

Connections

February 2007

MoDOT Launches Better Roads, Brighter Future Program

by Jeff Briggs

MoDOT has announced a new plan to improve the remainder of the state's 5,600 miles of major highways over the next five years. These busy highways will receive wider stripes and rumble stripes, brighter signs, paved shoulders and smooth pavement that will bring 85 percent of Missouri's major highway system up to good condition by the end of 2011.

"Missourians have told us that we've got to bring our heavily traveled roads up to good condition," said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn. "The Smooth Roads Initiative, which we completed last month, got the first 2,200 miles in good condition.

"This new program is the Smooth Roads Initiative on steroids. Nearly every single Missourian will benefit from these improvements."

Called Better Roads, Brighter Future, the program targets highways carrying 80 percent of all traffic on the state highway system—that's 103 million miles traveled a day. About 95 percent of all Missourians live within 10 miles of one of these roads.

"This program delivers three tremendous benefits – it will save lives, create jobs and save motorists money," Rahn said.

Improvements realized by the five-year program will prevent 85 disabling injuries and save 10 lives every year; support more than 48,000 jobs and make our communities more attractive to new business and job opportunities; and create a 2.4 percent improvement in fuel economy, while lowering annual maintenance costs incurred by the average driver by \$275 a year.

The five-year program will cost \$1.1 billion, using existing funds allocated for taking care of the state highway system. "We're identifying the roads most in need of improvement and that will benefit the most drivers, and focusing our resources in this area," Rahn said.

To kick-start the Better Roads, Brighter Future program, MoDOT is adding or accelerating 34 projects into its construction program for 2007. Additional projects will be added each year through 2011.

More details on the Better Roads, Brighter Future program are available at www.modot.org.



These "before and after" photos illustrate typical improvements MoDOT will be making as a result of the Better Roads, Brighter Future program.

Districts 7 and 4 Take First Chip Seal Crown

by Matt Hiebert

The first Annual Chip Seal Performance Challenge is complete, the winners are in and the success of the contest was greater than we imagined. The quality of the chip seals was so high, in fact, that judges and MoDOT management decided to broaden the award recipients to include an Honorable Mention category.

"The Chip Seal Performance Challenge was created to determine the most efficient and effective chip sealing process and, in turn, reward our employees for excellence in their field," said Pete Rahn. "These four teams have shown outstanding abilities in using their resources and making Missouri roads safe and smooth."

Winners were broken into coarse and fine aggregate categories. The coarse aggregate winning team was from District 7 for its work on Route 126 in Barton County (see photo to the right). A team from

District 4 won the fine aggregate category for work on Route C in Clay County.

Honorable mention for coarse aggregate went to the District 10 team working on Route C in Madison County. A team

from District 3 received honorable mention for its fine aggregate work on Route E in Lincoln County.

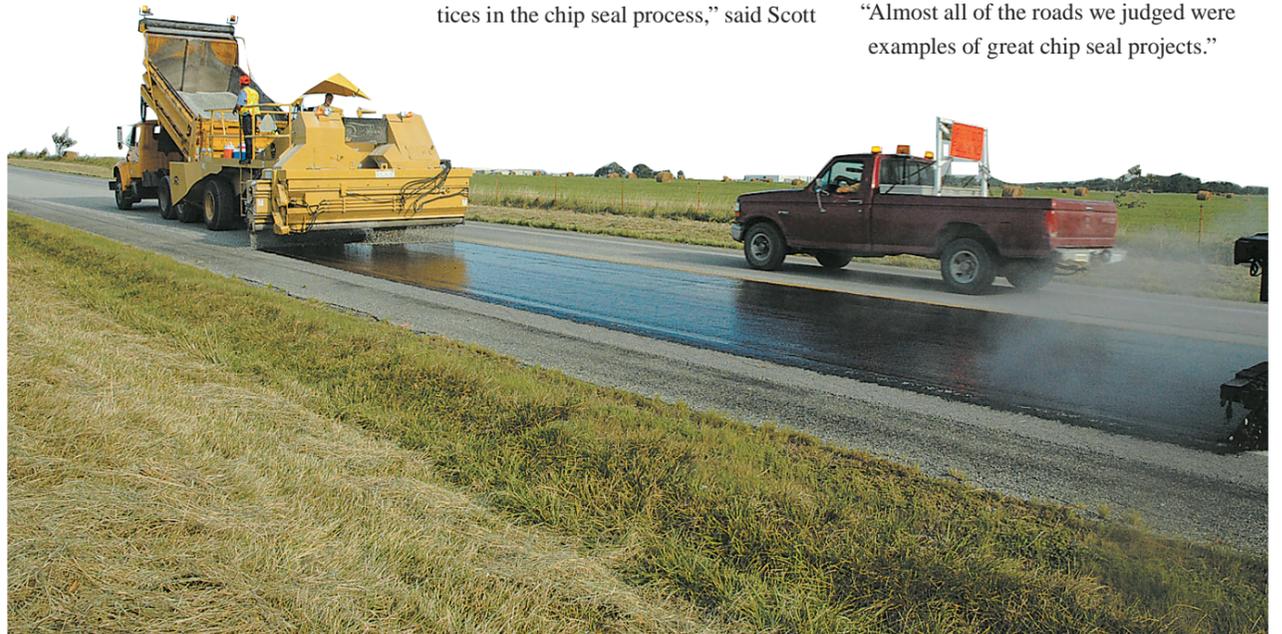
First place winners received \$5,000 to divide among team members. Teams receiving honorable mention were awarded \$2,500.

"The competition was designed for districts to demonstrate their best practices in the chip seal process," said Scott

Stone, maintenance liaison engineer and organizer of the event. "Chip sealing is an important and cost effective method for maintaining Missouri roads and we wanted teams to demonstrate their skills and innovation in using it."

Stone said that the quality of every entry was very high.

"It was tough to pick the winners," he said. "Almost all of the roads we judged were examples of great chip seal projects."



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All Hands on Deck

Teamwork saves General Services building from collapse.

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Mobilizing the Troops

District 9 crews prepare early for second winter storm.

Primary Safety Belt A Primary Concern for MoDOT

by Megan Mills

Primary safety belt legislation is MoDOT's top legislative priority this year. This legislation has the potential to save about 90 lives a year and prevent more than 1,000 serious injuries. Nevertheless, Missourians, and even some MoDOT employees, are still unsure about supporting the legislation.

Many myths exist about seat belts, but the facts show that wearing a safety belt is the single most effective way to reduce deaths and injuries in traffic crashes. A primary safety belt law would also save millions of dollars each year in Medicaid costs, as well as costs to Missouri taxpayers associated with traffic crashes.

"We spend billions on highways to keep drivers safe," said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn. "We could spend nothing and save 90 lives each year through a primary seat belt law."

Supporting a primary safety belt law includes wearing your safety belt at all times, encouraging your family and friends to buckle up, and even advocating the legislation in your community to generate support.

Safety advocates across Missouri are banding together as Primary Safety Belt Partners to spread the word about the importance of wearing safety belts. For more information, visit www.saveMOLives.com.

Common Seat Belt Myths

I can brace myself in a crash.

The force of a crash at 40 mph is like hitting the ground after falling off a 50-foot cliff.

If I don't wear my seat belt I'm only hurting myself

An unbelted person flies around inside a vehicle during a crash. Even if others in the car are belted, you could crush them with the force of your body or head on impact.

A safety belt could prevent me from escaping if the vehicle is on fire or submerged in water.

Fire and water are involved in less than one percent of all crashes. Being in a safety belt increases the likelihood that the occupant will be conscious and able to get out of the vehicle.

If I get hurt, I'm only hurting myself.

Medical costs are 55 percent higher for unbelted crash victims. Tax dollars pay for an estimated 25 percent of the medical costs of people injured in motor vehicles. When someone is killed or injured in a crash, family and friends suffer too.

A primary safety belt law will encourage racial profiling.

Law enforcement officers are required to complete a racial profile report on every motor vehicle stop except for roadblocks and sobriety checkpoints.

Employees Working Better, Faster, Cheaper Through Solutions at Work

by Patti Knopke

MoDOT employees are putting their problem solving solutions to work. And getting paid for it!

Since the launch of the statewide pilot in November, Solutions at Work has looked at 33 submissions with 10 best practices being approved for 2006 and 2007. Solutions At Work is designed to collect, evaluate, document and communicate best practices that are delivering improved results within MoDOT. The program also provides recognition to employees for approved best practices.

All submissions are evaluated using a point system for originality; how well others can use the practice; resources

saved, including time and money; and impact on MoDOT's tangible results. Three levels of reviewers, including a member of the Employee Advisory Council, offer comments and evaluation points before a district engineer or division manager assigns the final point value. Based on the points assigned, awards from \$75 to \$300 or eight to 16 hours of leave are offered to employees.

"We are thrilled to have a number of great best practices already approved. This program truly shows the problem-solving abilities of MoDOT employees," said Mara Campbell, director of Organizational Results. "We look forward to seeing Solutions at Work best practices used throughout the organization."

Best practices approved to date are:

- 1) Antifreeze stickers or stencils now mark equipment reservoirs.
- 2) Traffic impact study guidelines have been established.
- 3) Microfiche plans have been converted to PDF files and are available on the district's internal Web page.
- 4) Drift and stability tests for portable nuclear gauges have been eliminated.
- 5) The Northeast District has established a property damage repair and collection process with law enforcement agencies.
- 6) A computer program has been created to audit contract bids.
- 7) A formal partnering process has been implemented so design work can be shared between districts.
- 8) Electric winchs are now installed on dump truck tailgates.
- 9) Multipurpose utility trailers ensure everything needed to do almost any job is right on hand.
- 10) A secured server is now available for training materials for all district HR and Risk Management managers and staff.

