



Transcript

APRIL 2008



Historic highway construction season underway

Joel Hunt, Central Office

ECHOING GOV. TED STRICKLAND'S message of investing in what truly matters to Ohio, ODOT Director James Beasley ushered in the department's historic 2008–2009 Construction Season—complete with nearly a thousand different construction projects planned across Ohio with a total investment by the state of \$2.5 billion.

With construction crews working on the department's major modernization of Interstate 75 near downtown Dayton as a backdrop, the official statewide ceremony on April 2 was the first of several events to mark the start of construction.

"Improving for today . . . connecting to tomorrow" was the common theme, representing the importance of transportation investment to both the present and future of the state.

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Photo by Sharon Smigielski, District 8

From left: Director James Beasley, Dayton Mayor Rhine McLin, Federal Highway Administration Assistant Division Administrator Patrick Bauer, Montgomery County Commissioner Judy Dodge, District 7 Deputy Director Rex Dickey, and Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission Executive Director Don Spang kick off the 2008 Construction Season at an April 2 event in Dayton along ODOT's I-75 Modernization project.

ORANGE FOR SAFETY

Photo by Bruce Hull, Central Office



Drivers on Interstate 70 could see the orange lights illuminating Central Office during Work Zone Safety Awareness Week. See story on page 8.

Task force invites Ohioans to join 'Transportation Conversation'

Scott Varner, Central Office

WITH AN INVITATION FOR all Ohioans to join in a first-of-its-kind "Transportation Conversation," the Ohio 21st Century Transportation Priorities Task Force began in April what could be one of the most important, and perhaps the most challenging, effort to lay out the type of transportation system the state needs for the future.

Leading the task force will be Chairman Ty Marsh, president of the Columbus Chamber, Vice-Chair Frank Jackson, mayor of Cleveland, and Vice-Chair Deborah Lieberman, commissioner for Montgomery County.

Joining them will be more than 50 task force committee members,

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OHIO'S
21ST CENTURY



TRANSPORTATION
PRIORITIES



TASK
FORCE

Improved public transit means mobility and independence

Ryan Larzelere, Central Office

TWO NEW FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION programs could give disabled and disadvantaged Ohioans living in smaller urban and rural communities a new chance at mobility.

And according to ODOT's Transit Administrator, more mobility leads to independence.

ODOT began accepting the first applications for the New Freedom Program in March. This program from the Federal Transit Administra-

tion aims to help the disabled who, due to poor or non-existent public transportation, have been left without the means to get and keep a job.

"Lack of mobility is one of the top reasons many citizens with disabilities are unable to work," said administrator Marianne Freed. "The goal of the program is to encourage transportation services and transportation facility improvements for those people whose needs stretch beyond what is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990."

The Office of Transit will administer the funds given to local public transportation agencies that provide new options to help the disabled join the workforce. That includes purchasing special vehicles or improving access to existing services.

The second program—Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)—provides grants for projects that improve access to transportation for welfare recipients and low-income individuals. Under ODOT's guidance, local transit agencies would be eligible to receive funds to provide a variety of transportation options that allow financially-struggling Ohioans to



Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority driver assists a passenger with a service animal.



South East Area Transit driver assists a person with a disability in Zanesville.

get to work or to services such as job training and child care.

Projects in each program require matching funds, Freed added. The projects must also be derived from a locally-developed, coordinated, public transit-human services transportation plan. ☺

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Ohioans invited to join 'Transportation Conversation'

representing a diverse mix of experts, from both the private and governmental sectors, with backgrounds ranging from business and industry, shipping and logistics, finance and development, urban planning and agriculture, education and health care, transportation, and state and local government.

"Unlike past statewide planning efforts, the Transportation Priorities Task Force will explore a broader spectrum of issues facing the state," said Director James Beasley.

The statewide conversations will be centered on three key issues: promoting a multi-modal system,

maximizing public investment, and generating economic development.

In addition to gathering public input and information at a series of open meetings across the state, the task force is encouraging all Ohioans to join the conversation by submitting their ideas and opinions online at TransportationForTomorrow.ohio.gov.

