



Message from the Director

As you may have noticed, the Office of Real Estate Services has been undergoing a period of transition for approximately the last year or so. Several of our most experienced staff—including a team leader, our relocation and appraisal leads, and others—have either retired or moved, on to take advantage of other career opportunities. While our remaining staff have worked diligently to meet deadlines, our limited numbers have sometimes created a strain, especially in trying to accomplish “extra” activities beyond the office’s core responsibilities. Fortunately, help has arrived! Since June, we have welcomed Peter Clark, Melissa Corder, and Lindsey Svendsen. We plan on doing our best to make them feel welcome as we put them straight to work. As a result of filling these vacancies, there has been a re-distribution of duties and responsibilities to improve the way we conduct business with our customers and stakeholders. Our goal is to ensure continuous information sharing and knowledge exchange in the realm of Realty.

Virgil Pridemore, Director,
Office of Real Estate Services

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2017 Excellence in Right-of-Way Awards

The nomination period for the 2017 Excellence in Right-of-Way Awards opened on August 1, 2016 and will close September 30, 2016. Information on eligibility and nomination forms for the 2017 Program can be found at http://fhwatetest.fhwa.dot.gov/real_estate/rowea/index.cfm. For questions, please contact Carolyn James at 202-493-0353 or Carolyn.James@dot.gov.

Calendar of Events

For a listing of Planning, Environment, and Realty program meetings, events, and NHI training opportunities visit www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/calendar/index.cfm



Can you guess who restored this Camaro? Read “Getting to Know Realty Colleagues” to find out.

News from Headquarters



Conference News

Article by Mike Jones, Senior Member International ROW Association [SR/WA], POC-South

The Office of Real Estate Services (HEPR) and the Resource Center (RC) always look forward to the combined AASHTO/NAHBA Conference (this year from May 1-5, 2016). It's our best opportunity to meet, and interact directly with most of the State Department of Transportation (State DOT) Realty Program leaders. The presentations are excellent, and all the sessions provide time for questions and discussion which is great for everybody involved! Both the AASHTO and the NAHBA Conference provide unique opportunities for those of us in FHWA to give and receive feedback, share ideas, discuss potential changes, etc., with our State partners, across all of the Realty Program areas.

Dawn Horan was a speaker at two sessions during the NAHBA Conference. The first presentation was a "FHWA Update" that touched on many current issues in the outdoor advertising field, including information on the FAST Act, directional and official sign content, recent and pending lawsuits, and discussions about advertising within the right-of-way. The second presentation outlined FHWA expectations as to how State DOTs demonstrate that they have effective control of the Outdoor Advertising Program, as well as what a State DOT should expect during a process review.

This writer gave a presentation that included a summarization of the regulatory requirements relating to waiver valuations, and included a discussion of those non-compliance issues that seem to occur most often with respect to the use of waiver valuations, aka, appraisal waivers.

The other major conference for ROW professionals is, of course, the International Right of Way Association (IRWA) Annual Education Conference, which took place this year in Nashville, Tennessee (June 12-15, 2016). Rosemary Jones represented HEPR at the conference. and Marshall Wainright from the Resource Center also attended. There always seems to be some new and different questions/issues/takeaways from the IRWA Conference. But when you have 1,000 or so right-of-way professionals coming together in one place, what else could you expect, right? One of the more interesting presentations was given by James Olschewski of the Utah DOT on the subject of that State's "Corridor Preservation Program". At HEPR's request, Mr. Olschewski gave a repeat performance in our August 4, 2016 webinar. Hope you were able to catch that. If not, you may access a recording of the webinar at: <https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/p986gdtszkm/>.

HEPR's Highway Beautification Snapshot

In the time since the last newsletter was published, HEPR finalized a short video that provides an overview of the Outdoor Advertising and Junkyard Control regulations that protect and preserve the natural beauty along our Nation's roadways. The video is publicly available on FHWA's YouTube channel at

www.youtube.com/watch?v=16vxVJYITaw



Screen capture from HEPR's Highway Beautification video

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Updates

Article by Rosemary Jones and Dawn Horan

The FHWA recently revised its regulations governing the acquisition, management, and disposal of real property for transportation programs and projects receiving funds under Title 23, United States Code. The revisions were in part prompted by enactment of the federal legislation known as “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act” (MAP-21). Section 1302 of MAP-21 included new early acquisition flexibilities for the use of Title 23 Federal-aid highway program funds. The final rule addresses the use of these new early acquisition flexibilities. The FHWA also updated the real estate regulations to reflect the agency’s experience with the Federal-aid Highway Program since the last comprehensive rulemaking for Part 710 which occurred more than a decade ago. The updates include clarifying the Federal-State partnership, streamlining processes to better meet current Federal-aid highway program needs, and eliminating duplicative and outdated regulatory language. The final rule can be found at: www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-23/pdf/2016-19475.pdf

The FHWA continues to consider proposing amendments to its Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 regulations, which are located in 49 CFR Part 24. The need for revisions created by the enactment of MAP-21. Section 1521 of MAP-21 amendments included increases in statutory relocation benefits and a reduction of length of occupancy requirements for homeowners. The FHWA is also proposing to update the Uniform Act regulations to reflect the agency’s experience with the Federal-Aid Highway Program since the last comprehensive rulemaking for Part 24, which occurred in 2005. The updates under consideration include streamlining processes to better meet current Federal-aid highway program needs, and eliminating duplicative and outdated regulatory language. A draft NPRM is currently under review in our Office of the Chief Counsel. It is not expected to be published for public comment until the new administration takes office.