For more information on these best practices and submission forms for Solutions at Work, go to the Organizational Results page on MoDOT's intranet at wwwwi/intranet/or/.

2 | Boost and Buckle - Arrive Alive Child Passenger Safety Week Feb. 11-18

by Laura Holloway

Help your child become whatever they want to be.

Keep them alive.

That will be the key message to Missourians reminding them to do just that during Child Passenger Safety week Feb. 11-18.

The message will be delivered through radio and television ads featuring children telling their parents how important it is to buckle them up in proper child safety seats and booster seats. Several radio stations are planning remotes, where they will host their show at a store or event and focus on the im-

portance of car seats. Drawings are planned for the events where a car seat is given as a prize.

Ads are scheduled for the month of February at 280 Casey's General Stores in Missouri. Look for the ads on top of gasoline pumps where they will strategically encourage parents to be a superhero to their children by keeping them safe while driving.

The campaign brings attention to the most recent law for transporting children that went into effect in August 2006. The new booster seat law requires children to be in a booster seat if they are ages 4-7 years old, unless they are at least 80 pounds or are at least 4'9" tall.



Be Their
SUPERHERO

**Boost & Buckle
Kids Under 8!**

ARRIVE ALIVE
saveMOLives.com

"The previous law only required children under age four to be secured in an approved child safety seat, so many children weren't being adequately

protected," said Highway Safety Director Leanna Depue. "Just a few more years in a booster seat can help prevent serious injury and may even save your child's life."

Embracing Diversity

by Patti Knopke

MoDOT will value diversity because we believe in the power of our differences.

Just as MoDOT is committed to providing a world-class transportation experience, we are also committed to employing a workforce that reflects the customers, communities and cultures we serve by valuing diversity and embracing our differences.

But just how are we doing that? First, we define "valuing diversity" as recognizing and appreciating the strengths and different points of view that each person brings to MoDOT because of his or her unique background.

Second, we are expanding our focus when hiring and promoting. In the past, our definition of the "best" person for

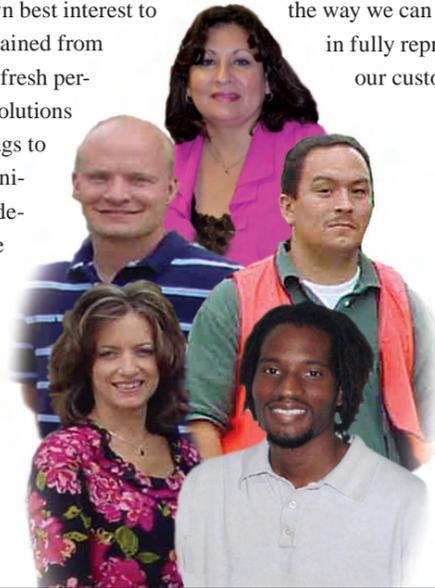
the job tended to be the most-qualified in the short term – the person who has the best experience, the most education and training, the best interview, the best performance ratings or the best combination of those things. This is the person most likely to hit the ground running.

While all of those things are important and must be considered, we must also consider the long-term needs of our organization. To increase diversity, sometimes we will select an individual who has the potential to be the best person for the job over the long term. This is the person who will bring new ideas, offer unique views and provide an opportunity to find better, faster, and cheaper ways to get the job done.

We must remember that embracing diversity is not just the words of a department value posted on our walls, it is an action expected of every employee. It really is in our own best interest to embrace the value gained from the different views, fresh perspectives and new solutions each individual brings to addressing our organizational issues and delivering our tangible results.

Employees should support diversity with their words and actions. Supervisors should strive to help create and

maintain a work setting that allows each employee to grow and develop, to feel comfortable and included, and to have a passion for their work. This is the way we can make progress in fully representing all of our customers.



State of Transportation Address Slated for Feb. 7

MoDOT Director Pete Rahn will deliver the fourth annual State of Transportation Address to a joint session of the Missouri General Assembly at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 7.

Rahn will tout several MoDOT successes in 2006 such as the Smooth Roads Initiative completed one year ahead of schedule; guard cable installation, which is virtually eliminating cross median crashes; and new laws creating stronger booster seat requirements and increasing penalties for injuring or killing workers in a work zone. He will also discuss

newer initiatives such as the Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Plan, the New I-64 project and the Better Roads, Brighter Future plan.

Employees and the public will be able to read a full-text version of the speech or view the address at www.modot.org shortly after it is delivered.

In 2003 the General Assembly created the State of Transportation Address. It requires MoDOT's director to address lawmakers regarding the state of Missouri's transportation system by mid-February of each year.

New HR Newsletter Connects Employees to MoDOT Policies

Did you know that sending a joke by e-mail, taking part in a football pool at work or using a work-issued cell phone for personal reasons could put you in violation of a Human Resources Policy? Many actions we may perceive as harmless acts or innocent fun, could actually put us in violation of policies at work.

Now Human Resources staff is working harder to help employees make a clearer connection with department policies. The division's latest efforts are featured in a newsletter called *The HR Bridge*. This short but comprehensive bulletin will be used to clarify any information gaps between MoDOT employees and Human Resources regarding policies and practices in the workplace.

The HR Bridge will be published monthly. The first issue focused on MoDOT policies regarding personal conduct with the use of communication devices. See Personnel Policy

2503, Communications and Information Systems, for more information about the appropriate use of the department's information technology resources at <http://wwwwi/intranet/hr/administration.htm>.



Employee Advisory Council Needs You!

A two-year-old employee organization that works with MoDOT management on cultural diversity, policy review and communication issues is looking for new members.

Since its inception in January 2005, the Employee Advisory Council has addressed more than 200 employee concerns, including pay and benefits issues and job study questions. Since council members serve for a two-year term, the EAC now needs full-time or permanent part-time employees in good standing to replace 10 members whose terms will expire this year.

The EAC is comprised of two employees from each district and the Central Office and up to three at-large positions chosen by the MoDOT director.

Employees who participate on the EAC attend at least one meeting a month in Jefferson City. They can expect to take

on various assignments that could take up to an additional two to three days a month of on-the-clock time to complete. New council members will take office on July 1.

Those interested in applying for EAC membership should fill out the form below and submit it by March 1 to the EAC representative in their district or the Central Office or to EAC Chairman Jason Williams in District 10. The membership application is also available on the Intranet at <http://wwwwi/intranet/eac/>.

Employees interested in joining should have been on the job with MoDOT for at least two years, met or exceeded performance expectations and had no serious disciplinary action pending for the past three years.



Membership Drive

The EAC is seeking new members to serve two-year terms. If you are interested, please complete this form and place it in one of the confidential EAC envelopes located in each building. Completed forms must be returned to your EAC representatives by Mar. 1, 2007.

Name: _____

Job Title: _____

District/Division: _____

Phone Number: _____

Years with MoDOT: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Why would you like to be considered for the EAC? _____

What would you like to accomplish for employees while serving on the EAC? _____

For more information, contact your local EAC representatives:

District 1
Jana Hughes & Ed Angle

District 2
Teresa Hall & Keith Toney

District 3
April Fohey & Kurt Kluesner

District 4
Michelle Clevenger, Marc Meador & Sonya Henson

District 5
Ron Miller & Ron Baker

District 6
Deanna Venker & Terry Smith

District 7
Jim Conley & Wendy Brunner-Lewis

District 8
Glenn Dalton & Angela Eden

District 9
Jim Clark & Kim Hillburn

District 10
Sandra Brooks, Jason Williams & Todd Thieret

Central Office
Randy Morris & Rhonda Thompson
EAC Liaison
Brenda Treadwell-Martin

New Policy Will Help Keep Employees Safe on the Job

Drug and Alcohol Policy To Change April 1

by Sally Oxenhandler

Abusing drugs and alcohol can cause problems at home and work, as well as put you and others in harm's way. Impaired behavior and judgment can lead to accidents or worse. To make our work environment safer and reduce risks to employees, we will be tightening our drug and alcohol policy.

Beginning April 1, employees who test positive for drugs or have a breath alcohol level of .04 or above will be terminated for the first offense. Our current drug and alcohol policy, which allows salaried employees up to three positive alcohol tests and two positive drug tests, jeopardizes employee safety. The policy change won't take effect until April to give employees who think they might have problems with alcohol or drugs time to seek help.

"We just can't compromise our employees' safety, and we feel our current policy has the potential to put employees at risk," said Beth Ring, Risk Management director. "At the same time, we recognize that drug and alcohol addiction is a disease that needs to

be treated, so we want to do all we can to offer assistance to employees with drug and alcohol problems."

The department offers employees and their families confidential counseling and referral services through the Employee Assistance Program. Employees are allowed six free sessions per year for each household member, or six sessions per year when counseling is shared between household members. You can get more details on our Web site: <http://www.modot.mo.gov/newsandinfo/benefits.htm> or by calling 1-800-808-2261. Information about any employee who seeks help will be kept strictly confidential.

Our intranet site, wwwi, offers a self assessment to help you determine if you have a drug or alcohol problem, as well as additional information and frequently asked questions about the policy change. You can also contact your Human Resources or Employee Benefits representative for more information.

Signs of Alcohol or Drug Abuse

How do you know if you might be dependent on alcohol or drugs and need help?

Symptoms of alcohol abuse vary from one person to the next. But one behavioral pattern supersedes all symptoms: Alcohol abuse occurs when people continue to drink even though their lives, responsibilities or relationships suffer because of their drinking.