"The opportunity for a statewide dialogue of this scale is so rare," added Assistant Director Jolene Molitoris, who expects the Task Force will issue its final recommendations later this fall.

The task force will also include input by state legislators, serving as

ex officio members, and a support team from several state agencies.

"Through a consensus around these important issues," Molitoris added, "Ohio can have one voice on its transportation needs as we enter debate on the state's Transportation Budget for 2010–2011 and the authorization of a new federal transportation bill."

Details about the meetings of the Ohio 21st Century Transportation Priorities Task Force, including a webcast of the group's inaugural meeting in May at ODOT's Central Office, can also be found online at TransportationForTomorrow.ohio.gov. ☺



Construction season begins across Ohio

Photo by Sharon Smigajski, District 8



Director Beasley addresses the crowd at the 2008 Construction Kickoff in Dayton. Other speakers included (from the left): District 7 Deputy Director **Rex Dickey**, Federal Highway Administration's Assistant Division Administrator **Patrick Bauer**, and Montgomery County Commissioner **Judy Dodge**.

“There will be 80 separate interstate construction projects, more than 800 resurfacing and roadway maintenance projects,” said Director Beasley, as he detailed some of the projects set for the next year and a half. “Many of our bridges will get the much needed attention they deserve, and we will improve the connections to our different modes of transportation.”

The largest state project set to sell is a major reconstruction project in Warren County on I-75 between the city of Middletown and the Montgomery county line. The \$154.5 million project will include the addition of an extra lane of traffic in both directions.

Planned for early 2009, this project will complement work currently underway on I-75 in Butler County north to State Route 122.

Work is well underway on I-75 in Dayton to realign the interstate at State Route 4, removing dangerous ramps and reducing crossover traffic. ODOT is also deploying new traffic monitoring equipment which will warn motorists of congestion in the construction zone.

To be completed this year is the State Route 161 widening project from the eastern edge of Franklin County to Licking County. In recent years, the SR 161 corridor has become a vital link to commuters and communities in Franklin, Delaware,

and Licking counties. It's also become one of the most congested.

In addition to showcasing the state's largest and more unique projects, the Director used the construction kick off to emphasize the multi-modal need to connect Ohio's highways to aviation, rail, waterways and transit.

As an example, the Director highlighted the work this year in Central Ohio at the Interstate 670/ International Gateway interchange near the Port Columbus Airport, which will better link the roadways with the airways, he explained.

The kickoff event in District 2 included information on the latest work along the much-anticipated “Fort to Port” project, connecting the economic-generating businesses of Fort Wayne, Indiana, with the Port of Toledo.

District 2 Deputy Director David Dysard noted the \$47 million align-

ment job from Napoleon to County Road 4 in Henry County—a contract which was awarded under engineer estimates and is set to begin in May.

The District 6 Construction Season—54 projects totaling \$350 million—includes a \$7 million railroad grade separation in Marysville near the Honda of America Manufacturing plant.

According to District 6 Deputy Director Tom Wester, through a public-private partnership with Honda, the bridge project—paid for by the automaker—will take about two and a half years to build, from conception to completion.

District 9 Deputy Director James Brushart also spoke of partnership. “Of the many construction projects planned for the district's highway system, we have 19 projects that are being coordinated with the area's county engineers for their county and township routes.”

“The future of our state holds great promise,” summarized Director Beasley at the Dayton event. “We know there are significant challenges ahead, but we also know that together—through partnerships that bring the voices of all Ohioans in concert—we can find common-sense solutions.”



More than 65 people attended the District 3 Construction Kickoff event. The district combined Government Day and Work Zone Safety Awareness Week into one large event.

Photo by Joyce Miller, District 3



Affirmative Action Plan a priority for new administrator

Ron Poole, Central Office

CHARGED WITH THE department's core value of embracing Ohio's great diversity and tasked with ensuring equal employment opportunities for women and minorities, attorney Aisha Powell has her work cut out for her.

Powell was recently welcomed by ODOT's Division of Quality and Human Resources as the department's new Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/Affirmative Action program administrator. She assumed her duties March 17.

