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Message from the Director

Equipped and Ready for Change

Virgil Pridemore, Office Director for the Office of Real Estate Services

It's already been a year since I became Director for the Office of Real Estate Services, and I continue to be impressed with the variety and quality of work FHWA is doing in the realty field. As I begin to think about the second year of my tenure in the position, I think about my commitment to working with my counterparts to ensure our workforce's ability to accomplish its important work in the future. It's something that may be said often, but it remains true: any successes we have come from our talented staff.

Accordingly, FHWA recently completed a workforce assessment. The purpose of the assessment was to identify and confirm how we might strengthen the delivery of our programs. The assessment results are now prompting the Headquarters office to reflect on the roles our staff serves and the work it does. We are in the midst of real and rapid change. For example, although our staffing levels remain stable, one of the bigger changes occurring is that much of our training and technology deployment functions will be transitioning to FHWA's Resource Center while most of the agency's policy, guidance, and technical assistance responsibilities will be fulfilled at Headquarters. It's certainly a deviation from how we've done things in the past, but we see this as an opportunity to reinforce our partnership with the Resource Center and ultimately provide better services to stakeholders. I'm reminded of the old adage "*You can't make progress by living in the past.*"

We're working on establishing a timeline for the changes to be implemented, but things are starting to take shape. I'm confident that once this reorganizing of responsibilities is complete our organization will be stronger and better positioned to better meet Division Office and other stakeholder needs.

News from FHWA Headquarters

Local Public Agency Stewardship and Oversight Peer Exchange

FHWA has identified local public agency (LPA) oversight as a high-visibility, high-risk area given that each year State DOTs entrust the administration of approximately \$8B in Federal-aid highway program funds to LPAs for highway projects. As such, HEPR has been undertaking a research project over recent months to compile information on effective LPA oversight practices in the realty program area. That project, which will result in what HEPR is calling an LPA Toolkit, is based on a variety of inputs including a comprehensive literature review, survey of FHWA Division Offices, and a recent "meeting of minds" at a peer exchange.

The peer exchange was one of two events convened at the U.S. DOT Volpe Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts during the first week of November 2014. One meeting, held November 3–4, entailed videoing FHWA staff as they presented a training course directed toward LPAs that acquire property for highway projects. The video will be made available to State DOTs and LPAs that are not able to participate in one of the in-person training sessions that FHWA periodically schedules across the country. The peer exchange, held on November 5–6, brought together approximately 30 subject matter experts from all levels of government to discuss LPA oversight nationwide, as well as materials that should be included in FHWA’s LPA Toolkit and the preferred method(s) of delivery for the Toolkit. The peer event provided FHWA, State DOT, and LPA staff the opportunity to share information on effective LPA oversight and stewardship practices and collaborate on the LPA Toolkit. Participants included personnel from the DOTs in Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, Ohio, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, and Washington; FHWA Headquarters; the FHWA Division Offices in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, Utah, Rhode Island, Texas, and Washington; and St. John’s County, Florida; Chatham County, Georgia; City of Georgetown, Texas; City of North Las Vegas, Nevada; and Thurston County, Washington.

Example LPA Toolkit Survey Results

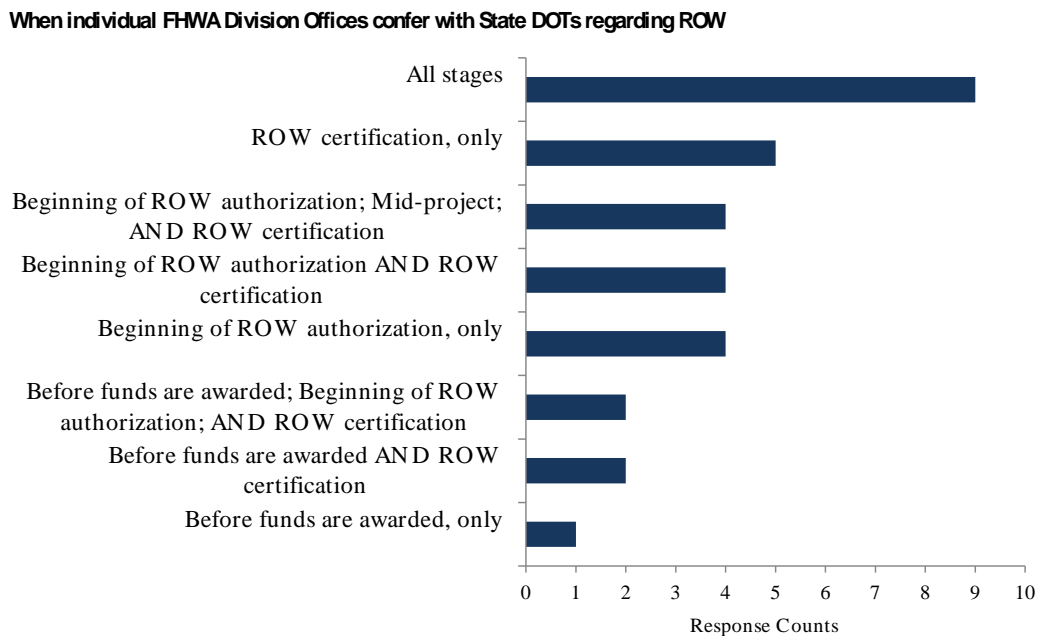


Figure 1: Summary of responses to one question on HEPR’s recent survey to Division Offices on oversight and stewardship of LPA realty activities.

Next steps for HEPR in the development in the research project are to synthesize the input received from the peer exchange and compile or develop materials for including in the LPA Toolkit. One option for the LPA Toolkit being considered is to enhance the quality and depth of information on the Right-of-Way portion of FHWA’s [Federal-aid Essentials for Local Public Agencies website](#). Federal-aid Essentials offers a central online library of informational videos and resources, designed specifically for LPAs. The site’s videos address topics by condensing the complex

regulations and requirements of the Federal-aid Highway Program into easy-to-understand concepts and illustrated examples.

Kansas Division Office: A Conversation with the Division Administrator

On December 22, 2014, Mike Bowen, the FHWA Kansas Division Office's Division Administrator (DA), sat down to talk with HEPR newsletter editors. The conversation spanned Mr. Bowen's topics from the beginnings of his career to his day-to-day activities as DA to his thoughts on the importance of FHWA Division Office leadership being knowledgeable about the Uniform Act and its requirements.