Here are some red flags that might help you recognize if you're abusing drugs:

- Refusing to acknowledge you have a problem with drugs, even though others can see it.
- Behaving in destructive or dangerous ways and doing things you'd probably never do if you were clean.

- Continuing to take drugs even though the drugs are harming you, such as making medical problems worse, getting into legal trouble, causing relationship problems or making psychological problems worse.
- Using drugs for recreational purposes, not medical problems, regardless of potential consequences.
- Abandoning friends, favorite activities, education, jobs, even cherished relationships and focusing on finding, buying, using and recovering from the drugs.

Chip-Seal Crown

continued from page 1

Judges included representatives from both MoDOT and the private sector. Judges from MoDOT were from the Maintenance, Construction and Community Relations divisions. Contractors and suppliers from the chip seal industry represented the private sector.

During the statewide tour judges reviewed 13 different stretches of road. Evaluation criteria for each included cost, quality, appearance and claims.

"This contest allowed us to reward teams for the quality of their work and their ability to maximize available resources," Stone said.

January/February Service Anniversaries

January

35 Years

Roger D. Sedore D3
Larry L. Whiteside D7

30 Years

Dale C. Niece D2
Susan K. McCubbins D4
Kenneth M. Hilkerbaumer D5
Richard D. Ziegelmeyer D6
Robert O. Cannon D7
Timothy A. Eakins D8
David S. Silveus D9
Terry R. Sampson CO

25 Years

William A. Weitkamp D4
Jerald L. Williams D7
Jerry Russell D8
Kevin W. Golden D9
Edward A. Nichols CO

20 Years

Karl D. Davenport D5
Lawrence L. Harmon D5
Cindy D. Upton D7

15 Years

Robert E. Hendricks D2
Teresa A. Hevel D3
David T. Silvester D3
Arturo Gonzalez D4
Christopher G. Redline D4
Steven R. Wyrick D4
Wayne L. Shaver D8
William A. Robison D10

10 Years

Dorothy J. Johnson D1
Margaret E. Justus D1
James K. Wray D2
Susan E. Ivy D5
Penny S. Priest D5
Jason R. Vanderfeltz D5
Brian W. Umfleet D6
Curt D. Woolsey D9
Charles Corlew D10

Jesse S. Elseman CO
Michael W. Harris CO
Mary E. Hunton CO
Walter M. Rankin CO
Christine A. Stieferman CO

5 Years

Justin A. Fessler D5
Daniel M. Buesse D6
Alferd E. Jessup D6
Vince G. Kaimann D6
Ryan M. Kidd D6
Robert A. Leek D6
Stuart R. McNeil D6
Bradley W. Ruble D6
Joseph D. Turner D7
Brett A. Foster D8
Darin R. Hamelink D8
Adam R. Humphrey D8
Todd W. Lowrance D8
Derek A. Olson D8
Robert J. Watson D8
Keith E. Lee D9
Elvin W. Terrill D9
Billy G. Aycok D10
Nathan R. Conner D10
Michael D. Riley D10
Jamie J. Schaffer D10
Brandon M. Hansberry CO
Lynette R. Happe CO
Alan Leary CO

February

30 Years

Shirley J. Norris D6
Wayne L. Traube D6
Tom M. Henderson D8
Armin J. Herrman D8
Randy D. Pamperien D8
Larry W. Scobee D8
Travis R. Cross D9

25 Years

William R. Shenkner D4
David W. Laughlin D5
Alan C. Evers CO

Gerhard H. Robbins CO
Tom M. Stratman CO
Terry W. Wilson CO

20 Years

Barbara E. Holland D1
Christine A. Ruby D4
Bruce L. Wright D6
William Wade D8

15 Years

Emma B. Lumley D3
Curtis C. Allinson D5
Danny R. Smith D7
Barry W. Weaver D7
Christian Schwandtner CO

10 Years

Curtis L. Tallman D2
Joel C. Blobaum D4

Patricia L. Rath D4
Jeffery L. Taylor D4
Susan D. DeClue D6
Douglas D. Glaser D9
Brian D. Tune D9
Joseph P. Allgier D10
Turner D. Bond CO
Kenneth A. Shamet CO

5 Years

Ronnie L. Browning D6
Joshua S. Claspill D6
Teresa M. Mount D6
Charles A. Armstrong D8
Michelle F. Rogers D8
Glory M. Edoho CO
Joan E. Lake CO
Bryan J. Ross CO

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In Memoriam

Active employee
Exa L. Lewis D1 Nov. 24

Retirees
Alfred W. Spindler D6 Nov. 1
Donald "Don" C. Jonson D5 Nov. 11
Robert "Bob" E. Clark D3 Nov. 13
Linn F. Crockett D7 Nov. 13
Myron L. Shepard D3 Nov. 13
Ernest L. Patterson D1 Nov. 15
Cleo D. Smith D1 Nov. 15
John F. Abbott D3 Nov. 21
Adrain L. Lindley D2 Nov. 24
Harold J. Rodgers D3 Dec. 4
William "Bill" H. Rhodes D3 Dec. 5
Jay Dee "J.D." Callighan D2 Dec. 5
Blanche E. Gillespie D4 Dec. 7
Russell L. Cull D3 Dec. 8
Donald R. Sorrells D10 Dec. 18
Dick W. Walker D7 Dec. 26
Ronald "Ron" C. Fryar D1 Dec. 26
Elmer Z. Dennis D10 Dec. 30

November Retirements

Name	Location	Years of Service
Bruce Chinn	CO	19
Ernest Hammon	D6	30
Jessie Howald	D8	34
Henry Johnson	D10	9
Joe Shields	D6	24
Herman Winebarger	D10	29
David Yeubanks	D2	12

December Retirements

Name	Location	Years of Service
Denzil Burriss	D2	9
Paul Kramp	D5	26



Central Office

Snow Forces Evacuation of General Services Building

by Kristi Jamison

The heavy snowfall on Dec. 1 created problems both on and off the road. Several state office buildings had to be evacuated due to the weight of the snow on rooftops, including one of our own at 830 MoDOT Drive.

General Services Manager Chris DeVore was at the quarterly Tracker meeting when he got word that the roof on the General Services building was at risk of collapsing. It had been covered with nearly four inches of ice and another eight inches to 10 inches of snow.

By the time DeVore arrived, Building and Grounds Maintenance Supervisor Andy Goeller had already done an initial assessment and determined employees should be evacuated for their safety.

A structural engineer was called in to inspect the site and concurred with the decision to evacuate. By Monday morning, Travel Services, Procurement, Car Pool, Distribution and District 5's Equipment Repair staff had been temporarily relocated and all pool vehicles were moved outside.

"We were able to set up temporary work stations in the old archives building so Procurement and Travel Services staff could continue to function," DeVore said. "Information Systems immediately helped set up computers so these offices could continue to provide their critical services."

General Services Manager Coleen Welter sent District 5's equipment repair staff to other areas to help field mechanics service the trucks that had just been used to clear the roadways.

"All of the employees who had to be evacuated and temporarily relocated were very understanding and extremely cooperative," DeVore said. "They did a remarkable job of maintaining their daily operations as normal as possible."

Meanwhile the ice and snow had to be removed as soon as possible, so General Services staff went to work quickly. Help soon arrived from Central Office's Bridge Maintenance staff; District 5's General Services staff with dump trucks and a loader; and District 5 Traffic Supervisor Kevin Eggemeyer and members of his signal and striping crew with bucket trucks.



Jeff Lockwood

Removing tons of snow and ice from the rooftop of the General Services building was no easy task. Thanks to lots of helping hands and equipment, employees were able to return within three working days.

"Although Andy Goeller and his staff did a great job coordinating efforts to save the building, we couldn't have done it without the manpower and equipment from District 5 and the bridge maintenance crew," DeVore said. "We quickly realized that we were fighting a losing battle with our small crew. Having the extra help and the equipment were crucial."

"There were about 30 people working on the building at one time. We cranked up the heat to help melt the

snow and ice from the inside while we worked systematically to physically remove it from the outside, being careful to keep the load of the snow balanced so the roof wouldn't collapse."

DeVore estimates that the crew removed about 1,000 tons of snow and ice. The roof was cleared and the building was approved for occupancy again three working days later. Thanks to the cooperative efforts of many, the staff was able to return by Thursday morning, Dec. 7.

You're Hired — Again!

Co-op Program Starts Another MoDOT Career

by DeAnne Bonnot

Starla Martin leaves work and thinks how relaxing it will be to go home to her two young children. A relaxing evening with two energetic kids? You bet!

She no longer has to rush home to read, edit papers or study for an upcoming exam after graduating with honors from Lincoln University in December. Nor does she have to check the help wanted ads for an opportunity to use her new degree.

Martin is the first Criminal Justice major and Motor Carrier Services Co-op student to gain full employment

with MoDOT. Her Co-op experience began in January 2006. While still a student, she traveled to Kansas City or St. Louis weekly to conduct inspections of commercial vehicles and trucking businesses.

"Starla received the same training and treatment as other technicians, so her first week as a full-time, full-fledged MCS employee was very much like the previous week. She hit the ground running," said Martin's supervisor, Chuck Gohring.

Martin is the ninth permanent employee hired through MoDOT's Cooperative Education program. The



Starla Martin serves cake to Co-op Program Coordinator David Williams and her "new" co-worker, Senior Motor Carrier Technician Ann Vaught, to celebrate her recent transition from Co-op student to full-time employee with Motor Carrier Services.

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first Co-op student, Terri Walker, now with Information Systems, joined the program in 2000.

"Students in the program are not guaranteed full-time job offers," said David Williams of Equal Opportunity. "They do compete for positions here and most have earned permanent employment."

Co-op participants are permanent part-time paid employees who earn benefits and salaries. They're different from interns who are typically employed for short periods and do not earn benefits.

