

Connections

May 2006

Customer Service Centers Going Strong After Ten Years

by Jeff Briggs



Cathy Morrison

Peggy Jones mans District 6's customer service center.

Call almost any large company and you'll hear the same thing – a recorded voice telling you which buttons to push to get more recorded voices.

Not at MoDOT, though. Our customer service lines are answered by actual people! Our agency is providing a level of customer service that most organizations can only dream of, thanks to our customer service centers. This month they celebrate their 10th anniversary.

At each district office as well as the Central Office, a team of reps is always standing by to handle calls live, as well as provide quick response to customer e-mails or in-person customers. These 34 folks are MoDOT's front line – the people the public talks to when they need us.

"Our customer service centers are absolutely critical to our success," said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn. "One of our department's values is to be responsive and courteous. The customer service representatives are the first point of contact for many of our customers, so the first impression they give, and results they deliver, can make or break us. I'm pleased to say they're doing a great job!"

The idea of a toll free number – 888-ASK-MODOT -- is considered routine at the

department now, but tying a statewide agency together with one easy to use number throughout the state was a leading edge idea when it was first implemented ten years ago. "We're the first department of transportation nationally to provide this service," Chief Engineer Joe Mickes said when announcing the new service back in 1996. "Our goal is to provide a one-stop approach with limited transfers and holding. Most questions can be immediately answered, and those that can't will be handled as quickly as possible."

Ten years later that's still the goal. In fact, more than 90 percent of all questions to the customer service centers are answered within 24 hours.

Using phone technology, calls to the toll-free number are automatically routed to the nearest district center, so representatives familiar with the caller's area can answer questions.

Customer service representatives are specially chosen and trained as experts in department operations, as well as how to treat the public well. "Our representatives constantly impress me with how much they know about the department, and how well they can explain it to the public," said Kristin Gerber, who manages the District 5 Customer Service Center. "And the public

feels the same way. Callers who take a survey after their call rate our reps with a satisfaction level of nearly 100 percent."

And they handle a lot of calls. Over the past year customer service representatives fielded more than 360,000 calls and other public contacts. "It's especially busy when the weather is bad," said District 1 Customer Service Representative Connie Hale. "When the roads are snow-covered the phone rings constantly, wondering how the roads are and when we're going to plow theirs. I'm glad, though, that so many people use our toll-free number when they need this information."

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Ten-Year Reps

A few customer service representatives were here when it all started 10 years ago, and are still serving MoDOT customers today.

- Connie Hale, District 1
- Tana Akright, District 3
- Jackie Biele, District 5
- Natalie Ward-Lyn, District 6
- Lita Ford-Cambers, District 7
- Tracy Davault, District 8
- Shelly Caldwell, District 9
- Danny Bradley, District 9
- Mary Ann Marshall, Central Office

Work Zone Awareness



Cathy Morrison

Bob Brendel spreads MoDOT's work zone awareness message.

Bob Brendel, outreach coordinator for Design, and several other MoDOT staff members took advantage of the large crowd visiting the new Busch Stadium on the St. Louis Cardinals' opening day to pass out statewide construction maps and emphasize the importance of driving safely

in work zones. The employees talked to Cardinals fans about the many work zones that will be cropping up around the state this construction season. The Cardinals' broadcast network airs MoDOT's work zone public service announcements.

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Damaging tornadoes strike again, this time in District 10

Customer Service Anniversary

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Another important component of customer service centers is data collection. Through the customer service database, created especially for these centers ten years ago, representatives can enter information from customer calls to make sure all questions are routed to the right person and track when each customer request is completed.

“We measure how long it takes to respond to customers, and how long it takes to complete their requests,” said Marisa Brown, who manages the District 3 Customer Service Center. “Using the database, we can make sure we’re providing great service.”

The role of a customer service representative has evolved over the years. While responding to calls remains an important part of the job, they now serve customers in a much greater capacity through coordination and organization of public meetings, initiating updates on projects, groundbreaking and ribbon-cutting ceremonies, database development and Web site updates.

“Customer service is not just about reacting and responding to the customer anymore,” Brown said. “It’s also about getting them information before they feel the need to call us.”

Customer Service Reps Remember Calls

by Jeff Briggs

Over the years, customer service representatives have fielded some interesting calls. Here are just a few examples:

District 1, Connie Hale – “We took a call from a mother asking about construction from District 1 to St. Louis. Her son suffered from a respiratory condition and had to avoid work zones, because dust or fumes might aggravate his condition. Shelly checked out work zones on the entire route to St. Louis and routed the family through five MoDOT districts, getting the child to St. Louis safely.”

District 1, Connie Hale – “We remember the March 1998 snow storm. Customer Service at that time also served as the command center during snow emergencies. We were staffed for seven days, 24 hours a day. We took hundreds of calls dealing with the snow. There were so many roads closed, the minority was the open roads. We had people stranded in their homes and in their vehicles, pregnant women about to deliver, funerals cancelled and numerous other situations. What an experience! One we don’t want to relive!”

Central Office, Mary Anne Marshall – “One spring day a teenager walked into the reception area at the Central Office. He said his brother and nephew were killed in an accident and he had hitchhiked from Sedalia to Jefferson



This 1996 photo shows an eager group ready to tackle the challenge of being a customer service representative.

Front row (l to r): Jackie Biele, District 5; Cheryl Broyles, Central Office; Julie Lewis, District 4; Audrey Marshall, District 1; Jackie Davis, District 4. Second row (l to r): Debbie Malone, District 3; Jeannie Wilson, Central Office; Tracy Davault, District 8; Kathy Parise, District 7; Lita Cambers, District 7; Margie Mansager, Central Office; Vickie Ray, District 2; Tammy Wallace, District 2. Third row (l to r): James Ray Riggins, District 10; Charlotte Butler, District 10; Brenda Descamps, District 8; Sandra Panetta, District 8; Freda Engelhart, District 4; Danny Bradley, District 9; Connie Hale, District 1; Tana Akright, District 3; Mary Anne Marshall, Central Office.

Not pictured: Shelly Caldwell, District 9; Eve Black, Natalie Ward-Lyn, Marie Swanson, Dee Woods, Paula Walls, Kelly Rohas, all of District 6.

City. When he arrived he went to St. Peter’s Church to pray. He had to get to St. Louis and the person he spoke with at the church told him to come to MoDOT. After some discussion, Bev Thoenen and I decided to give him \$20 to buy a ticket. Then Bev walked down to the train station and gave him an

additional \$10 so that he could buy himself something to eat. We didn’t know for sure whether to believe him, but we both sort of worried about him. Believe it or not, in the fall he came in to visit us and returned the \$30. Probably the best memory I will have of being a customer service rep.”

Graduate Orientation Draws A Crowd

by Rachel Van Tuyl

Because MoDOT is a big place and all 6,200 of us are spread throughout the state, we often work with people whom we rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to meet face-to-face. The graduate orientation program is designed to help

senior management discuss our mission, values and tangible results.

The program began in the early 1990s exclusively for civil engineers. It was later expanded and is now open to all employees hired within the last calendar

This year, about 80 MoDOT employees attended the program, which was held March 28-30 at the Ramada Inn in Jefferson City.

“I enjoyed the presentations from the various departments and how they fit in with the mission and goals at MoDOT,” said former participant David Spieker, a Human Resources specialist at MoDOT. “The program provided me with a ‘big picture’ of how MoDOT functions and operates as well as an opportunity to meet other MoDOT team members.”

Another participant, South Central District Community Relations Manager Ann Marie Newberry, also found the program to be very beneficial.

“The graduate orientation program helped me form a total picture of MoDOT,” Newberry said. “Getting your feet wet and learning your district can be challenging enough. I appreciated the opportunity to meet individuals from Central Office divisions and discover the services available to me.”

If you have any questions or are interested in participating in the program, please contact Javal Burton at (573) 526-0676 or via e-mail at Javal.Burton@modot.mo.gov.



Mark Baumgartner (near machine) gives graduate orientation participants a tour of MoDOT’s photo laboratory.

change that. It gives employees the chance to meet with department leaders and learn more about how Central Office divisions support them in their day-to-day work activities.

During the three-day event, which is offered twice a year, participants are able to tour MoDOT facilities and listen to

year who have a college degree and are in positions that require a degree.

Human Resources Specialist Javal Burton organized this year’s program.

“This is my first year coordinating graduate orientation, and it’s been very exciting,” Burton said. “It’s nice to meet the new faces within MoDOT.”

Staggered Registration Is Improvement

by DeAnne Bonnot

Last year, Missouri motor carriers were given the option to change the due date of their annual registration. Instead of dealing with the usual year-end crush as Motor Carrier Services processed the renewals of thousands of carriers at once, companies were given the option to renew their registration and pay their fees in spring, summer, fall or winter.

The first wave of the staggered registration is under way. Around 16 percent of all Missouri carriers had to file paperwork by April 3 and pay their fees by June 30 to operate legally.

“This change has given our motor carriers some needed flexibility in renewing their annual registrations and that has enabled us to serve them better,” said Jan Skouby, Motor Carrier Services director.

These carriers are also the first to have the option to use the Internet to complete their tasks anytime, day or night. No more thick bundles to mail or ship overnight. No more long waits for those who used to visit the MCS office. Though it is an adjustment, many carriers have successfully filed already and used a credit card to pay their fees.

Build Your Career Through the Mentoring Program

by Kristi Jamison

Working at MoDOT is not just a job ... it's a career. And when you're ready to start climbing that career ladder, the Mentoring Program is a step in the right direction.

