The recent Ohio Award for Excellence (OAE) announcement that ODOT had received more awards than any other state agency was a validation of the department’s successful approach to continuous improvement.

“This recognition illustrates how our focus on improving core business activities has benefitted the department as a whole,” said Steve Wall, deputy director for the ODOT Office of Quality. “Each of the districts worked to improve their operations and the OAE awards acknowledged those efforts.”

In May, the OAE Board of Trustees reported that four districts – five, six, eight, and nine – applied for and received tier I status. Three districts – three, four and seven – received tier II. And for the first time ever, a state agency made the remarkable achievement of receiving tier III status. “District 12 received that honor,” said Gov. Bob Taft. “That is truly a remarkable achievement for an agency of state government.”

With this recent recognition, ODOT has now had 11 of its 12 districts apply for the award at least once. District 2 is preparing to apply for the first time next year, as will certain sections of Central Office. ODOT has been channeling its quality efforts toward applying for status under the OAE for the last five years.

“The overall goal of quality is to continuously improve your process to meet, then exceed customers’ expectations,” said Billie Jo Baughman, quality officer with District 12. “Using the OAE criteria allows us to refine our approach to quality. Each tier level we apply for allows us to mature as a high-performing organization.”

The non-profit OAE Board of Trustees is dedicated to helping Ohio enterprises become better at what they do by examining how they actually conduct their business for their customers. The business or government agency first notifies the council of their intent to apply for a tier status of I, II, III, or IV – with IV being the highest level they can achieve. Using the Malcolm Baldridge Criteria for Performance Excellence – a nationally-recognized business standard – the award council examines organizations in areas such as Strategic Planning, Customer-Focus and Business Results. The organization must complete an extensive questionnaire probing how their organization works, and host on-site visits by examiners to make certain the questionnaire is fully accurate. The examiners make full reports to a panel of judges who recommend the tier status which becomes official after a final review by the OAE Board.

“When you are faced with questions asking you how you manage key processes or how your organization rewards and supports good employees, you really
have to stop and think about things in a way you never have before,” said Wall. “You really have to analyze your organization for its strengths and weaknesses. The OAE process makes you think about your business in a new light.”

Applicants get something more than just status for applying: the OAE Board provides a detailed feedback report which includes “Opportunities for Improvement” (OFIs) sections. No matter how well any district or office does, the OFIs provide improvement opportunities. These can often be a starting point for reaching a higher level of competency.

“Before we applied for tier II status, we were just collecting information from our Quality of Work-Life Surveys,” said District 1 Quality Systems Manager Jeff Brenneman. “We had nothing in place for actually making changes. Now we are doing more proactive things, such as using our newsletter to discuss and explain issues that may be concerning our employees. Helping people understand why certain situations exist can go a long way toward improving their work environment.”

ODOT has embraced the spirit of using constant feedback to reach new levels of improvement. The department has 33 volunteers trained as OAE examiners. They will use their knowledge to help any office or district better prepare for future applications. Volunteers are also studying other state agencies and private corporations, learning how they improve their functions and apply that knowledge to the department.

Some ODOT districts will take time off from applying for tier status to concentrate on making improvements; others who have just applied will be applying again next year.

“It’s exciting to see a district come together to prepare for a Baldrige-based assessment by outside examiners,” said Wall. “It forces everyone to understand the entire organization and how their job contributes to achieving customer-focused results. Quality is becoming the way we get things accomplished, and not just a side addition to our jobs.”

ODOT Real Estate Two-Time Winner of National Award

FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR, ODOT has won one of the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) prestigious Excellence in Right of Way Awards. Ohio won the award for Technical Specialities in Property Management, and is the only state to have won an award in each of the two years FHWA has presented them.

“ODOT, like other departments of transportation across the nation, is constantly being challenged on many fronts, including funding for highway projects,” said Jim Vial, administrator of ODOT’s Office of Real Estate. “This award recognizes an innovative approach in land disposals that recovers money that can be used for construction and other projects.”

The awards program was developed by FHWA to honor those who excel in streamlining or improving the property acquisition process while ensuring property owners’ and tenants’ rights are protected. The awards recognize outstanding innovations that enhance the right of way professional’s ability to meet the challenges associated with acquiring property for a Federal-aid project.