Through the Co-op program, students planning careers in civil engineering,

computer science, criminal justice or business administration and related studies can gain valuable on-the-job training while they earn their degree. MoDOT supervisors get additional help without adding to the number of full-time employees because EO pays the participants' salary and benefits.

To learn more about building MoDOT's future through the Co-op program, visit www.modot.org/jobs and click on Co-op/Intern Program.

for more info

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D1

Northwest

One More Challenge Met

by M. Elaine Justus

If you read the summary for the January 10th Commission meeting, you may have seen a small reference to the "Risk Management Annual Report." It looked like one more column of numbers comparing 2005 to 2006, but you would be making a mistake to dismiss it as merely that.

What the numbers are comparing are the number of lost work days and the number of workers' compensation claims made in those two years. That's pretty dry stuff until you look a little closer and notice that the number of lost work days (lost time injuries) in 2005 was 3,027 while in 2006 it was 935. That's a reduction of 69 percent in one year!

What is a "lost injury" anyway? That's when an employee is injured as a result of their normal job duties and a doctor has determined the injured employee cannot work.

So what changed? What changed was a challenge from Director Pete Rahn.

This report is one of the very first he requested when he joined MoDOT, and one that did not compare well with that of his former state. That's when he challenged MoDOT's Risk Management Division to do better.

job. We then found temporary duties for those employees with the goal of keeping the employee productive.

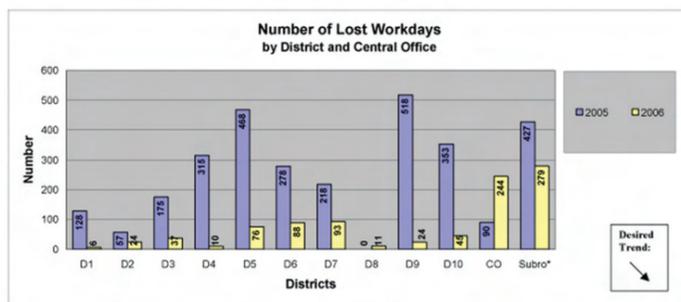
What we discovered was not only can we reduce our lost time days and save MoDOT money, but we also achieve the

cess. It's better to continue to be active even if only in a limited capacity. What MoDOT has accomplished in only one year is unbelievable, and it took every department working together to make it happen."

The Northwest District is especially honored that the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission chose the occasion of their January meeting to publicly acknowledge our district. With a 95 percent reduction, we were second only to the Kansas City area's 98 percent. We did rank first statewide, though, for having the fewest number of lost workdays with only six for the entire year (compared to 128 last year).

"Thank you to everyone who helped make an unbelievable challenge a reality," said Northwest District Safety and Health Manager Lori Dake. "I genuinely appreciate all the cooperation we received from not only field employees and supervisors, but district office staff and supervisors and the Jefferson City Risk Management office."

Comparative - Number of lost work days per year



If the Smooth Roads Initiative proved anything, it proved we can handle a challenge. Working together (state, districts and departments), we identified those employees whose restrictions did not allow them to work in their normal

bonus of having employees heal faster. According to Beth Ring, director of the Risk Management Division, "Physicians who specialize in sports medicine for professional athletes have found that inactivity often slows the healing pro-

A Snowblower in Missouri?

by Holly Murphy



Ken Strube

Twenty-six Northwest District employees volunteered to help open the roads in the Fulton and Columbia areas. It has been quite sometime since the Northwest District has had snow like this.

Often the Northwest District (sometimes referred to as the frozen north) has snow when other parts of the state are experiencing mild temperatures and no precipitation. Well, the tables were turned this past December when the central part of the state was inun-

dated with the white fluffy stuff. The Northwest District sent 14 large trucks and 26 employees who volunteered to help out. The group arrived on Friday in the Booneville, Columbia and Fulton areas where they helped to open routes.

One piece of equipment the Northwest District sent along was the OSHKOSH snowblower. This large piece of equipment was purchased in 2002 and is one of only three in the state. Until now, we hadn't really had a chance to put it to the test. The machine had been utilized to push snow because it also has a blade attachment, but we thankfully haven't had a large enough snow accumulation to put the blower unit to use. The blower attachment had been tucked away in the northern part of the district until December. That snow storm was

actually a very good hands-on training opportunity for our operators. The snowblower is designed to work in deep snow, and that was abundant in many areas around Columbia. Our volunteers had less than 24 hours notice to get ready, hit the road, and spend the entire weekend helping out. They didn't arrive home until the following Monday. We want to thank all of our employees who volunteered to travel long distances in difficult conditions to help with this snow removal effort.



Ken Strube

The Northwest District assisted our neighbors to the south with their snow removal efforts in early December. Here they are putting the OSHKOSH snowblower to use.

for more info

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D2

North Central

Extreme Makeover for Route 36

Missouri U.S. Route 36
 Construction Program Report / U.S. 36 Highway
 Association / District 2 / December 2006



The eight-mile section opened to traffic on Dec. 18, 2006, six months ahead of schedule and \$1 million under budget.

Ceremony attendees from left: Representative-elect Tom Shively, Mayor Dale Bagley, Macon Co. Presiding Commissioner Craig Jones, District Engineer Dan Niec, Rep. Kathy Chinn, Lt. Nelson Elfrink, Hwy. 36 Assoc. President Ed Douglas, Macon Economic Development Director Frank Withrow.

Route 36 - Linn County **
 Resurface 13.5 miles of westbound lanes Route 36 from two miles west of Route 11 south to the Macon County Line. Project includes bridge rehabilitations.
 Project Begins: Spring 2007
 Completed: Fall 2007

Route 36 - Livingston County
 Resurface 26 miles of eastbound and westbound lanes of Route 36 from one mile east of Route 65 to just east of Brookfield. Project includes bridge rehabilitations.
 Project Begins: Spring 2007
 Completed: Fall 2007

Route 36 - Livingston County **
 Resurface 11.7 miles of westbound lanes from the Caldwell County line to Route 65 in Chillicothe. Project Begins: Spring 2007
 Completed: Fall 2007

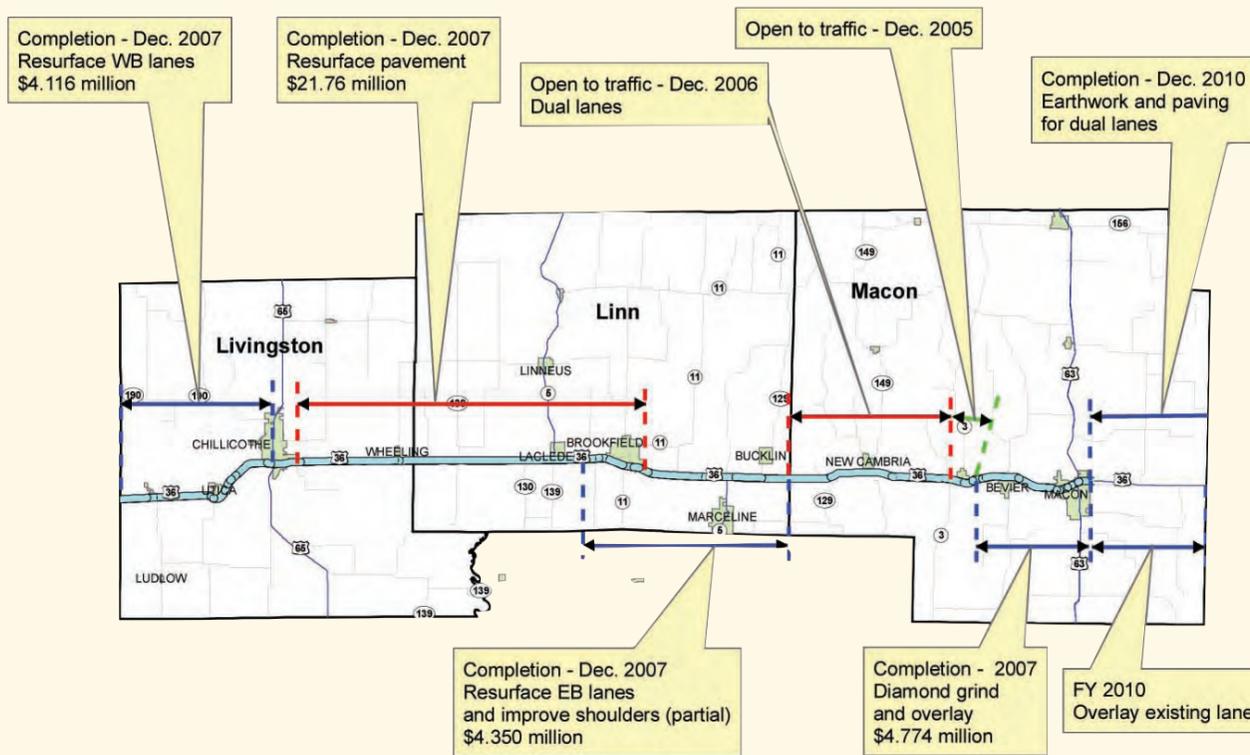
Route 36 - Macon County**
 Overlay 11.85 miles of Route 36 from Middle Fork Chariton River to the end of the divided lanes. Project includes bridge rehabilitations.
 Project Begins: Spring 2007
 Completed: Winter 2007

Route 36 - Macon County
 Resurface four and three-fourths miles of Route 36 from the end of the divided lanes to the Shelby County line.
 Project Begins: Summer 2010
 Completed: Winter 2010

“District 2 is equally as excited about beginning the surface rehabilitation projects as we are about nearing the completion of the expansion of the corridor to a four-lane facility,” said District Engineer Dan Niec. “We are particularly grateful to have three of these projects accelerated with the Better Roads, Brighter Future program.” What would have taken four years to complete will be finished by the end of the summer.

