



# Transcript

January 2004



## A Century of Progress

**Ron Poole**  
Central Office



**T**HE YEAR WAS 1904 – IT MARKED THE unveiling of the first banana split, the coining of the term Hot Dog, and the opening of New York’s subway system. A postage stamp cost 2 cents, a new home could be purchased for \$1,200, and the average annual salary was \$540. It was a time when cars and trucks were just starting to become common elements in society. It was also the beginning of a century of progress for the Ohio Department of Transportation.

In July 1904, state legislation created the first Ohio Department of Highways (ODOH). At the time, 70 percent of the state’s roads were dirt. These roads were often impassable after heavy rains, impeding the progress of farmers trying to get their goods to market. With the rapid growth of the auto industry looming, Ohio established a department to study the existing roads and develop recommendations to improve them.

ODOH began operations in February 1905 with Sam Huston of Steubenville serving as the department’s first commis-

sioner. His staff of three people shared office space with the Department of Agriculture, and were allocated a \$10,000 budget to begin their work of improving Ohio’s road system. Huston used \$177.50 of his own money to purchase furniture for the office.

Over the next 100 years, the highway network blossomed, as mud and dirt routes were replaced with miles of asphalt, concrete and steel. The roads, which were once an impediment to Ohio’s productivity, have evolved into

in the state’s status as an economic powerhouse.

The transformation of the department occurred over many decades. By 1913, the department went from studying roads to overseeing roadway construction. When the country became engaged in World War I, ODOH began removing snow from roads so the army could mobilize its vehicles in support of the war effort. After the war, snow removal became a core business function for the department.



Early 1900s road construction project on Aberdeen Road in Ripley, Brown County.

During the Great Depression era of the 1930s, ODOH employed more than 11,000 individuals through the federal works program who might have otherwise been jobless. Administration of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles became a responsibility of the department in 1933, and that same year, the ODOH started the Highway Patrol and

one of the state’s most valuable economic attributes. This vast transportation system combined with Ohio’s strategic location in the nation’s manufacturing and agricultural heartland have resulted

training academy.

The 1940s and 1950s brought a great deal of adversity. ODOH had to cope

(see **CENTURY** on page 2)

## CENTURY *(from page 1)*

with material shortages because of World War II, a lack of qualified new engineers and a scarcity of funding for a growing list of projects. However, these two decades also brought about the emergence of new technology such as the use of aerial photography to provide greater map detail and accuracy. It also defined the department's focus to expand the existing roadway network and increase the connectivity of Ohio's growing communities.

The highway network we know today began in the mid-1950s, pushed by President Eisenhower. Eisenhower's understanding of the importance of a well defined system of interconnected routes dated back to 1917. His experience with the German Autobahn in World War II reaffirmed how a unified network of quality roadways could make the movement of people and materials easier and more efficient. In Eisenhower's 1954 State of the Union address he made it clear the need for new highways was a priority of his administration.

In 1956 Congress enacted legislation that established the country's interstate highway system, the largest public works project ever conceived. Construction on Ohio's new interstates began the next year. ODOH emerged as one of the early leaders in interstate construction by completing many of its projects ahead of schedule. In 1965 and 1966, Ohio was



Ohio Department of Highway's workers conduct berm maintenance in the late 1950s on State Route 44 in Geauga County.

the country's top state in completing interstate projects.

In late September 1972, ODOH became the Ohio Department of Transportation. The responsibilities of the newly-created department expanded to include aviation, water, public and bicycle transportation programs. The 1970s and 1980s again brought daunting challenges to the highway system. Fuel shortages and pollution fears cut funding and public support during a time when ODOT needed to maintain and repair a rapidly deteriorating pavement and bridge system. While the department was able to continue to provide an efficient highway network, deficiencies were continuing to

grow and system expansion slowed considerably.

The mid-1990s brought a dramatic evolution in the department with the Vision 2000 reorganization. ODOT successfully reduced its staff by nearly 2,000 individuals without layoffs and combined offices and bureaus for a more streamlined operation. Just as Commissioner Huston showed fiscal responsibility in returning \$215 of his first year budget, the modern ODOT reinvested nearly \$600 million in operating savings into rebuilding deteriorating roads and bridges. By the late '90s ODOT had re-established itself as an efficient and effective organization.

Today, ODOT is one of the largest state agencies in Ohio, employing slightly more than 6,000 people. The state's original dirt road network has grown to nearly 114,000 lane miles of highway and nearly 15,000 bridges. What once was a patchwork method for repairing roads has evolved into a comprehensive data-based process. What once was a politically driven new construction program has developed into a criteria-supported open process. Today, ODOT decisions are based on facts, supported by documentation, and are specifically focused on taking care of what exists while systematically expanding the system where necessary.