When and why did you first get into the transportation field?

I grew up during the era the country was building the Interstate. My family moved back and forth between Kansas and Missouri during my youth for my dad's job. As we drove down the roads over time, we'd see new sections of the highway being constructed—the equipment and progress were impressive. Year to year, you could see the benefits the highway was bringing to communities.

Transportation had an impact on me from those days of watching the Interstate be built. Professionally, I first entered the field in summer 1969 in Independence, KS, which is a town about 135 miles south of Topeka. Two Kansas State Highway Commission engineers that I knew talked to me about the engineering profession, and I was fortunate to get a job in their office for the summer. I started primarily doing asphalt inspections on U.S. 166 west of Coffeyville, KS.

What brought you to FHWA?

In the summers of 1971 and 1972, I worked on an Interstate construction project in Ottawa, KS. An FHWA area engineer came to the project monthly to conduct inspections. I became familiar with the work that engineer was doing and thought it was something I might like doing. Once I learned about FHWA's training opportunities, as well as the mobility possibilities given the model of having a Division Office in every state, I decided to apply for a job. Since then, I've been lucky to work for FHWA in a handful of states, starting in Kansas, leaving in 1973 for Georgia, then Arizona, California, Eastern Federal Lands, Nebraska, Illinois, Utah, Wyoming as the ADA, North Dakota as the DA, and now for the last 12 years back in Kansas as the DA. In my view, living and working in different places has given me the opportunity to gain experiences and to learn more about the country.

What does your day-to-day job look like as DA? What are some key responsibilities from your perspective?

The day-to-day DA job depends on the state. Some states need more DA-level involvement than others. A lot hinges on the quality of the relationship between the DA and state DOT executives. Here in KS, we have an excellent working relationship with Kansas DOT management. I try to use an "open-door" approach where I encourage staff to come in and discuss with me any issues they're facing—just as I encourage them to talk to and learn from each other. I also make a point to walk around the office to talk to employees to hear about the work they're doing. Sometimes, I think Division Office personnel are afraid to talk with their respective DAs. I want to avoid that dynamic, so I make it a goal to develop relationships with my staff. I want them to feel empowered to get me involved—we're all working together, after all, and therefore everyone adds value to the program.

Another important part of my job is implementing change. FHWA has evolved over the years. When Division Office staff members who have retired over the last few years run into me and ask about the highway program, the questions they have hardly relate the program as it is today. FHWA is constantly implementing positive change. With that said, I want to mentor my staff; provide them guidance; help make sure that as one generation moves on, we have left behind another generation that has confidence to continue doing the job.

In your view, how important are ROW activities in Kansas?

No matter where you are, the ROW program is an equally important program to any other program. All programs have a niche.

In your career with FHWA, have issues with ROW become more complex?

If a project comes to the division office, then its circumstances have probably already become complex. The Division Office likely won't be involved in common, straightforward projects. The state DOT approaches FHWA for guidance and direction on complicated projects. So no, I do not necessarily think they have become more complex over the last 40 years. What has changed is the public's ability to interact more or less directly with the Division Office. With the Internet and email, the Division Office is only a few keystrokes away. The public seems to know where to go now more than it did before.

What advantages does a DA have in being knowledgeable about the Uniform Act?

People who have been involved in more generalist-type positions are likely to have become aware of the Uniform Act over the course of their regular job duties. The benefit of such knowledge is that when a DA is working with ROW specialists the DA can be more aware of the type of questions that he/she should be asking. Issues change from day to day, location to location, and project to project, but knowing what to ask gives an advantage common to any project.

What resources do you rely on to stay on top of issues related to the Uniform Act?

A critical part of my job is to know my staff so I can have confidence in them. I rely on them to keep me informed about the UA and other topics. DAs cannot know everything.

What's the most effective role that a DA can play to support the Division's ROW activities?

I think the DA should be available. Staff members don't visit you unless they need to see you. So it's important to let them develop on their own but to be available when they do have a question or issue. I try to support my staff in the decisions they make, that way when they have conversations with the DOT, the DOT knows that I am informed and that the Division Office's decisions have been well thought out and discussed.

In my view, one of the hardest things about being a specialist at an FHWA Division Office is that specialist can sometimes be alone with no one to bounce ideas off of. A specialist may be the only person in the office who knows a particular topic or skill. Division Offices, on the other hand, tend to have several generalist positions. These people can easily discuss project details among themselves. Along these lines, I meet quarterly with the DAs from Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska. We discuss issues that we all are encountering. I encourage my staff to do the same: talk with each other; get to know what your colleagues do and what they know.

News from the Regional POCs

News from the Northern Corner

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

Updates from the District of Columbia

- The D.C. Division Office is actively working with the D.C. DOT on updating its Outdoor Advertising Control Federal/State agreement.

Updates from Delaware

- The DelMar Division Office recently completed work with Delaware DOT's (DelDOT) Outdoor Advertising (OA) program on increasing their signs for public service organizations and religious notices to match those of Federal regulations.

Updates from New York

- Currently, the NY Division Office is working with the Port Authority on a follow-up review completed last year. The Division is also working with New York State DOT (NYSDOT) on its quality assurance (QA) review process. The QA reviews will be conducted in all of NYSDOT's 11 regions and will look at all of the functional areas within ROW.

Updates from Pennsylvania

- The Pennsylvania Division Office welcomes Keith Lynch, the Director of Program Development, as he temporarily manages the Realty program for the Division. Keith also currently oversees planning, environment and the freight program.

News from the Western Corner

(Article by Dave Leighow, POC-West)

Updates from California

- The California Division Realty Officer, along with Maggie Duncan-Augustt and Dave Leighow of HEPR, participated in Caltrans' "Federal Land Transfer (FLT) Functional Council" meeting in September 2014. The Functional Council is a format that Caltrans uses to bring together District and HQ staff to discuss current issues in program areas (e.g., Relocation Assistance, Property Management, and FLTs) and, in this particular case, to invite representatives from other Federal land management agencies to participate. The Functional Council included representatives from two Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMAs), the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. The discussions were very informative and also helped to strengthen the working relationship between Caltrans and the FLMAs.

Participants in the meeting received copies of a comprehensive FLT manual and a CD with the manual and other documents.

