Ohio Department of Transportation ★ Employee Newsletter

November 2005

ODOT’s construction program has grown from about $1.2 billion in 2004 to $1.36 billion in 2005. It will continue to grow up to nearly $2 billion in 2008.

Over the next 10 to 12 years, ODOT will deliver its largest construction program since the creation of the interstate highway system, due largely to Governor Bob Taft’s Jobs and Progress Plan. Taft announced the plan in 2003 in response to Ohio’s transportation priorities for the first 20 years of the 21st century. The plan significantly increases the investment into rebuilding Ohio’s congested interstates and freeways and improving safety.

The foundation of the 12-year Jobs and Progress Plan is preservation of existing infrastructure in a “steady state” of low and predictable deficiencies, which can be funded through established funding allocations to ODOT’s district offices. Core program funding – such as for paving and bridge work – remain relatively unchanged.

“Funding the Jobs and Progress Plan provides an unprecedented opportunity and responsibility for the department to deliver large and complex projects that will promote Ohio’s economy, foster economic development and enhance the quality of life for people around Ohio,” said ODOT Director Gordon Proctor.

The Jobs and Progress Plan uses new state and federal fuel tax revenue to significantly increase transportation funding to address the nearly 90 percent growth in traffic Ohio has experienced in the past 25 years.

The new revenue comes from the six cent per gallon gas tax increase, the federal “ethanol penalty” correction and other adjustments from the reauthorization of the federal transportation bill. Ohio is already seeing a rise in funding from the gas tax increase, which was phased in 2 cents per year beginning in 2003. At the same time, major growth in the construction program is underway and will continue with the reconstruction of freeways in Ohio’s six largest urban areas and several large rural corridors.

“Since the announcement of the Jobs and Progress Plan, ODOT has been carefully planning its construction program to deliver this major investment,” Proctor said. “ODOT has entered into a 12-year period of significantly increased investment in Ohio’s highway network. While some of the projects have already begun, we will see the full plan unfold over the next 10 years.”

With the increase in state and federal tax revenue from the Jobs and Progress Plan, ODOT can significantly expand its major new construction program to about $500 million annually to address congestion and safety without reducing system-preservation investments.

The 2005 construction season kicked off in March with $1.36 billion in resurfacing, reconstruction and major new construction projects, including 68 projects to improve Ohio’s interstates.

The 2005 construction program was up from $1.2 billion in 2004 and $1.1 billion in 2003. The amount of work being included in some construction projects today raises them to ‘mega project’ status, a term the industry uses to describe projects exceeding the $100 million mark.

Mega projects in 2005 included the Interstate 71 Corridor Reconstruction and Widening in District 3; the Interstate 77 Canton to Akron Corridor Reconstruction and Widening in District 4; Major Reconstruction of State Route 161 interchanges at Interstate 270 and Sunbury Road in District 6; the Interstate 70/Interstate 75 Interchange Reconstruction in District 7; the Veterans’ Glass City Skyway bridge over the Maumee River in District 2 (formerly known as the Maumee River Crossing); and construction of various new sections of U.S. Route 30, including a 26-mile stretch in District 1.

In this issue of Transcript, you’ll find updates on these projects and others across the state. While the overwhelming theme of the 2005 construction season was moving forward with the Jobs and Progress Plan, you’ll also see some of ODOT’s other initiatives and values including the Safety Program, Aesthetics Initiative and ODOT’s customer-oriented approach running through the project updates.

Interstate 71 widening in Medina County. photo by Joyce Dunford, D-3
ODOT continued working toward its goal of upgrading U.S. Route 30 with the construction of various new sections of the route, including a 16-mile stretch in Crawford and Richland counties, a 26-mile stretch in Hancock and Wyandot counties and an eight-mile stretch in Wayne County.

District 1’s relocation and expansion of U.S. 30 from State Route 235 in Hancock County to the Upper Sandusky bypass in Wyandot County has progressed at a rapid pace. Governor Bob Taft and ODOT Director Gordon Proctor broke ground for the project in May of this year.

“We’re pretty well on schedule, if not a little bit ahead,” said ODOT District 1 Construction Engineer Bruce Merry.

The pace of construction has been quickened due to an exceptionally dry summer which allowed earth work to progress. The 26-mile long project is approximately 25 percent complete and is on schedule for an October 2007 completion.