SIP Reviews (PY2015 and PY2016)

Article by Mike Jones, Senior Member International ROW Association [SR/WA], POC-South

The Office of Real Estate Services is the FHWA lead office on this 5-year review. Our Resource Center Realty staff is working side-by-side with us on this major effort. The focus of the national review is to identify successful, effective and/or innovative processes and activities in the stewardship and oversight of the Realty/Outdoor Advertising & Junkyard Control Programs. This means we are looking at our FHWA Divisions’ stewardship and oversight of their State DOT partner’s Realty/OAC Program: and we’re looking at the State DOT’s stewardship and oversight of the LPA Realty Program in that State. By the time we complete the review, we will have surveyed and interviewed (either in person or remotely) all 52 FHWA Division Realty Officers (and their State DOT Realty partners).

We have completed the reviews for this year and the report detailing those findings is being completed. In case you’re wondering, the 2016 participants were: AZ, CO, CT, GA, IL, NV, NJ, NM, ND, PR, RI, SC, VT, and WI.

If we haven’t visited your State yet, you can expect us to come calling sometime within the next two years. So if you’ve been thinking about “tweaking” any aspects of your “stewardship and oversight activities” to make it more effective/successful/innovative . . . this would be a great time to get moving on that!

Singing on Television

In her spare time, Karen Orton, Realty Officer in the Oklahoma Division Office, sings gospel music with an all-female a cappella group in Oklahoma City. The group—Ladies of WINGS—has been singing together for about 18 years. Earlier this year on January 15th, the women sang in commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on a local FOX News affiliate television program. The performance can be viewed at:

<http://okcfox.com/features/living-oklahoma/ladies-of-wings-women-in-need-of-god-sing>



Ladies of WINGS sing on TV for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Karen is 4th from the left on the back row.

LPA Toolkit Update

In February, HEPR's Carolyn James facilitated a webinar on "The State of the Practice Research in the Development of LPA Program Steward and Oversight Strategies". Guest speakers included representatives from the State DOTs in Georgia, Indiana, and South Carolina, and the FHWA Division Offices in Indiana and Georgia. The online LPA Toolkit, which contains a variety of resources to facilitate oversight and stewardship of LPAs' realty activities, is currently available and can be accessed on our Realty website or at this link: www.fhwa.dot.gov/real_estate/local_public_agencies/lpa_tool/.

Also available online are a literature review, Division Office survey, and peer exchange report with several highlighted resources that can be accessed at: www.fhwa.dot.gov/real_estate/local_public_agencies/.

News from Regional POCs



Southern Corner News

(Article by Mike Jones, POC-South)

Alabama (Tammy Keeley): The Alabama Division reports that:

- the Alabama DOT has re-structured from a more centralized organization (where most decisions took place) to a regional framework, giving the “Regions” more autonomy and decision-making authority.
- on the program level, this year Tammy will be conducting a review of the ALDOT relocation program. She was actively involved in Environmental Justice issues in the Birmingham Central Business District (I20/I59) Project, where she helped insure that the needs of the impacted communities were appropriately addressed.
- she made a presentation on “ROW Performance Measures” to the local IRWA Chapter in March 2016.
- Tammy also has planning responsibilities with regard to the Tuscaloosa MPO. In early April she also gave a presentation on “Uniform Act Requirements” to LPA attendees at the 2016 Alabama Transportation Planning Association Conference, in Dothan, AL.

Arkansas (David Blakeney): The Arkansas Division reports that:

- David and his State partners in the Right-of-Way Division of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) have been in discussion about programmatic and operational issues in connection with waiver valuations. The AHTD ROW Director has been considering how to expand the agency’s use of the waiver valuation tool and exploring potential flexibilities. One issue in expanding the use of valuation waivers is how the AHTD’s ROW Division might effectively address initial resistance among some staff to potential role changes.

Florida (Brian Telfair): The Florida Division reports that:

- the Division and Florida DOT have recently been working closely on two Federal Land Transfers (FLT) – both of which were required in connection with a project that is part of the massive on-going Everglades Restoration Project. The project is located on the Tamiami Trail (a 275-mile stretch of US41 that connects the metropolitan areas of Tampa and Miami). Their most recent joint efforts resulted in the completion of the 2nd Tamiami Trail FLT between FDOT and the National Park Service.

Georgia (Neosha Lawhorn): The Georgia Division reports that:

- in addition to her role as the Realty Officer for the GA Division, Neosha is also the Division’s LPA Coordinator. A major component of her “program stewardship” activities is her role in the delivery of technical assistance workshops for LPA staff and their ROW consultants. Along with her DOT partners, she co-presents LPA ROW workshops on a quarterly basis around the State. She and GDOT staff also co-present LPA training in other program areas – on an even more ambitious schedule.
- in late March, the Georgia Division and their GDOT partners both participated in interviews as part of FHWA’s PY2016 Strategic Implementation Plan’s “National Right-of-Way Stewardship and Oversight Review.”