Administered by the Equal Opportunity Division, the department's Mentoring Program is a great way for employees



Greg Wood, left, special assignments liaison for Audits and Investigations, mentors Stefan Denson, senior investigator for Audits and Investigations, as part of MoDOT's mentoring program.

to explore career-building opportunities and attain professional development goals. Through the program, a cooperative mentoring relationship is developed by pairing an employee (mentee) with

a more experienced co-worker (mentor) from the same geographical area and line of career interest. The working partnership creates a continuous learning environment favorable for helping the mentee discover and develop his or her skills and abilities.

In this win-win process, the mentee benefits by learning how his or her skills fit into the department's goals and objectives and by building the skills necessary to compete for advanced placement opportunities. The mentor benefits by gaining a deeper understanding of his or her job functions and sharing that knowledge with others. And ultimately, the department benefits by improving employee skills, creating leadership succession and enhancing its ability to recruit and retain employees.

To date, more than 100 employees are participating in the program with more joining every day. In fact, one of the best times to consider a mentee/mentor partnership is when a new employee joins MoDOT.

Online System Helps MoDOT Protect Environment, Save Costs

A new statewide, online herbicide tracking application is helping MoDOT save time and money. The database keeps track of herbicides MoDOT uses to manage roadside vegetation.

"The database captures more accurate and consistent information for every spray application we make," said Rand Swanigan, roadside management specialist. "It also allows our building supervisors to monitor herbicides they have in inventory and keep records that help them better manage their applications."

As a result, Swanigan said, herbicide applications are more efficient, which

helps protect the environment. It also saves the department some money.

"It's hard to estimate a 'true' cost savings, but we see it reducing costs by \$50,000 or more the first year just by helping us to better manage our inventories and plan for ordering supplies for next year's applications," Swanigan said. "Also, access to records is almost instantaneous, where previously it might have taken hours or days to locate one specific spray record."

MoDOT is responsible for about 32,000 miles of roadside each year, maintaining the proper vegetation so motorists' views are not hindered.

Shutterbug Alert!

Get Your Cameras Ready!

We'll once again be hosting a contest to select a photo for the cover of the 2007-2008 Missouri highway map. Look for more details to come your way. For more information, contact Arnold Williams, geographic information systems coordinator, at 573-751-7012 or arnold.williams@modot.mo.gov.

We Need To Talk: Missouri's Interstate Celebration Plans

They changed our lives. Now they're in trouble. We need to talk.

That's the teaser for the public policy forum we're hosting in June to discuss the condition of our interstates and where we're headed. Titled "Our Interstates at 50: A Midlife Crisis," the forum will be held June 22 at the University of Missouri-Columbia in conjunction with the nation's celebration of the 50th anniversary of the interstate system. It's co-sponsored by

the Institute of Public Policy, Truman School of Public Affairs.

U.S. General (ret.) Barry McCaffrey, NBC News analyst, Operation Desert Storm commander and national infrastructure expert, will be the keynote speaker for the forum. Other speakers include:

- Bob Priddy, Missouri net;
- Mary Peters, (former Federal Highway Administration Administrator),

National Director for Transportation Policy and Consulting, HDR Incorporated;

- Bob Heitmann, Cintra-Zachry Construction;
- Hal Kassoff, Parsons Brinkerhoff;
- Frank Moretti, TRIP; and
- other national and state transportation leaders.

Director Pete Rahn will host the forum. Three panels will discuss the interstate system's past, present and future.

"The creation of the interstate highway system has been the most significant development in transportation history, but today we're at a crossroads," said Rahn. "Missouri has lacked the funding needed to keep its interstates in good condition, and many of our interstate highways are aging, congested and in need of reconstruction."

In addition to the public forum, we'll host a June 28 event to celebrate the first interstate contract awarded at the site of one of the first interstate projects - located at Interstate 70 and Fifth Street in St. Charles. And, the Kansas Department of Transportation is tentatively planning an event for June 23 at the Kansas Speedway and has invited us to participate.

Interstate Info

Fact: Missouri has 17 routes that carry the interstate designation and account for 1,180 miles of the 32,318 miles included in the state's total highway system.

This and other interesting interstate information can now be found on our Web site at www.modot.org/interstate. You'll also find a fascinating recap of Missouri's interstate history and some neat photos showing the original construction. A quiz and some comments from those who can recall the early days of our interstates round out the material available online.



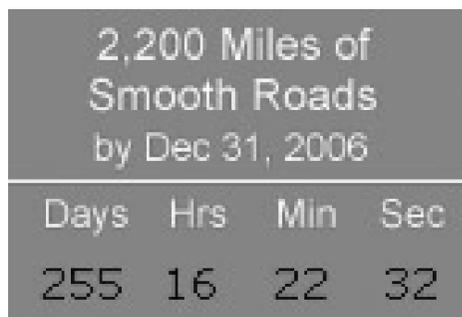
THIS IS THE FIRST PROJECT
IN THE UNITED STATES
ON WHICH ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION WAS STARTED
UNDER PROVISIONS OF THE NEW
FEDERAL AID HIGHWAY ACT OF 1956
MISSOURI STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION
CAMERON, JOYCE & COMPANY
CONTRACTOR



The Countdown Begins: MoDOT Web Site Tracks SRI Deadline "To The Second"

by Jeff Briggs

By the end of this year, Missouri's busiest highways will be in good condition if MoDOT can meet the governor's challenge to complete the Smooth Roads Initiative by Dec. 31. And a countdown clock - found at www.modot.org - is ticking down the days, hours,



MoDOT's countdown clock can be found at www.modot.org.

minutes and seconds until the end of the year to help make sure everyone stays focused on that deadline.

The Smooth Roads Initiative is part of MoDOT's Smoother, Safer, Sooner program, an aggressive road-building effort financed by voter passage of Amendment 3 in November 2004. The initiative, begun a year ago, had a goal of bringing the most heavily traveled 2,200 miles of Missouri highways up to good condition by December 2007.

In his recent State of the State Address, Gov. Matt Blunt called on MoDOT to move that deadline up to December 2006.

"Improving all these highways by the end of 2007 was already an aggressive timetable," said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn. "Moving everything up a year is a huge challenge, but I'm confident we can get it done."

"Our employees and contractor partners are planning their busiest year ever to meet this deadline," he said. "We'll be pushing hard every day to accomplish this, and the countdown clock won't ever slow down or let us forget our mission."

The highway miles included in the SRI account for 60 percent of all traffic on the state system. The roads include interstates, major highways in the metropolitan areas, and highway corridors connecting smaller towns throughout the state. About 86 percent of Missouri's population lives within 10 miles of one of the selected roads. When work on the initiative started a year ago, three-fourths of these highways were in fair to poor condition.

Web Address Now On MoDOT Vehicles

by Matt Hiebert

Many MoDOT vehicles will soon be sporting some fancy new detailing on their exterior. Well, maybe not fancy, but certainly informative.

To ensure that drivers know MoDOT's Web site address, a vinyl decal that says www.modot.org is being placed on the doors of more than 2,500 vehicles.

The concept is to bring more people to the Web site so they can stay engaged in their Department of Transportation. Knowing where to find the site is the first step.

District 5 has taken the lead in this effort, and Coleen Welter, General Services manager, said the address will soon appear on a variety of vehicles.

"We've put the Web site address on our dump trucks, utility trucks, light-duty trucks, auger units and even some sweepers," she said. "These are all visible vehicles the public sees everyday."

Once people learn what the Web site has to offer, they will come to it more often

and stay informed on Missouri's transportation system.

There are a few vehicles that won't carry the address, with good reason.

"The trucks with the B20 (fuel) decal are too crowded for the address to fit," Welter said. "And other vehicles don't have room because of the MoDOT logo."

Welter said the sign shop is printing the decals in concurrence with the signage needs of the Smooth Roads Initiative.



MoDOT vehicles throughout the state are beginning to bear the department's Web site address.

May Service Anniversaries

40 Years

Glenn R. Rice D3
Fredrick E. Caldwell D4

35 Years

Oliver R. Adamson D9

30 Years

Dennis E. Pollard D2
George B. Herrick D3
Micheal D. Parrish D3
Terry L. Stinnett D3
Jeffrey L. Bailey D4
Michael D. Dunseith D7
Douglas W. Boze D9
James R. Johns D10

25 Years

Russell A. Mitchell D2
Michael A. Hurst D4
David B. Morris D5

20 Years

Larry H. Parsons D1
Kelly D. Lucas D2
Michael E. McGrath D2
Thomas P. Batenhorst D3
Harvey D. Lewis D3
James C. Burgess D4
Brian S. Ziegler D4
Marlin W. Gessling D5
Robert E. Hesemann D5
Bobby Quick D5
Willa B. Drake D7
Walter R. Headrick D7
Lonnie K. Jordon D7
Bernie J. Mac D8
Ricky D. Branum D10
Deborah R. Strobel D10
Jay W. Trammell D10
Dwight D. Vaughn D10
Jeffrey F. Briggs CO
Patrick L. McDaniel CO
Larry D. Ridnour CO

15 Years

David S. Corbin D1
William D. Basler D2

David L. Deitch D2
Douglas A. Pettig D2
Roger W. Reger D2
Larry D. Wells D2
Darren L. Apperson D5
James J. James D5
Gary S. Townsend D5
Marjorie Dunn D6
Eric V. Ingrum D6
Matthew N. Jansson D6
Bruce E. Staley D6
Charles R. Dykens D7
Fred L. George D7
Johnny L. Aldridge D10
Jeffrey S. Byrge D10
John L. Davis D10
Debbie J. Foster D10
Randy R. Gholson D10
Helen M. Grindstaff D10
Shannon W. Inman D10
Bradley G. Milam D10
Terry J. Walker D10
Kenneth E. Barnett CO
Jay Bestgen CO
Lois D. Fairchild CO
Brent P. Fischer CO
Kent W. Nelson CO