Updates from Washington

- Kudos to Elizabeth Healy of the Washington Division Office and to the Realty team at the Washington State DOT for completing a review of its Right-of-Way certification process. The review team looked at two issues: (1) the frequency of and support for ROW Cert 3s and (2) the justification for a finding of “no ROW required.” A draft report has been developed and a final report is expected in the near future. This review is expected to be available to other Divisions that may wish to take a look at their respective State’s certification process.
- In February of 2014, Shomari West entered the PDP program and came into the California Division Office. Having worked with Shomari this past year, I have had the opportunity to watch him learn and grow into the Realty discipline, and have been very pleased with his progress and his enthusiasm for learning. Shomari very graciously agreed to write a brief article for the newsletter on his initial impressions of FHWA and the Realty Discipline. Here is what he wrote:
 - Hello, my name is Shomari West. I am a native of North Carolina. I began my journey with the FHWA February 24, 2014 in the California Division. I am currently a Realty/Planning PDP, spending time developing knowledge in both disciplines. Since I became a part of the FHWA family, I’ve had numerous amazing opportunities and experiences. The feeling of family I receive from coworkers and management has been very heart felt, and it has facilitated my swift transition. I’ve already completed two state assignments for a total of four months. The opportunities to learn the Realty Discipline and the details of work elements that are important to know when looking at State DOT programs from a stewardship and oversight perspective are vital.

One of the crucial things that I have learned is that you have to establish a strong working relationship with the SDOT in order to maintain a successful stewardship and oversight program. Without having a cohesive relationship, you will not know what areas states are underperforming in until a Review or Project Analysis Risk Assessment is completed. On a project level, I have noticed some inconsistency and accuracy issues and the way some regulations are interpreted. The SDOT is mindful of Federal regulatory requirements to implement the policy most of the time but will request language and guidance from the FHWA when needed. When I become a full-time Division Realty Specialist/Planner, I look forward to helping the SDOT improve its overall Realty/Planning processes. Ultimately, I want to help develop more efficient, rigorous, and streamlined programs. I am looking forward to taking advantage of many more learning opportunities provided by FHWA and the PDP Program.

Other Updates from the Western Corner

- Big news for the northwest Division Offices and State DOTs—the Northwest Regional Right of Way Conference is being planned to resume in 2015. Details are sketchy at this time, but the tentative date of the conference is the week of October 26th, and the proposed location

is Vancouver, WA. We expect to have more specific details in our Summer 2015 edition of the Newsletter.

- There has been much activity in the West with other Federal agencies. The POC-West has been providing technical assistance to several different agencies, including the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). BOR has utilized FHWA assistance on some relocations in central Washington. The USACE has received assistance on some tenant relocation issues in northern California. Also, at the request of FRA, we have provided assistance to the California High Speed Rail Authority (CAHSR) for the high speed rail project that will eventually link southern and northern California. The CAHSR has encountered a number of interesting situations involving illegal aliens and the POC-West has received significant help from the HEPR Program Development team in responding to those situations.
- Speaking of illegal aliens, one of our Western Division Realty folks asked a question about whether the recent Immigration Executive Actions/Orders would have an effect on how the agency applies the requirements of 49 CFR 24.208 regarding relocation assistance and illegal aliens. As of the date this article was prepared (12/8/14), there has been no change announced.

News from the Southern Corner

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

Funding constraints can impact our program in many ways and at many levels

In tough budgetary times, what's usually the first item in any government program or office to feel the fiscal axe? If you said "Training" - Congratulations! You win the Grand Prize! No surprise there.

The South Carolina DOT has been experiencing the same budget issues that most State DOTs have been facing for the last several years. For that reason, it's particularly impressive that the SCDOT (and particularly the SCDOT Rights of Way Office) recently sponsored a 2-day Rights of Way Symposium (September 24-25, 2014). The South Carolina Secretary of Transportation, Janet P. Oakley provided the opening remarks on Day 1 and commented: "You're the lynchpin in the middle of the project delivery process. You're the point of public engagement that frequently has the greatest impact on the public. It's critical what you do to project delivery."

"You learn more quickly under the guidance of experienced teachers. You waste a lot of time going down blind alleys if you have no one to lead you."

W. Somerset Maugham, English dramatist & novelist

The Symposium certainly provided a great opportunity for attendees to learn "... quickly under the guidance of experienced teachers". The presenters all possessed vast experience in the Real Property Acquisition Program, at the SDOT and/or FHWA levels. For FHWA's part, Jessica Hekter, South Carolina Division Realty Officer, played a key role in helping her DOT partners plan the symposium. Jessica also joined Marshall Wainright, who is FHWA's Resource Center Realty and NEPA Team Leader, in presenting a plenary session titled "MAP-21/Every Day Counts (EDC)"

session. Marshall also presented both parts of two more sessions, the “LPA Real Estate Acquisition” and “Real Estate Acquisition under the Uniform Act” sessions.



Jessica Hekter, SC Division Realty Officer Marshall Wainright, Resource Center Team Leader

When asked, the SCDOT Rights of Way Director Brian Keys stated, “I think it’s been tremendous. I’ve had overwhelmingly positive comments from the staff and our partners in business, appraisers, FHWA, our Local Public Agencies and consultants.”

The event drew nearly 200 attendees, including SCDOT staff, Local Public Agency (LPA) staff, independent fee appraisers, ROW consultants, and FHWA Realty staff. The sessions’ subjects included Acquisition and Appraisal Basics, Acquisition under the Uniform Act (Parts 1 & 2), Plans Reading, Dealing with Utilities and Railroads, Title Research, Outdoor Advertising, Conflict Management, Time Management, LPA ROW Project Issues, Conflict Management, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and State Legal Information.



Some of the SCDOT staff who attended the 2014 “Rights of Way Symposium”

So...:

- “Kudos” to the South Carolina DOT’s leadership for recognizing the inherent importance and value in developing and maintaining a knowledgeable and well-trained workforce, not just in the “good” times – but during “tough” times as well; and,
- “Kudos” to Jessica and Marshall for assisting the DOT and for providing the Federal perspective to the Symposium’s content.

Major Changes

Similar to many other States, Mississippi has been addressing the size of its realty workforce. The reality is that the workload for its realty workforce has dwindled over the last couple of years, resulting in the MDOT’s decision to reduce its ROW staff and implement major changes to the Division.