Kentucky (David Whitworth): The Kentucky Division reports that:

- in response to a request from the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Marshall Wainright from the Resource Center (RC) recently presented two technical assistance workshop sessions on “Uniform Act Requirements.” The following excerpt is from an email from KYTC ROW Direct Dean Loy sent, after the training and re-affirms something that all of our FHWA Realty staff already knows:

“Mr. Wainwright did an outstanding job! Marshall is an excellent instructor and possesses great knowledge about the right of way process and the requirements needed for a successful program. I also appreciate FHWA in putting together this program. I am a big proponent of educating our workforce and keeping them up to date on our ever-changing laws, rules, and policies. I sincerely hope FHWA and KYTC will continue to have a great working relationship.”

Kudos to Marshall (and to Michele Palicka and Rodney Vaughn) for the outstanding service they provide to all of our Divisions, with the customized technical assistance workshops they develop and deliver, and their assistance in conducting program/process/project reviews.

Louisiana (Charles Harkless): The Louisiana Division reports that:

- Charles, who had been the Acting Realty Officer since James Hall retired last year – is now the “official” Realty Officer, in addition to his responsibility for overseeing the Civil Rights program. He reports that there are a couple design-build projects under construction and expresses the Division’s thanks for assistance provided to them in that regard.

He reports that, in January, Marshall Wainright presented an “Advanced Relocation” course that was well-received by the attendees and provided them with a lot of good program information and helpful tips. Charles’ first ROW presentation will be given at an upcoming transportation conference – on Outdoor Advertising Control no less. Charles expresses his thanks to Dawn Horan of HEPR, who provided him with great information and direction.

Mississippi (Rick Mangrum): The Mississippi Division reports that:

- the Mississippi DOT (MDOT) and the City of Jackson are in the ROW acquisition phase for the West County Line Road and State Street TIGER project. This project is a “Ladder of Opportunity” project mentioned during the recent FHWA Administrator’s webinar. The Division is also working with local county governments and MDOT on three other TIGER projects, to pave county roads and replace 18 county bridges.
- the MDOT has also started a bridge replacement program with \$180 million of dedicated State bond money. This will help the State and local governments replace or repair about 70 bridges.
- the MDOT has begun a large ROW project on I-55, outside of Memphis: the estimated ROW cost is \$20 million. The project will impact 65 parcels and includes 11 businesses and 17 miscellaneous personal property relocations. The project will add lanes, expand existing interchanges and add interchanges to the current system.

North Carolina (Mike Dawson): The North Carolina Division reports that:

- the Division and NCDOT are formalizing the DOT’s QA/QC process across the entire spectrum of the program including timetables for routine reviews, checkpoints for internal scoping and monitoring of projects and related files.
- they are also working together to develop strategies to better monitor design build ROW and overall consultant-led ROW projects as well. At this point, over 80 percent of NCDOT’s ROW work is being performed by consultants. Mike has informed us that conducting effective stewardship and oversight of such a large consultant workload requires a huge effort for both the NCDOT Central Office and the Division.

Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands (Roberto Escalera): The Puerto Rico Division reports that:

- there has been very little new ROW project activity recently. Roberto has remained engaged by reviewing all the project certifications and ensuring that both Puerto Rico's and Virgin Islands' Right-of-Way Manuals have been updated, certified, and approved by the Division. He is also involved in a major infrastructure project in the Virgin Islands which will replace a Coast Guard Facility. He also continues to be actively engaged in the Division's Civil Rights Program, his second responsibility area in the Division.

South Carolina (Jessica Hekter): The South Carolina Division reports that:

- the SCDOT recently named Michael Barbee as their new ROW Director. The SCDOT and FHWA worked together to update and approve the SCDOT ROW manual.
- on the project level, the State and the Division have been working to advance the 701 Bridge Replacement design build project. The project team has been successful in eliminating ROW impacts to 4(f)/6(f) property owned by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- in late March, the South Carolina Division and their SCDOT partners both participated in interviews as part of FHWA's PY2016 Strategic Implementation Plan's "National Right-of-Way Stewardship and Oversight Review."

Tennessee (Theresa Claxton): The Tennessee Division reports that:

- Victor Otero has left FHWA's Tennessee Division Office for a position in the USACE in Galveston, TX. We will miss Victor's energy and perspective in managing the ROW program in TN. The Division's Planning and Program Management Team Leader, Theresa Claxton has assumed the Division ROW duties at this time.
- the TN Division has completed 3 of 6 planned project reviews for PY16 and is wrapping up a Process Review Report regarding LPA ROW Oversight.
- in response to new ROW program delegations from the updated FHWA/TDOT Stewardship and Oversight Agreement, the TN Division and TDOT developed several monthly or bi-monthly reporting tools to allow the TN Division to assess the effectiveness of implementing the new delegations (such as approvals of Conditional ROW Certificates off of the Interstate). The tools are in the early testing phase. These oversight tools allow the TN Division to manage and mitigate potential risk.

Virginia (Barbara Middleton): The Virginia Division reports that:

- a recent trend on highway projects in Virginia (both DOT and LPA projects) has been the growing level of involvement by attorneys who are representing relocatees, (especially business relocatees). In some projects where this is occurring, the acquiring agencies are finding it difficult to complete the relocation process in a timely manner.
- in May, the Resource Center assisted the Division in a review of a LPA project that involved the relocation of several businesses. During that visit, the Resource Center staff also provided relocation training.