District 2 and the citizens of north central Missouri have celebrated and will continue to celebrate the milestones on this corridor. Everyone is looking forward to 2010 and the completion of this extreme makeover.

**Denotes projects accelerated with the Better Roads, Brighter Future Program.



Map created and provided by Darby Logan, District 1 senior transportation planner

If you would ask just about any citizen in north central Missouri what major corridor in our area is in need of an extreme makeover, you would more than likely hear a response of “Route 36!”

Although we don’t have a big blue bus and rolling cameras like the popular television show “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” we are announcing upgrades to Route 36 that will no doubt astound Missourians with the before and after pictures.

This extreme makeover started during the summer of 2004 in Macon and Livingston counties. In 2004:

- More than seven miles of new four-lane highway were constructed between New Cambria and Bevier, which included a new interchange at Callao.
- More than four miles were constructed from Route C to west of Route 65.

In 2005 construction continued in Macon County on eight miles from New Cambria to the Linn County line, including a new interchange at New Cambria and resurfacing the existing lanes. This project opened last December, six months ahead of schedule and \$1 million under budget. Opening this section allows motorists to travel

on four-lane highway from Macon to St. Joseph. To continue the four-lane makeover, a ground breaking ceremony was held last fall to kick off the first of three separate projects to upgrade the remaining two-lane roadway of Route 36 between Hannibal and Macon to four-lanes. The last of the three projects will be let in October of this year.

When the 52-miles between Hannibal and Macon are completed in 2010, Route 36 will be a full four-lane facility across the entire state.

Another huge part of this extreme makeover lies in pavement improvements. As Route 36 becomes a four-lane facility, we want to make sure the old surface gets a much needed face lift. This summer \$35 million will be spent on this project, with additional working following in 2010. To accomplish this the following pavement rehabilitation projects have been scheduled:

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D3

Northeast

The Fight Against Mother Nature

Dec. 1, 2006 and Jan. 12, 2007 are two dates that will stick in the minds of MoDOT's Northeast District crews for a long time. "It's the first time in 20 years we had to stop plowing because it was too dangerous," said Maintenance Superintendent Butch Mundle about the December snowstorm.

Some area residents took safety into their own hands. A handwritten, cardboard sign that read "Highway 61 north closed" was taped to a convenience

store door in Bowling Green. Many others just stayed home.

Then came the ice storm in January. "We were ready, and our crews did a fantastic job clearing the roads," Butch said, and he's not just saying this because he works so closely with the crews. "We had very few complaints logged in to the Customer Service Center during the ice storm, plus we didn't have any fleet accidents, just a couple of minor slide offs," he said.



On day three of the major snowfall that hit much of Missouri, crews were out cleaning off the Mark Twain Memorial Bridge in Hannibal.

Team Right of Way Heads South

"Helping out on MoDOT projects in other parts of the state helps us gain insight to best practices and develop better teamwork throughout our organization," said Holly Thronson of the Northeast District's Right of Way department. Holly and co-worker Bob Manzke, along with other districts and the Central Office, helped the Southeast District meet deadlines on a massive construction project.

The Southeast District's Right of Way department needed to acquire properties for its Route 72 project in Madison and Bollinger counties. To meet time constraints, in addition to enlisting

the help of other districts, a week-long "open house" was created. In a short five-day span, working 10- and 12-hour days, the group successfully obtained two-thirds of the properties needed for the project.

"We had to complete paperwork for about 40 property owners prior to the meetings," Holly said. During the open house, property owners were able to come in at their convenience. The acquisition process was explained, an offer made, paperwork was signed, and the deal was closed. "The reason it worked so well is because most of these were small acquisitions," Holly said. "It was also a project that was badly needed in the area, and the residents were glad it was going to be built."

"This was an effective team approach, and we were glad to be part of it," Holly and Bob concurred, who along with many of members of the district's Right of Way team, will be helping out again this year using a similar process. They are scheduled to provide assistance in appraisal and negotiation functions to the Southeast District on two other route 72 projects in Bollinger and Cape Girardeau counties, and more are set for later in the year.



Bob Manzke and Holly Thronson look at the next project they will be helping with in the Southeast District.

From Encouragement to Reward

When ideas have turned into products and processes that have reduced physical stress, improved efficiency and or saved MoDOT money, Northeast District Engineer Kirk Juranas wants to know about them. So last fall, he requested every maintenance work unit share their products and processes, and he now has a two-inch binder with a picture of every product and an e-mail about every process that was presented.

Kirk has encouraged his maintenance staff to submit these ideas to the Solutions at Work program. "I can honestly say everything that was submitted was good and should help us work toward our goal," he said. "I'm very proud of the ingenuity of our team in the Northeast District."

Here's a hint on Kirk's next challenge...energy conservation. Be ready, Northeast District!

"This was an effort to get our folks to share ideas that could reduce injury," Kirk said.

Over the past year, Kirk has served on the re-engineering team, whose primary goal is to reduce injuries by lowering equipment and product weight. "Reducing cement bags from 94 pound bags to 47 pound bags is one example of change that has helped reduce injury, and we're continuing to look for more changes," Kirk said.



Steve Wommack and Gary Peasel of the Eolia maintenance building received Solutions at Work rewards for their utility trailer.

Seat Belt Bear Teaches Kids Physics of a Crash

A new addition to the MoDOT safety team will help children and teens alike understand the force of a crash while

wearing or not wearing a seat belt. The Seat Belt Bear chair was built by Gary Tolivar, with the help of Kevin Haner,

in MoDOT's Northeast District, and it has been "on the road" ever since teaching kids the importance of wearing seat belts.

"It's fun, but educational, and that's what we strive for when teaching safety," said Adrienne Abright, one of the Northeast Regional Blueprint Outreach Coordinators.



Adrienne Abright, outreach coordinator for the Regional Blueprint Committee, demonstrates how a seat belt can save Mr. Bear's life to a group of fifth graders in New London.

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D4

Kansas City Area

Food Fests Bring Big Bucks to Employees Fund

by Joel Blobaum

Food and fund-raising continued their long relationship in District 4 through November and December, as a Fall Harvest Chili Contest and the fourth annual Holiday Breakfast netted more than \$1,400 for the District 4 Employees Fund.

With some assistance from the District 4 Employees' Committee, the Henry and Johnson counties maintenance buildings and the Clinton Project Office organized the Nov. 7 chili competition at the Knob Noster Maintenance Building. The first-of-its-kind lunch-time event featured a setting of straw bales, corn stalks and pumpkins — and 110 people feasting on 23 crocks of chili, hot dogs, fixings and desserts brought in by the MoDOT employees.

Chili contest winners were:

1st place: Clinton Construction Office
2nd place: Tie between Ron Cordes, Higginsville; and Ron Eads, General Services

4th place: Cliff Everts, Knob Noster
5th place: Steve Alley, Warrensburg
6th place: Steve Phillips, Clinton Maintenance.

The District 4 Association donated the drink cups for the lunch and pocket calendars and pens for the chili contestants. Six local vendors served as chili judges; they also donated prizes for the contest winners and extra items for a raffle. The event raised \$1,051 for the Employees Fund.

The annual Holiday Breakfast attracted 167 employees, retirees and guests who enjoyed pancakes, sausage and scrambled eggs prepared by Chris Cakes Inc. — none more so than Brandon Cracraft of the Stadium Project Office, who downed 17 pancakes to capture top honors in the event's pancake eating contest. Joe Caldarella of General Services and Steve Porter of Community Relations were distant runners-up.

The District 4 Employees' Fund benefits MoDOT District 4 employees who find themselves in financial distress due to events that are no fault of their own. Committee members are Amy Gagne, Robin Warren, Sally Crump, Debi Skaggs, Terri Houck-Shannon, Heather Barrows and Teresa Martin.



Karin Cummins

More than 100 people attended the chili contest to get a taste of the food fest.



Joel Blobaum

The General Services contingent was first in line for pancakes.

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KC Scout Enhancements for Quicker, Safer Drive Time

by Kerri Lewis

Since its 2004 debut, the Kansas City Scout system has reported and addressed traffic impacts along more than 90 miles of freeways in the bi-state Kansas City metropolitan area. Now, in 2007, Scout is offering new services, an enhanced Web site and system expansion developed to help travelers and commuters reach their destination safer and quicker.

A new "My KC Scout" service can give motorists a heads-up about traffic delays or emergencies impacting drive times through their computer or text-

travel speeds along any given area of the Scout system and determine the amount of time it takes to reach certain destinations.

These times may vary based on any problems up ahead, such as accidents or severe weather. Drivers can read the posted travel times from hundreds of feet away when they are traveling at the posted speed limit, giving them time to choose an alternate route or stay on their current path.

Even more enhancements are available on Scout's Web site at www.kcscout.net.

The site now offers an additional increase in bandwidth to improve its speed and increase the number of users it can serve. In addition, Web site visitors can view multiple camera views from the Scout system at one time rather than viewing them one at a time. Scout system maps are also available with a map zoom feature. Many of these improvements are the result of comments received from Web site visitors.

Beginning early in 2007, travelers can expect to see some system upgrades. Scout

expansion projects will add seven new cameras located at Interstate 470 from the Triangle to Woods Chapel Road and two new cameras at Route 71 from Red Bridge Road to Main Street.

Full Scout expansion, which includes cameras, message signs and traffic detectors, will be located along Interstate 435 from Bannister Road to the Missouri River; Interstate 35 from Parvin Road to Pleasant Valley Road; and Interstate 29 from I-35 to North 64th Street.



