

Bringing Home the “Orange” *Work Zone Policy Wins National Award*

For motorists like Don Breeden time is money. The time he spends stuck in traffic costs his employer PGT Trucking hundreds of dollars each year.

“It’s very important for me to get from Point A to Point B safely and efficiently – I’m on a schedule,” he said. “My loads are permitted and if there is an accident or traffic jam, others can take detours but I must wait it out.”

The Ohio Department of Transportation recognizes that every minute counts on the highway. So much so that ODOT was recently recognized nationally by its peers for the department’s efforts to reduce work zone congestion and accidents.

The American Association of State Transportation and Highway Officials has named ODOT winner of the **2002 President’s Transportation Award** for its outstanding efforts to make work zones safer and more convenient for motorists. The association represents highway and transportation departments in 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

While the glory goes to ODOT, the foundation for the award was built by a hard-working team of men and women who helped change the way ODOT maintains traffic during maintenance and construction.

“Years ago, it was common practice to close a lane of traffic without regard to traffic volume, which often resulted in large-scale traffic backups,” said Bill Lozier, deputy director for Highway Management. “But today, motorist delays and the cost of congestion are one of the most critical elements in planning work zones.”

During the policy’s first full year of implementation in 2001, the department spent an additional \$30 million to minimize work zone delays. Those efforts included building temporary pavement and ramps to maintain more lanes of traffic, longer work hours and incentive/disincentive contracts to speed the pace of construction.

Many aspects of the Maintenance of Traffic Policy, such as the permitted lane closure map and setting thresholds for motorists’ delay, have been adopted by other states.

“The national recognition is great,” said Dave Holstein, administrator for Traffic Engineering, “but it’s even better to draw attention to the effort we’re making to reduce work zone congestion. It shows that Ohio is raising the bar.”