West Virginia (Jeff Robinette): The West Virginia Division reports that:

- there has been a lot of "movement" going on in West Virginia over the last several months. In November 2015, Eric B. Hudnall became the new Director of the Right-of-Way Division in the WV Department of Transportation, Highways Division. Additionally FHWA's WV Division Administrator retired in December '15 and ADA Emiliano M. Lopez, was named the Acting Division Administrator. In February 2016 Edward Stephen, the former ADA of the DC Division, was named as the new Division Administrator in West Virginia.

- the biggest news in the WV Realty Program at present may be that the DOT is actively acquiring the necessary ROW on one of two projects on the Appalachian "Corridor H." A Design/Build construction contract was awarded November 2015 for the first phase of the "Kerens to Parsons Project,"; a 7.53-mile section is one of three remaining sections to be constructed. Completion of that construction contract is anticipated in the fall of 2019. This project involves Federal Land Transfers from the U.S. Forest Service for multiple tracts within the Monongahela National Forest. Jeff and his WVDOT partners have persevered to successfully hammer out the agreements.

Northern Corner News

(Article by Maggie Duncan-Augustt, POC-North)

New Jersey (Ekaraj Phomsavath): The New Jersey Division ...

- participated in this year's National SIP Review as well as coordinated with HQ on LPA training for NJDOT.
- is working with NJDOT and HQ to coordinate Outdoor Advertising Control training.
- has recently assigned Ekaraj Phomsavath to manage their Realty Program.

Massachusetts (Currently Vacant): The Massachusetts Division ...

- is in the process of filling the Realty Specialist position vacated by Lindsey Svendsen. John McVann, the Division's Director of Project Delivery is currently fulfilling the Realty Program role. The Division is hoping to have a new Realty Officer in place this fall.
- has been focused on innovative uses for solar panels such as placement of the panels on park-n-rides canopies.
- worked with the Rhode Island Division leadership and RIDOT to coordinate and complete this year's RI Realty National SIP Review.

Pennsylvania (Barbara Shaffer): The Pennsylvania Division reports ...

- it coordinated with the Resource Center and PennDOT to have Relocation Workshops conducted in Bridgeville, and Harrisburg, PA. The workshops were open to PennDOT Staff, Realty LPAs, and Realty consultants on PennDOT's list of approved vendors.
- Barbara Shaffer has been appointed to be the Division Realty Officer, succeeding Melissa Corde who is now one of our HEPR staff.
- a rewrite of the OAC manual and a state of the art electronic database called the "Highway Beautification Management System" (HBMS) for all signs and junkyards, have been implemented. The database houses all documents (photos, pictures, correspondence, and location information) and the staff are using Trimble Lidar technology in the field to conduct statewide surveillance of all signs and junkyards and are collecting the location data using these devices. The junkyard owners and sign owners are now able to initiate an application or renew their annual permits or licenses online. The HBMS system is also directly linked to a sister State Agency that processes permit and license payments. The system also automatically notifies District staff when a new application is submitted for review, and when payments are made to renew a permit or license.

Maryland (Eric Savage): The Maryland Division ...

- conducted a review of the Relocation Streamlining Demonstration Pilot Program with MDSHA and HQ, and also conducted a property management review focused on leasing.

- conducted ROW training in two areas; Appraisal (Understanding Highest and Best Use in a Before and After Appraisal), and a general ROW overview (Acquisition, Appraisal and Relocation under 49 CFR Part 24). Both training sessions were 2 day courses.

Ohio (Abraham Geevarghese): The Ohio Division reports ...

- Abraham will provide a presentation on FHWA updates for the local IRWA Chapter during "ODOT Day", which is a yearly educational conference where participants can earn up to eight continuing education credits.

Rhode Island and Connecticut (Currently Vacant): The Rhode Island and Connecticut Divisions report ...

- that their shared Realty Officer position has been vacant since the retirement of Mike Butler in January. The two Divisions have collaborated in their efforts to fill the Realty Specialist position vacated by Mike. In the interim, the CT Division ADA Michelle Hilary is handling the Realty issues.

Western Corner News

(Article by Rosemary Jones, POC-West)

Utah (Edward Woolford): The Utah Division reports ...

- the former Division Environmental Program Manager Edward Woolford, is now wearing two hats: his current job title is "Right-of-Way and Environmental Program Manager". HEPR would like to extend a warm welcome to Edward as he joins our Realty Group.
- the Division is consulting with HQ on potentially extending until 2017 the approved Pilot Programs—1) Increase in Appraisal Waiver and 2) Negotiator Conflict of Interest thresholds.
- they are trying to ascertain funding options to assist the state with updating the ODA Control Program Inventory System.
- they are excited to have one railroad agreement executed and are looking forward to adding additional agreements in the future.

Colorado: (Currently vacant) The Colorado Division reports ...

- that the FHWA Office of Real Estate Services and the FHWA Resource Center conducted SIP Reviews with the Colorado Division office and the Colorado DOT in April.
- that congratulations are in order, to the former Colorado & Wyoming Division Realty Officer, Megan Jensen. She recently accepted a new position in HCR (Headquarters Civil Rights) and she started her new position August 1. Best wishes to Megan in her new role.
- that William Haas, Program Development Team Leader, is acting as the interim Realty contact until a permanent Realty Specialist is in place.

Washington: (Currently vacant) The Washington Division reports ...

- congratulations are also in order to the Washington Division Realty Officer, Elizabeth Healy. Back in April, Elizabeth accepted a new position with the Federal Aviation Administration. Best wishes to Elizabeth in her new role. The Washington Division is currently working on filling the vacant position.
- At present, the Realty Program responsibilities are being shared by Susan Wimberly, Division Field Operations Team Leader, and Don Petersen, Division Safety/Design Engineer.