A native of Columbus, Powell received her bachelor's degree in Psychology and Political Science from Capital University. She received her legal degree from The Ohio State University's Moritz College of Law.

Powell worked as a page at the Ohio House of Representatives and has experience in labor and employment law.

Her responsibilities as the new EEO program administrator include preparing and implementing ODOT's

Affirmative Action Plan (AAP), which was recently approved by Director Beasley.

"The primary objective of the AAP is to take result oriented steps to ensure equal employment opportunities for women, minorities, veterans and the disabled here at ODOT," said Powell.

Powell added that the department's efforts will include recruitment activities and community outreach to the plan's target audience. ODOT will assess and track the progress of these efforts throughout the year.

The AAP is updated annually and



EEO/Affirmative Action Program Administrator Aisha Powell, right, discusses her orientation experience with coworker Brian Brown.

Photo by Michael Stout, Central Office

submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for review and approval. The FHWA must be assured projects will be conducted in a non-discriminatory manner before it approves federal funds for ODOT. ☺

FYI: TRAC Welcomes New Members

PRIOR TO THE FIRST Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) meeting of 2008, Governor Strickland appointed two new members.



Robert Brown

Robert Brown, of Shaker Heights, is currently the treasurer for Case Western Reserve University. Brown previously served as the capital markets adviser for the U.S. Department of Transportation from 1999 to 2007. He is a member of the Transportation Research Boards' finance committee and is a past member of the American Public Transit Association's board of directors. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University in 1969, a law degree from Harvard University in 1974 and a master's of law from Georgetown University in 1975.

William Brennan, of Whitehouse, has been the president of Associated General Contractors of Northwest Ohio Inc. in Toledo since 1998. Brennan previously served as the executive vice president for the Home Builders Association of Greater Toledo from

1990–1997. Brennan attended the University of Toledo where he received both a master's degree in public administration in 1975 and a law degree in 1979. ☺



William Brennan



Army of volunteers prevents litter 'Clear Across Ohio'

Joel Hunt, Central Office

DESPITE A RARE SNOW STORM THAT POSTPONED celebrations in Northwest Ohio, ODOT and its litter prevention partner Keep Ohio Beautiful (KOB) launched this year's Great American Cleanup by underscoring the team effort of state employees, KOB affiliates, and more than 1,400 Adopt-A-Highway volunteers.

It started with Gov. Ted Strickland's proclamation of April as "Keep Ohio Beautiful Month."

The official statewide kickoff was supposed to take place March 29 at the Erie Street Market in Toledo, but several inches of snow the day before forced ODOT and KOB to reschedule the event three weeks later.

Still, ODOT crews and volunteers in other parts of the state hit the highways to pick up the first rounds of what will likely total an annual estimate of 10 million tons of trash.

"To give you some perspective," said Director James Beasley, "the \$4 million ODOT spent last year to pick up highway litter could have instead paid for the paving of a new 40-mile, two-lane road."

In addition to the volunteer event in Toledo, crews from District 2 made a clean sweep of the eight counties in their area. District Deputy Director David Dysard worked alongside crews in Ottawa and Lucas counties.

In District 3, the department partnered with Keep Akron Beautiful, the Akron Police Department, and the State Highway Patrol on "Operation Coverload," a joint effort to raise awareness about secured load laws.

And in Southwest Ohio, District 8 crews working with Keep Cincinnati Beautiful joined the estimated 2.5 million people nationwide who celebrated the Great American Cleanup, the nation's largest annual community improvement program.

Throughout the entire year, litter prevention efforts are aided by ODOT's Adopt-A-Highway program, led by Statewide Coordinator Scott Lucas.



Photo by Kerry Crossen, Keep Ohio Beautiful

Volunteers pick up litter along Interstate 75 in downtown Cincinnati on Saturday, March 29.

Ohio's 1,400 Adopt-A-Highway groups—with at least one group in each county—adopt a two-mile section or an interchange along the state highway system, picking up litter and debris a minimum of four times each year.

