter Choice Program Offered

**Dave Seech**

*Central Office*

Gov. Taft announced the State of Ohio Commuter Choice Program on 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 is 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.

To participate in the program, a state employee can register on-line at [www.wageworks.com](http://www.wageworks.com) or call 1-887-924-3967. The registration deadline is the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month to participate the following month. However, employees 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 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/](http://www.fta.dot.gov/library/)

## 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.

*Cover/ Meghan Martindale*