Idaho (Scott Frey): The Idaho Division reports that ...

- the Idaho Transportation Department (IDOT) has an on-going challenge with attrition and staffing. The IDOT is making an internal assessment to determine which positions can be contracted, such as appraisal review and relocation.
- in light of the fact the IDOT has a process in place, approved by their FHWA Division office, for handling Federally Funded Early Acquisition Projects, the Division is happy to announce that they have approved another early acquisition project.

Hawaii (Kelly Okumura): The Hawaii Division reports ...

- exciting news from the Hawaii Division—we have a new Realty Specialist—Kelly J. H. Okumura. HEPR would like to extend a warm welcome to Kelly as she joins our Realty group.

California (Melani Millard): The California Division reports that it ...

- will soon be entering into a Charter (agreement) with Caltrans and various other agencies in the forming of “California’s State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC).” The council intends to bring together stakeholders that represent market forces so they may collaborate to lead innovation in transportation infrastructure. The Division is hoping to come up with Realty-related efficiencies/proposals.
- worked with the Resource Center to deliver four (4) Realty and Outdoor Advertising Control Workshops to Caltrans and Local Public Agencies.
- is working with Caltrans on a complete Right-of-Way Manual review, and have updated several policies along the way to ensure that projects are being delivered in compliance with the most current Federal and state laws. Caltrans previously provided their manual certification and received Division concurrence at the end of January.

Montana (Brian Hasselbach): The Montana Division Office reports that ...

- the Montana DOT is currently revising the state administrative rules that will allow for limited application of digital billboards.

Arizona (Layne Patton): The Arizona Division reports that ...

- Layne, along with Resource Center Staff, conducted compliance reviews on a \$2 billion modified P3 freeway project most of which is being designed and built on a new alignment.
- Layne worked on an Appraisal Qualification review by evaluating the work product of fee appraisers contracted with ADOT.

New Mexico (Greg Heitmann): The New Mexico Division reports that ...

- they are working with the New Mexico DOT to address encroachment issues. The Division Administrator is allowing NMDOT flexibility regarding encroachments when there is no impact to the highway facility, projects or the traveling public. (23 CFR 1.23(c)).
- the Office of Real Estate Services and the Resource Center conducted SIP Reviews with the New Mexico Division Office and New Mexico DOT in May.

Nevada (Daniel Hawk) The Nevada Division reports that ...

- Daniel Hawk came on board as the Right-of-Way and Civil Rights Program Manager in August 2016. Daniel has prior experience in both programs (civil rights experience with an LPA in CA and ROW experience with CALTRANS). HEPR would like to extend a warm welcome to Dan as he joins our Realty group.

Mid-American Corner News

(Article by Cliff Pearson, POC-Mid-America)

Indiana (Colleen Smith): The Indiana Division reports that ...

- the Indiana DOT along with our FHWA Division Realty Officer, Colleen Smith, have been working diligently to improve the LPA program. The I-69 corridor, along with several other major acquisition projects have caused LPAs in the State to acquire more property than any other LPA program in the nation.
- The current IDOT Right-of-Way Operations Manual requires LPA consultants who acquire property using Federal-aid to be certified by the State. That certification is achieved by a series of training sessions administered by the State DOT. Additionally, the LPA program has assigned 15+/- staff at the central office who specialize in the LPA Program. All LPA projects are reviewed 100 percent by the State DOT.

Oklahoma (Karen Orton): The Oklahoma Division reports that ...

- Karen now has collateral duties as the FHWA Oklahoma Division Environmental Projects Manager.
- She also completed a three-month detail assignment as the Realty Specialist with FHWA's Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD).

Missouri (Dawn Perkins/Mike Latuszek): The Division reports that ...

- they completed 15 CAP Reviews on LPA projects utilizing the Level 2 Realty Guide during this performance year. The Division is working with MoDOT to address the issues found, and as always their MoDOT partners are working with them to make the LPA program better. MoDOT has been reviewing their state regulations and policies to reduce redundancy and increase efficiency.
- Congratulations to Dawn Perkins, who recently accepted another position in the MO Division Office: Dawn is now the St. Louis Urban Transportation Engineer: we all wish her well in her new position.
- Dawn has informed us that Mike Latuszek, a Community Planner in the Missouri Division will be assuming the Division Realty responsibilities on a permanent basis in the near future, however his "start date" for assuming the Realty role has not been set. Dawn will continue to be the Realty contact until that time, and she reports that she will be available mentor Mike as needed during his transition period. We look forward to welcoming Mike aboard.

Nebraska (Justin Luther): The Nebraska Division reports that ...

- former Nebraska PDP, Erich Hines, was successful in coordinating a dual civil rights and right-of-way developmental assignment in FHWA Headquarters (HQ) in February and March 2016. While at HQ, Erich's objective was to focus on enriching his knowledge on the Uniform Act and the Highway Beautification Act. Erich recently accepted a position in the Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

News from the Resource Center



On the Move with the Resource Center Realty Team

(Article by the FHWA Resource Center)

We are sad to report we had to say good bye to Christina (Chrisy) Currier of the Texas Division on the Resource Center Right of Way Team. With the retirement of Marsha Bayer in the Texas Division, Chrisy now devotes all of her time to Division Realty matters. We want to thank Chrisy for all her hard work and the positive impact she has made on making the ROW Resource Center Team more effective and marketable. She will be greatly missed. Due to the loss of Chrisy, our office recently advertised a full time position on the Realty Team and we look forward to our new addition. As soon as the position is filled, we will be introducing our newest colleague to all of you in the field. We are excited that the demand for our services has required additional personnel resources added to our Realty Team.