10 Years

John E. Cool D1
Darin R. Epperson D3
Jody B. Geisendorfer D3
Anthony G. Grote D3
Richard A. Hyde D3
Kevin C. James D3
Macy J. Rodenbaugh D3
Deborah L. Jerome D4
David L. Johnson D4
Pamela L. Nugent D4
Kenneth A. Cherry D6
Claude A. Brown D7
Dennis J. Greenfield D7
Twyla K. Harper D7
Regina R. Shipley D7
Johnnie D. Smith D7

Robert L. Cunningham D9
Steve B. Limbaugh D10
Joshua Wessel D10
Tamara R. Clutts CO
Michael A. Donahoe CO
Llans E. Taylor CO
Melanie L. Wilson CO

5 Years

Randall E. Aulbur D3
Kenyon R. Warbritton D3
Daniel D. Allred D4
Johnny R. Appleberry D4
Stephen G. Boone D4
Randy L. Buhler D4
Deloris K. Goetz D4
Hope L. Visconti D4
Corey J. Duemmel D5
Bryan S. Gregory D5
Kristina T. Coppinger D6
Tim A. Huskey D6
Toby J. Kemper D6
James E. Lerch D6
Susan D. Mueller D6
Thomas J. Parsons D6

Daniel W. Savageau D6
Darrel L. Arnold D7
Brent C. Banas D7
Jeffrey R. Kaiser D7
Carl G. Jackson D8
Gary A. McLarry D8
Michael R. Nelson D8
Jeff S. Willey D9
Bobby R. Carlyle D10
Kelly L. Green D10
Travis J. Slayton D10
Tyson K. Watson D10
Karen L. Daniels CO
Leann C. Helling CO
Paul J. Imhoff CO
Jerry D. Lacey CO
Robin L. Livesay CO
John F. Mehuys CO
Michael R. Meyerhoff CO
Amy M. Niederhelm CO
Debra L. Stieffermann CO
Adam R. Wyrick CO
Xinge Yin CO

In Memoriam

Active employees	CO	March 30
Carol A. Newland	CO	March 30
Retirees		
Joe D. White	D8	March 1
Sigal W. Hughes	D4	March 3
Warren G. Nobles	D10	March 8
James E. Hill	D7	March 9
Rolland L. Thomason	D4	March 15
Roy A. Davis	D5	March 18
Neils J. Johnson	D8	March 22
Sam T. Lawson	CO	March 26

March Retirements

Name	Location	Years of Service
Richard Branum	CO	8
Roger Collins	D6	20
Gary Fricke	D4	32
Eric Heckle	D7	9
Perry Hoffman	D9	22
Steve Jarvis	D9	29
Frank Johnson	D10	7
Donald Mudd	D3	38
Patricia North	D9	19
Dale Roller	D8	36
Edward Speakman	D10	14
Jerome Thoenen	D5	28
James Wiggins	D7	22



Central Office

Mehmert Oversees New Innovative Partnership Group

by Kristi Jamison

Change is the law of life, and although it is rarely popular, it is necessary for an organization to be successful. Over the past few years, MoDOT certainly has embraced change and has been transformed into an environment that is much more transparent and open to new ideas that lead to innovative transportation solutions. An example of this is Resource Management's new Innovative Partnership Group.

A team formed last fall made several recommendations designed to help us focus more closely on building partnerships within both the public and private sectors, and working with those partners to identify alternative financing options to fund more transportation projects.

One outcome resulting from the team's recommendations was establishing an Innovative Partnership Group, which is housed in Resource Management. Leading the group is Mark Mehmert, the new partnership development

manager (see sidebar article). He and his staff specifically support two tangible results found in the Tracker: partnering with others to deliver transportation services and leveraging transportation to advance economic development.

As a marketer, consultant and facilitator, Mehmert and his group are key to establishing the department's commitment to build partnerships with others to deliver transportation services and to leverage innovative transportation financing solutions.

"We have a lot of innovative financing tools at our disposal, and we haven't always made the most of them," said Roberta Broeker, chief financial officer. "Mark and the Innovative Partnership Group will play an integral role in educating those inside and outside of MoDOT about the range of options that are available. That will help us bring new resources to projects, and stretch our dollars as far as we can."

Mehmert will work with both public and private partners to help determine cost share details and identify resources that will provide funding for projects that may have otherwise not been feasible, create additional resources to complete more projects, and speed delivery of others. The group will mainly focus on transportation projects that advance economic development. They'll also look for ways to accelerate projects that are of the greatest public benefit and provide the best value for every dollar spent.



Mark Mehmert, MoDOT's partnership development manager.

"Transportation improvement needs far outweigh state or local resources, so we felt it was important that MoDOT could help facilitate the process

involved in determining the cost share and maximize all resources available for projects," said Kirk Boyer, resource management director. "With the new Innovative Partnership Group in place, we are better able to develop strategic partnerships that allow us to more easily identify creative ways to finance more projects and at a faster pace."

Mehmert is also currently developing a marketing plan that will increase awareness and participation in the Innovative Finance Program.

Get To Know Mark

Mark Mehmert started working for MoDOT on Feb. 1. As Partnership Development Manager, his primary duty is marketing the tools MoDOT has available for the purpose of building Missouri's transportation system.

"I look forward to working with MoDOT's district engineers to partner with Missouri communities that want to identify cost-efficient, effective means to address their transportation needs," Mehmert said. "Every local dollar we can bring to the table stretches MoDOT's dollars, helping us to accomplish more with less."

Mehmert brings a wide array of marketing experience to his new position. He comes to MoDOT most recently from the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center, which absorbed his position with the Missouri Occupational Information Coordinating Committee in a merger between the departments of Economic Development and Elementary and Secondary Education.

At MOICC/MERIC, Mehmert marketed the benefits of career planning, helping job seekers obtain up-to-date information to make well-informed career decisions. Prior to that, he worked as a research analyst at the Department of Economic Development, helping market the benefits of doing business in Missouri.

We're Number One...to Local Job Seekers

by Kristi Jamison



Roberta Broeker, Gilbert Hake and Micki Knudsen celebrate MoDOT's top employee award.

The Department of Economic Development's Division of Workforce Development oversees nearly 40 Missouri Career Centers where the staffs' primary goal is to help match job seekers and employers. It's not unusual for individuals to consider certain employers as the most popular to work for in a specific area, so staff at the Jefferson

City Career Center recently went to task to determine who those businesses and agencies are locally, and MoDOT came out on top.

During a four-month period beginning November 2005, the staff surveyed their job-seeking customers to find out which business and government agency they

most want to work for. Much to our delight, MoDOT was selected as the most sought after government agency!

Human Resources Director Micki Knudsen and Chief Financial Officer Roberta Broeker accepted the award on behalf of MoDOT during a presentation at Job Fair Jefferson City on April 6.

"It was quite an honor to learn that the Department of Transportation was selected as the state agency most local job seekers would prefer to work for," Knudsen said. "The award speaks volumes about the quality agency we are, and we will continue to improve our working environment to make this an

even better place to work in the future."

The event was attended by more than 100 people, and was co-sponsored by the Division of Workforce Development and KRCG, with support from the Jefferson City Chamber of Commerce, Convenient Food Marts, KWOS and KLIK.

5

Motor Carrier Services Investigators Receive Security Training

by DeAnne Bonnot

In March, staff from the U.S. Transportation Security Administration taught Motor Carrier Services safety and compliance investigators how to conduct a corporate security review. Now, when investigators visit carriers to perform regular inspections, they'll be able to advise the company how to improve the security of their location and protect their assets from theft and terrorist interference.

Information gathered during these visits will be shared with the administration so a national security baseline can be established. The baseline may

help identify threats to domestic security more quickly than was previously possible.



Larry Slade of the U.S. Transportation Security Administration explains security reviews to Motor Carriers Staff.

for more info

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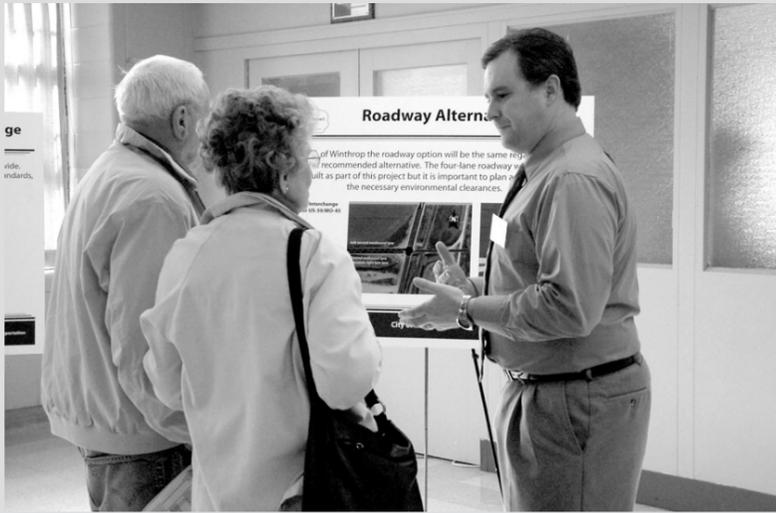
Sally Oxenhandler
573.751.7456
sally.oxenhandler@modot.mo.gov