"Last year, ODOT and Adopt-A-Highway volunteers picked up 442,057 bags of trash," said Lucas. "The total number of bags our crews and volunteers collected weighed 4,420 tons, enough to fill 4,421 single-axle dump trucks!"

FYI: Team Up ODOT 2008

For its 10th anniversary, this year's Team Up ODOT, set for May 8 at the State Fairgrounds in Columbus, will showcase "Efficiency and Accountability," with awards to staffers who are putting best practices into action and making ODOT the most efficient and effective department possible.

ODOT Director James Beasley and OCSEA President Eddie Parks are scheduled to speak at this year's event at the Rhodes Center from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

To share more about Governor Strickland's new Employee and Stakeholder Feedback Program will be Mitchell Bailey, Policy Administrator for the Department of Administrative Services.

This year's event will also feature a cookout, with food donated by OCSEA and Enhanced Lifestyles, a non-profit organization founded by Chuck Studebaker. Enhanced Lifestyles provides modified computer equipment, support groups, training, and ramps for home wheelchair access to people living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), often referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease. The \$3-per-person cost will go to ODOT's Combined Charitable Campaign and Enhanced Lifestyles.

For more information, contact Team Up ODOT coordinators Carol Schubert, (614) 752-5722, or Willa O'Neill, (614) 466-9967.

Photo by Brian Hedge, District 6



Litter volunteers stretch before heading out at the Delaware litter kickoff in March. The effort was part of the Great American Cleanup.

Who's behind the ODOT Zephyr?

Ryan Larzelere, Central Office

NIKE HAS A SWOOSH. McDONALD'S has golden arches. ODOT has the Zephyr.

In a way, the design was born the same year as the department it represents. On June 30, 1972, Governor John Gilligan signed legislation which turned the state's Department of Highways into the Ohio Department of Transportation.

A new department called for a new symbol, so during the summer and fall of 1972, ODOT held a contest to find an emblem.

Randy Witherspoon, a member of Central Office's Public Information staff, submitted a kind of swoop set in a circle. He wanted to embody mobility without confinement or limitation, an abstract, futuristic symbol that represented transportation as ageless.

Witherspoon's idea won out over more than 100 entries, and in December 1972 was adopted as ODOT's official symbol.

"Many interesting designs were submitted," said then-director J. Phillip Richley. "The emblem designed by Witherspoon, however, captured all the elements a transpor-

tation emblem should signify."

The ODOT logo has not always appeared as it does now. Other backgrounds and colors, including blue and red, were used before green became the final choice.

At first, the emblem was often referred to as the department's "wings." But a more creative name—one shared with the ancient Greek god of the west wind—emerged.

Today, Witherspoon's swoop is known simply as the ODOT "zephyr."

Found on everything from snow plows, cars, and construction equipment to business cards, signs, and the

department's website, the ODOT zephyr is recognized by Ohioans all across the state.

Whatever it's called, Witherspoon sought to give ODOT a timeless symbol. Thirty-six years later, his submission still represents the future of transportation: always moving forward to meet the needs of Ohio's citizens. 🌱



Jim Matlock, Traffic



Web pages to gain different look and feel

Ryan Larzelere, Central Office

DESIGNED TO BE MORE USER-FRIENDLY AND EASIER to navigate and edit, the latest version of ODOT's website is set to debut in May with a fresh new

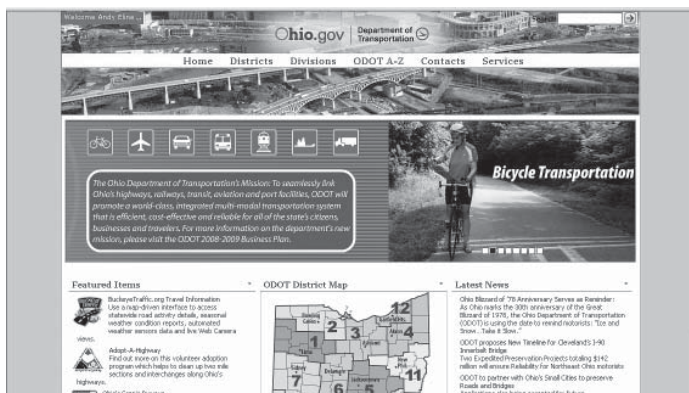
look that encompasses thousands of pages across 12 district offices, 14 divisions and more than 50 offices and functional sections.