Through the department’s innovative approach, District 9 and the Office of Real Estate quickly sold excess property originally purchased for a State Route 7 project in Lawrence County. The sale of this property recaptured $491,000 of the project’s original right of way investment.

On past projects, abandoned houses and other structures were commonly vandalized if ODOT did not sell the excess properties quickly. The destruction to these buildings often lowered the value of the property and required demolition. In these instances ODOT did not recapture its investment for this property.

The Office of Real Estate’s Douglas Maitland accepted the award at the 2004 FHWA and the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Subcommittee on Right of Way and Utilities annual conference in Seattle, Washington. “The award was based on the work of many people that included ODOT employees and consultants; specifically ODOT District 9 employees Dwight Daugherty and June Wayland,” said Maitland.

Daugherty originally had the idea that significant funding could be recaptured if the excess properties were sold early in the construction phase of the SR 7 project. Daugherty worked with ODOT personnel and property owners to determine property value and record the purchases made at the auction. Wayland was instrumental in widely publicizing the property auction to potential buyers. These efforts
streamlined the process and expanded the pool of those interested in purchasing the excess properties. This helped the department receive a greater return from the sale of the properties.

“It is encouraging to know that right of way professionals are continually striving to improve their processes and the services they provide to the public,” Federal Highway Administrator Mary Peters wrote in a letter. “Other right of way professionals can implement and build upon the ideas and innovative processes represented in the winning entries.”

According to Peters, FHWA received many impressive entries this year describing exciting and innovative right of way projects from around the country. The winners’ examples demonstrate that right of way professionals sharing successes benefit both the right of way community and the public. The ultimate benefits include time and money saved as we continue to streamline the process and make our national transportation system safer and more efficient while continuing to protect the rights of owners and tenants as well as the environment.

The categories for the 2004 Excellence in Right of Way Awards included Innovation, Leadership, Local Public Agency Stewardship, Streamlining and Integration, and Technical Specialties.

Pocket-Sized Field Manual Aids Workers

A NEW POCKET-SIZED, WEATHERPROOF version of the Guidelines for Traffic Control in Work Zones will soon provide workers a convenient and compact resource while on a job site. The 53-page field guide is a scaled down version of the 228-page, letter-sized manual.

The guide, developed by the Office of Traffic Engineering, contains the drawings from chapter six of the Ohio Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, which directs workers on the correct placement of signs and other traffic control devices in work zones.

According to Ken Linger, maintenance of traffic engineer, the guide has been in the works for five years. “We saw Virginia’s version in 1999 and liked it,” he said. “But we decided to wait until the Federal Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices’ Millennium Edition was released before we printed our field guide, so it would have the most current information.”

Now that it is available, workers can keep the guide in their pocket or the glove box of their state-owned vehicle for quick reference. Linger said if something comes up that is not in the guide, workers can ask their supervisor or the project engineer for help.

The guide will be available in early July.
A Century of Progress: 
The Department Grows in the 1930s

Ron Poole, Central Office

Merica was enjoying a good time during the “roaring ‘20s” of the last century. There was optimism the recent World War I would be the “War to end all wars,” and anyone could get rich with the right stock tip. On September 29, 1929, America’s good fortune came to a screeching halt with the crash of the stock market. Many lost their jobs, and poverty was on display everywhere. The next decade would be one of struggle, and the Ohio Department of Highways (ODOH) would play a role in helping the state through the crisis.

In 1929, the same year as the stock market crash, Robert Waid took over for Harry Kirk as the department’s director. The Ohio Assembly also enacted the Norton-Nichols Bill, which added a 12th district office to the ODOH. Additional provisions of the bill made all state highway extensions in municipalities a part of the state system, and had the state treasurer act as custodian in collecting funds from the counties and municipalities. These funds would be combined with the federal money for road improvements.

In 1931, the department gained the opportunity to help the state during the depression. O.W. Merrel became the new director when a federal office, the Work Projects Administration (WPA), began administering federal aid to provide employment opportunities for those in need. The WPA sponsored road building and road improvement projects which the states could not fund themselves. Under Merrel, ODOH was an early leader among the state DOHs in these efforts, organizing and employing new workers. WPA road and bridge improvements covered 60 counties and extended the highway system by more than 500 miles during the 1930s. More importantly, these projects employed more than 11,000 Ohioans in need of jobs.

