

MOVING FORWARD



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

Ohio Department of Transportation, Office of Research and Development

Fall 2002

What Do Our Peers Have to Say About Us?

Monique R. Evans, P.E.

The 2002 Research Peer Exchange held on August 5-7, 2002 was a tremendous success. The purpose of a peer exchange is to encourage research managers to discuss and trade ideas for improving their respective research, development, and technology transfer programs. The exchange team that visited ODOT consisted of Leona Kolbet from Nebraska DOT, David Lippert from Illinois DOT, David Martinelli from West Virginia University, and Barbara Harder from B.T. Harder, Inc.

Because ODOT has made quite a few changes to the research management process over the past two years, we were interested in getting some general feedback from the exchange team in the following five areas: 1) the revised research process, 2) implementation, 3) costs and budgets, 4) performance measures and 5) the selection of research projects.

Some of the strengths identified by the team were:

“The ability of the research program to execute contracts in a time frame that is responsive to the researcher organization is impressive. Many state DOT research units have unwieldy processes that prevent such responsiveness.”

“The ODOT research program is ambitious, entrepreneurial, and highly productive. It serves the Department well and is a reflection on the buy-in of research along all levels of the agency.”

“The research program is continually seeking ways to better serve its constituents and have proposed several enhancements that are innovative.”

“An open and fair Request for Proposal process is being established which allows many universities and consultants to compete for work.”

“Including a ‘Recommended Implementation Plan’ in the Final Research Proposal demonstrates that implementation is a vital task and needs to be addressed throughout the research project.”

The team was also unanimously impressed with the project wrap-up evaluation forms that we recently developed as qualitative measures of project performance. (These forms are available on our website.)

Some of the suggestions offered by the team were:

“Technical panels could be used for a greater number of research projects. The team concept tends to reduce the amount of work expected solely from the Technical Liaison...”

“Conducting a Case Study of completed and implemented research is a method [that the research office could use] to show a return on investment.”

“There is an opportunity for the Research staff to enhance the involvement of District technical personnel in implementing results.”

“Research participation should be made part of the official work responsibilities of the Technical Liaisons and they should receive recognition for their contributions wherever possible, e.g. technical publications, promotional publications, and performance reviews.”

We have developed an action plan to address each of the opportunities for improvement identified by the exchange team and will use it as part of our continuous improvement plan.

The feedback provided at this meeting was invaluable. We would like to express our deepest appreciation to the exchange team for contributing their time, experience, and knowledge.



Vikram Dalal Retires from Ohio DOT

After 31 years of service with the Ohio Department of Transportation, Vikram (Vik) Dalal will be retiring at the end of September 2002. Vik has worked in the Office of Structural Engineering (OSE) and Office of Research and Development (R&D). During his thirteen year tenure in OSE, Vik assisted in the design and review of plans for various structures including bridges, culverts, and super-span.

For eighteen years, Mr. Dalal worked closely with researchers on a variety of projects associated with R&D. Vik recalls the modal testing and instrumentation of bridges loaded to failure as being the most significant projects he participated in. Ohio has been a leader in the bridge testing for superloads, including the largest superload test of 900,000 pounds on the Ohio Turnpike in 1995. Over the years, Vik has been a champion for research dealing with the design, modeling, and rating of bridges. Through his enduring enthusiasm for this topic, a project started last year to instrument and monitor the Grant Bridge on US-52. This is the first study of a cable stay bridge of this size and magnitude.

Vik received his Masters from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and has been a licensed engineer in the State of Ohio since the late sixties. He attributes much of his success at ODOT to maintaining open communication with others. He has been an asset to the Department and will be greatly missed. We wish him the best during his retirement.

Cooperative Research Seminar 2002

On Monday December 16, 2002, the Office of Research and Development will host our first Cooperative Research Seminar at the OSU Fawcett Center. Approximately 300 people representing ODOT, FHWA, academia, private corporations, industry, county engineers, and various professional organizations will be invited to exchange ideas on ODOT's strategic research plan. The department's focus is on enhancing organizational maturity by defining measures and creating systems to guarantee success of our Vision. Consistent methodical concentration

on our core business using the tools of research, technology and innovation will continue to be our strategy for improvement.

During the seminar the Department's 10-year strategic research plan will be presented along with the 5-year project matrices for each of our divisions/offices. At the conclusion of the seminar, we hope to have identified any major gaps in our long term focus areas. Problem statements for the 5-year matrices will be modified or supplemented as needed to address these gaps. We also hope to examine

the relevancy, potential payoff and partnership opportunities for accomplishing our research goals. This seminar will allow us to gain valuable input from the research community to help refine our research efforts.

Registration materials for the seminar will be sent out within the next week. This information will also be available on our website. The deadline for registration is November 15, 2002. Watch your mail or our website for more information on this upcoming event.

Web Updates

Several updates have been done to the R&D website. Visit the site at <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/divplan/research> to get new information. Some of the new items you will find include the following:

- SP&R 2003 Report: Updated to reflect the new 2003 program
- Forms: This page has been redone to cater to both the researcher and the technical liaison. Revised and newly created forms, including forms for the quarterly report, executive summary, proposal budgets, report reviews, and project wrap-up evaluations, can be obtained from this page.



- Final Reports: Newly completed reports are added quarterly.
- Newsletter: Moving Forward: You can access prior and current issues of the newsletter.

Transportation Research Board 82nd Annual Meeting

The 82nd annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) will be held in Washington, DC, January 12 - 16, 2003. The program covers all transportation modes with more than 2,200 presentations in 450 sessions. There will be four themes focused on during this meeting. These special interest areas are security, congestion, safety, and reauthorization. For more information and registration materials, visit the TRB website (TRB.org/trb/meeting). Early registration ends November 30, 2002.

Send general inquiries,
requests for report copies,
comments, and suggestions to
our general email account:

research@dot.state.oh.us

Ohio Transportation Engineering Conference 2002

The 56th annual Ohio Transportation Engineering Conference will be held on October 22 & 23, 2002 in the Greater Columbus Convention Center. Several research projects will be featured in various sessions throughout the conference. A special session will be held on October 22, 2002 at 3:00 pm focusing on ODOT's research and technology transfer program. During this session ODOT's strategic 10-year focus will be discussed as well as the Ohio Local Technology Assistance Program (LTAP). Other areas of interest that will be focused on at OTEC include alternative fuels, hybrid vehicles, and transportation security to name a few. For additional information on OTEC visit the web site at www.otecohio.org.

Calendar of Events

October - 2002

22nd-23rd - OTEC (Convention Center - Columbus, OH) - For more info contact Terri Barnhart (terri.barnhart@dot.state.oh.us - 614-387-3102) or go to <http://www.otecohio.org>

November - 2002

15th - Deadline for Registration for Cooperative Research Seminar - For more info contact Vicky Fout

30th - Deadline for Registration for TRB Annual Meeting - For more info go to <http://www.trb.org/trb/meeting>

December - 2002

16th - Cooperative Research Seminar (Fawcett Center, - Columbus, OH) - For more info contact Vicky Fout

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