In the summer of 2014, some of MDOT’s ROW staff was moved to other Divisions within the agency. Then, on October 16, 2014, MDOT did a reduction in force of 44 employees - thereby reducing the staff of the Right of Way Division by more than 50 percent. The reduction included all of the right of way agents in the Property Titles, Appraisal/Appraisal Review and Acquisition sections. Additionally, MDOT put a new leadership team in place over a month prior to the reduction in force and the Division was reorganized structurally into Administrative and Operations functions. Rick Mangrum, FHWA’s Mississippi Division Realty Officer, is working with the MDOT in the implementation of the changes to their ROW program. Some of MDOT’s major tasks are updating the MDOT ROW Manual and developing/implementing “on-call” ROW consultant contracts. Both processes are underway.

Rick observed that he has to learn the remaining employees’ responsibilities, some of whom are performing new roles. Additionally, he has to work with MDOT to define the necessary roles and responsibilities to ensure proper oversight of the ROW program, especially since more work will be outsourced. Once all the new structures are in place, and the new processes are implemented, the Division will conduct reviews to insure that all areas of the Realty Program remain in compliance. Over time, the Mississippi Division and Mr. Mangrum have built a solid relationship with MDOT. Through it all, Rick remains confident that MDOT Right of Way Division will efficiently move the program forward. So “stay tuned” ... there will be more updates on their progress over the course of the next year or so.

“Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.”

George S. Patton, General, U.S. Army

News from the Mid-American Corner

(Article by Bruce Bradley, POC-Mid-America)

Updates from Michigan

We would like to welcome Patrick Marchman, AICP, as the Environment and Right-of-Way Program Manager for FHWA’s Michigan Division. Patrick has worked as an environmental planner for the

past 10 years at the U.S. Army Reserve, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. He is new to the ROW discipline but is looking forward to learning everything to effectively serve as a ROW specialist.

Updates from North Dakota

One segment of the Williston Bypass project has been completed and the North Dakota State DOT is in the process of planning a second phase near Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. As a recipient of a Tiger Grant for the [Fort Berthold Comprehensive Regional Transportation Planning Project](#), the DOT is conducting a series of studies (including ROW) to accommodate changes to the transportation network for the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation caused by energy development. Stephanie Hickman certainly has her hands full in serving as the Planning and Program Development Team Leader responsible for the realty program.

Updates from Nebraska

In September of 2014, Erich Hines began the PDP program sponsored by the Nebraska Division. He's originally from North Carolina, and Justin Luther will be his coach. Before coming to FHWA, he worked internationally for charity and has served in the United States Army. He has degrees from Queen's University of Charlotte and New York University.

Updates from Wisconsin

We would like to welcome Joel Batha as the Realty Specialist with collateral duties in civil rights. Joel comes to the Wisconsin Division office after having served for over 15 years in various capacities in the Wisconsin DOT, Bureau of Technical Services. For much of Joel's tenure, he served in a statewide capacity in the areas of acquisition and litigation. Because of Joel's law background, he functioned in a liaison capacity between the WisDOT, its Office of General Counsel and the lawyers representing WisDOT from the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

The Wisconsin Division Office Realty updates:

- Ongoing Stewardship and Oversight of the Division's PoCI's and PoDI's;
- Assisting with WisDOT's efforts to implement MAP 21 changes in relocation benefits – particularly relating to higher Federal benefit levels in residential replacement housing and nonresidential fixed move payments, which now exceed maximums provided under state law;
- Wisconsin Division and WisDOT LPA Program Manager invited to participate in the November LPA Peer Exchange organized by HEPR and the Volpe Center. WisDOT is "borrowing" some excellent ideas presented, which ideas will eventually end up in a FHWA LPA Toolkit.

News from the Resource Center

(Article by Michele Palicka, FHWA Resource Center and Georgia Division Office)

Best wishes for a Happy and Prosperous 2015 to everyone from the Resource Center Realty Team. We would like to thank everyone for helping us achieve a very productive and successful year in 2014.

The Realty section is still fairly new to the Resource Center but we have accomplished a lot in our first 2 years thanks to all of our partners. The realty team presented ROW workshops and assisted in reviews in 20 different states and one territory last year; a few states we had the pleasure of visiting two or three times in 2014. The Resource Center Team was involved in many different activities this past year:

- Relocation training in New Mexico and Nebraska;
- Negotiation training in Louisiana, Illinois, Georgia, and New Mexico;
- NHI Training classes in Virginia, Montana and Idaho;
- Appraisal and Appraisal Review classes in Massachusetts, Alabama, South Carolina, and New Mexico;
- Uniform Act and Local Public Agency training in Virginia and Utah, Outdoor Advertising training in Pennsylvania and a Property Management presentation in Puerto Rico.

We also participated in a project review in New York City; a project review and certification review in Washington State; Outdoor Advertising Reviews in Missouri and Illinois; an Administrative Settlement and Appraisal Waiver review in Delaware; and assisted the headquarters' office with State Implementation Plan reviews. Marshall Wainright represented our office at and participated in the AASHTO Subcommittee on ROW, Utilities, and Outdoor Advertising annual meeting in Utah; the 60th IRWA Annual meeting in Connecticut; the 22nd Annual Minnesota DOT ROW Professionals Workshop; South Carolina's 2nd Right of Way Professionals Symposium. Additionally, he assisted headquarters with an LPA Peer Exchange in Massachusetts. We thoroughly enjoyed our time out in the field with FHWA division realty officers and specialists, the State DOT representatives, ROW consultants, and local government staffs. Every time we travel and work with all of you, we learn something new while learning more about what is going on in the field.

We are off to a busy start in 2015 with several workshops planned for the first few months of the year in different parts of the country. To assist our partners with their training needs, we have created [Workshop Flyers](#) that highlight established training workshops we have developed. Our workshops include training on:

- Essential Requirements of the Uniform Act
- Residential and Business Relocation
- Negotiations and Acquisition
- Appraisal Principles under the Uniform Act
- ROW 101
- Outdoor Advertising

- NEPA and ROW Integration
- Essentials of ROW Program Management

The workshop flyers with detailed information are available [here](#). We have created standard presentations for all of the topics above but are more than willing to work with you to customize the training to your particular needs. The workshops can be altered by combining different topics, emphasizing particular hot topics in your state or adjusting the time frames to make sure we fit your training needs. *Also, if you would like a specific flyer, the Resource Center is more than happy to mail or email one to your Division Office.*

One exciting development in 2015 we would like to share with all of you is the increased involvement of FHWA staff in the delivery of NHI ROW classes in the future. We hope this will increase the federal perspective in the training as FHWA staff will be able to share their federal experiences and the federal view on current issues. We believe this is a great tool to broaden the exposure of our staff as well as learn different topics and issues from around the country. This should be a win-win for everyone.