D1

Northwest

A Bridge to the Future

Story and photos by Elaine Justus

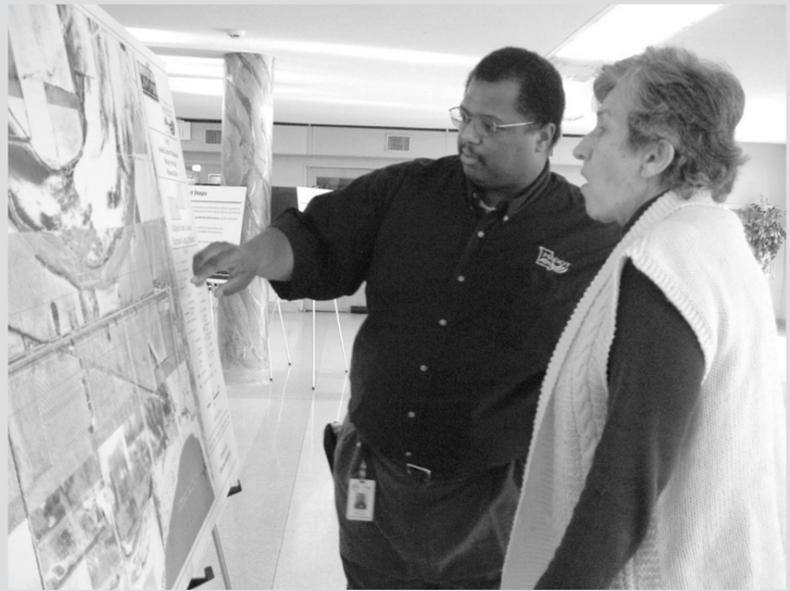


Shannon Kusilek, transportation planning manager for the Northwest District, was on hand to answer any questions about the draft EIS.

With the completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) portion of the study of the bridge across the Missouri River at Atchison, Kan., it was time for another public meeting. Both the Kansas Department of Transportation and the Missouri Department of Transportation were on hand to share the findings of the EIS. We were also there to continue the discussion regarding whether or not a new 2-lane or 4-lane bridge is needed. In addition, data

was collected to determine what type of bridge would be most appropriate to the setting. The attendees were offered several options to consider:

- 1) Rehabilitate the existing bridge.
- 2) Build a new two-lane structure parallel to the existing bridge and rehabilitate the existing bridge.
- 3) Build a new four-lane bridge parallel to the existing bridge and remove the existing bridge at completion.



Assistant District Engineer Tony McGaughy shares information about the future plans for improvements to routes 59 and 45 as part of the study about the bridge over the Missouri River at Atchison, Kan.

Although we did not receive a unanimous response, it is fair to say we definitely achieved informed consent. It is clear that an overwhelming number of people attending the public meeting want a new four-lane structure. There remains a small portion of the community, though, who value the historical aspect of the existing bridge and would like to see it preserved. At this same meeting, KDOT and MoDOT offered a number of ways that the memory of the bridge could be preserved if the decision is made to demolish it. A few ideas brought forth included a photographic record of the 1937 structure, a scale replica could be constructed for display

or even a portion of the existing truss preserved and displayed.

A statistically-valid telephone survey is being conducted with residents of Atchison and Winthrop to ask their opinion about the options. It is up to the community to tell us whether economic development and modernization outweigh history.

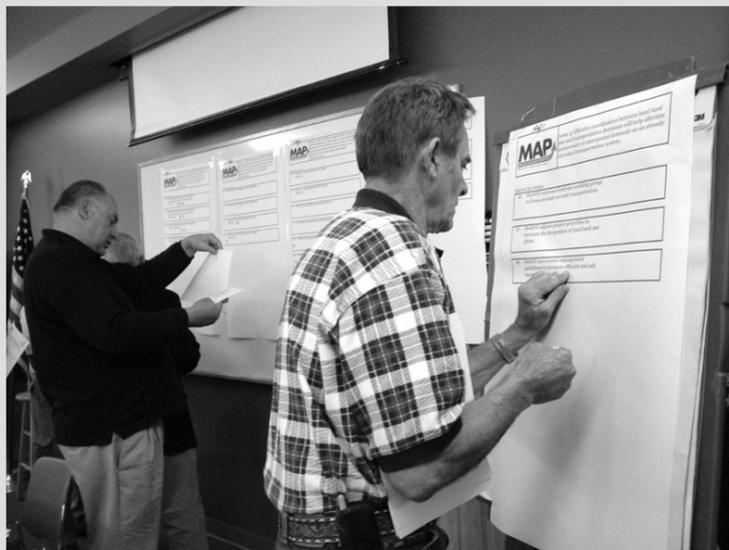
The study is scheduled to be completed sometime this year, and the final decision on the project will rest with the two transportation agencies and the Federal Highway Administration. Construction on the bridge is scheduled to begin in 2009.

Mapping the Future

Story and photos by Elaine Justus



The very last local meeting of the Northwest Regional Work Group for Missouri Advance Planning took place April 5 at the office of the Missouri Department of Conservation. Consultants HNTB and the Osprey Group led the discussion about the future of transportation in Missouri.



The group took the opportunity to offer their "votes" for the highest priority issues facing transportation, and how to address them. In the forefront is Mark Hoover, Clinton county commissioner, to his left is retired businessman Jack Briggs, father of Community Relations' own Jeff Briggs.

April 5 was a "red letter" day for the regional work group for Missouri Advance Planning. That's the day that the last local meeting of their group was held. The Missouri Department of Conservation's Northwest Regional District Office, located on the campus of Missouri Western State University, graciously volunteered their meeting room. Their one year commitment is almost up, and the team has accom-

plished a great deal. The final "wrap up" meeting of this effort will take place May 18 in Columbia when all six statewide regional work groups will compare their findings and make their final recommendations. Upon completion, their findings will be presented to the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission to assist them in planning Missouri's long-term transportation future.

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D2

North Central

Down on the Farm

What could entice the group below to pose for this picture? An opportunity to tour the processing plant of the second largest pork producer in the United States - Premium Standard Farms.

In 1988 PSF began production opera-

their production by 35 percent to 10,000 hogs a day.

PSF not only employs workers at the Milan facility, but including their farming operations and transportation fleet, they employ 2,300 workers across eight



Gordon Becton - PSF

All decked out, the group gets ready to tour the PSF processing plant in Milan. Left to right - D2 Area Engineer Phil Sandifer, D1 Assistant District Engineer Tony McGaughy, D2 District Engineer Dan Niec, Commissioner David Gach, Director Pete Rahn, D2 Assistant District Engineer Mike Herleth.

tions near Princeton, Missouri. As the company grew, in 1994 the processing operation was established in Milan.

The Milan plant employs nearly 1,000 workers at the facility and processes around 7,400 hogs a day, and they're not finished growing yet. In March, they broke ground for a year-long construction project for an addition to the facility. Once built, they plan to hire an additional 50 employees and increase

counties in northern Mo. This distinction makes them the largest employer north of Route 36.

Producing a quality product is of course at the heart of the operation. PSF's integrated system guarantees the high quality that their customers can count on, while the Citizen's Advisory Panel meets regularly to discuss operation issues that impact the community.

Appreciating Red Cross Training



Shari Dye

Commissioner David Gach, Marcus Stauffer, Todd Greenstreet and Pete Rahn.

When a fellow co-worker became choked on a piece of food and was turning blue from lack of oxygen, Assistant Maintenance Supervisor Todd Greenstreet and Crew Worker Marcus Stauffer knew what to do. Certified responders through the American Red Cross program, Todd and Marcus performed the Heimlich maneuver, dislodging the food and restoring oxygen to their choking co-worker.

MoDOT Director Pete Rahn paid a surprise visit to a recent spring meeting and presented Certificates of Appreciation to Todd and Marcus. Thanking them for their heroic efforts, Pete asked their supervisor Roger Rader, who had nominated them for the award, to arrange a day off with pay to further reward them for their heroic measures.

Following the tour, PSF representatives gave a brief presentation on the company and discussed transportation issues and needs important to their organization.

The tour provided the MoDOT group the opportunity to view the process from start to finish. They were also provided an excellent lunch, of quality pork products of course.

When discussing the tour, as a businessman Commissioner Gach noted, "It's a great benefit to a rural community to have an employer of this size in the area." Director Rahn stated, "It was fascinating to see the specialized equipment that allows the plant to process the large numbers that they do,"

Thank you to Plant Superintendent Greg Lara, Communications Manager Jason Helton, Communications Supervisor Gordon Becton, Transportation Manager Dale Kellen and Director of Transportation and Logistics Mike Shutt for providing the tour and information.

The MoDOT group was happy to have the opportunity to meet with PSF. As the builders and caretakers of our state's transportation system, it is important to meet with our transportation partners to learn about their businesses and the needs and challenges they face. Understanding our customers needs will help us to provide excellent service to the state of Missouri.



Tammy Wallace

Human Recourse Manager Ellen Gehringer proudly accepts the award presented by District Engineer Dan Niec.

Building the Bridges of Diversity

District Two's Human Resource Department was recognized for its continued efforts toward building diversity within MoDOT. The award, entitled "Building the Bridges of Diversity," is given by MoDOT's Equal Opportunity Division in recognition of innovative efforts towards minority outreach and cultural diversity.

"We've been utilizing many different ways to advertise MoDOT's employment opportunities," said HR Manager Ellen Gehringer. "It is our goal to have a qualified work force that mirrors our community."

