



Research Newsletter

Minnesota Department of Transportation
Research Services Section
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Office of Investment
Management

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Issue 4

Karen Billiar, Charter member of our office, retires after 21 years of state service

Karen Billiar, Financial Services Manager with the Research Services Section, announced her retirement. Her last day in the office will be May 19th.

She began her state career with the Department of Finance in 1984. When Karen joined Mn/DOT in September of 1987, she was one of four charter members in the newly created office of 'Research Administration and Development' with Dick Ingberg as Manager. When Bob Benke took over as Manager in January of 1990, the office was then called 'Research and Development'. Karen has been through many Managers/Directors as well as many different office names and she has had to move from the basement of Central Office to the Materials, Research Lab in Maplewood, to the Ford Building and finally back to CO.



Karen Billiar, Mn/DOT Research Services Section

The Local Road Research Board (LRRB) is administered by our office and they recently awarded Karen with a plaque for her 17 plus years of dedicated service to the board. The LRRB is made up of city and county engineers, and representatives from both Mn/DOT and the University of Minnesota. They initially held meetings twice a year, then four times a year. Karen has taken minutes (still uses her shorthand), managed their budget, prepared their annual program and handled other administrative duties since her Mn/DOT career began. In all this time, she has only missed one meeting!

Research Services has a close partnership with the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) at the University of Minnesota and Karen has been a key leader in helping develop our joint research programs and contracting processes. The CTS employees have voiced their opinion that Karen has always brought a 'can-do' attitude to our work together. In addition, her experience and knowledge often made things happen that others didn't believe were possible.

Before she began her career with the state, Karen worked in the Virgin Islands on the island of St. Croix as secretary to the manager of a hotel and the board of directors of its' corporation. Her husband Edward suggested that they consider visiting there after she retires. But she may be too busy spending time with 'the new man in her life', her handsome grandson John! Her daughters Kimberly and Kristie tell us that she will be enjoying her time away from the office doing gardening, sewing, reading and antique shopping as well.

Reviewing her career with the department, Karen said she has really enjoyed her work – never boring, sometimes challenging, and always something new. Karen's replacement is Sue Kahle.

Wishing Karen Billiar a Happy Retirement!

Web site to help track “Test Sections” in Minnesota

Mn/DOT along with Minnesota cities and counties have developed hundreds of test sections and projects relating to every aspect of roadway design. These projects typically have a local champion who sees the value in field validation of both new designs and materials. The problem with our current system is that projects tend to be forgotten before the benefits of research are learned. This is primarily due to the time it takes to develop results since pavements/projects tend to deteriorate very slowly. During this time the locations and purpose of the test sections are lost and cannot be used by others. Mn/DOT along with the Local Road Research Board have teamed to develop a web site to capture the existing test section information to help prevent the future loss of such information.

The system allows anyone from the State, County, City, and outside consultants to access, enter and view test section related data. A password is needed if any edits are required. The system uses the following terminology.

Study Groups – Name of the research project that created the test sections.

Test Sections – The test section number, or you can enter the location information.

Field Reviews – Field review information and comments.

Reports can be displayed on computer screens or can be made into a excel spreadsheet for more detailed analysis. Users can also specify a group, key-word, highway, district, or county to develop reports. The success of this effort will fall directly on each of us who develop and monitor test sections in our state.

The ‘Test Sections’ web site is located at:

<http://mnroad.dot.state.mn.us/research/mnresearch.asp>

For more information on research test section tracking please contact Ben Worel at (651) 779-5522, ben.worel@dot.state.mn.us or Rich Helgerson at (651) 779-5935 rich.helgerson@dot.state.mn.us



Transportation Library Connectivity

The title of this item is the same as a pooled fund study just getting underway, led by Wisconsin DOT. The goal of the study is to improve the transfer of transportation-related information and knowledge through the development of libraries and information services serving the transportation community.

The proposal for the study stated:

"Library and information services currently are an underutilized piece of the technology transfer process. Library services are integral because they capture needed information and enable customers to access it when needed. Without these services, the information is simply irretrievable."

The study, to be conducted during 2005 to 2006 is intended to provide the following benefits to participants.

Access to a vast and diverse pool of transportation-related information, much of which is not currently available on the Internet.

Reduced costs through sharing of resources and reduced service fees.

Better coordination with regional and national entities for effective distribution of information.

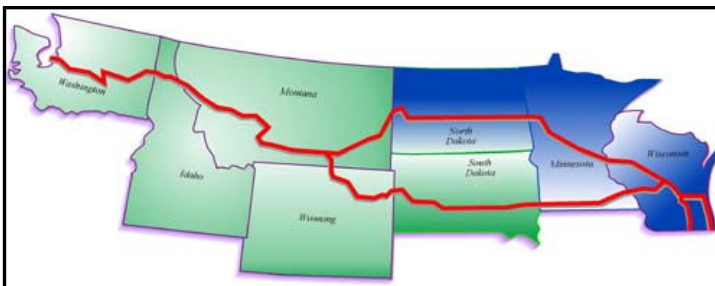
Cost savings through avoiding the duplication of research efforts.

To date, eight states, including Minnesota, are participating in the study. Several more participants are expected to join the study over the next few months. Further information on the project is available from FHWA's pooled fund website at <http://www.pooledfund.org/projectdetails.asp?id=337&status=4>.