In the year ahead, we look forward to working with as many of you as possible. Please remember, we are here to help you with training or to help you find the information you are looking for to make better decisions; please do not hesitate to call us for assistance. If you have a suggestion on how we can do our jobs better, we really would like to hear from you. If you have an idea for a new training workshop, we would love to hear your suggestions. Please call Marshall Wainright at (404)562-3692, Michele Palicka at (404)562-3918 or Chrisy Currier at (512)536-5931 with any ideas and suggestions. We need all of you to make sure we are on the right track in 2015 and in the years to come.

Thank you all again to all our partners who aid us in our success in the Resource Center. We look forward to hearing from all of you soon!

Innovative Approaches and Tools

Panel Discussion on Business Relocation

Government programs designed to benefit the public as a whole often result in acquisition of private property, and sometimes in the displacement of people from their residences, businesses, nonprofit organizations, or farms. On January 7, 2015, HEPR convened an expert panel to discuss challenges and effective practices related to business relocations, with focus given to the relocation of complex business and industrial operations. The following subject matter experts graciously volunteered time to participate in the discussion: Bob Cunningham of Delaware DOT (DelDOT), Robert Knight, Gillian Bernard, Steve Carlton, Jesse Moss of Florida DOT (FDOT), Danny Johnson of Washington State DOT (WSDOT), and Cassandra Walbrun and Dawn Van Oudenhoven of Wisconsin DOT. Maggie Duncan-Augustt, Mike Jones, and Dave Leighow of HEPR also participated.

Please talk about your agency's business relocation program—e.g., size of staff; centralized or decentralized operation; do you have relocation agents who specialize in relocating businesses; do you prepare a business relocation plan?

Florida: FDOT is a decentralized agency. We have seven (7) District offices and a Turnpike Enterprise serving the State of Florida. Use of the single-agent concept varies depending on District's preference. For those Districts that do invoke the single-agent concept, ROW agents are responsible for the duties associated with acquisition, relocation, and property management. Furthermore there is no specificity for our relocation agents, they are equipped and expected to more than adequately handle any relocation type that arises.

Washington: Washington State is a centralized state meaning all reviews for the state are done through our Headquarters office. WSDOT has six different regions, and each region has its own relocation staff. Currently, there are 10 staff members in the six regions and two employees in Headquarters relocation. With that said, those agents do all general relocation. They do everything from residential relocation, to non-residential, and personal property only relocations. We do have one agent who specializes in complex relocations and non-residential moves. He does work in all of the regions, wherever he is needed. Historically, we have had two, but we are now down to one technical expert in the non-residential field.

Wisconsin: WisDOT does about 60 or so non-residential relocations per year. We are primarily a decentralized operation, with a centralized policy development and business relocation oversight. In WisDOT's five regions, there are a total of nine agents assigned to relocations, but some of those also conduct acquisitions as well. With limited staffing resources, consultants provide about 50 percent of WisDOT's relocation work, and the regions manage those consultants. I am the statewide facilitator, and we have a half-time facilitator to assist me in the review of our relocation plans and non-residential relocations. While we do not have agents who are specialized directly in business relocations, we do have a number of senior relocation agents.

Delaware: Although Delaware is the second smallest state, DelDOT is currently a decentralized agency. Our area is probably the same as the other state's districts. But that has recently been changing. About six months ago, a business centralization process began, and now all the acquisitions and relocations are handled out of the Dover office. There still are field offices. Our agents work on the one-agent concept and they all do both acquisitions and relocations. We are also working toward establishing relocation mentors, which would be a situation where the senior agents take others under their wing. That activity is under way, so for now all of the agents do all of the relocation work.

Briefly describe a complex business relocation your agency has handled. What worked well, and what did not work well on that relocation?

Florida: In 2013, FDOT District 5 office moved a tenant - a coin-operated laundry business - that was in a standalone building located in a downtown area. This business had been in the same location for quite some time. Some of the challenges involved with moving the business were:

- High rents in the area (the laundry business had been paying the same rent for a long time)
- New zoning requirements

- Difficulty finding a replacement location. There were few, if any, landlords willing to rent to a laundry facility, and it was hard to find a comparable location that was nearby the laundry business' customer base.
- Because it was a laundry facility, there were quite a bit of impact fees; there were things required such as going from septic to sewer connections and so forth.

Ultimately, the business owner found a replacement facility, but it was part of a strip mall, and the building required many modifications to accommodate the laundry operation. The owner retained a specialized mover, whose profession was retrofitting and rebuilding laundries, and FDOT wanted to use someone who was certified since much of the laundry equipment was still under warranty.

Before the move started, a meeting with the business owner was held to discuss the requirements and to review the move estimate. Displacee was also provided with a description of the expenses that were covered and not covered along with a payment schedule. Due to the substantial amount of modifications required, District paid on a schedule so that the business owner received payment upon completion of required activities. This practice was applied throughout the entire relocation process of the business.

What worked well in that relocation was very early communication with the owner and contractor; ensuring that the proper experts were involved; and, having an advanced payment schedule tied to performance benchmarks. Some things that didn't work well had to do with internal processes. Because a lot of the checks were ordered early, a lot of explanations had to be made to FDOT's financial departments. In some cases, the payment amount would change, requiring FDOT to scramble to get the relocatee paid within a reasonable amount of time. One of the surprises of this relocation was that about a year after the facility was relocated, FDOT received a call from the county looking for our records regarding relocation costs, which had to do with the individual's tangible taxes, which was a very unique experience.

Washington: A few months ago, WSDOT completed a relocation that started four or five years ago. It was a large industrial oil recycling plant. It was definitely a very complicated relocation from the get go and was a unique case where the displacee was a tenant on the site and the owner went through the inverse condemnation process and won.

WSDOT relocated the owner but the unique part is that through the inverse condemnation process it was never disclosed to us that there was also a tenant on site. The tenant was a large industrial recycling operation similar to the parcel owner's business. Long story short, WSDOT realized after the inverse condemnation process that there was a tenant that needed to be relocated, which complicated things because we typically go out early in advance and walk through with the owner and the appraiser, but in this case that didn't happen.