Dry conditions also allowed the contractor to take advantage of an acceleration agreement which resulted in the early opening of State Route 37 in Hancock County where a future interchange will intersect with the new highway. The route was opened Oct. 11, approximately two months ahead of schedule.

“Opening State Route 37 as soon as possible was important,” said Norman R. Redick, District 1 deputy director. “The local school district was concerned with their buses crossing existing U.S. 30 at alternate locations during the closure so we offered the contractor an incentive to open the road early.”

During the winter months, the contractor will work on construction of the 20 structures along the new highway and will continue with drainage work. By the end of the year the contractor hopes to have the base and intermediate course of asphalt in place along the first six miles of the project, from SR 235 heading east.

The construction of U.S. 30 in Hancock and Wyandot counties is the final project of three in District 1 to upgrade U.S. 30 from a two-lane to a four-lane highway. The first project, from Beaverdam in Allen County to SR 235 in Hancock County, was opened to traffic in 1999. A new four-lane section from the Upper Sandusky bypass in Wyandot County to the Bucyrus bypass in Crawford County opened to traffic in December 2004.

“We’ve worked for nearly 40 years to make U.S. 30 a four-lane route throughout northwest Ohio. When this project is completed we will have achieved a tremendous accomplishment,” said Redick.

ODOT is known as the Maumee River Crossing) is open to traffic. The Veterans’ Glass City Skyway bridge project began in March 2002 and is now 80 percent complete. The completion date is scheduled for the end of 2006. Other project milestones that are complete include: all foundation and pier work (bridge structure); all concrete segments for the main span and bridge approaches; and all ramps.

At a construction cost of $220 million, the Veterans’ Glass City Skyway bridge project began in March 2002 and is now 80 percent complete. The completion date is scheduled for the end of 2006. Other project milestones that are complete include: all foundation and pier work (bridge structure); all concrete segments for the main span and bridge approaches; and all ramps.

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“Topping off the pylon is a major milestone for ODOT and the citizens of Toledo,” said Proctor. “This one-of-a-kind pylon will make the Veterans’ Glass City Skyway bridge a lasting landmark for the entire northwest Ohio region.”

The 400-foot tall concrete pylon is the central structural element of the bridge. The pylon will be the second-tallest structure in Toledo and will not only be unique to Ohio, but also to the world. The top 185 feet of the pylon will contain glass curtain walls that will be internally illuminated by 350 Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs). These LEDs can make the pylon any color or combination of colors and will be visible for miles.

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dated Craig Memorial lift bridge, which stops Interstate 280 traffic an average of 500 times per year, causing congestion and creating safety problems.

The Veterans’ Glass City Skyway project is a prime example of the types of projects supported by Governor Bob Taft’s Jobs and Progress Plan.

“The Veterans’ Glass City Skyway project and all of the Jobs and Progress projects are more than just building a bridge or highway to solve a traffic problem,” Proctor said. “They represent the largest investment into our infrastructure since the original creation of the highway system.”

While not quite as well known as the Veterans’ Glass City Skyway bridge, District 2 has also been hard at work on another innovative bridge project to replace the existing two-lane State Route 108 Perry Street bridge in Napoleon. The new, four-lane structure will improve safety and access for traffic on SR 108 while replicating the old bridge’s historic architectural features.

The bridge is of vital importance to the community, as it is the only bridge in Napoleon that allows motorists to cross the Maumee River. Originally, plans for a new bridge called for closing the existing bridge for 27 months and involved a seven-mile detour.

Responding to the concerns of the community, ODOT redesigned the project to include pre-cast segments and reduced the time for reconstruction to just nine months. The new bridge opened to the public Oct. 29.

The State Route 2 Edison Bridge over Sandusky Bay is another example of ODOT responding to community concerns. This $17.5 million project to widen and re-deck the bridge began in March 2005 and is presently scheduled for completion in July 2007. Most of this project’s work is being done outside of the normal construction season, due to the high volume of seasonal traffic which utilizes SR 2 to travel to Cedar Point and the Lake Erie Islands.

The $69.5 million project relocated a 16-mile stretch of U.S. 30 from the Bucyrus Bypass to the Ontario Bypass; widened the road to four lanes; completed two diamond interchanges; constructed new interchanges at State Route 602, State Route 598 and State Route 61; built 10 new grade separations; and improved safety and congestion by adding a paved median and shoulders.