Travel Time messages tell motorists what to expect during their trips along the Scout system.

messaging device. Subscribers who sign up for this service at www.kcscout.net decide which routes they want to be alerted about. Scout will do the rest, sending automated messages when there is a problem on the designated routes. The service is offered free-of-charge, although normal mobile carrier fees will still apply.

Those who are unable to receive or take advantage of this free service shouldn't be discouraged. Scout also offers information via "Travel Times" posted on the large electronic message boards along several of the Scout's freeways. Sensors calculate the average

KANSAS CITY

SCOUT

getting you there

D5 Central

District Begins New Work Zone Training

by Holly Dentner

Advanced Work Zone Training has begun in District 5, and employees will spend the next few months learning more about managing work zones.

About 125 district employees have been signed up for the first round of workshops, scheduled around the district through March. The workshops have been developed to meet a federal mandate that requires trained "work zone specialists" be involved in every part of highway work, whether it be construction, traffic or maintenance.

Construction and maintenance employees already complete work zone training, but the advanced course takes

them one step further and designates them with the "specialist" classification.

"The training helps us understand how to monitor work zones according to the new mandate," said Liz Duvall, senior traffic studies specialist. "It will cover setting things up, following the guidelines and spotting problems or anything that needs adjusting."

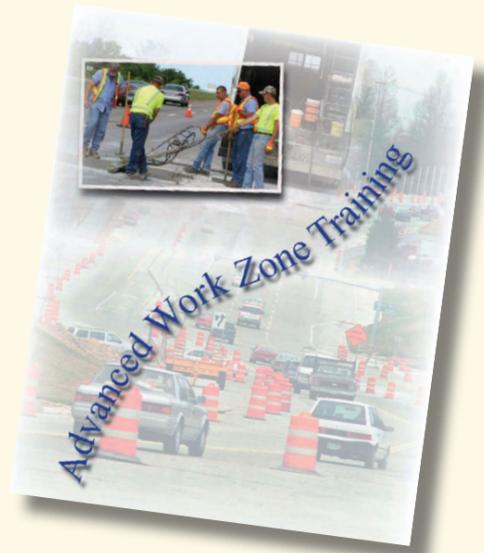
The training lasts two days, and attendees will have to analyze both standard and atypical work zone scenarios. That includes adapting traffic control plans to meet special circumstances and building traffic management plans.

Duvall, with area engineers and maintenance supervisors, worked carefully on the attendee list to provide even more benefit to employees.

"Our employees were handpicked for each workshop because we wanted a good mix of people from different areas," said Duvall. "They need to understand all aspects of a work zone, so we wanted Construction, Maintenance, Design, Special Crews and Traffic employees in every class so they can see how the regulations affect all aspects of the work zone."

The district will train about 300 people total, but the first group will be supervisors and other employees who are in work zones most frequently.

"Other districts are doing the same thing, because the mandate has an October 2007 deadline," said Duvall. "Contractors must comply with the mandate, too, and are working on designating work zone specialists for their highway projects."



MoDOT to Study Whitton Expressway in Jefferson City

by Holly Dentner

Economic developers in Jefferson City hope future visitors will make their way to a section of town that most people haven't seen in a while. They're working to turn the old state penitentiary property into a center for business and government.

One hurdle they face is access, so MoDOT has partnered with Jefferson City and Cole County to study their options. Last spring MoDOT completed a "problem definition" study of the Rex Whitton Expressway, also known as Route 50/63, which serves as the primary traffic route to Jefferson City's downtown area.

area. Travelers would have to make their way through commercial and residential areas before reaching the site.

"Right now there's no direct access," said Dusenberg. "And the study confirmed that there are very few locations along the corridor to add an interchange to accommodate the kind of traffic the prison site redevelopment could bring."

After discussing their options with Jefferson City and Cole County officials, MoDOT decided to move to the next step: an environmental impact statement and location study.

"An environmental and location study will help us determine the preferred alternative to address the situation. That means we'll examine all the factors involved in changing the expressway and figure out the most practical and affordable solution," said Dusenberg.

On Jan. 18, representatives from MoDOT, Jefferson City and Cole County interviewed consultants who submitted proposals to conduct the study. They will confirm all the contract details of the selected consultant in the next few weeks and hope to get the study under way by May. The cost for the study will be divided between the three agencies.

10 | "A problem definition study investigates what traffic issues could result from general growth in the area and any other special circumstances," said Mike Dusenberg, District 5 planning manager. "This study looked at possible growth along the Whitton Expressway, including the prison redevelopment."

Current traffic on the Whitton Expressway can be heavy, and the district has made adjustments to signing, signals, and the roadway itself to help traffic flow through the area. The old prison site is north of the expressway, but there is no interchange from the highway that provides a clear route to the

Work Begins on Miller County Bridges

Construction has begun on two new bridges in Miller County. The bridges will replace the Brushy Fork Creek and Barren Fork Creek bridges on Route 17, between Iberia and Route C. The project includes grading, drainage and construction of two new bridges.

The new Brushy Fork Creek Bridge will be built approximately 100 feet downstream from the existing bridge. Nearly one-half mile of new roadway will be built from the new bridge to the existing pavement.

The new Barren Fork Creek Bridge will be built approximately 1,000 feet downstream from the existing bridge. Nearly a mile of new roadway will be constructed from the new bridge to the existing pavement. The new alignment will eliminate several curves.

Both bridges will be built with 12-foot driving lanes and shoulders. Emery Sapp & Sons, Inc., is the contractor for the bridge project, which is expected to be complete in fall 2007 at a cost of \$3.6 million.



Transportation Project Designer Bob Jany inspects the Barren Fork Creek Bridge during a design field check. Both Barren Fork Creek and Brushy Fork Creek bridges, built in 1926, are being replaced. The new bridges will include wider lanes and shoulders, improving safety for motorists.

Brrrrrr. . It's Cold Outside



A wind chill of eight degrees doesn't stop Intermediate Crew Worker Dale Hoellering and Maintenance Specialist Doug Renick as they repair reflective guard rail delineators on Route 50 in Jefferson City.

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D6

St. Louis Area

Brave Actions Recognized

By Kara Price

A fellow MoDOT employee within District 6's Right of Way department has earned the Certificate of Appreciation Award for her brave and selfless actions on Aug. 28, 2006. Susan Snyders, district office services supervisor, and four of her co-workers were returning from a Right of Way seminar in Columbia when a truck traveling in front of them had a tire blowout near the Warrenton exit. The truck swerved, hit the median wall, rolled over and ejected the driver from the vehicle.

While one of Snyders' co-workers called 911 for assistance, she took the initiative to be with the driver until the paramedics arrived. Although Snyders didn't deliver any first aid to the driver, she stayed with him and helped the paramedics by providing details of the accident as well as the condition and identification of the driver.

"The guy was hurt badly and I thought someone should be near him until the paramedics arrived," Snyders said. "I don't feel like I deserve this award, but I am very proud to receive such an honor."

District 6 Engineer Ed Hassinger presented Snyders the Certificate of Appreciation on Jan. 19 at the District 6 leadership staff meeting. Snyders' four co-workers, Cathy Calvin, Cindy Coleman, Nicole Kreisel and Denise Thompson, nominated Snyders for this award. The Certificate of Appreciation was provided by the Central Office Risk Management division.

"I thought that Susie should be nominated for the Certificate of Appreciation because it was impressive the way she took initiative once the accident occurred and how she assessed the situation," Kreisel, Right of Way specialist, said. "All Susie wanted to do is help anyway she could."



From left to right: Right of Way division employees Cathy Calvin, Nicole Kreisel, Susan Snyders (honoree), and Cindy Coleman pose with District 6 Engineer Ed Hassinger. Not Pictured: Denise Thompson, Right of Way.

Susan Snyders has dedicated 12 1/2 years to MoDOT in the Right of Way department. She currently supervises the description writers, coordinates any details with title companies and manages the daily office responsibilities.

"I tried to do what I could for the guy who was hurt, and I sincerely appreciate everything my co-workers have done to nominate me for this award," Snyders said.

"I tried to do what I could for the guy who was hurt, and I sincerely appreciate everything my co-workers have done to nominate me for this award," Snyders said.

Congratulations, Susie, for your selfless actions and being so willing to help someone!

The I-64 Team Moves into a New Project Office

By Kara Price

Missouri Department of Transportation's I-64 team now resides in a new home near the intersection of Interstate 170 and Page. This group has been housed in the District 6 office and moved into the project office on Jan. 22.

This new workplace houses about 200 team members, uniting about 30 MoDOT employees, the project's consultants and Gateway Constructors – the contractor for the New I-64 project. Project managers, designers, materials, community relations and all other components of the project form a team as they work side-by-side to rebuild Interstate 64.

"One of the best ways we can do our job better is to bring the entire I-64 team together within the same facility," said Lesley Hoffarth, project director of the I-64 team. "We took this a step further



The new I-64 project office near the intersection of I-170 and Page.

by setting the office up for the team to sit with one another on a daily basis to develop a closer working relationship

rather than just seeing one another at meetings. I am very excited about the team's move to this new location so we can make I-64 a new and improved interstate."

Consolidating the group comes just in time, as Gateway Constructors recently announced more details about its 2007 construction schedule. Demolition work is scheduled later this month and some lane reductions and ramp closures are already slated for March and April. For more details go to www.thenewi64.org.

District 6 would like to wish the I-64 team well as they settle into their new office.