We ended up assigning a very qualified agent with taking on the relocation. However, due to the project's long timeframe, WSDOT lost this agent and the next assigned through attrition, and over the course of the project the relocation was assigned to four different agents. That in and of itself created a little bit of confusion, especially for this complex relocation. In the end, we determined that we needed a move planner and the owner of the plant suggested a consultant that the company had used in the past when it established new plants. The consultant specialized in permitting and the environment processes and could help the business get started in a new location. For us it was a

no-brainer. It was definitely unique and complicated enough that WSDOT approved this move planner. The agent that ended up closing the file sat down with the move planner and, over the course of a few months, taught them about the Uniform Act. WSDOT's agent educated the move planner on what could and couldn't be paid for under the CFR's. One of the trickier parts of relocating the oil recycling plant was that almost everything on site was considered personal property. The equipment was all part of a massive system that took up acres. Once the move planner was up to speed on the relocation, everything went quickly and easily. The move planner would write up a recommendation on what needed to be done and cite the law, adding photo exhibits for clarification.

I would say a lesson learned is that having multiple staff reassigned to a parcel mid-project is very challenging. What went well was that once we had a qualified agent on staff, that person was able to work closely with the move planner. They developed a rapport that helped get the business moved, set up, and functioning afterward very successfully.

Wisconsin: (*Kassandra*) Wisconsin has a specific law providing businesses that have to be relocated with a replacement payment that is above and beyond anything the Uniform Act provides. This does create some scenarios where WisDOT has to look at different issues than the UA requires to provide that payment. Wisconsin state law requires the preparation of a relocation plan, and it has specific criteria. Through the relocation plan effort, WisDOT interviews relocatees very early on in the process before actually starting an acquisition or relocation. I'm going to pass it over to Dawn to talk about a wild game farm relocation that I think is really instructive.

(*Dawn*): WisDOT approached what appeared to be a site for a residential relocation as a result of a highway improvement. At the time of relocation interview, WisDOT discovered that the property owner was also running a game bird farm business on site. When our engineering staff reviewed the site, they thought it was simply a gentleman who had some birds, more of a hobby type situation. As it turned out, it was a unique business, which included a hatchery site with about 700 wild game and exotic game birds that some of which were sold and others which reproduced. He also had about 1,000 chicks.

One of the major challenges associated with this relocation was that the timeframe to perform the acquisition, relocation, and move was limited to approximately six months. Finding out about the bird farm resulted in a late design change; so by the time WisDOT figured out a business relocation would be necessary, there was very little time to actually complete the move. There was also little time to move the birds because of their hatching season. When birds are moved, it may affect their hatching cycles. It was also estimated that during the move approximately 8—10 percent of the birds would die during the catching and caging process, the stress of the move, or the inability to adapt to new habitat (Only a certain amount of birds could be moved at once because they had to slowly get used to the new habitat).

And then there was the question of how moving the birds would be handled. The business owner was not aware of anyone who could do the move, so WisDOT talked about doing a self-move. WisDOT staff contacted local zoo staff and wild game farms to gain knowledge as to what might be required in such a move and whether there were any local movers who could do it.

Ultimately, the zoo contact helped WisDOT find a company that could move the birds. We were advised that the move would be extremely costly and that the owner would risk losing many birds during the move. There was the underlying question of what the cost would be if the high-dollar birds died, or no longer reproduced as a result of the relocation. For this reason, WisDOT made the decision to buy the birds instead of having to pay to relocate them. In the end, the business owner purchased the birds back from us for a dollar and then was responsible for the move: any mortality that occurred during the move would be his responsibility. He agreed to this approach.

The relocation eventually ended with the owner moving to another 20-acre parcel that he owned that housed a deer farm. He built a new residence on-site and replicated many of the ponds, pens, and landscaping that had previously been on the original site. He was able to successfully transfer the birds—only suffering a small loss during the move. We were able to complete the relocation during the six month timeline. So essentially WisDOT was able to work around the hatching season, moving the birds during the fall, and the business owner was able to replicate all the pens needed to move the birds in a timely fashion.

What worked well is that we had really good communication throughout the process between the agency and the owner. The agent took the time to understand how the business operated and to understand the owner's concerns with the move. We continued to gain knowledge about wild game farms. What also helped was understanding the timeline and how it was going to affect the move. In this case, timing was important due to the hatching season and weather needed to move birds safely. We capitalized on existing resources, such as the zoo personnel, to familiarize ourselves with the business' needs. There are specialized movers, for example, and builders who are familiar with the construction of game farms. We talked with them too. It was all part of problem solving and working through a difficult situation to reach an end result that worked best for the agency and the business owner.

Things that didn't work well: the late design change didn't give us a lot of time to actually know what type of challenges we'd face. And the region, nor really anyone else in our state, was familiar with this type of facility and relocating all of these birds. The short timeframe to complete the relocation also made it very difficult and added tension to the move, all of which we were able to work through.

Delaware: I am fairly new to Delaware but have over 20 years of experience from elsewhere, so my example is from my previous experience. The project involved a relocation of a high-end tackle and sporting goods store. I was the District Manager at the time, and the project came to me as an appeal. The owner had to move the company's property from one site to another, which was determined to be a temporary move, for which the business wanted to be compensated.

The move included high-end mahogany racks that had to have very specialized moving equipment. It couldn't just be thrown into packing crates and moved. Additionally, the company had a very thriving Internet business – about 50 percent of its sales. It overnight ships sporting goods across the world, for example, to sportspeople in professional fishing or hunting events in Dubai or Australia. If the business can't ship what the fishermen and hunters need, then they will go elsewhere with their business. For this reason, the business was very concerned about being unable to provide its Internet service for any period of time, and thus the DOT had to find a way to move the Internet business, which of course, is not just about unplugging servers, driving 20 miles, and

plugging them back in again. We had to have the business' new server up and running prior to it having its existing server disconnected.

The business ended up moving without really notifying or working with the relocation agents. This is a case that went into condemnation. As it went into condemnation, the sides didn't want to talk to each other, and as we all know when you're going through a relocation, talking is the number one thing that has to occur. When the displacee doesn't want to discuss issues with the state, and the state isn't getting any feedback, it becomes problematic.