We are also excited to have Lisa Hanf join our team last year as the Resource Center Environmental and Realty Technical Service Team Manager. Ms. Hanf joins our team from EPA Region IX and previously worked for FHWA in our San Francisco office. We look forward to her help and guidance as we expand and excel in the years to come.

The Resource Center Realty Team has been busy this last year attending the 2016 AASHTO Subcommittee on Right of Way, Utilities and Outdoor Advertising conference in Orlando, Florida, the Annual IRWA Educational Conference in Memphis, TN, co-instructing NHI Realty Courses, assisting Division Offices with project reviews and presenting numerous Resource Center Right of Way workshops on topics such as Acquisition, Appraisal, Relocation and ROW Project Management around the United States. Marshall and Michele also went to Guam in the beginning of August to teach three NHI courses to the Guam Department of Public Works staff and other Northern Mariana Islands Government representatives. It is always great to get out in the field and meet with our customers. Our interactions in the field help to keep us up-to-date with current program trends and program implementation issues. Our interaction with all of you is vital to insure we are creating training and providing technical assistance that is helpful and relevant. Thank you to everyone who has given us these great opportunities to learn, grow and improve. We truly appreciate all the opportunities we have been granted and we look forward to hearing from more of you in the future. If we can be of assistance, please contact Marshall at Marshall.Wainright@dot.gov or by phone at (404) 562-3692. Michele is also available at Michele.Palicka@dot.gov or by phone at (404) 562-3918.

Featured Articles



“Plans on Demand”

Formerly the AASHTO Technology Implementation Group, the “AASHTO Innovation Initiative” advances innovation from the grassroots up: by agencies, for agencies, peer-to-peer. Each year, the program selects highly valuable technologies, processes, software, or other innovations that have been adopted by at least one agency, are proven in use, and are expected to be of significant benefit to other agencies. Recently, the Initiative assembled a team of specialists from across the country—specifically, Vermont, Arizona, New Mexico, and Florida—to develop and share new data management tools for accessing ROW plans. The outcome is a product called “[Plans on Demand](#),” which aims to provide low- or no-cost options that improve access to ROW plans, maps, and other documents for agencies and their customers.

Transportation agencies have historically stored their ROW data in a variety of forms and locations, making it difficult for users to find, to access, and to know with a degree of certainty that the data was accurate and comprehensive. In some cases, older documents may even be deteriorated and indecipherable. Delays in ROW research can slow down an entire project. To address these issues, the Arizona DOT and the Vermont Transportation Agency (VTrans) have demonstrated how “Plans on Demand” systems can be cost-effective, easy-to-use tools for consolidating all of a State's ROW information into one, universally accessible system. To develop its system, AzDOT first hired a summer intern to scan the backlog of its ROW plans. It then linked those images to a map corresponding to the locations depicted in the plans. Now, users can retrieve ROW plans and surveys for interstate highways, state routes, and U.S. highways by selecting a road and then clicking the milepost of the aerial map to see what plans are available at that location. See <http://azdot.gov/rowplans>. At VTrans, the ROW Viewer (<http://host.appgeo.com/VTrans/Viewer.aspx>) offers users an interactive GIS map from which plans and other documents can be retrieved and viewed.

The AASHTO Innovation Initiative has developed a 3-year plan, budget, and various outreach materials for targeting key states that are considering updating their ROW plan management approaches. There is a goal to engage and support the development of systems similar to AzDOT's and VTrans' in at least 12 states. Direct meetings and presentations at relevant conferences and workshops are planned.

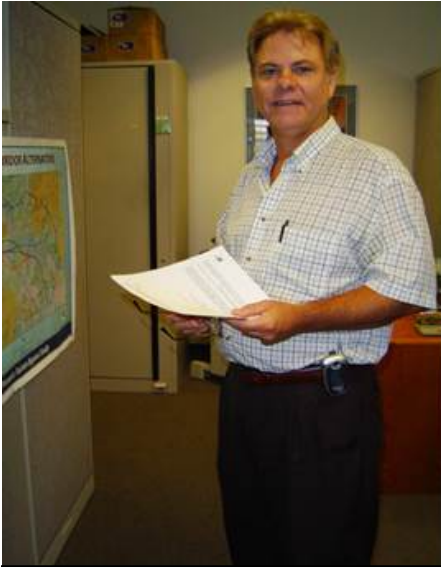
Gordie Howe International Bridge Update

The Gordie Howe International Bridge Project (previously known as the New International Trade Crossing/Detroit River International Crossing) involves the construction of a six-lane bridge across the Detroit River between Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario, as well as associated border inspection facilities. A new border crossing is needed to support the region, state, provincial, and national economies while addressing the civil and national defense and homeland security needs of the busiest trade corridor between the United States and Canada. The crossing will provide uninterrupted traffic flow by linking Interstate 75 in Michigan with the new Herb Gray Parkway connection to Highway 401 in Ontario. The project will:

- provide new border-crossing capacity to meet increased long-term demand;
- improve system connectivity to enhance the seamless flow of people and goods;
- improve operations and processing capability in accommodating the flow of people and goods at the plazas; and
- provide reasonable and secure border crossing system options in the event of incidents, maintenance, congestion, or other disruptions.