In addition to the typical media advertising, additional outreach methods being used by the department are:

- Sending flyers to minority churches
- Placing flyers in ethnic restaurants
- Providing banners to advertise job vacancies in maintenance communities

- Participating in numerous job fairs and career days
- Increasing TRAC interaction

Gehringer also attributes the dedication of the many individuals who assist the department with these efforts. TRAC volunteers Erin Gruber, Keith Killen, Amy Crawford, Aaron McVicker and Lincoln Keen, who visit schools promoting civil engineering as a career. Jeff Gander, Preston Kramer, Scott Stevens, Mike McGrath, Andy Willis and the many others who also meet with students to tell them about career opportunities with MoDOT. And last but certainly not least Denise Hutchinson and Vicky Ray of the HR department who are involved with numerous outreach activities.

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D3

Northeast

Pete Presents, Speaks and Listens

MoDOT Director Pete Rahn visited the south area of the NE District in April to present an award, listen to employees, eat lunch with a maintenance crew, speak at a ribbon cutting, and look at construction on a major river bridge. In less than six hours, Pete was exposed to everyday activities, with a few special ones in between. He presented Lee

Ann Kelley with the Meritorious Safety Award and was the keynote speaker at the Boonslick Regional Planning Commission's ribbon cutting for their new building. Members of the Hermann Bridge Transportation Corporation had the opportunity to meet Pete and get an update on construction of the new bridge from Jerad Noland, resident engineer.



Pete Rahn, MoDOT director, and Kirk Juranas, district engineer, listen as Bowling Green maintenance employee Terry Burris expresses concerns about "S" curve construction.



Coordinated efforts among Wal-Mart, the city of Mexico, the contractor and MoDOT have led to a smoother entrance into an important business area in Mexico. MoDOT provided the traffic control in this effort.

Tanya Dauma "Buyer of the Year"

Tanya Dauma, procurement supervisor, has been selected by her peers as "Buyer of the Year" by the Missouri Association of Public Purchasing. This is the state chapter of the National Institute of Government Purchasing. Tanya was picked from a field of candidates that is not limited to only MoDOT, but encompasses all the public purchasing entities within the state. Tanya has been an employee

for almost 13 years, and a member of the MAPP for 8 years. Tanya was given a



plaque at the Spring Conference in April.

Safety and Health Days Showcase



Safety and Health Days were not meant to be a traditional safety fair, which is why NE District employees learned as much about various other departments within MoDOT as they did about being healthy and safe. Photogrammetry, multimedia, motor carriers and environmental departments were just a few who had representatives attend the day-long event in each of the areas to share information. Sgt. Brent Bernhardt was the featured speaker, sharing the "It's My Life" video, and representatives from other external departments, such as Missouri Department of Conservation, also spoke.



(Above l - r) Chris Shulse, roadside supervisor, and Dennis Hollingsworth, Mexico Project Office, look through a stereoscope which depicts 3D images photogrammetry brought with them as part of their display. (Below l - r) Senior Crew Worker Rich Fowler and Danny Sawyer, building utilities service specialist, listen as James Lipitri speaks about the importance of good nutrition.



Mom Lydia and Dad Chris help out little Sid Brownell during the annual Easter Egg Hunt held at the district office for employee families. More than 65 turned out for the event, even though the weather was cool. Even the Easter Bunny made an appearance!

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D4

Kansas City Area

Caution: Busy Construction Season Ahead

by Steve Porter

So much to do; so little time! That about sums up the 2006 construction season forecast for District 4. The worst places for a motorist to be this season are the Downtown Loop; Interstate 435 at the Missouri River Bridge; Interstate 70 in eastern Jackson and Lafayette counties; and as always, the Triangle.

The Downtown Loop is already busy. Expansion of Bartle Hall requires infrequent lane, ramp and even highway closures, usually overnight. Modifications to the south side of the Loop to prepare for the new Sprint Arena include removing the Truman Road and McGee Street bridges and replacing the Locust and Oak Street bridges over Interstate 670. Another project to rehabilitate bridges and resurface lanes on Interstate 670 on the south side of the loop will also restrict lanes and close ramps at various times this summer. These MoDOT projects, coupled with Kansas City Public Works improvements downtown, are sure to test the most patient motorists this season.

Last year it was the Paseo Bridge closure that had motorists scrambling to find alternatives over the Missouri River. This year rehabilitation work on Interstate 435 – the busiest river crossing in the District – will restrict lanes and slow traffic throughout the summer. Construction crews are already working night and day to finish before November.

Think you can escape construction by going east? Think again. Urgent bridge rehabilitation of Interstate 70 over Manchester Road will close all eastbound lanes for a weekend, either in May or June. The around-the-clock work will begin on a Friday evening and conclude by mid-morning Monday. The date will be determined by weather, and will occur when the Royals are playing out of town so as not to inconvenience game-day travelers. During the work, traffic will detour to Route 40.

Farther east on Interstate 70, crews will resurface eastbound and westbound lanes and seal shoulders from Route 7

in Blue Springs to Route D near Bates City. Much of the work will be at night to accommodate commuters and avoid peak traffic periods. A similar project on Interstate 70 from Johnson Drive to Route 13 in Johnson County also will be scheduled around peak traffic periods and take advantage of nighttime hours.

The Northland freeways will see work too. Smooth Roads Initiative projects in Clay County will resurface Interstate 35 from Clinton County to Parvin Road, much of the work at night. In Platte County, a new interchange will be built at New Horizons Parkway, the ramps will be resurfaced at Route 9, and northbound and southbound lanes and ramps will be resurfaced from Interstate 29 to the Missouri River bridge. Pavement repair on Interstate 435 from Interstate 35 to Interstate 29 will restrict lanes at various times.

The Triangle, in its sixth year of reconstruction, will be busiest on Route 71 from Red Bridge Road to Blue Ridge Boulevard. New collector ramps between those roads will be open by the end of this season, and mainline traffic will shift to those lanes so that the old Route 71 pavement can be removed and replaced with more lanes. The project that never seems to stop will continue to restrict lanes, close ramps and detour traffic, but mostly during overnight and weekend periods.

Those are just the freeway projects this season in District 4. Scores of other projects, from major construction to Smooth Roads Initiative and preventive maintenance work, will add to traffic challenges well into late fall this year. The payoff will be smoother roads for the vast majority of travelers in the Kansas City District.

All Hail Breaks Loose at District 4

by Steve Porter

Chicken Little's alarmist warnings finally came true at District 4 offices on Sunday, March 12. The sky actually did fall – in the form of golfball-size or larger hail that smashed MoDOT windshields and deeply dented dozens of department vehicles.

Hail damaged more than 50 vehicles parked at District 4 offices in Lee's Summit, costing MoDOT about \$6,000.

General Services Manager Cindy Beebe said that 11 vehicles were removed from service immediately, 12 were damaged but usable pending repairs, and five others were damaged while awaiting other repairs at the garage. Windshields of 35 vehicles were smashed, taillights and trim were broken on six vehicles, and in a few cases side and rear windows also were broken. As many as 20 vehicles received only dents, Beebe said.

District 4 garage personnel had most vehicles back in action by mid-week. Windshields and taillights were replaced, but dents will remain as reminders of a nasty spring-like storm that came with a few days left in the winter season.

MoDOT employees could see they weren't the only ones affected in the neighborhood. At the two auto dealerships across the street from District 4,

insurance evaluators and employees sweeping up broken glass were out shortly after sunrise the next morning.

The hail was the product of a long day of severe storms that produced 113 tornadoes and 10 deaths throughout



Charles Griffin of Affordable Auto Glass prepares the frame of a MoDOT Ford Taurus for a new windshield.

the Midwest, including a fatality in District 4. A 54-year-old man was killed by a tornado near Urich in Henry County. Dozens of houses and buildings were severely damaged or destroyed throughout the eight counties comprising District 4. Cass, Johnson and Henry counties were among 36 throughout Missouri that are eligible for federal disaster relief resulting from the storm damage.

Crews were out in several counties removing storm debris from MoDOT highways and right of way. Tornado, wind and hail damage were the worst in District 4 since tornadoes ripped through Platte, Clay and Ray counties two years ago.

Citizens Map Transportation Future

An April 5 meeting of the West Central/Kansas City regional working group at District 4 headquarters marked the fourth time the group had gathered as part of the Missouri Advance Planning initiative.

MAP is a statewide dialogue on what the state's transportation system could and should do for its citizens and how best to fulfill those expectations and potential. This initiative will produce Missouri's transportation vision and will provide the building blocks for developing a shared action plan to create the state's future transportation system.

A May 18 meeting in Columbia will bring regional groups from across the state together for further dialogue about statewide needs, transportation trends and conditions, and improvements to Missouri's transportation policies and strategies.



Sedalia Mayor Bob Wasson participates in an exercise to prioritize actions that would address Missouri's transportation needs. Mayor Wasson attended the April 5 meeting at Lee's Summit.

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D5

Central

National Program Piloted in Mid-Missouri

Expanding Non-motorized Transportation in Columbia

Think about it – if you didn't have a car, how would you get to work each morning? How would you make it to the doctor's office or the grocery store? For the citizens of Columbia, a new program may help those without motorized vehicles make it to their destinations.

The program is the result of \$22 million in federal funding awarded to the city to construct a network of "non-motorized transportation infrastructure facilities." That means the city will develop projects to create sidewalks, bicycle lanes and pedestrian/bike trails that connect with transit stations, schools, residences, businesses and other community centers throughout Columbia.



Chuck Sullivan

Columbia is one of four cities across the country receiving grant funds to demonstrate the extent to which bicycling and walking can carry a significant part of the transportation load. For Columbia, it means expanding and completing a network already in place.

"We already work very hard to make Columbia accessible for bicyclists and pedestrians," said John Glascock, public works director for the city of Columbia. "We have lots of plans developed and this money will help us make them a reality."