The "kicker" of the story is that the owner was a really detail-oriented CPA, so he had miles of files – every receipt and income statement – which came into play when the DOT started to research the relocation and look into the Code of Federal Regulations. Even though they didn't give us notice of the move, they had verifiable records and good documentation, and because of this, the DOT was advised to compensate the move. Eventually, the business moved into a new site, and the DOT worked close with it to compensate the eligible expenses.

Unfortunately, the situation continued, because the business lost its lease on the site determined to be a temporary move (while they were trying to build a new site). About a year later, the DOT went through the entire process again. Since then, the business has moved into another location, essentially another move of the same nature, and is now they are trying to move again.

I think what worked well is that once we had information on what the owner had, we formed a team because, again there were literally stacks of documentation that we had to go through in order to verify what type of payments, if any, were eligible. Also, once we began communication with the owner, it was a lot easier to move along and things worked better. What didn't work well was at the initial start of the process when the communication broke down. The agent involved may not have anticipated the challenging scenario that was faced, starting off with a moving estimate that involved a typical moving firm to move stuff by truck a few miles. This was not that type of move. I believe that that is really something you need to look at. We may have needed to have people who were really relocation experts to get involved earlier, and that wasn't done.

Identify two or three successful practices your agency has used to facilitate the timely relocation of complex business operations.

Florida: Regardless of complexity, there are fundamental essentials that must be achieved for all relocations to ensure success. These essentials can range from early and often communication to providing a prompt response to displacee's concern. These fundamental essentials help build trust and are vital to overall success of all relocations.

Washington: One of the things that I've found to be invaluable doing complex relocations is for the relocation agent to accompany the appraiser and owner during the walkthrough. I can't stress that enough. If you get the opportunity to go out there with the appraiser and the owner, discuss personalty and realty, hear what they're saying, it can really eliminate surprises, disagreements, and appeals later on, and it also lets the agent understand how that large, random piece of equipment fits into the big picture. The relocation agent can talk to the owner and ask questions like: who's your vendor? Where did you buy it? How do you move it in? It allows you to start planning how you're going to successfully relocate that business. This is definitely a practice we like

to employ in Washington on our complex relocations. We try to do it on all of our relocations, but it's not always possible.

Another thing that our current relocation agent who specializes in complex relocations has had really great success with is to get the business owners to write the recommendation for reimbursement for him. He educates the owners on the Washington State Administrative Code and which laws apply to their claims. I think it's successful because he is really involving the owners in the payment process. They develop a sense of ownership over the process. Usually, business owners are educated people, and they can write pretty convincing arguments for why they should be paid. Those are two things that WSDOT has done with great success.

Wisconsin: (Kassandra) I totally agree with what Washington State is doing about relocation agents accompanying the appraiser. All of our appraisals are conducted by consultants and that coordination early-on is very important during the walkthrough to understand what is personal property, what is real property, what is going to be purchased, what's going to be moved. It really sets the right tone for the entire conversation. I think where we've seen the most difficulty is where that is not done upfront and the appraiser misses something, or the appraiser assumes something, or the relocation agent just doesn't have enough information to go on when he/she walks through the door. So this is something we continue to message from headquarters to the regions and consultants. Unfortunately, I don't think this happens in every case with every relocation.

Some relocations are more straightforward business moves, but the extensive ones (maybe where there is a lot of equipment or where there are convenience stores) require early planning. WisDOT's plan development process helps us with the coordination between the regions and the headquarters office, which approves the plans and business relocations, because we have a better idea of what to expect. When things do come up and there are questions about eligibility, having that communication right away can help to problem solve before actually getting a claim item for reimbursement and there having been no communication; that can sometimes create difficult situations.

(Dawn) Doing the interview process early and talking things through with business owners to understand the challenges to be faced is an effective practice. For example, I have a pharmacy relocation approaching. They have to supply nursing homes making the move critical to be performed within a 24 hour period and on a Sunday allowing the business to continue their operations. If you can get everyone involved early on, it can make the process easier. Advanced planning will allow for both the agent and business owner to feel more confident about the move prior to the relocation and be able to better plan when the time comes to perform the actual move.

Delaware: I could say ditto. Early communication is important. One of the things we try to stress, because we have the ability to do so here, is to have the same team deal with the business owner from the beginning through to the end. It may not be the same agent, but the team will be there, and the groups can build up a rapport early on.

The other thing we do on a team basis, especially for complex relocations, is to encourage agents to run questions up the food chain to see if other people in the agency have ideas. We tend to do a lot of "column A column B" type stuff, when there really are other options – like purchase of substitute personal property or loss of tangible assets available. When an owner hears the options that are

available through the relocation process, it gives them more confidence. It gives them a feeling that they can participate and are not just being told what to do.

What recommendations can you offer to enhance the successful relocation of a business?

Wisconsin: (*Kassandra*) I think there are a number of agents who are at that stage in their career where they are beginning to mentor newer agents in the relocation field. You don't just walk out the door and become a relocation agent right away. It does take time. This is an important aspect that WisDOT is trying to accommodate to some degree.

Another point that I think is really useful is encouraging our own project designers and engineers to offer as much time as they can to the relocation agents working with the businesses being relocated. As we noted in our example, having six months to relocate a bird farm was unrealistic, but having the other disciplines involved help make it possible. That is an important concept: relocation for businesses needs added time in the project process. We need to communicate with the businesses and move forward. There are cases where we have more than enough time, but more often than not, I don't think there is the understanding out there about how much time is needed to complete a business relocation.

Delaware: One of the things we're facing that is probably consistent with our fellow northeast states is that we don't do much new alignment anymore. We mostly do rehabilitations. The amount of business relocations never was a high number the last 25 years, but it's being going down slowly because we don't impact them that much. What we're finding is that when we've gone to the one-agent concept is that an agent may acquire and relocate, say, a gas station today and then never do it again for years. Relocation is an experience that you have to keep trying and learning and doing it. It's constantly changing. Therefore, we're trying to create a mentoring system, where people who are really experts in the field are teaching more junior staff. We don't want people to retire and take all the knowledge with them.

We also acknowledge we're all human beings here. Occasionally, something doesn't work. We tell our agents, in those cases, keep trying. Keep working on it, but if you get stuck, it's always okay to shift to another agent. Sometimes it's an oil and vinegar situation, and it's best to have another person step in.

The last thing we have is that agents start from the public information stages and work on the project until the end. The business owners become familiar with people's faces, and they get to know the DOT staff that will be helping them relocate.