The bridge will be named after the Floral, Saskatchewan-born Canadian ice hockey player Gordie Howe, who was best known for his tenure with the Detroit Red Wings of the National Hockey League. The Michigan Division is coordinating with Michigan DOT and the Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority on the procurement of the Public-Private-Partnership to design, construct, finance, operate, and maintain the crossing. The FHWA issued a Record of Decision on January 14, 2009 and the project received a Presidential Permit in April 2013. In June 2015, MDOT hosted a kick-off meeting for the right-of-way acquisition for the project. On December 10, 2015, Michigan DOT closed on the first parcel in the right-of-way acquisition phase of the project. This parcel is the first of approximately 700 parcels covering over 270 acres in southwest Detroit. The Gordie Howe International Bridge is scheduled to open in 2020.

Introducing Realty Colleagues



Here is Layne in the office. He is learning to play guitar in his spare time.

Layne Patton, Arizona Division Office

Following his father's lead, Layne got his start in the realty field in 1978. He began working in sales, in addition to learning to appraise rural properties, and became a Texas Real Estate Broker in 1986. He started a full-service realty business with his dad in 1985 and began taking appraisal courses, eventually becoming a certified appraiser in 1992. He worked with Texas DOT for six years and in August 2000, Layne applied to work with FHWA. Within a month he was in Washington, D.C. for training as a PDP, and a week later he was on his way to Florida to begin his PDP assignment under his coach Bill Wade. His Federal service path then included a 27-month stint with the California Division Office, leading to where he is today. Layne is proud to still be a licensed broker in Texas, although he is not active.

From 2008 to 2010, Layne Patton participated in an 18-month pilot project to explore the feasibility of resource sharing among Division Offices in the west. The pilot consisted of three FHWA Division Realty staff overseeing five states. At the end of the pilot, FHWA evaluated its effectiveness, ultimately determining that one Right-of-Way Officer serving two states is something that is practical in certain situations. Since that time, Layne has served as the Right-of-Way Officer for the FHWA Division Offices in Arizona and New Mexico—living the ups and downs of the demanding, but

rewarding schedule the arrangement creates. He divides his time based on the issues that arise in each state and travels from Phoenix, where he is based, to Santa Fe approximately 9 to 10 times per year. He jokes that sometimes he has one full-time job split evenly between the states and other times he has two full-time jobs not split at all. He adds that success is possible by being adaptable and able to adjust priorities as new matters present themselves. Layne also strives to have a good rapport with staff in both states' DOTs, which he notes goes a long way to making his shared duties possible.

Given this professional history (ask him another time about his days working in the oil fields and pipeline construction), it may not be surprising that real estate plays prominently in Layne's interests and hobbies. He is married with no kids and his five-year anniversary is approaching this May. Knowing he has a musical background (among other things), his wife bought him a guitar that he is now learning to play. In his younger days, he played the saxophone in high school where he was in the school jazz band; played in a polka band and then later was a member of the Texas A&M University marching band during his course studies. He is a 6th generation Texan and still has that Texas spirit (another family history discussion for later).

Layne is eligible to retire, but he says, "why retire when you love what you do." In retirement he plans to buy a travel trailer and see the country again with his wife and two Shih-Tzus.

Dawn Perkins, Missouri Division Office

Dawn is the Realty Specialist in the Missouri Division, but she works in a number of disciplines other than realty. Some of the areas in which she has responsibilities include the utility program and working with transportation engineers. She is a point of contact for questions the Division Office receives about Buy America and has been involved with Recovery Act projects, one of which is still active. Dawn is also the TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Discretionary Grants Program coordinator for the office. What has helped allow her to be successful doing these and other things? Dawn thinks it's

because she's had a knack for organizing her time effectively. The "juggling act" has been possible because Dawn makes a point of prioritizing the many tasks that come across her desk.



Dawn Perkins of the FHWA Missouri Division Office

Dawn keeps herself busy at home too. She supports her two children's involvement in various activities at their school and beyond. When not volunteering at school or church, Dawn facilitates her son's interest in wrestling and her daughter's interest in gymnastics. While those who know her may also know these things about her, she thought they may be surprised to find out that she managed a shoe store while in college.

If she weren't at FHWA, Dawn might be running her own engineering firm. Dawn has her Professional Engineer license and could envision herself in a consulting environment, trying to go out and find her own work.

As noted previously, Dawn was recently appointed as the St. Louis Urban Transportation Engineer in the Missouri Division Office. All of Dawn's FHWA Realty peers wish her much success in her new position!

Eric Savage, Maryland Division Office

Eric Savage says he's been on the "10-year plan." He spent 10 years as a right-of-way appraiser for the Mississippi State Highway Department—which is now Mississippi DOT, after that 10 years as Senior Appraiser for Florida DOT, and after that 10 years at Delaware DOT as Assistant Chief of Right of Way. Since 2007 (Don't do the math on this!), Eric has worked with the FHWA Maryland and District of Columbia Division Offices, overseeing right-of-way activities for both Divisions. Based out of the Maryland office, he also works on utility issues from time to time. According to Eric, there are two keys to success in his current position: having a full understanding of Federal right-of-way requirements and being able to tap into his inner patience. The latter comes with a wink and a smile.