After learning about the award in December, the city formed several committees to develop the program. A 35-member citizen committee helps the city look at the existing system, future plans and outreach and education for the public. A technical committee analyzes project details. The city also has a 20-member MoDOT advisory team.

"Since MoDOT serves as the pass-through agency for the funds, we need to meet regularly," said Glascock. "Many of Columbia's major roads are maintained by MoDOT, so we need to work together to make sure these roads are incorporated in this plan."

Caryn Giarratano, MoDOT state bicycle and pedestrian coordinator, is pleased to see a project like this in Missouri and believes it will enhance quality of life in Columbia.

"A significant portion of the state's population cannot drive a car because they are too young, too old, or physically or financially unable," said Giarratano. "They still need a way to get to their destinations, and this project is designed to help meet their transportation needs."

Glascock says the community has been supportive and he believes the city will only be better for it in the long run. The local hospitals already support it for the health benefits it could provide its users, and businesses are eager to see what kind of effect it could have for them.

While the city works with MoDOT to address some administrative details, planning has already begun to address key intersections in the city with the first portion of the grant.

Public Responds to Route 5 Plans

During a public meeting on March 16, Traffic Operations Engineer Trent Brooks and Senior Construction Inspector Chris Graham chat with Morgan County residents about the plan to widen a portion of Route 5 through Laurie. About 30 people stopped by to review the maps and ask questions.



Holly Dentner

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Meet with Pete



Roger Schwartz

Director Pete Rahn talks with maintenance crews from Auxvasse, Fulton, Mokane and New Bloomfield on Friday, April 7. Rahn also stopped at the Drake and Linn maintenance buildings to meet with employees and answer questions.

Arrive Alive: Regional Campaign Targets Teens

by Holly Dentner

Warmer weather and the end of the school year means mid-Missouri teens will have a lot to celebrate this month. While their celebrations are well deserved, their safety while doing so means a great deal to the central region group of the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety.

Safety belt use among teens is 56 percent – dramatically lower than Missouri's overall usage rate of 76 percent. The central region group hopes to help change this statistic with an advertising campaign they launched in April and May. While young people are at the movies, in their cars, watching television or even reading their school newspapers, the coalition is reminding them to Buckle Up and Arrive Alive.

"We launched our own campaign to complement the statewide effort," said Matt Myers, district traffic engineer. "While billboards and ads reach a wide demographic across the state, we wanted to specifically target our area teenagers."

Movie theaters in Columbia and Jefferson City have been airing custom Arrive Alive messages created by Sergeant Jeff Stiefman, an officer with the Jefferson City Police Department and coalition member. Stiefman combined the Arrive Alive print and radio ads so they play simultaneously. In one ad, viewers see the "What's Stopping You" windshield ad shatter into the Arrive Alive logo while the radio ad describes what happens when a person's head hits a windshield.

The movie ads started in April and will continue throughout the year, including

the Osage Beach theater this summer. According to Myers, they reach a truly captive audience.

"We know teenagers go to the movies all the time," said Myers. "And most people can't help but watch the advertising played before a movie starts. It's a great way to get their attention."

Over a two-month period, four Arrive Alive public service announcements aired 960 times on central Missouri radio stations popular with the young adult demographic.



An ad like this one appeared in high school newspapers and yearbooks to remind students to buckle up.

During the same time, television ads aired 414 times on mid-Missouri stations. Many ads were scheduled during prime time shows that appeal to teenagers. The local CBS affiliate even aired an ad during the final game of the NCAA men's basketball tournament.

To round out avenues to reach teenage drivers, print ads were featured 14 times in four high school newspapers. Thirteen schools in the area will also see the "What's Stopping You" ad in their high school yearbooks.

In addition to the ad campaign, the regional group provides funding and equipment for local law enforcement. Both the advertising and enforcement is made possible with funding specifically designated for highway fatality prevention. Additional information is available at www.savemolives.com.

D6

St. Louis Area



Michael Meyer

(L-R) Rick Rahne starts to excavate the privy. Behind him is Brianne Olson who is excavating a feature within the house kitchen. Tim Porter takes notes on the excavation. All work in the Historic Preservation Section at Central Office.



Michael Meyer

The foundations of 12 row houses from the 1840s were discovered below Interstate 64 at 8th Street during the excavation. The houses similarly built on the scale of The Eugene Field House were three story-single family homes.

Digging Into St. Louis' Past Hidden Beneath Interstate 64

by Debbie Allen

St. Louis' history may be short by old world standards, but St. Louis has a rich heritage of archaeological sites. These sites have the potential to shine light on our traveling history that tends to remain hidden beneath the road.

In 2005, MoDOT's Historic Preservation Section was called to come to the site of the new 8th Street Ramp Project located at Broadway south of Poplar Street under Interstate 64. Flanked by Busch Stadium to the north and the Eugene Field House to the south, the foundations of 12 row houses from the 1840s, were discovered. The houses similarly built on the scale of the Eugene Field House were three story-single family homes.

It is very common for construction projects downtown to uncover old building remains where it was a common practice down through the years for the new to be built right on top of the old. However, what made this particular project notable was that these homes were built in one of the oldest parts of the city, during a time when the city was just beginning to grow into the metropolis it is today. Because of the site's relative age, and its association with several important figures in the history of St. Louis, documenting this

site was essential. Many of the artifacts from the site, including fine china and tableware, wine and liqueur bottles, and various toiletry items, have been dated to the mid-nineteenth century. That is noteworthy because it was at this time that the case of Dredd Scott v. Irene Emerson was being argued before the Missouri Supreme Court and Chief Justice Hamilton Gamble, the occupant of the last house on the row and the object of the excavation.

The St. Louis Cardinals have constructed a new ballpark in the area just south of the the old Busch Stadium and just north of Interstate 64/Route 40. Construction of this new ballpark requires the removal of the eastbound I-64 ramp at 8th Street. A new 8th Street ramp will be constructed to replace it. The new ramp will be relocated south of existing Interstate 64/Route 40 with access at 6th Street (east of the existing ramp). The new ramp is expected to be open to traffic in early 2007.

MoDOT is using MoDOT Economic Development Funds for this project. These funds are only available for road construction required to attract new business or to support existing economic development projects.

Memorial Ceremony Honors D6 Employees



Megan McEntee

Eileen Feth (far left), widow of Adolph Emil Feth, and Joan Wieda (far right), widow of William Wieda, accept flowers from Assistant District Engineer Tom Ryan on behalf of District 6. Their husbands made the ultimate sacrifice for District 6 when they were killed in the line of duty.



Megan McEntee

The plaque on the left that honors William Wieda was unveiled at the Memorial Ceremony. It is temporarily located at the Memorial Garden. The plaque was originally on the Hanley Road bridge on Interstate 64. It was moved because of The New I-64 Project. When the bridge is rebuilt, Wieda's plaque will be installed on the new bridge. The other plaque honors all of the District 6 employees and is marked with 24 roses to represent those employees.



Megan McEntee

Cones were also used to represent the 24 District 6 employees who lost their lives in the line of duty. The Memorial Ceremony was held as part of National Work Zone Awareness Week, which was held April 3-9.

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D7

Southwest

School Children Share Their Views on Highway Safety

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis

Orange barrels, highway workers, drivers using cell phones and speeding...school children know they don't mix. Southwest Missouri students recently drew images of ways to convince motorists to slow down in work zones as part of District 7's annual work zone poster contest. The winning posters were displayed at Joplin's Northpark Mall on April 3-16 and at the Nevada Community Center on April 19-30.

Judges were Ted Frieden and John Millirons (Lamar Maintenance), Todd Meinhardt (Joplin Maintenance), Larry Myers and Wilber Berry (Carl Junction Maintenance), Bobetta Jeffries (Sheldon Maintenance), Paul Kraft (General Services) and Rick Silvers (Materials).

The winners in this year's poster contest were:

3rd Grade

- 1st Place – Courtney Byford, Eugene Field Elementary School, Webb City
- 2nd Place – Zoe Clarkson, Stockton Elementary School, Stockton
- 3rd Place – Katie Griffiths, Mark Twain Elementary School, Carthage

4th Grade

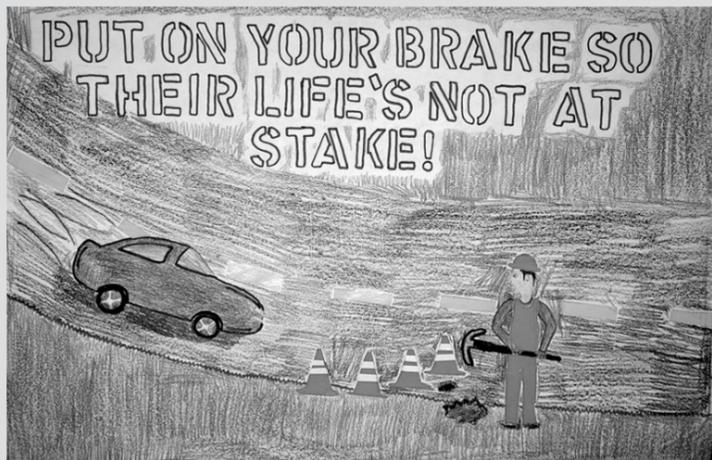
- 1st Place – Sam Hubbard, Miami R-1 Elementary School, Amoret
- 2nd Place – Kortnie Roberts, Irving Elementary School, Joplin
- 3rd Place – Courtney Huggins, Irving Elementary School, Joplin

5th Grade

- 1st Place – Payton Hallford, El Dorado Springs Elementary School, El Dorado Springs
- 2nd Place – Erika Sarceno, Fairview Elementary School, Carthage
- 3rd Place – Trevor Duff, Monett Intermediate School, Monett

First-place winners were treated to a school assembly demonstrating MoDOT trucks, a trophy and a gift

certificate. Second- and third-place winners also received prizes.