MoDOT employees who will be joining the team at their new location include Hoffarth, Deputy Project Director Ron Morris, Eric Bievenue, Larry Burke, Mike Castro, Sally Cox, Robert Hardin, Al Hartwig, Dave Henroid, Jesse Jonas, Chris Kelly, Angela Keune, Kelvin Mack, Joe Molinaro, Chris Morgan, Jim Schmidt, David Washington and Linda Wilson.

The mailing address for the new I-64 project office is: 8474 Delpport Drive, St. Louis, MO 63114. There will be contact numbers listed in the March issue of *Connections*.

for more info

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D7

Southwest

Stateline Welcome Center Demolished

Updated Building to Open in Late 2007

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis

The beginning of 2007 brought about change on Interstate 44 at the Oklahoma state line. On Jan. 8, crews blocked the entrances to the rest areas and welcome center in Newton County and began demolishing the original structures.

The rest areas and welcome center were built in the early 1970s, when the average daily traffic count on I-44 was about 4,000 vehicles. By the end of the buildings' lives, they were outdated

and too small to handle the amount of visitors coming through them. The latest traffic count places the number of vehicles traveling I-44 through Newton County at 25,800.

The new, 4,800-square-foot welcome center, slated to open in October, will cost \$4.9 million. The westbound rest area will reopen as truck parking with no restroom facilities. A temporary welcome center is open at the junction of Business 71 and I-44 near Joplin.



Brian Hicks



Debbie Hopper



The original welcome center is shown at top. The center photo shows the demolition, and the bottom is an artist's rendering of the new welcome center.

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Praise Crosses Borders

by Lori Marble

The sentiment of appreciation below is from one of the greatly appreciated notes we received following the Jan. 13 winter storm. In addition to knowing we made a difference with our customers, it was equally gratifying to know we were helping and working with our neighboring district, District 8. The communities listed lie on the shared district border—we're honored to share the thanks with them. It's good to know we "have each other's backs."

"During the recent ice storm I acquired a new appreciation for MODOT and more specifically the crews that work on our roads. My wife and I work the midnight shift for the Carroll Co. (Arkansas) Sheriff's Dept. and travel Hwy 76 between Cape Fair and Shell Knob. Saturday night while going to work we came upon a MODOT crew

cutting limbs and trees that the ice had brought down on the road. We stopped to inquire about the road conditions ahead. Here were two men working in the freezing rain at midnight to make our roads safe. They stopped long enough to cheerfully give us the information we needed. Sunday night we passed them again. About two miles ahead a large tree had made the road impassable. We returned and informed the crew, this time one man, of the hazard. He proceeded ahead and before we could turn around and make our way back he had the road cleared. His name is Tim, one of the same men we had seen the night before.

"Thanks to Tim and all the road crews that work for us. There are folks out here who appreciate what you do."

— Juan Cribbs, Cape Fair

More of What SRI Taught Us...



Joseph Turner

"For the urban Joplin area the Smooth Roads Initiative program was great! Down through the years most of the routes in the urban area were deteriorating at a rate faster than maintenance had the resources to keep up with, and under the old logic there were not a great deal of options open to us. They had too high of volume, which required too high a price for maintenance to spend large amounts of money on resurfacing or rebuilding due to the type and quantity of material required. They also did not fit the criteria for construction money since most of it was used to complete projects that were already promised. So many of these routes fell through the cracks. With SRI all of these routes were addressed.

crews and thank them for all their effort and quality work. I was also impressed by the maintenance crew's ability to accomplish non-SRI work for crews who were more directly involved with SRI work. We definitely helped each other carry the load. Without everyone's timely and concerted efforts, SRI would not have been a success. The recently completed SRI work should reduce the vigorous efforts made to maintain these critical roads and allow us to increase our attention to other worthy needs. This event in MoDOT's history produces a lot of future benefit. Again, thank you to all the Northern Area maintenance workers."

— Mike Rinehart
 Area Engineer

"You can notice a significant difference in the aesthetics and ride on every MoDOT route in the urban area of Joplin. From public comments and feedback from our field personnel I think everyone in the Joplin area is satisfied with our SRI efforts. I know I am!"

— Tim Houdyshell
 Maintenance Superintendent II

"SRI was important in many ways. One was in the focused message and direction it provided.

"As engineers, we have a tendency to focus on minute details and sometimes that's not the best approach with the public. The public's perception is the more miles you cover, the better.

"Northern Area maintenance crews were active in preparing roads and shoulders for SRI work. Attending to edge drop-offs was also accomplished as SRI work was completed. I want to recognize the role of maintenance

"Our 'Progress as Promised' message resonated in our communities and with our employees. It helped us accomplish large projects in a timely manner."

— Dan Salisbury
 Assistant District Engineer

D8

Springfield Area



D8 at Work

January ice storm cleanup (top): Conway Intermediate Crew Worker Danny Cook, left, and Senior Crew Worker Mistie Williams clear Laclede County Route CC near Conway.

Power emergency (middle): Building Services Crew Workers Jeff Barnhouse, left, and Johnny Hicks set up a generator at the Plad shop, one of D8's 19 facilities that lost electricity in the January ice storm.

Public meeting/Route 13 widening to Kimberling City (top left): Assistant Right of Way Manager Becky Goad talks to landowner.

Public meeting/Northbound Route 13 relocation between Springfield and Bolivar (middle left): District Traffic Engineer Joe Rickman listens to residents.

December sleet/snow (bottom left): Walnut Grove Maintenance Supervisor Earl Cameron plows Route 123 north of Willard.

Traffic signal at Sunshine Street (Route D) and Plaza Avenue, Springfield (right): Senior Signal and Lighting Electrician Bob Barnes installs LED lens.



Bob Edwards

January/February D8 Retirees

by Angela Eden

Dove Int. Crew Worker Wayne Bradshaw

Service: 15 years (March 23, 1990)

Career: Seasonal crew worker, Lebanon, 1989; crew worker, Dove, 1990; intermediate crew worker, 2000

Memorable Work: Mowing roadsides throughout the Dove area

Quote: "If you have sharp (mower) blades, it'll cut and it'll look good. I like to make it look good."

Post-MoDOT Plans: Watch old movies, mow grass and spend more time with wife, Dolores

Fair Grove Senior Crew Worker Ted Collier

Service: 30 years (Jan. 5, 1976)

Career: Crew worker, Stafford, 1976; crew worker, Springfield Maintenance, 1980; senior crew worker, Springfield Maintenance, 1992; senior crew worker, Fair Grove Maintenance, 2003

Memorable Work: Mowing, keeping stop signs up, repairing roadway edges

Quote: "We've got family and they drive on these roads, too. We make things safe for the traveling public."

Post-MoDOT Plans: Spending more time with family, especially son, Clayton; part-time job; more volunteer church work

Traffic Technician Jo George

Service: 23 years (April 1, 1985)

Career: Part-time materials sampler, Materials, 1985; data collector, Traffic, 1987; traffic technician, 2006

Memorable Work: Taking traffic counts in every corner of the district

Quote: "I have a lot of people stop and visit with me" to ask what she's doing

Post-MoDOT Plans: Doing whatever she wants to do when she wants to do it; spending more time with grandchildren



Bradshaw



Collier



George



Grantham



Mann



Pocian

Buffalo Int. Construction Inspector Dee Grantham

Service: 20 years (March 17, 1986)

Career: Construction assistant, Buffalo Const., 1986; construction inspector, 1991; traffic specialist, Traffic, 2002; construction inspector, Buffalo Const., 2004; intermediate construction inspector, 2006

Memorable Work: Inspecting district's first contract to epoxy-seal bridge decks

Quote: "More paperwork than ever" required for construction projects

Post-MoDOT Plans: Driving an over-the-road truck

Senior Design Technician Dave Mann

Service: 35 years (May 1, 1971)

Career: Seasonal crew worker, Springfield, 1971; crew worker, Sign Crew, 1971; design technician, Design, 1979; intermediate design technician, 1990; senior design technician, 1998

Memorable Work: Plowing snow out of Springfield area shops

Quote: "I'm going to miss the people. They're good friends."

Post-MoDOT Plans: Continue as a firefighter with Willard Fire Department

Fair Grove Maintenance Supervisor Corrine Pocian

Service: 28 years (June 1, 1978)

Career: Crew worker, Springfield, 1978; crew leader, 1983; assistant maintenance supervisor, 1993; maintenance supervisor, Sparta, 1997; maintenance supervisor, Fordland, 1999; maintenance supervisor, Fair Grove, 2000

Memorable Work: Repairing guardrail; patching with "lay down" machine

Quote: "I enjoyed working with the crews - the kids in the other shops."

Post-MoDOT Plans: Buying a one-ton truck and starting a hauling business

Also retiring:

- Mountain Grove Senior Crew Worker Ron Hilt
- Manes Maintenance Supervisor Randy Wade

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D9

South Central

South Central District Survives Round 2 Of Icy Weather

Ice has been the overwhelming theme of this winter season for all of Missouri. South Central joined its fellow districts after the Dec. 1, 2006 storm in reviewing existing protocol and ramping up response plans. Little did everyone know those plans would be tested only a little over a month later.

Maintenance Engineer Henry Haggard assessed materials on hand and put into action the lessons learned from the December storm. Crews were put on standby throughout the district, especially in the south, should they have to be moved north to assist. Crews even in the southern most counties could be found outfitting trucks with snow removal equipment in the event they were needed. In addition, it was decided salt storage from the south would supplement the hardest hit areas, which were expected to be along Interstate 44. Crews were mobilized several hours ahead of when the storm was expected to hit in order to get a jump on areas of concern. With the predicted intensity of the storm, additional staffing in the customer service center, both during the day and overnight, were added to address heavy call volumes and assist with the emergency radio.