— J. Brian Cunningham contributed to this story



Heavy machinery secures a bridge column for the High Street Cap in downtown Columbus, part of the Interstate 670 reconstruction project completed in 2003.

## Learning From Boston's 'Big Dig'

WITH ODOT ENTERING THE "MEGA" project era, the department will use the experiences of other states to keep the construction of these costly projects on-budget and on-time.

In April, ODOT engineers and planners will participate in a conference regarding the construction of Boston's \$14.6 billion Central Artery/Tunnel project. The project also known as the "Big Dig," has produced a variety of design and construction innovations which should be useful as ODOT's mega project era begins.

"The Big Dig construction process is a good research project on what went right and what we should avoid," said State Construction Engineer Gary Angles.

Gov. Taft's Jobs and Progress Plan, unveiled in August, identified large projects in nearly every region of the state that will be constructed during the next 12 years. These projects – such as the Interstate 70/71 split in downtown Columbus, the Cleveland Innerbelt, and the Interstate 75 corridor reconstruction – will consist of several phases and each will cost several hundred million dollars.

"Any practical knowledge from people involved with these extremely complex and highly costly projects will be useful to us as we move into our mega project construction," said Angles.

## Selection Process Upheld

ODOT'S PAVEMENT SELECTION PROCESS was found to be sound according to a recent evaluation from an independent consultant. While most of the



Workers secure re-bar on Boston's Big Dig Project. Image by Michael Hintilan from the Big Dig Web site.

department's activities in selecting whether to use asphalt or concrete in project construction were consistent with other states' practices, a few changes were recommended.

Ohio House Bill 87 created the Pavement Selection Advisory Council (PSAC), consisting of seven members. The council hired ERES Consultants, an independent consultant, to research, compile and document information comparing Ohio's pavement selection processes to that of several other states.

The nearly 40-page report and several hundred pages of appendices concluded ODOT was objective in its selection process and required only a few changes.

"Much of what we currently do was validated by this process," said Director Proctor. "Most of the recommended changes are minor and can be implemented quickly. There are a few that will require additional study and data collection and will take a few

# DOT Close-Up

Joel Hunt  
Central Office



years to address."

ODOT will continue to maintain the PSAC Web site, providing ongoing information regarding the department's progress on implementing the recommended changes.

For more information contact Tom Pannett in the ODOT Chief Legal Office or visit the PSAC Web site at [www.ohiopavementselection.org](http://www.ohiopavementselection.org).

## 'Santa' Delivers Smiles, Mail

A FEW WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS EACH year, Denny Rogers, a 12-year veteran pony driver for District 4, loads a six-foot Santa mannequin into the passenger seat of his ODOT van.

"I just want to spread a little cheer without causing distractions on the highway," Rogers said.

The mannequin dons one of Rogers' old Santa costumes, complete with boots. Its hand is attached to a stick which Rogers uses to make Santa wave at kids when they pass by.

Rogers has been a "real-life" Santa for the past 19 years, mostly for friends and acquaintances. "I feel blessed for the things I have in life and playing Santa is something I enjoy doing," Rogers said.



Santa rode shotgun last December with ODOT District 4 pony driver Denny Rogers.



## Direction Set for Next Two Years

**J. Brian Cunningham**  
Central Office



**T**HE DEPARTMENT'S NEW BUSINESS Plan, released in December, sets ODOT's course for the next two years and provides insight on departmental activities for the next decade.

The document contains revisions to the department's vision and goals, establishes five new strategic initiatives and highlights goals for Organizational Performance Index (OPI) measures.

"This plan is more than a simple two-year document," said Director Gordon Proctor. "It establishes the department's direction for the next 10 years at a minimum, and probably well beyond that."

The key element in ODOT's new business plan is beginning the implementation of Gov. Taft's Jobs and Progress Plan, unveiled in early August. The Jobs and Progress Plan devotes more than \$5 billion over the next 10 years to upgrade Ohio's urban infrastructure, complete the state's macro-corridors, construct projects to improve safety and create new economic development opportunities.

"The plan creates a foundation of detailed activities that build into our general mission of providing a world-class transportation system," said Proctor. "Meeting our OPI goals enables us to

achieve our Strategic Initiatives which support our values and goals and results in successfully achieving our Mission."

The five new Strategic Initiatives focus on delivering the governor's Jobs and Progress Plan: eliminating high-crash and heavily congested locations; improving highway conditions; addressing pavement degradation; and implementing the training and certification program for the new highway technician series.