5th grade 1st place winner: Payton Hallford, El Dorado Springs



3rd grade 1st place winner: Courtney Byford, Webb City



4th grade 1st place winner: Sam Hubbard, Amoret

12



From left to right: John Millirons, Larry Myers, and Bobetta Jeffries took on the tough job of judging the posters.

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Life After MoDOT...D7 Retirees' Corner Ralph Crain: From Tending to Loans to Tending to Kids

by Lita Cambers



Ralph Crain began his career with the Missouri Department of Transportation March 1, 1978, as a district stock clerk. When he retired in 1996, he was the district personnel services

agent. Simply put, Ralph took care of employees' money in the District 7 Highway Credit Union.

Now Ralph is taking care of kids. During the school year he is a part-time bus driver for the Joplin school system. He mows yards during the summer.

Ralph's wife Pat is also employed by the Joplin school district as a payroll clerk. Ralph and Pat have five grown children and nine grandchildren.

Even though Ralph had back surgery five years after retiring and triple bypass surgery last year, he still says retirement has been a busy and rewarding time.

D8

Springfield Area

New Right of Way Incentives Program Satisfies Customers, Meets Project Timetable

by Angela Eden

The need for speed to move ahead on a Route 65 four-laning project south of Hollister prompted District 8's Right of Way group to offer property owners a financial incentive to quickly sell.

Wilson said each property owner was offered an additional 25 percent of the property's appraised value, although the extra amount would be no less than \$1,000 nor more than \$100,000.

This was the first time for MoDOT to

Those who settled did so within 30

days of receiving their offer. They expressed little skepticism.

"They were receptive to it," said Senior Right of Way Specialist Andy Ellsworth.

Looking at land purchases for similar projects, Wilson estimates that the new program saved MoDOT about 2.5 percent in right of way costs. Yet the property owners received a fair price without spending extra time and money trying to prove their land was worth more, she said.

"People were rewarded for cooperating with us early in the process," Wilson said.

Most participants in the incentive program said they were treated

fairly, a subsequent survey showed. Only two property owners opted to go to condemnation. One of those two received less than had been offered plus incentive.

The incentive program also worked well for two bridge replacement projects in Polk County.

In the future, right of way spending may come in lower than anticipated or higher than anticipated under the incentive program. The key benefit to MoDOT is speed.



District 8 Right-of-Way staff: Top Photo – Seated, Manager Connie Wilson; from left, Andy Ellsworth, Mary Slaughter, Linda Bass. Bottom Photo – Seated, Mark Stiles; from left, Debra Vinson, Shirley Fortner, Becky Goad and Malissa Julien.

employ such a program, modeled after one used by the Florida Department of Transportation. Approval was given by MoDOT Central Office and the Federal Highway Administration.

The system worked so well that district personnel were asked to talk about it at a four-state regional right of way conference in Kansas City.

Right of Way Manager Connie Wilson said 30 parcels of land had to be purchased in 45 days to meet the bid-letting deadline for the accelerated Amendment 3 project to widen Route 65. The goal was met. On average, the property-buying process for such a project takes 118 days.

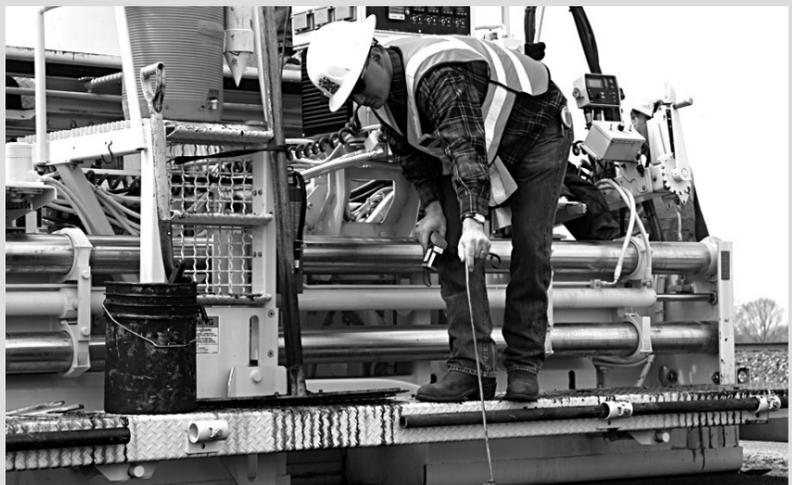
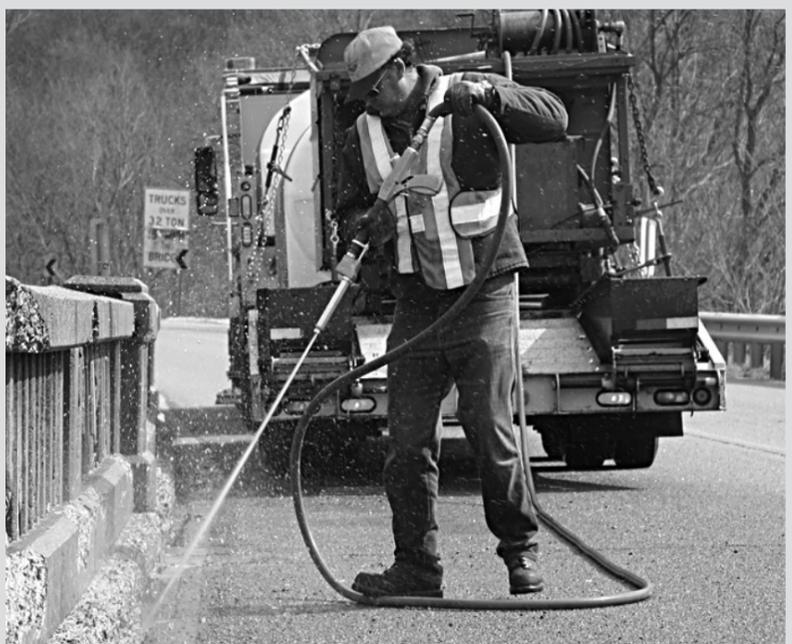
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"Talkin' Transportation"
Call-In Radio Show
KWTO 560 AM, Springfield
10-10:50 a.m. Wednesdays
radiospringfield.com



D8 at Work

Nebo Senior Crew Worker Leonard Admire (top photo) is part of a bridge flushing operation working in Laclede and Webster counties. He cleans the Route 5 bridge over the Osage Fork River at Evergreen south of Lebanon.

Ava Maintenance Specialist Darrel Hickman, in grader, and Goodhope Senior Crew Worker Danny Johnson, on roller, help patch Route 14 east of Ava (middle photo). They are part of a repair operation working in advance of a resurfacing project.

Springfield Senior Construction Technician David Long (bottom photo) checks the depth of new asphalt being laid as part of an SRI resurfacing project. He works along westbound Route 60 east of Rogersville.

District Garage Supervisor Retires

by Angela Eden

Service: 31-1/2 years
(Hired Oct. 1, 1974)

Career: Crew worker, Ozark, 1974; shop mechanic, District Garage, 1976; field mechanic, Walnut Shade then Branson, 1977; mechanic supervisor, District Garage, 2001

Memorable Work: While working at Walnut Shade, Ava and Goodhope

Also retiring May 1 is Marshfield area Field Mechanic Mike Eggeman.



Ted Netzer

shops were added to his responsibilities, so he drove 2,000 miles a month from shop to shop to maintain equipment

Changes: Increased focus on safety

Quote: "There are high-tech electronics on everything. All equipment has computers. That means more training is required for mechanics and parts are more expensive."

Post-MoDOT Plans: Working on home projects, riding his bicycle and traveling with his wife, Karen

D9

South Central

Building Bridges: Inspector Travels to Africa On Misson

by Ann Marie Newberry

Opportunities to match work skills with a personal mission can be some of life's most rewarding experiences. Senior Construction Inspector David Prock, of the Willow Springs Project Office, found a unique way to help people in Africa by using the skills he employs everyday at MoDOT, matched with the strength of his faith.

Through Friends in Action International, a Christian-based missionary group operating out of Mansfield, Mo., Prock became aware of a bridge building project in a remote part of Africa known as Tanda, Guinea. The bridge was badly needed as the rainy season, which runs from May to November, prevents the village people from accessing their supply routes.

Prock said that area of Africa is extremely poor. Without the help of the work groups, the people of Tanda would have no means to build the bridge.

"We all have so much," he said. "People who live in places like Tanda have nothing. Every item has value. For instance, they even melt down metal cans to recycle the material and make things they need. This lifestyle makes them so appreciative of things like the bridge built for their community."

Four work groups, all volunteers with various backgrounds, completed construction of the one lane bridge in only six weeks. Prock's group was at the

work site for two weeks in early March. The site was two hours away from fuel and the only equipment available to



Senior Construction Inspector David Prock and Friends in Action International Representative Fred Seiferth on the completed bridge.

them was a small excavator and a tractor with a dump bed.

"Building a bridge in that short amount of time with a skilled crew and modern equipment would be amazing," Prock said. "It was important to get it done quickly before the rainy season hits, when waters rise and Tanda is cut off from its supply route. Everything including medical supplies and everyday necessities has to come by that route."

Prock told of an elder in the Tanda Tribe who took time to walk to their camp one evening and express his gratitude. "Through an interpreter, he spoke to our group thanking us for

coming, leaving our families behind and volunteering," he said. "He told us how the bridge would open his community to the outside world. He was very genuine."