"From his first day on the job, Director Beasley talked of wanting the department's website updated, with a cleaner and consistent look," said Deputy Director Spencer Wood, head of the department's Division of Information Technology (DoIT).

"Even in the 2008–2009 Business Plan, we talk about how the department needs to provide clear, concise, and user-friendly information," said Wood, "whether it's the companies and citizens seeking to work with ODOT, the motorists needing road conditions and travel routes, or local governments searching for project partnerships."

The need for a new site also gave the department the opportunity to update the software used to edit websites. Microsoft's phased-out FrontPage has been replaced with a more contemporary SharePoint Document and Content Management System.

With help and guidance from DoIT, the Office of Training, and the Office of Communications, several ODOT employees



A screenshot of the new ODOT homepage. The look and feel for the redesign provides better navigation and consistency with other state of Ohio websites.

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A piece of equipment, a piece of history

Rhonda Pees, District 1

THE LAST YELLOW dump truck in ODOT District 1—and perhaps one of the few remaining in service in ODOT’s fleet—proudly sits in Putnam County: one of 109 single axle dump trucks and 16 tandems. It is used as a back-up vehicle and for brine application in winter.

Jim Kleman, a labor foreman who retired from the Putnam County garage in 2003, can still rattle off the truck’s license plate and complete equipment number five years after leaving ODOT.

“You’re talking about 702-2542787,” he said. “If you wrote it down as many times as I did, you’d remember.”

For decades, ODOT trucks were only yellow. In 1992, the department began phasing out yellow in favor of white, a color that fades less with age and allows replacement vehicles to better blend with the rest of the fleet.

Today, the 1991 International truck is the only yellow vehicle left in the Northwest Ohio district. There have been several opportunities to replace it, but staff in District 1 have opted to keep this piece of history in service.



Photo by Rhonda Pees, District 1

Brenda Verhoff of Putnam County puts the last remaining yellow truck in District 1 through the paces during inspection in November. ODOT yellow was phased out beginning in 1992 in favor of white.

“We’ve gotten rid of newer trucks in favor of the yellow,” said Dave Scheckelhoff, Putnam County mechanic, “because this one was in better shape.”

The credit for the trucks’ continued service belongs to Kleman. In his former job, he made sure the yellow truck was clean and ready, and he expected it to be kept that way.

“It was understood by everyone in the garage that the truck was to be returned in pristine condition,” said Kleman. “If somebody used it and didn’t clean it up, I’d get very upset: candy wrappers and empty soft drink bottles left in the cab were especially irritating to me.”

Kleman said the longevity and condition of the truck is a testament to what good care and maintenance can do for equipment.

But the district’s last yellow truck is in its final stretch. With 172,642 miles on it, the vehicle may be retired by the garage this fall.

For some it will be the end of an era. Others, like Scheckelhoff, will see it as just an inevitable part of progress: “I see them all come and go.”

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New look and feel for Web sites

have been using the new software, which can make it easier to create professional websites by using a standardized approach.

ODOT’s Communications Graphics Manager Andy Eline said, “The template-driven approach allows all districts and divisions to create web pages that are similar in design and navigation across the board, so readers will know where they are.”

“SharePoint provides security, dynamic document control and presentation, and the ability for us to provide checks and balances to our workflow,” said Eline. “These new abilities will help the department’s website be more robust and more up-to-date than ever before.”

Eline added that ODOT’s redesign will tie into the look the state’s new Ohio.gov homepage. All state agencies have been tasked with redesigning their websites to reflect the new online design of Ohio.gov by next year.

“ODOT will be one of the first agencies to make the switch,” said Wood.



The revamped Ohio.gov state homepage, launched in February 2007, was the model for ODOT’s template-based site overhaul.