Additionally, each of 65 statewide and district OPIs have clear goals that are expected to be reached during the next two years and then sustained in the future.

"During the next two years we will be making significant improvements to all facets of Ohio's transportation system," said Proctor. "However, we will not have to dramatically change current practices to accomplish our goals. We will make incremental improvements to what we already do – drawing upon past experiences and applying those experiences consistently and comprehensively."

The business plan is legislatively required to be produced every two years and must be filed with the Ohio General Assembly under state law which created ODOT's Career Professional Service.

## National Memorial 11 Employees Killed

**Becky McCarty**  
District 11

**T**HE TRAGIC SEPTEMBER DEATHS OF Allen Cappel and John Webb Jr., two District 11 employees, were a sobering reminder of the dangerous nature of highway work.

In December, the names of three Ohio highway workers killed in work zone accidents during 2003 were added to the National Work Zone Memorial – Cappel, Webb, and James Keith, a city of Stow worker.

The traveling exhibition, managed by the American Traffic Safety Services Foundation (ATSSF), stopped in Columbus to recognize their sacrifice and promote safer driving in highway work zones. The memorial honors the thousands of men, women and children who have died in work zone accidents.

Cappel and Webb were killed in September when their state car was hit by a dump truck during the inspection of a highway project along U.S. Route 250 near New Philadelphia.



### Retirements

#### District 1

- Dean Augsburg
- Larry Mullins
- Joseph Schumaker
- John Wallace

#### District 2

- James Coy
- Jane Himburg
- Thomas Holsopple
- Donald Widman

#### District 3

- Ernest Crawford
- Richard Lehman
- William Spencer

#### District 4

- James Parthemer
- Gerald Pitcock

#### District 5

- Joyce Ramey

#### District 6

- David Edwards
- Jimmie Gaines

#### District 7

- Robert Reed

#### District 8

- Brenda Bradds
- Stephen Bradds
- John Grant
- Jack Lewis
- Jeffrey Smith

#### District 9

- Gary Bailey
- Larry Hill
- Sharon Humble

#### District 10

- Nickie Prater
- Carl Mullen
- Curtis Ramey
- Stephen Smith

#### District 11

- Roy Champer
- Ernest Fleshman
- Kenneth Miskimen
- David Simmons

#### District 12

- Charles Boul

#### Central Office

- Rebecca Fuess
- David Gunlock
- Mary James
- Marian Lowe



Sadly, the traveling National Work Zone Memorial died in work zone accidents – added to the memorial are the names of Cappel and John Webb Jr., in 2003.

# al Honors District led in Work Zone

“Each day, hundreds of thousands of workers like them get up and go to work in one of the most dangerous jobs in the nation,” said District 11 Deputy Director Myron Pakush. “These workers are on the front lines of our nation’s roads and highways, repairing and rebuilding them so people can travel to work, go to the store, attend soccer practice and visit family and friends.”

Last year, there were 6,500 work zone crashes in Ohio – 1,500 people were injured and 24 people died. According to Ohio crash statistics, driver error accounted for 87 percent of all work zone crashes and 92 percent of all injuries and fatalities. The most common causes were following too close, failure to yield, improper lane changing and speeding. The Federal Highway Administration reports that each year more than 40,000 people are injured and 1,000 are killed nationwide.

– Michelle May contributed to this story



Memorial – honoring those who have  
two names from ODOT District 11, Allen

# New Quality Office Uses the Past to Build Future

Ron Poole  
Central Office



**B**UILDING ON THE PAST AND UTILIZING new techniques, ODOT’s recreated Office of Quality and Organizational Development (OQOD) is focused on improving the department at its core.

“Quality teams have made many remarkable improvements, but people still often think of them as touchy-feely efforts,” said Steve Wall, quality’s new deputy director in Central Office. “ODOT employees have learned how to use quality techniques such as flow charts and tracking time or costs to make positive changes. Now we need to focus the power of process improvement on analyzing and improving our core business results.”

Wall joined ODOT in July after heading Ohio’s Quality Office. He and Quality Coordinator Carol Schubert and Union Quality Coordinator Willa O’Neill have all been working to create an overall focus on customer satisfaction in whatever the department does. The trio travel to department offices, organizing and guiding employee efforts to improve the way they do their jobs.

“Late last year we worked with District 10 in conducting a public involvement meeting on the State Route 682 Corridor Study,” said Schubert. “The office wanted input from the public on possible solutions to the number of accidents occurring in the area. We facilitated a productive group discussion by asking questions and generating and recording

as many ideas as possible.”