In his spare time, Eric rebuilds classic cars. His most recent project was a 1967 pearl white Camaro, which represents the product of 8 years of Eric's steady and consistent restoration work. He tends to focus attention on rebuilding cars from '60s and '70s. It's a fun hobby for Eric, which he sometimes gets to put on display at car shows and parades.



Eric Savage of the FHWA Missouri Division Office (top) rebuilds classic cars (bottom) in his spare time.

If he weren't working at FHWA, Eric says his dream job would be less of a job and more of hobby of other sorts that most people could likely get behind: kicking back on the beach. He grew up on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi and spent treasured time on the beaches around Jacksonville, Florida. Relaxing on a beach would be a nice alternative career!

Jessica Heckter, South Carolina Division Office

The South Carolina Division Office's Jessica Hekter does not face the challenge of "being stuck in a rut." She's the lead for the planning program, the lead for air quality, and the lead for realty. She's also on a team that handles asset management topics.

Given the multiple hats she wears in the office, Jessica notes that it's hard to predict what any given day might look like. Some days are mainly ROW-focused days, others center on planning or air quality, keeping her job interesting and engaging.



One of Jessica's driving goals is to help others.

What is certain in the face of her varied work commitment is Jessica's effort to be a person who, in her words, "helps versus one who impedes." She makes it a priority to be proactive, looking for solutions and opportunities where possible instead of making findings for corrective actions. She strives to maintain a good relationship with the state DOT and to be a go-to resource for DOT staff. "Getting to yes" is one of Jessica's driving goals.

Outside of work, Jessica spends a lot of time encouraging her daughter's early enjoyment of soccer, and now that she's expecting a new child, she is trying to get caught up on her Netflix queue. Ask her sometime about binge watching action dramas! Jessica also loves the outdoors and looks forward to when she can spend more time doing outdoor activities again. If she weren't at FHWA, she thinks she might be working in the animal rescue field; currently, she does animal rescue volunteering in her spare time.

Mike Jones, FHWA Headquarters

Mike Jones jokes that as a left-handed middle child, he has a good excuse for struggling to stay on task. While those who know him may chuckle, they probably also know that, like all the other Realty staff in FHWA's Headquarters office, he has to be able to move back and forth among several different work activities at a moment's notice based on ever-changing priorities. One of Mike's roles has been that of the Realty point of contact (POC) for 13 FHWA Division Offices in the DFS-South region—the group he calls his "number one customers." He tries to respond to their requests for assistance as efficiently as he can, in the hectic DC environment. Complicating that is the fact that a typical day might include drafting and/or reviewing responses to correspondence from various government agencies or elected officials, handling calls from disgruntled property owners who might be calling from any of the 50 states, D.C., or Puerto Rico or responding to requests for assistance from his Divisions. He may be conducting a presentation at a conference, or in a webinar on a current realty topic of interest. It's interesting and always something different. He is also a State Certified General Appraiser, and with John Turpin's recent retirement, Mike is also now the FHWA's lead Realty Specialist for real property valuation issues. He is planning to conduct more real property valuation technical assistance workshops and encourages the Divisions and State DOTs to contact him with any questions about those.

Mike got his start at FHWA in 1998, working there for 3+ years before returning to the Maryland State Highway Administration where he began his Right-of-Way career in 1986. In November 2010, Mike returned to FHWA and says he's never been bored since.

When asked to discuss something unusual in his life, Mike talked about attending a one-room elementary school, where there was one teacher for six grades (and only about 12-15 students in all) —something that may be hard for some to conceptualize today, more than a decade into the 21st century. In first grade, he was one of two students. When his lone classmate was held back, Mike became the only student in his grade for the next five years! When he graduated to middle school his bus ride went from 1 mile to 15 miles – and he was no longer guaranteed to be No. 1 in his class. From that point through high school, he had about 275 classmates.



Mike Jones (left) was a commercial oyster diver in the 1980s. His youth and early adulthood were spent on a farm in rural Maryland (center). One his most memorable vacations was a snow skiing trip to Zermatt, Switzerland (right).

Mike has fond memories of his youth and early adulthood, growing up and living on a family farm. The family lived on an island in the Chesapeake Bay that was settled in the 1600s, in an area that was inhabited by Native Americans long before European settlers arrived. Over the years, Mike and each of his family members amassed their own collections of Indian artifacts (arrowheads, axes, clay pipes, etc.) Mike obtained his Bachelor Degree from Towson University and after completing his undergrad studies, he returned to the island, where he and his father together farmed approximately 1,000 acres and Mike owned a separate commercial hog operation with close to 1,000 animals. In the 1980s, Mike and his father mutually agreed to close out their two operations and sell their adjacent farms. Mike then became a commercial crabber and oyster diver before eventually finding a job listing for "ROW agent" with the Maryland State Highway Administration.....and, as they say, "the rest is history."

As you might expect, Mike loves being outside when he's not working in DC. Over the years, his outdoors passions have included hunting, fishing, golfing, snow skiing and wildlife photography - although he doesn't get the opportunity to do them as much these days. His most memorable vacation was an 8-day snow skiing trip to Zermatt, Switzerland in 2001, with a dozen or so close friends.

When his career at FHWA is over, Mike hopes to spend more time pursuing two of his passions: photography and writing - maybe focusing on commentary and op-ed pieces.