District 3 also has an eight-mile, $53.6 million project to relocate and widen U.S. 30 east of the city of Wooster that will be completed in 2007. The mainline route may be opened by the end of 2005, weather permitting. The eastbound lanes are nearly finished with concrete paving and the westbound lanes should finish asphalt paving in November. New interchanges at Apple Creek Road and Carr Road will be finished by 2007.

Reconstruction and widening of Interstate 71 from the Wayne County line to Leroy Road in Medina County is about one year from completion. Traffic is currently shifted onto the new pavement (inside lanes) with the work zone on the outside lanes. Approximately four miles of cable barrier have been installed as part of this project to help prevent crossover accidents on I-71.

To the south, reconstruction and widening of I-71 continues with the addition of a third lane in each direction from Mansfield-Lucas Road to 0.75 miles south of State Route 97 in Richland County. The rehabilitation of the State Route 97 interchange is complete and the State Route 13 interchange rehabilitation will finish by the end of November. Traffic is currently shifted onto the new pavement (inside lanes) with the work zone on the outside lanes. Approximately four miles of cable barrier have been installed as part of this project. The completion date is fall 2006.

The State Route 711 connector, a

### District Three Focuses on Jobs and Progress; Interstate 71

Joyce Dunford, District 3

DOT Director Gordon Proctor opened a new four-lane U.S. Route 30 on Aug. 4, between the city of Bucyrus and the city of Ontario, completing the upgrade of U.S. 30 to a four-lane route in Crawford and Richland counties.

“The completion of the Bucyrus to Ontario corridor is one more successful step toward upgrading U.S. 30 to a four-lane highway across Ohio,” said Proctor. “The upgrade will address safety and congestion issues and open this area to economic development opportunities by providing a safer, more efficient means of travel for motorists and freight shipments.”

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### District Four Delivers Record Construction Program

Jennifer Richmond, District 4

District 4 made strong progress in completing its construction program for 2005.

The State Route 711 connector, a
new highway connecting the cities of Youngstown in Mahoning County and Girard in Trumbull County, opened to traffic Oct. 24. The two-phase, $60 million project began in 2002. Contractors carved out a section of the new highway by blasting as deep as 50 feet and removing 1.2 million tons of rock. More than 1,500 holes were drilled in order to complete mine remediation work. Two completely new interchanges, seven new signalized intersections, more than 180 highway lighting structures and more than 145 acres of seeding and mulching were completed as part of the project.

The $250 million, 13-mile widening of Interstate 77 in southern Summit and Stark counties, which began in 1999, is on track to be complete by 2008. The fourth phase of this seven-phase project is scheduled to be substantially complete this year. Two additional phases of construction are ongoing and will be complete in 2006 and 2007. The final phase of construction is scheduled to get underway in early 2006.

The widening of State Route 43 just south of the city of Kent began in late June 2005 and is expected to be complete by fall 2006. This major north-south route is heavily traveled by commuters and students attending Kent State University. The $6.9 million project will widen SR 43 from two to five lanes, improving safety and reducing congestion in Portage County.

The $14 million major rehabilitation and pavement replacement project along four miles of Interstate 90 in Ashtabula County began in May 2005 and is scheduled to be complete by fall 2006. A second project, the resurfacing of five miles of I-90 was completed at the beginning of November. Earlier this year, construction impacts were reduced on this project when District 4 responded to customer feedback/field observation and altered the contract to perform paving operations only during nighttime hours.

The four-mile, major rehabilitation of Interstate 76 in Mahoning County is in the final stages of construction. The $16 million project, which began in April 2004, included the rehabilitation of three bridges and the widening of interchange ramps. The project, which included full-depth concrete pavement replacement, is scheduled to be complete in late November 2005.

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The new U.S. Route 33 Lancaster Bypass.
District 6 Moves Forward with Mega-Project
Todd Sloan, District 6

District 6 has had a busy year as the Northeast Expressway Transformation (NExT) project saw its first full season of construction. Built in the 1960s, the highway system along the Interstate 70/Sunbury Road corridor has become a highly congested and overburdened route. The NExT project is transforming this corridor and will provide a highway system that will serve traffic for years to come.

District 6 broke ground in June 2004. The $126 million project is nearly 50 percent complete and involves rebuilding 17 bridges, 18 ramps and five miles of highway (43 lane miles). The project is scheduled to be complete in late 2007.

This winter, crews will be working on bridge substructures and cast-in-place retaining walls.

“This project has been one of District 6’s biggest challenges so far, combining complex and overlapping phases with an already overburdened highway system and tight deadlines,” said Jack Marchbanks, District 6 deputy director. “But the next few months will have numerous success stories and the NExT project is well on its way to completion.”