One of ODOT’s new tools in the quest for quality development is reflected in the recently unveiled ODOT Business Plan for 2004. One of the department’s objectives is to continuously create a quality culture at ODOT, using the criteria for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. This same criteria is the basis for the Ohio Award for Excellence (OAE), given annually to applicants from the public and private sectors for achievements in Strategic Planning,



Carol Schubert, Steve Wall and Willa O’Neill (l-r) discuss criteria used in the Ohio Award for Excellence program to evaluate effective organizations.

Leadership, Process Improvement, Customer-Focus, Information and Analysis, Human Resource Focus, and Business Results.

“The OAE recognizes four levels or tiers of achievement in these areas, and the department’s goal is to have all of its offices ready to apply for Level Two or higher status in 2004,” said Schubert. “In the private sector, Baldrige winners have out-performed their competitors in the stock market during the last eight years. Using our experience to improve in these areas means we will have a real positive impact on our customers.”

(see **QUALITY** on page 6)

## QUALITY (from page 5)

Another new aspect of the Office of Quality was adding O'Neill as a full-time union quality coordinator. Previously an employee of the District 10 office, her task now is to work with the department's

union members to ensure their ideas and perspectives are an integral part of all quality initiatives.

"It is my responsibility to help bargaining unit members understand why quality is important and how it impacts their daily jobs and their job security,"

O'Neill said.

Wall is working with management to improve the way the department tracks the results of quality efforts. The employees of the quality office are available to assist ODOT's district offices and other sections within Central Office.

# Ohio Award for Excellence Update

Ron Poole, Central Office

**T**HE TABLE BELOW HIGHLIGHTS ODOT district activities regarding the Ohio Award for Excellence (OAE) program. Currently, ODOT is the only state agency with two offices achieving "Level Two" status. The department's 2004 goal is to have all districts apply for OAE Award Level Two or higher. To aid in the application process 21 ODOT employees have been trained as OAE evaluators to provide assistance if necessary.

OAE awards are given annually to applicants from the public and private sectors for achievements in Strategic Planning, Leadership, Process Improvement, Customer-Focus, Information and Analysis, Human Resource Focus, and Business Results.

### The following are Ohio Award for Excellence four award levels:

**Pledge to Excellence (Level 1):** The starting level of recognition for organizations that have begun their journey toward understanding and applying principles of excellence.

**Commitment to Excellence (Level 2):** The intermediate level of recognition for organizations that have demonstrated a serious commitment to excellence and a process for continuous improvement. The organizations have documented a solid system-level approach to achieving excellence.

**Achievement of Excellence (Level 3):** An advanced level of recognition for organizations that have demonstrated, through commitment and practice, significant progress toward excellence. Organizations recognized at this level clearly demonstrate results directly attributable to deployment of a systematic approach.

**Governor's Award for Excellence (Level 4):** The highest level of recognition for organizations that have demonstrated, through practices and superior results, the highest level of excellence. These organizations are outstanding examples of excellence in Ohio, exhibiting "world class" processes that serve as role models for others.

District	OAE Status
1	Currently at Commitment to Excellence (Level 2).
2	Will apply for Commitment to Excellence (Level 2) in September 2004.
3	Results of September 2003 Commitment to Excellence (Level 2) application expected in May 2004.
4	Results of September 2003 Commitment to Excellence (Level 2) application expected in May 2004.
5	Results of September 2003 Pledge to Excellence (Level 1) application expected in May 2004.
6	Results of September 2003 Pledge to Excellence (Level 1) application expected in May 2004.
7	Results of September 2003 Commitment to Excellence (Level 2) application expected in May 2004.
8	Results of September 2003 Commitment to Excellence (Level 2) application expected in May 2004.
9	Results of September 2003 Pledge to Excellence (Level 1) application expected in May 2004.
10	Currently at Pledge to Excellence (Level 1).
11	Currently at Pledge to Excellence (Level 1).
12	Currently at Commitment to Excellence (Level 2), results of September 2003 Achievement of Excellence (Level 3) application expected in May 2004.



**Melissa Cook**  
Central Office

# News From the Road

## Hot New Training Hits the Ground Running

**T**WO PILOT CLASSES HELD OVER THE PAST several months kicked off the department's new Highway Technician Academy.

The first pilot classes consisted of maintenance operations overview, and business grammar and writing. Fraud and Ethics Awareness is the next pilot scheduled. The comprehensive schedule will allow each employee affected by the HT Series to receive a maximum of 25 training days annually over the next three years.

