

MOVING FORWARD



He who does not look ahead, remains behind. (Spanish Proverb)

Ohio Department of Transportation, Office of Research and Development

Winter 2001

Message from the Administrator

Monique R. Evans, P.E.

Greetings from ODOT! I hope you enjoy this first edition of our office newsletter. Many changes are being made to the program and in order to keep everyone abreast of these changes and other important events in transportation research, our office will publish this newsletter quarterly. It will also be available on our website.

We considered several names for this newsletter and finally selected "Moving Forward" because it succinctly conveys our purpose for conducting transportation research. We conduct research to solve problems, answer questions and develop tools that are needed to help propel the department into the 21st century.

The conduct of research is an active and continuous process that builds upon its own successes and failures. Our challenge is to maximize the successes and minimize

the failures by creating an environment that tolerates a certain amount of risk in the pursuit of reasonable ideas. The department has had a commitment to this pursuit since its inception. To learn more about this I invite you to read our feature article, "Research & Development: The Spirit Endures" by Ron Poole. (Each quarter the feature article will spotlight significant project or program developments.)

As the process for conducting research at ODOT changes, I would like to thank all of you for your patience during this transition period. Once the dust has settled, I am certain we will have a diverse, flexible and robust research program that meets the changing needs of Ohio's citizens. We are excited to have the opportunity to make this happen and we look forward to your input and support along the way. Please feel free to contact me or my staff with any questions or concerns you may have about our program.

Monique R. Evans

Website Updates

The R&D website has been undergoing some revisions. In addition to an update on the office staff, new links have been added to the site. Forms can now be obtained through the web site by clicking on the "Forms" link. Currently the quarterly report form can be downloaded. Additional forms, such as equipment inventory, proposal guidelines, and many more, will be added to this site in the future.

The entire State Planning and Research program, part 2 (Research) for state fiscal year 2002 can also be viewed from our website by clicking on the link "SP&R2002 Report." The status of the R&D program is available including active projects, active projects awaiting final reports, and proposed new projects.

Other items that will be added to the web site in the future include RFPs, downloadable final materials to improve road conditions.

(See WEBSITE on page 2)

reports, the R&D manual, and more. Check out the web site today at <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/divplan/research>.



A new email account has been created to direct general inquiries on the program or requests for reports and information. The address is "research@dot.state.oh.us".

Research & Development: The Spirit Endures

By: Ron Poole, Central Office

Research & Development – R&D – is all about **looking ahead and moving forward**. R&D helps the various offices of the Ohio Department of Transportation shape its goals. That spirit has been with the department since its very beginning.

Prior to the 20th century, Ohio was a land shaped by the desire of early Americans to travel and settle its regions. The Ohio River allowed travelers to move into the Ohio Valley and set up their first settlements in 1792. Zane's Trace, the first federally-funded roadway

started in 1796, connected the Ohio Territory to Kentucky. From its declaration as a state in 1803 until the turn of the 20th century, Ohioans traveled by steamboats, by canals, by trains or by horse and buggy. Electric cars and trolleys, or interurbans, carried them within major cities. These city streets were paved or constructed by brick, but 70 percent of the state's roads were made of simple dirt and mud. These roads could be made impassible by storms, stranding farmers who depended on them for travel. Though the roads between communities were owned by the state, no money was set aside and used for their upkeep.

More than likely, the growing national demand for automobiles and better roads led the state to create the first department concerned with transportation. In 1904, the Ohio Legislature passed House Bill 230 and created The

Ohio Department of Highways (ODOH). The department officially began operation in February of the following year. The first Commissioner of Highways was Sam Huston of Steubenville. He oversaw a staff of three people and had a budget of \$10,000. His department was so new, it did not have its own office space; they had to share with the Department of Agriculture. Huston used \$177.50 of his own \$2,500 salary, to buy office furniture for his staff and himself. He even returned \$215 of his budget money to the state at the end of first year.

ODOH started small because its first duties were only to study the practical aspects of highways and their repair. The department had no authority to initiate projects. It was the spirit of research and finding new ways to approach road construction which defined the agency. In his first report to Gov.



Situations such as this were common before the wide-spread construction of roads.

Andrew Harris in 1906, Huston discussed the use of gravel roads and other select materials to improve road conditions. Huston also established the department's first formal test lab to determine the reliability and superiority of materials used in road construction. Successors to the first commissioner would continue this research, selecting materials and improving road construction techniques that would make mobility possible for all citizens.

With the beginning of the 21st century, the renamed Ohio Department of Transportation is a much larger and more complex organization. ODOT is concerned not only with highways but with travel by air, rail and water as well. The agency has thousands of employees across the state working to maintain a well-established transportation infrastructure. ODOT is an integral part of the life in the state.

But for all those changes, the spirit of **looking ahead and moving forward** remains the guiding force of the department. Even as ODOT must concern itself with the maintenance and repair of what has been built, its offices are still setting new goals for the future. For R&D, this means funding new and continuing studies as part of a full research program. Like the first ODOH, the office is engaged in finding practical answers to the concerns of transportation services. Just as importantly, R&D is committed to share the results of this research, and aims to encourage its positive implementation.

In some ways, it is as if the department is starting its mission all over again.

Here's to the spirit of innovation: May it continue for centuries more.

R&D is On the Road

(No, this is not an article on pavement research.)

The staff of R&D has been taking the Office to the researchers. In an effort to get to know our researchers and to encourage communication, the R&D Office has been visiting Ohio universities that have traditionally conducted research with the Department. The main focus of these trips is to update the organizations on evolving changes to the research program and to solicit input regarding their concerns. We have already visited Ohio University, the University of Akron, the University of Cincinnati, Case Western Reserve University, and the University of Toledo. The Office appreciates the effort these organizations made to arrange the visits and we look forward to meeting with other organizations in the upcoming months.

While our Office would like to visit every entity that currently does research with ODOT, this just isn't practical. So, in order to ensure that smaller organizations and those located a substantial distance from ODOT are given the same opportunity to meet the new staff and to provide input on changes to the program, R&D will be arranging a meeting at the ODOT Central Office to cover the same issues that are being discussed during the visits. Information on this will be provided in the future.



Calendar of Events

December - 2001

Problem Statements from ODOT Program Offices will be developed this month for the 2003 R&D Program

January - 2002

14th - 17th - 81st Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board, Washington, DC
Problem Statements forwarded to Researchers for responses

March

Responses to Problem Statements due from Researchers
10-yr Strategic Research Plan completed

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