By this winter, five of the eight ramps within the I-270/SR 161 interchange will be rebuilt. In addition, crews will be working toward completing half of the Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) at Sunbury Road and SR 161 by the end of the winter months.

Like the NExT project, the Madison/Clark Interstate 70 construction project is nearly 50 percent complete. This project will increase I-70 to three lanes between U.S. Route 42 and State Route 54. Crews will also repair or rebuild 13 bridges and eight ramps.

While it’s not a mega-project, those working on the $55 million project can take pride in the fact the eastbound lanes of the interstate will be completed by December – ahead of schedule and an important boon for motorists. Completing the eastbound lanes early allows both directions of traffic to be maintained on the newly constructed lanes and frees ODOT from maintaining the rapidly deteriorating pavement on the westbound lanes through the winter. This will give motorists a smoother ride and will let the contractor take advantage of any opportunities for work that can be done over the winter.

Including weather delays, the contractor has until May 2007 to complete the project, but it is currently on track to be complete by fall 2006.

Major Changes for I-70/I-75 Continue in District 7
Tina Thompson, District 7

District 7’s Interstate 70/Interstate 75 interchange project, dubbed “Where Great Ideas Take Flight,” is a $145 million reconstruction project in Montgomery County. The project began in March 2002, and District 7 is now in the third year and second phase of the three-phased, six-year project.

This phase of the project includes the construction of three of the interchange’s exterior ramps and three local bridge replacements.

In August, District 7 celebrated the opening of the signature “fly-over ramp.” The two-lane 2,400 foot-long interior ramp, which stands approximately 45 feet over I-75, has practically eliminated the

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*Image Descriptions*
- Franklin County’s Northeast Expressway Transformation (NExT) project.
- Interstate 75’s signature fly-over ramp, with detail of fighter jet relief above.
Innovation as the project themes.

Commission members, property owners selected Local artists, developers interchange was the first of eight pilot Participation Guidelines. The I-70/75 initiative, in 2000 Because of this interstate corridors. Appearance of our enhancements all 19 bridge piers of the fly-over ramp.

Winter activities will include retaining wall construction, noise wall construction and lighting work. Depending on the weather, crews will also be constructing a railroad bridge over I-70 and the structure that will carry I-70 over I-75 this winter. The latter will be built in phases to keep two lanes of traffic open on I-70. All work is scheduled to be complete by fall 2008.

Raised images of the Wright “B” Flyer, Lunar Module and Apollo Capsule are incorporated on some of the project’s retaining walls, and fighter jets appear on all 19 bridge piers of the fly-over ramp. ODOT added these enhancements through the governor’s initiative to enhance the appearance of our interstate corridors. Because of this initiative, in 2000 the Department developed Aesthetics and Community Participation Guidelines. The I-70/75 interchange was the first of eight pilot projects selected. Local artists, developers, planning commission and aviation commission members, property owners and local public officials attended a design charrette and chose Aviation and Innovation as the project themes.

The project is on schedule to be complete by mid-November.

The railroad grade separation project on SR 747 is located near the Tri-County Mall, again affecting commuters and businesses. The project is relocating the railroad on a newly created overpass above SR 747 to eliminate stopping traffic at the railroad crossing. The route will also be widened from five to six lanes to further reduce congestion. Crews began widening the ramps to and from Interstate 275 this season as well as working on the railroad overpass. Work will be complete by fall 2006.

Another safety project on U.S. Route 42 fell on the Butler/Warren county line and involved two separate communities – West Chester and Mason, Ohio. Constant communication between ODOT and these entities was a top priority, as was communication with the local schools. Work included widening lanes, installing a four-way, left turn traffic signal and landscaping improvements. This project completed earlier than expected, opening the road to traffic in conjunction with the start of school and finishing all work in October.

The widening and repaving of State Route 73 in Butler County was another safety-related project affecting area residents and students of a nearby high school as the work affected the intersection leading to the school. To help slow motorists down and increase safety for the students, ODOT installed a new, flashing yellow light and a “20-mph School Zone” sign at the intersection, along with the addition of a left turn lane for a steady flow of traffic. Five-foot paved shoulders were also added to improve sight distance. The project is on schedule to be complete in November.