North/West Passage Transportation Pooled Fund Study to Begin Phase II

Minnesota is the lead agency of the North/West Passage Corridor Transportation Pooled Fund (TPF) Study. The corridor includes the states along I-94 and I-90 from Wisconsin to Washington. The objective of the study is to influence ongoing standards development and to utilize effective methods for sharing, coordinating, and integrating traveler information across state borders. Currently, within the North/West Passage Corridor states (North Dakota, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, and South Dakota) there are numerous and largely autonomous systems for collecting, processing and integrating traveler and road maintenance information, and for delivering the information to users. Most of the information, however, is not readily shared across state borders.

Through the TPF Study, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin funded the development of the North/West Passage Phase I work program. The members are now soliciting participation in Phase II of the TPF Study. The level of interest among other states along the corridors has remained strong and it is anticipated that additional states will be joining the pooled fund study and participating in Phase II.



North/West Passage Corridor along I-94 and I-90 from Wisconsin to Washington.

The initial focus of Phase I projects was on the I-94 Corridor within Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota. Phase I included several smaller projects that focused largely on immediate benefits. Examples include; facilitating the exchange of traveler information data between North Dakota and Minnesota for delivery via each states' 511 traveler information service, and developing a state-to-state communication plan for shared operation of a planned bridge



deck antiicing system and dynamic message signs (DMS) deployment on the I-94 Bridge over the Red River at the Minnesota-North Dakota Border. Phase I also included the development of a website for communication of North/West Passage information. For a comprehensive overview of all Phase I project please visit: <http://www.nwpassage.info>.

The Phase II Work Plan was developed by the corridor steering committee and included input from all states along the corridor. The project ideas given highest priority through the steering committee voting

exercises could all be described as planning efforts with a broader corridor-wide scope. It was determined that these projects could be combined into what we are calling the North/West Passage ITS Integrated Corridor Strategic Plan. The key elements of this plan will include:

- ❖ the development of a corridor architecture with a focus on center-to-center data sharing across state borders
 - ❖ an inventory of communication infrastructure for the entire corridor
 - ❖ a coordinated concept of operations for the sharing of traveler information across state borders.
- Suggested projects for the corridor to pursue will be identified.

The North/West Passage Corridor Coalition intends to start work on the Phase II Work Plan in the Spring of 2005. We are currently moving forward with the development of a request for proposals. If you have any questions, please contact Mark Nelson at (651) 284-3484 or mark.nelson@dot.state.mn.us.

Congratulations to the Mn/DOT team for their Research Partnership Award!

The Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) Research Partnership Award was designed to recognize research projects within the CTS research program that result in significant impacts on transportation, and to reward outstanding teams from diverse partnerships to achieve this level of excellence. At the March 29 ceremony, the research award went to “Fly Ash Screening Tool Investigation 795 Implementation”. It is a project that documents the implementation of a regulatory tool to determine the benefits of reusing waste materials in road construction. We are proud to announce that the project partners representing Mn/DOT were Jim Kllessig, Barbara Loida, Clark Moe, Tim Anderson, Robert Edstrom, Bruce Johnson, John Jones, Roger Olson, Ruth Robertson and John Seikmeier. Our sincerest congratulations to them as this year’s Research Partnership Award winners, and thanks for all their contributions towards reaching new heights in transportation research. Other project partners that made this project a success were from the University of Minnesota, Waseca, Scott, Polk and Rock Counties, the cities of Hutchinson and Waseca and employees from Xcel, MPCA, Barr Engineering, Wenck Associates.

Calendar of Events

MAY

11-13	Minnesota Public Works Association Spring 2005 Conference, Nisswa. Contact Heather Dorr, (612) 625-5267, hdoor@cce.umn.edu
19	Research Coordinators Meeting at Arden Hills Room 4 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. For more information contact Gary Orlich, (651) 205-4698, Gary.Orlich@dot.state.mn.us
23-24	Biennial meeting of the TRB State DOT Representatives in Washington, D.C. For more information contact Rosa Allen at rallen@nas.edu

JUNE

5-8	Special Libraries Association 2005 Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada. For more information visit http://www.sla.org/content/Events/conference/ac2005/index.cfm
23-24	Joint LRRB and Research Implementation Committee (RIC) meeting in Onamia, Minnesota. Contact Susan Kahle, (651) 296-1542, susan.kahle@dot.state.mn.us

JULY

10-15	TRB 2005 Summer Conference, Boston Seaport Hotel & World Trade Center, Boston, Massachusetts. Email TRBMeetings@NAS.edu or visit http://trb.org/Conferences/JointSummer/
13-15	96th Annual Meeting of the Mississippi Valley Conference of State Highway and Transportation Officials at Holiday Inn Chicago City Centre in Chicago, IL. For general conference information visit http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-33580---,00.html or contact Coleen Hines, (517) 335-3011, hinesc@michigan.gov

OCTOBER

24-26	Minnesota Public Transit Conference sponsored by Mn/DOT, Minnesota Public Transit Association and Metropolitan Council. For more information visit http://www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/tconf/ or contact Jody Jacoby, (651) 282-6754, jody.jacoby@dot.state.mn.us
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We're on the Web!

<http://www.research.dot.state.mn.us/>