The South Central District also partnered with adjoining districts to release consistent messages to media regarding MoDOT contact information and other resources available to the public. Tem-

plate releases also were created so as maintenance forces reported issues on the roadways, information could quickly be communicated to the public. For issues on Interstate 44, maintenance forces relied on the Transportation Management Center in St. Louis, just as they had during construction season. A quick call from the field warning of icy conditions, roadway obstructions or other incidents triggered an e-mail to

media all along the interstate corridor. This message could then be picked up and broadcast to the public.

With an increased reliance on the World Wide Web for up-to-date information, it was realized that maintaining the road conditions map and posting news releases were high priorities. Web trend reports following the storm indicated significant spikes, which validated this approach.

The South Central District was spared from the severity the most recent storm in-

flicted upon the Joplin and Springfield districts. However, the pre-planning certainly paid off during response and now the clean-up process. A review of best practices will undoubtedly reveal additional areas in which preparations



Intermediate Crew Worker Mike Frazier lines a MoDOT truck up with a snow plow.



Crews throughout the district installed bed spreaders in preparation for winter weather.

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Battle of the Belt Winners Announced

Fifteen schools from the South Central District participated in Battle of the Belt, a safety belt challenge where high schools competed against one another to increase safety belt use. Prize money was available at the regional and statewide levels.

The challenge involved an unannounced safety belt check, followed by an educational blitz on safety belt

use and a final unannounced safety belt check to determine if a change in behavior occurred.

More than 100 schools participated statewide from Oct. 1 through Nov. 30, with two winners chosen from each of the 10 regions. Each regional winner received \$250 and two statewide winners received \$500 each. (Prize money provided by American Family Insurance).

Newburg High School was regional winner for the highest safety belt usage overall.

Southern Reynolds County High School had the greatest percentage of increase in safety belt usage at a regional and statewide level.

Each participating school created unique ways to increase education and promote safety belt use. All were successful in their efforts.



Missouri State Highway Patrol Sergeant Dan Crain helps a student properly buckle up before enduring a 5-mph-crash simulated by the Seat Belt Convincer.

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D10

Southeast

Plans for Route 67 Wayne County Residents Provide Their Input

by Tonya Wells

One-hundred-fifty-nine people attended a public hearing in December to gather input on upcoming Route 67 improvements in Wayne County. The input received from those folks has resulted in additional changes to the project.

During the meeting, the project team shared plans for upgrading the route to four lanes and discussed the locations of median crossings.

“We wanted to show residents what we had and simply ask what we needed,” said Project Manager Andy Meyer. “The result was the need for an additional median crossing at County Road 221A, which we are working to add to the project.”

Two sections of the Route 67 four-lane project were discussed during the meeting, including the Greenville bypass and the Silva interchange.

From the Madison County line to Route 34 — Two additional lanes will be constructed as well as a new four-lane relocation around Silva, a new two-lane relocation of Route 34 west and an interchange at the Route 67/34 intersection.

“With a new four-lane Route 67 intersecting with Route 34 at Silva, the proposed interchange will be a tremendous safety improvement,” said Planning Manager Bill Robison.



Attendees look over the new designs for Route 67.



Right of Way employees Janice Collier and Pam Masterson explain plans to meeting attendees.

Right of way purchasing is expected to start in spring 2007. Construction is expected to begin spring 2008.

From Route 34 to two miles south of Route F — Two additional lanes will be constructed as well as a bypass at Greenville and a new four-lane St. Francis River/Wappapello Lake Bridge. The district is letting a contract this month for construction of the bridge. Because of the proposed location of the Greenville bypass, the district is working with the city of Greenville and the Department of Natural Resources on relocating the Greenville City Park. Once DNR approves the plan, the district will reimburse the city for the

cost of relocation, and then the city can begin building the new facility.

Right of way purchasing for this section of the improvements is expected to start in spring 2007.

“The Route 67 four-lane improvements are big projects in Wayne County,” said Project Manager Tim Richmond. “We are so thankful to the residents for coming to the meeting and sharing their ideas with us. Because of their input, we are able to make changes to the plans that will benefit the folks who will use this route everyday. We look forward to continue working with them as we go forth in the project development process.”

Twenty Years of Giving

by Angie Thomason

2006 marked the 20th anniversary of the district’s Christmas Angels Chili Dinner. Bowls of chili were sold to area businesses and the proceeds, which nearly reached \$4,000, went toward purchasing gifts for 125 area children.

Karen Williams, who has volunteered every year since the dinner started, thinks it’s a humbling experience.

“The chili dinner is so rewarding because you get to purchase gifts for children who otherwise wouldn’t receive anything for Christmas,” said Williams. “That has always been the motivation for our employees to continue this tradition.”

Nearly 170 local businesses bought more than 1,000 bowls of chili. Employees who volunteered used their vacation time to cook and deliver the chili.

KB Toys and Vanity Fair opened their doors early and offered discounts. In addition, Southern Missouri Bank in Sikeston hosted a toy drive, which also benefited these area children.

This event that started in 1986 lives on and continues to benefit the lives of many area children.



Some of the employees who volunteered at the 20th Annual Christmas Angels Chili Dinner display some of the Christmas presents purchased for area children.

Blueprint Conference

Traffic safety advocates from across the state met for the Blueprint for Roadway Safety conference Nov. 28-30 in St. Louis.

Two awards were presented to members from the Southeast Coalition for Roadway Safety.

The Regional Highway Safety Award recognized an individual, group or company that has shown leadership in accomplishing the goals of their region’s Blueprint Coalition. The Southeast Coalition for Roadway Safety Educational Subcommittee was honored with this award.

The Tempe Humphrey Award was presented to Sharee Galnore and Lynn

Ware. Galnore and Ware work for the Cape Girardeau Safe Communities Program and won for promoting safety belt use in their community through information and educational programs.



From left to right: Major Arthur Dale Penn, MSHP; Sharee Galnore, Cape Girardeau Safe Communities; Angie Wilson, community relations manager; Lynn Ware, Cape Girardeau Safe Communities; and Jay Lancaster, district design liaison.

15

Recent Retirements



Lynn Peirick retired Jan. 1 after 34 years with MoDOT. He was an assistant maintenance supervisor in Perryville.



James Riggins retired Jan. 1 after 30 years with MoDOT. He was a senior traffic technician at the district office.



Carl Bond retired Jan. 1 after 27 years with MoDOT. He was a maintenance supervisor in Puxico.

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Connections

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Major Winter Storm Challenged MoDOT

by Kristi Jamison

Mother Nature has already wreaked havoc in several parts of the country this winter and Missouri is no exception. Following one of the most severe winter storms in recent history on Dec. 1, MoDOT was left digging out the state's roadways and re-evaluating its winter storm policies after the storm forced a rare closure of a portion of Interstate 70.

Mid-Missouri was hit the hardest with more than a foot of snow falling in several locations during the overnight hours between Nov. 30 and Dec. 1. At the peak of the storm, our snowplow crews were forced to stop because of whiteout conditions. When they were able to get back on the roads again, about three hours later, part of I-70 had to be closed because so many cars and

trucks had slid off the road, frozen up or simply stopped because they couldn't move forward.

"Our crews were already geared up to deal with ice and snow, but nothing could have prepared them for the severity of this storm," said Don Hillis, System Management director. "It was probably the worst conditions I have

seen in a long time. At one point it was snowing three inches an hour, which caused whiteout conditions that made it too dangerous for our crews to continue plowing.

"Our crews gave it everything they had and really did a tremendous job of clearing the roads as quickly as possible considering the extreme conditions."

In hindsight, however, it appears that better communication may have helped motorists make wiser travel decisions.

As a result, Hillis is now heading up efforts to determine how MoDOT can better respond to such sudden, severe weather conditions in the future.

"Portable wireless message boards would have helped warn motorists on I-70 about the bottleneck, particularly between Route 65 and Boonville, giving them options to turn around, take alternative routes or stay put where they were," Hillis said. "Unfortunately, problems with the software used to send messages prevented us from doing so."

Hillis and others are currently looking at MoDOT's policies for handling severe winter storms and will soon be implementing new procedures that will ensure the appropriate technologies and course of action are in place to better communicate in the future. That way MoDOT will be better prepared to help keep motorists safe and well informed no matter what Mother Nature has in store.



Snowplows are MoDOT's first line of defense against snow and ice. Storms in December and January have kept our maintenance crews very busy this winter season.

Missourians Take a Walk on the Safe Side

by Megan Mills

As traffic volumes increase on Missouri roadways, MoDOT continues to look for new ways to make it safer for pedestrians to cross them.

From 2002 to 2004, 250 pedestrians were killed and more than 1,000 seriously injured in Missouri traffic crashes. Countdown indications and audible crosswalks are two ways Missouri crosswalks are becoming safer across the state.

The "talking" crosswalks are the newest technology advancement in crosswalk safety. The signal has a locator tone all the time so a person who is

vision-impaired can find the crosswalk button. After the button (pictured on the right) is pushed, a different tone tells the pedestrian when it's okay to cross. These new signals cost about \$2,000 each.

"We recently installed one of these signals in Hannibal after a request from a vision-impaired resident," said MoDOT Maintenance and Traffic Engineer Mark Giessinger. "The signal is installed right by a school, so many people benefit from this new safety advance."

Countdown indications have a visual number that counts down, telling the pe-

destrian how much time is left to cross the street. The countdown indications can be found all over the state.

"Countdown indications are becoming more commonplace throughout the state since their first installation in the 1990s and the 'talking' crosswalks are in use in several places throughout the state," said Julie Stotlemeyer, signal and lighting engineer.

Signal advancements such as these aim to improve safety and reduce the number of pedestrian-related deaths and injuries on Missouri roadways.