Finally, the replacement of the High-Main Street bridge in the city of Hamilton will offer travelers a new, six-lane bridge with sidewalks on both sides for pedestrians and bicycles. There will be scenic overlook balconies at each of the four piers. Due to record flooding, an implosion of the old structure was chosen as the fastest means of removal. Most of the pile driving is complete and erection of the remaining girders begins in November. The bridge deck will be completed in the spring of 2006, with the entire project finished in the fall of 2006. Video clips of the implosion can be viewed under the Photo Archive for April/May 2005 at: www.highmainbridge.com
Currently, construction is being conducted off the existing highway and is not affecting traffic. During the 2005 construction season, contractors began work on the construction of four structures, including the Scioto River bridge and a new structure under the CSX Railway. Most of the earthwork has been completed, as well as the cutting and filling for the sub-base of the highway. All work is on schedule to meet the completion date of November 2006.

The project is estimated to cost approximately $13.5 million of the project’s total $19 million worth. All traffic restrictions should be lifted by the end of November, meeting the goal of completing this work ahead of snow and ice season.

The district also oversaw several safety projects this year, including the reconfiguration of the U.S. Route 33/South Route 681 intersection. An adjacent to the new U.S. 33 Athens-to-Darwin Connector in Meigs County (opened in 2004), this project will separate through traffic on SR 681 from through traffic on U.S. 33. Motorists will no longer need to cross four lanes of traffic at the site. The project is estimated to cost $2.5 million and should be completed by the end of November.

The reconstruction of the Ohio approach to the Parkersburg-Belpre Memorial Toll Bridge in Washington County is another important safety project. The project realigns the U.S. 50 ramp to eliminate a stop and more efficiently serve area traffic. Deceleration lanes were also constructed in this vicinity. The project is estimated to cost $1.2 million and was completed at the end of October.

The Ross State Route 207 Connector project at U.S. Route 23.

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District 11 Focuses on Emergency Repairs
Becky McCarty, District 11

As ODOT completes its largest construction season in history, District 11 is also beginning to see the end of a laundry list of emergency repairs that began stacking up in January 2004. From four flood-related events between January 2004 and January 2005, District 11 recorded more than 200 sites of damage to its state highway system, totalling more than $39 million. Those figures do not include local and county sites the district has provided guidance and assistance on repairing.

Almost two years since the first event, District 11 has completed 87 percent of all repairs. Only 13 percent remain in progress or have not begun yet.

In addition to the extraordinary amount of emergency projects completed this year, District 11 constructed about 65 projects, including bridge and culvert repairs; resurfacing and pavement repairs; safety improvements; maintenance projects and local enhancement projects. The total cost of these construction projects was around $40 million.

U.S. Route 40 in Lansing, Belmont County, before and after Hurricane Ivan related flood repairs.

District 12 Works with Community, Completes Major Bridge Project
Lora Hummer, District 12

All major work has been completed on the two-year reconstruction of the Fleet and Grant Ave. bridges over Interstate 77 in Cuyahoga County.

ODOT partnered with the cities of Newburgh Heights, Cuyahoga Heights and Cleveland, including the Slavic Village neighborhood, to identify preferred design aesthetics and safety improvements for both bridges (as well as four railroad bridges in the corridor).

“The Fleet and Grant bridge reconstruction projects are an outstanding example of context sensitive design which incorporates the vision and aspirations of the neighborhoods and community as a whole. Consistent with ODOT’s Aesthetics initiative, the structures serve as a southern gateway to Cleveland, Newburgh Heights and Cuyahoga Heights,” said Dave Coyle, District 12 deputy director.

Pedestrian safety and access to the bridges was improved with the reconstruction: A new pedestrian crossing was added on the south side of Fleet Ave., and the intersections’ turn radii were modified to slow traffic and improve safety. Sidewalks were widened on Fleet Ave. to better accommodate pedestrians.

Improved aesthetics include ornamental lighting on both bridges, matching the lighting featured in other locations in the Slavic Village neighborhood. Decorative fencing was installed on the Fleet Ave. bridge in order to connect the bridge with the historic tradition of the neighborhood and to enhance the appearance of the bridge for pedestrian users.

Bridge pillars on both bridges were finished with faux brick detailing. Brick was chosen to compliment nearby buildings in order to connect the bridge to the neighborhood. Concrete and steel on the bridges were painted with light shades of gray to provide a bright appearance without being a distraction.

Construction of this $5.9 million project began Feb. 23, 2004 and all construction-related restrictions were lifted from both bridges the week of Aug. 8, 2005.