Orange glow spotlights Work Zone Safety Week

Ryan Larzelere, Central Office

HOPING TO CAST A NEW spotlight on the need for safety in construction zones, ODOT's Central Office and several district offices and buildings across the state were illuminated in orange light, as part of the ninth annual National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week.

Along with the orange glow at night, daytime visitors to ODOT's offices were reminded of the 14 people killed in work zone related accident in 2007, as 14 construction barrels or orange cones lined the entrances.

Ohio joined several other states in adopting the national "Slow for the Cone Zone" slogan, a phrase that's still being used well past the seven-day awareness week that started April 7.

"We work in a dangerous industry," said Tim Burkpile, District 1 deputy director. "The safety of our workers and of the public we serve should be a priority in everything we do, every day."

The national kickoff event for work zone awareness week was held on the steps of the California State Capitol. It was the first time since the creation of National Work Zone Awareness Week in December 1999

that the national event was held outside of the Washington, D.C. area.

Across the country, more than 40,000 people are injured each year as a result of work zone crashes. In Ohio alone, there were 5,418 work zone crashes resulting in 1,860 injuries.

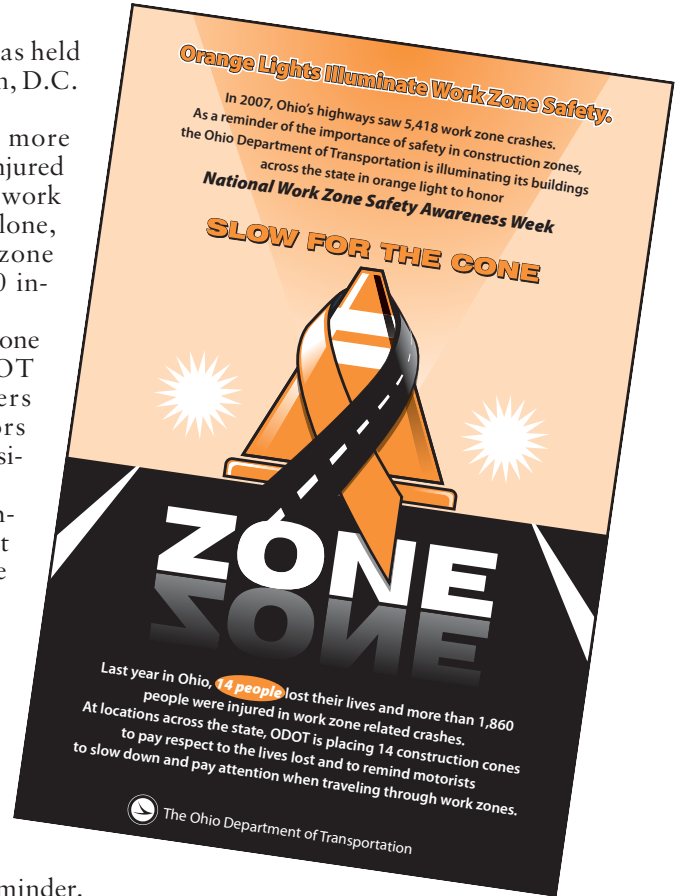
For this year's work zone safety observance, ODOT partnered with members of the Ohio Contractors Association and other businesses.

The Greater Ohio Ethanol (GO Ethanol) plant near the District 1 office in Lima joined ODOT's message, illuminating a portion of the ethanol-generating facility in orange.

"Safety is job one here at the plant," said Greg Kruger, president and CEO of GO Ethanol. "We begin each meeting with a safety reminder.

Participating with ODOT in their efforts to highlight the importance of safety was a natural partnership for us."

"Orange is the color which represents safety for us



as it designates our work zones," added District Deputy Director Burkpile, hoping that even after the orange lights are gone that people will "remember that work zone safety is their responsibility as well." ☺

Photo by Brian Hedge, District 6




District 6 headquarters illuminated by orange lights in support of Work Zone Safety Awareness Week.

Photo by Theresa Pollock, District 2




District 2's Slow for the Cone Zone campaign included displays at the rest areas on north and southbound Interstate 75 just south of U.S. 6 in Wood County.



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