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As the WPA program was helping to jump start the nation’s economy and expand Ohio’s highway system, new technologies began to emerge that revolutionized the construction industry. The steam shovel, which had been used in moving earth in the 1920s, was replaced in the 1930s by diesel engine shovels. Horse-drawn wagons were being replaced by trucks for hauling materials to and from work sites. And the increasing use of new gasoline-powered tractors, graders and pavers were all improving road-building efficiency. The materials used for road surfaces continued to advance as well. Crushed stone bases became coated with liquefied asphalt or tar, followed by a coating of stone chips to create better pavement surfaces.

However, the improved roads generated more traffic which resulted in increased crashes. As a result, ODOH became more active in protecting and regulating highway users. In 1933, the Ohio Assembly created the Ohio Highway Patrol under the jurisdiction of the department. That same year the patrol had its first training school with 60 recruits—the limit under the new state law. The department also took control of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles from the Secretary of State, deciding who would receive a license to drive.

In 1935, John Jaster Jr. became ODOH director and the Ohio Legislature gave the department control over an additional 5,000 miles of county and township roads. This expanded the state highway system by more than 40 percent. Not only was the system larger, it was becoming busier than ever. The use of trucks to ship goods was becoming more financially advantageous to businesses compared to rail. The demand for better roads to accommodate truck traffic was growing at a far greater rate than the department could comply.

To accommodate the additional lane mileage and the growing demand for better roads, Jaster created the first Bureau
The new bureau handled projects from conception until a contract was awarded to a private firm for construction. It enabled the project development operations to be consolidated into a centralized process and increased efficiency.

The Highway Patrol was growing in its mission, too. A superintendent oversaw the operations of the patrol, which now included a training school, and the various activities of officers in the field. With help from local police forces and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the patrol’s training curriculum developed to cover all of the aspects of law enforcement. By 1937, the patrol consisted of more than 200 field officers, trainers and radio operators in more than 27 outposts and headquarters across Ohio.

The final two years of the 1930s saw two new directors, Ivan R. Ault in 1938, and Robert S. Beighter in 1939. The ODOH expanded the Location and Design section by establishing eight regional offices. And in 1939 the department awarded 186 projects totaling $4.8 million. This was a record year for the department, and signaled a recovery from the depression.

Perhaps nothing illustrates how much the ODOH grew and changed during the 1930s more than a comparison of the table of organization from that era. In 1920, the organizational needs of the DOH could be served by the commissioner and a handful of trained engineers, all headquartered in Columbus. But by the mid-1930s, the director had his own secretarial staff, authority over eight major bureaus, each with diverse subsections, and 12 district offices with their own resident engineers.

By the end of the 1930s, the department occupied offices throughout the state and was in control of a multi-step process of road building involving complex design and funding issues. The ODOH was also responsible for registering automobiles, issuing driver’s licenses and overseeing the development and training of a growing police force. The ODOH had become a larger, more diverse organization that had proven it could adapt to new challenges.
The Safety/Workers Compensation Group with Central Office created a survey comparing the department’s Workers’ Compensation measures to those of 28 other state DOTs. After one year of following a new safety business plan developed by the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation, ODOT reported a decrease in workers compensation costs of $118,000 from 2003.

Transportation departments tend to share the same injury problem areas, and the rates generally are proportional to the total number of employees. The highway maintenance trades are probably at the greatest risk and where injuries are most prevalent. The chart below compares the state’s rankings in several categories:

### Survey of State DOT Workers' Compensation/Injury Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total # Employees</th>
<th># Hwy Mnt Workers</th>
<th>Injury Types</th>
<th>WC Image / Loss Cost</th>
<th>Total # of 2001 Claims</th>
<th>Total # of 2002 Claims</th>
<th>Total # of 2001 Lost Time Claims</th>
<th>Total # of 2002 Lost Time Claims</th>
<th># of 2001 Lost Days</th>
<th># of 2002 Lost Days</th>
<th>2001 Cost</th>
<th>2002 Cost</th>
<th>Safety Measures</th>
<th>Injury Rate Per 100 Employees</th>
<th>Lost Time % of Total Claims</th>
<th>Claim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>3,752</td>
<td>2,736</td>
<td>Heavy labor tasks</td>
<td>State Fund</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>$2.4 Mil</td>
<td>$1.6 Mil</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>3,319</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>Muscular stress/strain</td>
<td>Self Insured</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>$2.4 Mil</td>
<td>$1.6 Mil</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A new certification program, offered by Wright State University (WSU), is helping students launch careers as transit professionals. ODOT is working with the University’s Department of Urban Affairs and Geography to expand the field of quality transit managers and enhance the skills and education of existing transit professionals.

The new Public and Social Services Transportation Certificate Program will help promote public and social transportation as a career choice to those who may never have considered it. It also targets those currently employed in public transportation, social service agencies, and private nonprofit organizations. To be admitted to the certificate program, students must meet the admission requirements of WSU.

“The idea was continually put on the backburner until it was proposed to and accepted by the Chairman of Urban Affairs and Geography at Wright State,” said Rosamary Amiet, ODOT public transportation manager. “I told myself all along that if just one person who took these courses became interested and employed in a transit career, it would be a success.”

Started in 2003, the program was 10 years in the making, according to Amiet, she believed in the program since day one and was glad to see it become a reality. The university will include the course material in its course listings, provide classroom space and pay for the instructors. ODOT will offer scholarships for tuition assistance using funding from the Federal Transit Administration and Rural Transit Assistance Program, and will work with area transit systems to develop intern opportunities.

Three courses make up the program, and one course will be offered per quarter: Non-profit Management and Public Transit; Rural and Urban Transportation; and Public and Social Transportation: Financial Management and Organization. Students are encouraged to complete all three courses consisting of 24 hours of class work, as well as an internship in order to receive a certificate of completion from ODOT.

Students already employed in a transit field may replace the internship with an approved work study course and/or one additional select or core course. There were 36 students enrolled in the Spring and three students are taking advantage of internships. In addition to a certificate, the courses can also count toward a college degree. Students are expected to earn a grade of “C” or better for all courses required for the certificate.

The transit classes provided some of the students new experiences, such as riding public transit for the first time. One of the class assignments was to ride public transit and then write about their experience. Many of the students indicated the experience gave them a better understanding of how dependent some people are on public transit as a primary means of transportation.

One student wrote on the feedback report, “I no longer look at public transportation the way I used to. Although I am very attached to my car, I would not hesitate to ride the RTA (Regional Transit Authority) again in the future.”

Although enrollment has been good, ODOT and WSU hope to develop Web-based courses and possibly establish satellite campus locations to ease the burden of commuting and increase enrollment. For more information about specific course content, the certificate program, scholarship opportunities, or Wright State University please contact Lynn Rathke at ODOT, 614-644-7362.

Wright State University students participate in the Non-Profit Management and Public Transit Course being offered as part of the university’s new Public and Social Services Transportation Certificate Program.
Would you like to represent ODOT at the Ohio State Fair?

The ODOT display is located in the air-conditioned Marketplace Building. The fair is from August 4-15.

Volunteers wanted:
Knowledgeable and enthusiastic employees are encouraged to volunteer to talk to citizens about ODOT and distribute departmental literature.

Here are the particulars:
Supervisor approval must be obtained to work at the fair. A permission slip will be sent to those wishing to volunteer. The permission slip must be signed by the supervisor and returned to Julie Walcoff by July 19, 2004.

Shifts available are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 10 p.m., with two people required for each shift. There is one hour factored in for lunch. Unfortunately, travel time cannot be factored into the shift.

Working at the fair is in place of regular work; there will be no overtime eligibility. Generally, volunteers can only be spared for one shift during the fair.

If a volunteer works at the fair on a weekend, that weekend shift can be substituted, with supervisor approval, for a regular workday during the same week. Parking and entry passes will be provided for ODOT volunteers.

There will be an informational meeting for volunteers on July 22, 2003, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in Central Office Room GB.

If interested in volunteering, please contact: Julie.Walcoff@dot.state.oh.us (614) 466-3049