Before leaving, Prock said he dug a 6 ft. by 10 ft. trench with the small excavator used to build the bridge. The purpose of the trench was to help provide water to carry the Tanda people through the dry season. "Water is very precious to them and they were concerned about what they would do during the drought," he explained. "The water quality is so poor, every drop has to be filtered and it took a planning day ahead to make sure you had enough."

Prock described the trip as an opportunity to blend his MoDOT work experience with his faith and share it with others. "I will likely do it again," he said. "It was a wonderful opportunity and a very rewarding experience."

Prock said he is very thankful for the support he felt from his supervisor, Resident Engineer Phill Knott, and others at MoDOT. "It was wonderful to have all the support from my family and my MoDOT family," he said.

To learn more about Friends in Action International and the projects they sponsor, visit: www.faintl.org.

South Central District Celebrates Ten Years of Customer Service

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If you were to ask South Central District Customer Service Representatives (CSR) Danny Bradley and Shelly Cauldwell where the last ten years have gone, they might take a minute to answer. Bradley and Cauldwell are two of the original CSRs at MoDOT and will celebrate the tenth year of the program with their peers this May.

Bradley started his career at MoDOT Oct. 23, 1979 as a custodian in the district office. After a year, he moved into maintenance as a crew worker for nine years then a maintenance clerk for eight years. He has spent the last ten as

a customer service representative. "It has been a great experience," Bradley said of his time as a CSR. "There have been lots of fun times along with some hard work."

Cauldwell joined MoDOT June 1, 1991 as a district equipment office clerk. Two years later, she became a senior secretary for construction, maintenance and traffic. After a year in that role, she transferred to Human Resources and finally moved into her current role as a CSR, where she has been for ten years. "Wow, time flies when you are having fun," Cauldwell said. "You never know

who or what is going to be on the other end of the line. Overall, it has been a good experience both in the office and out in the field."

Community Relations Manager Ann Marie Newberry, who began her duties in the South Central District last September, said she values the knowledge Bradley and Cauldwell have shared

with her. "I am amazed at the volume of information the pair has amassed through the years," she said. "They have played a huge part in helping me get my feet wet in my new role and I am pleased to have them as a part of the community relations team. They are dedicated professionals with a genuine desire to help all customers. I congratulate them on ten successful years."



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D10

Southeast

District Helps Communities Following Tornadoes



Scott McCord, Scott McCord Photography

The massive F-4 tornado approaching Interstate 55 near Caruthersville on Sunday evening April 2.

March and April have been challenging times for many southeast Missouri residents as they begin to recover from a series of tornadoes that have plagued the area.

A tornado hit near St. Mary in the northern part of the Southeast District in March and was followed by more in Stoddard and Pemiscot counties in early April.

The tornado-ravaged communities of Braggadocio and Caruthersville in Pemiscot County experienced major destruction. Pemiscot County has been declared a national disaster area by President Bush.

Some Southeast District employees and retirees have experienced significant damage to their homes or to the homes of family members as well.

“The first major disaster I was deployed to assist with was Hurricane Katrina, but Katrina can’t compare with what we were dealing with in Caruthersville

a couple weeks ago. The destruction right here in southeast Missouri is total destruction where as with Katrina, many of the buildings were still intact,” Building and Grounds Maintenance Supervisor David Fleming said. Fleming is also an American Red Cross volunteer first responder.

Fleming spent time setting up and staffing the Red Cross shelter and assisting the command center in Caruthersville.

“When I got the call that Sunday evening, the Red Cross coordinator dispatched me to the site of a fatality in Circle City in Stoddard County. After responding to that location, the coordinator asked me to join the team headed to Caruthersville and when I arrived, our MoDOT workers were already on the scene,” Fleming said.

As soon as the tornadoes went through, MoDOT crews were in action clearing debris from the roads so emergency responders could get through.

“In addition to opening the roads, we had to move quickly to get stop signs and other vital signs replaced because most of them flew away,” Maintenance Superintendent David Kitchens said.

In the days that followed, crews also provided assistance by programming and relocating changeable message boards for emergency responders and providing large barricades to block many of the entrances into town.

“We had such a great spirit of cooperation from within our district and from district to district as well,” Area Engineer Jeff Lambert said. “I received several calls from throughout D10 offering assistance. The East Area delivered barricades and equipment early in the morning hours that followed the tornado, while the Portageville shed was instrumental in getting our roadway signs back in order. The St. Louis District supplied a large generator-powered overhead light that proved very helpful at night.”

Some district MoDOT facilities were destroyed or sustained damage as a result of the tornadoes. Fabric salt tents were hardest hit at locations including Wardell, Bernie, Portageville, Kewanee, Park Hills, Brazeau and Ste. Genevieve. A fabric cold storage unit and the radio tower at Wardell were also damaged.

Anyone wanting to donate time, talents or funds to help tornado victims, can do so by contacting the American Red Cross, Heartland Tornado Relief, 2430 Myra Drive, Cape Girardeau, MO, 63703 or by calling (573) 335-9471.



Dave Kitchens

Tornado destruction in the Braggadocio area following the April 2 twister.



Jim Grindstaff (left) and District Engineer Mark Shelton

Grindstaff Retires

Thirty years of public service was honored recently at a retirement gathering for Senior Crew Worker Jim Grindstaff who retired April 1. Grindstaff worked out of the Jackson maintenance facility and devoted his MoDOT career to highway maintenance.

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Honoring a Friend



Employees from the Jackson Project Office take time to plant a Dogwood tree in the memory of co-worker and friend, Bob Eftink, who lost his life in a work zone accident on April 7. Eftink was an intermediate construction inspector and 20-year MoDOT veteran. The Jackson office received the tree from the Park Hills Project Office.

Connections

The mission of *Connections* is to be a monthly source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide. It is distributed to MoDOT employees and retirees.

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Major Vs. Minor - How Our Roads Stack Up

by Sue Cox

Imagine smooth surfaces, bright roadway stripes, signs that are easy to read and road improvements that enhance your safety. This vision of getting the state's major roads in good condition is becoming a reality.

Missouri's major roads carry the majority of our traffic and need the most improvements, according to MoDOT Chief Engineer Kevin Keith. And the department is busy pulling together detailed expectations for how we'll tackle this work.

"About 5,400 miles of major roads carry 76 percent of Missouri's traffic," he said. "Only 47 percent of these roads are in good condition."

Major roads are what the department calls principal arterials. These are roads that provide for statewide or interstate movement of traffic such as Interstates 70 and 44 and Routes 63, 54 and 36.

As a comparison, Keith said, the state's minor highways, which include about 27,000 miles, carry only about 24 percent of the traffic. These highways, sometimes called farm-to-market roads, include lettered routes such as A, C and DD that serve local transportation

needs. Sixty-two percent of these highways are in good condition.

Don Hillis, director of System Management, and his staff have developed the expectations for the planning, design, management and operation of Missouri's major and minor highways so all employees will be on the same page as we tackle this project. In general, the practical design philosophy will be implemented for all construction projects; safety will be monitored with a focus on reducing fatalities and serious injuries; and work zones will be managed to minimize impact on the traveling public.

On major roads, the focus will be on improving and/or maintaining pavement; shoulders; bridges; access management; incident management; traveler information; traffic signals; rumble strips; pavement markings; signing; delineation; roadsides; and welcome centers/rest areas.

Thanks to the passage of Amendment 3 in November 2004, we're able to address some of the needs of both our major and minor roads. The state's 2006-2010 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program contains 866 projects totaling



\$7.3 billion - \$5.9 billion of which is focused on improving the state's major roads and bridges. This work includes rebuilding Interstate 64 in St. Louis, building a new Paseo bridge in Kansas City and finishing Routes 36, 71, 60, 61, 67, 54 at the Lake of the Ozarks and 65 south of Branson.

We're also taking care of the state's existing highway system through our Smooth Roads Initiative, which will bring 2,200 miles of Missouri's major roads up to good condition.

"When SRI is finished at the end of this year, we'll focus on the next 3,200

miles of major roads," Keith said. "By 2010, the end of the current five-year program, 75 percent of our major roads will be in good condition."

Once we improve our major roads, we'll turn our attention to fixing the minor roads, Keith said.

"In the meantime, we'll continue to maintain Missouri's minor roads at or near their current level. However, as we look ahead, we should not expect our minor roads to become super highways. Our vision for these roads is good pavement, stripes, two-foot shoulders and improved bridges - all of which will take money."

MoDOT Offers Highway Work Zone Maps

To help motorists avoid as many orange barrels as possible this construction season, we're offering a statewide construction map listing major construction projects that will affect traffic across the state. The map also breaks out major projects in the St. Louis, Springfield and Kansas City areas. It gives brief project details, notes whether work is occurring during the day or night or both and shows the expected completion date.

Maps specific to work along Interstates 70 and 44 are also available. With 27 projects scheduled on I-44 this year, 17

planned for I-70 and many more scattered throughout the state, more than



1,000 work zones are expected during the construction season.

"Not only do we want to alert motorists that we'll be out there working day and night to make their roads smoother and safer, but we want to give them tools they can use to minimize their delays and frustration," said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn.

You can get the maps by call-

ing MoDOT's toll-free number, 888-ASK-MoDOT or visiting www.modot.org. The maps are also posted on the department's Web site, along with an interactive work zone map that gives more detailed work zone information.

"The governor has challenged us to finish our Smooth Roads Initiative by the end of the year - a full year ahead of schedule - which means 2,200 miles of highway improvements and a lot of work zones," said Rahn. "While this will mean some delays, it also means smoother, safer traveling in the long run."