"We are working diligently on classification specifications and course development to expedite allocation of personnel into the series," Sue Grundey, HT Series Project Manager. "It is our goal to afford everyone an opportunity for both the training and experience needed to successfully enter the HT Series."

In late November the HT Series was ratified by a large majority of OCSEA voting members and will involve approximately 2,500 ODOT highway management and construction personnel. It was developed as part of ODOT's 2003 Strategic Initiative 10 – Improving Construction Administration.

## Video Conferencing Brings ODOT Together

**T**HE RECENT VIDEO CONFERENCES CONDUCTED by Director Proctor with Central Office and district employees launched a new element in the department's project development process.

These regularly held conferences enable the director and other Central Office employees face to face interaction with district employees to receive project up-

dates but eliminates the time and cost of traveling.

Currently, the department has the capability to connect two sites to Central Office. As the district facilities continue to acquire the needed technology the ability to communicate via video conferencing will expand. Various members of the Central Office Division of Information Technology team are assisting with the connectivity and setup.

The department is entering a new era of "mega" projects and is undertaking the largest and most comprehensive transportation initiative since the original creation of the interstate highway system. Gov. Taft's Jobs and Progress Plan, unveiled in early August, devotes \$5 billion over the next 10 years toward Ohio's highway network. The ability to conduct ongoing meetings via video conferencing is an important element in ensuring ODOT efficiently develops and delivers the coming decade's major new construction projects.

## Reduce Waste, Build New Homes

**A** NEW AGREEMENT BETWEEN ODOT AND Habitat for Humanity will enable the non-profit organization to salvage materials from homes that would have previously been demolished because of new projects. This agreement, devel-

oped by ODOT's Office of Environmental Services, is one of the first of its kind in the country.

Materials such as windows, doors, furnaces, sinks, woodwork and other household items will be removed by Habitat volunteers prior to the demolition of the houses. These items will then be taken to a Habitat for Humanity store to be resold to the public with profits going to help build additional homes.

"The agreement goes a long way toward ensuring materials that would otherwise wind up in a landfill are put to good use elsewhere," said Tim Hill, administrator for the Office of Environmental Services. "It's good to know that although ODOT does everything it can do to avoid having to acquire a home for a highway improvement project, something positive can still come out of this action."

Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization that builds new, low-cost homes for low income families living in substandard housing. Since 1976, the or-



Representatives from Ohio's Habitat for Humanity program salvage items from a house ODOT will demolish for the upcoming Interstate 270/State Route 161/Sunbury Road project in Franklin County.

ganization has built more than 50,000 houses with families throughout the United States and more than 100,000 houses in communities around the world. Now at work in 92 countries, this organization is building a house every 26 minutes. By 2005, Habitat for Humanity houses will be sheltering 1 million people.

# The Conaway Conferences

**T**HE CONAWAY CONFERENCES PROVIDE an opportunity for representatives from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Ohio Contractors Association (OCA) to share construction industry innovations and best practices. These informal gatherings, held regionally each year, provide a forum to analyze the previous construction season and to prepare for the upcoming year.

Don R. Conaway, the namesake of the Conaway Conferences, was a longtime advocate of partnering between contractors and ODOT. When promoted to the position of ODOT deputy director of construction in 1991, Mr. Conaway re-organized the ODOT-OCA Winter Construction Seminars.

In 2002 the ODOT-OCA Winter Construction Seminar was renamed the Conaway Conference after the late Don Conaway. These conferences have grown over the past decade and attract nearly 1,000 attendees annually.

# FYI

## Conaway Conferences

The Conaway Conference Steering Committee has finalized schedules for the 2004 conferences as follows:

### February 5 and 6

Districts 1, 2 & 6

The Lodge at Sawmill Creek  
Huron, Ohio

### March 18 and 19

Districts 5 & 10

Ohio University Inn and  
Conference Center  
Athens, Ohio

### February 26 and 27

Districts 7, 8 & 9

Deer Creek Resort and  
Conference Center  
Mt. Sterling, Ohio

### March 25 and 26

Districts 3, 4, 11 & 12

The Lodge at Sawmill Creek  
Huron, Ohio

## Feature Photo

Department of Highway workers repairing brick pavement on U.S. Route 22/State Route 3 in Southwest Ohio, circa 1935.



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OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
1980 W. BROAD ST.  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43223  
(614) 466-7170 (FAX) 644-8662

Visit our Web site at  
<http://www.dot.state.oh.us>



Bob Taft,  
Governor

Gordon Proctor,  
ODOT Director

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS  
J. Brian Cunningham, Editor  
Andy Eline, Layout/Design Editor

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