Washington: One thing we've done that we've had a lot of success with is having multiple relocation agents who specialized in complex business relocations. They worked in all four corners of the state. It didn't mean they were necessarily stationed or assigned to a certain region. When the state displaced a complex business, that's where the work was. We had a lot of success having agents specialize in complex, non-residential relocation.

Florida: As previously stated, establishing early and often communication is considered a fundamental essential for a successful relocation. We cannot assist unless we have a total

understanding of the displacee's needs. It is also imperative that the displacee knows that his/her concern, once expressed, will be addressed in a timely manner regardless of agent's current workload. Of course to accomplish this, one must also have a knowledgeable staff on hand as well.

Do all of your states utilize a process where the relocation agent goes out to the business with the appraiser? If so, are there any problems with doing so in a consistent basis?

Washington: We do our best. We try to get relocation out on site to do the walkthroughs, and for the most part we've been successful. I will tell you from experience that the one problem we've seen is that we can throw a massive team on site, and I think it can be overwhelming for the owner when a troop of six or eight DOT workers walk through the door. It's not always just the appraiser and relocation agent. Occasionally, the review appraiser comes. Occasionally, the acquisition agent comes. There can be any number of people there, and there can be so much information thrown at an owner that it can get overwhelming. We're all trying to help, but this can be a downside of having another person be present at the walkthrough.

Delaware: We do in Delaware. I agree with Washington; we try not send out the 5th battalion. We just send one person out: the person who is most likely to work on the project. If it's a complex relocation we might send out a mentor along with the relocation agent, because sometimes we're not just dealing with an owner occupant, but also an owner and a tenant, and the owner often don't want their tenants getting scared about what is going on. We want to avoid this issue.

Wisconsin: *(Kassandra)* We experience challenges with this, because consultants do our appraisals. When we have a consultant coordinating with another consultant it can sometimes create issues. Recently, we've encountered challenges on relocations, because the message from the consultant isn't making it from the consultant to the region and then to headquarters clearly. We're working on ways to address this challenge. What we want to do is get out ahead of those relocations that we believe will be more complex, more detailed, and have specific issues that we'll need to address and get ahead of it rather than waiting until we have an appraisal and trying to pattern ourselves into a good situation. We don't have enough staff to worry about having a team that will overwhelm property owners, but I can say this: on occasions there will be attorneys representing the businesses that are being relocated on site, and they like to mash relocation and condemnation issues together. This can overwhelm the DOT staff, because there aren't agency attorneys present.

Have you considered using the appraisal scope of work as a means to facilitate having a relocation agent to accompany the appraiser?

Wisconsin: *(Kassandra)* We plan to add this to our scope of services. We have a master contact situation where every two years, appraisers can apply to the state with their qualifications to be put on the master contract list. Our regions can then hire those appraisers from the list. This is one provision that we'll be adding to the next master contract cycle. We also encourage our regions to include this provision in their scope of services.

Federal regulations allow for the use of move planners. What has your overall experience been in dealing with move planners?

Washington: Generally, it's been challenging for WSDOT to work with move planners. We've struggled with it a bit. A lot of times the move planners will submit claims for things that aren't eligible or for things that are eligible but that the agent assigned is already working on. More often than not, we see noncomplex businesses wanting to hire a move planner, when it may not be necessary.

Delaware: We haven't used them at this point.

Florida: We've had mixed results.

Wisconsin: *(Kassandra)* We don't see move planners very often. In the last several years, there's maybe been one that I'm aware of, and it was for a chemical plant—very specialized, lots of regulations, safety concerns, permitting issues, etc. It was our agency decision to go to a move planner. I find it interesting that Washington actually has move planners going to particular project areas and trying to blanket them.

Introducing Realty Colleagues

Hugh Hadsock

Hugh Hadsock began at FHWA in 2008 in the Arkansas Division Office and advanced through the PDP program as a mid-career hire. Now based out of Salt Lake City, UT, Hugh is the ROW and Utility Program Manager for both the Utah and Nevada Division Offices. He finds that although he serves the same role for both States, much of his work in Utah is centered on activities at the overarching program level while his work in Nevada is more project-specific. In order to successfully fulfill his responsibilities in both States, Hugh has tried to remain flexible and willing to shift priorities to address urgent problems as they emerge.

Prior to working at FHWA, Hugh worked as a consultant for 10 years, specializing in relocation and acquisition. He first became interested in the realty discipline when a former South Carolina DOT executive, who happened to be a good friend of Hugh's, left the DOT to start a right-of-way acquisition company. Hugh's friend asked Hugh to join because he thought Hugh's previous management experience would be an asset to the new business. Hugh now holds his real estate license in six different states, and he has completed the classwork necessary to be a certified appraiser.

When not working at FHWA, Hugh mans his own barbeque catering company called Huey's Carolina Q. He encourages people to ask him about the subtle differences between South- and North-Carolina-style barbeque. Hugh also loves camping, especially in National Parks including



Figure 2: Hugh Hadsock standing beside his trailer-mounted barbeque grill.

Arches, Zion, Bryce, and perhaps his favorite: Moab. While hiking, Hugh has seen both wolves and black bears. Hugh is also very involved in community service in his region. He has served twice as the Director of “Draper Days,” a community festival held the third week in July. The festival, which draws around 80,000 people, consists of more than 20 events including a pancake breakfast, parade, live concerts, and a fireworks show.

If Hugh were not working for FHWA he would be interested in serving in a public office or even working in barbeque full time. That said, he would also be interested in spending the end of his FHWA career working in Washington D.C., before retiring to the beach.

Mary Jane Daluge

Mary Jane Daluge has been a member of the FHWA Office of Real Estate Services Program Development Team since 2008. She first worked in the Outdoor Advertising Control program area, but now she serves as the “Relocation” point of contact, responding to questions from the field. Mary Jane thrives on juggling many responsibilities, including developing policy and guidance that have national implications.

Mary Jane has had an interesting history working in the realty discipline. She entered it with a Bachelor’s degree in Business Management from the University of Maryland. She first worked as a Realty Specialist and housing inspector for the Department of Defense at a U.S. Air Force base in Upper Heyford, England. In this role she inspected off-base housing and set rents for the various units based on local economic factors. The houses that she helped rent to Americans during this time ranged from a wing in a manor house that had a helicopter pad to a cottage on a pig farm. The job allowed her to meet a diverse cross-section of British citizens and sample a variety of fish and chip lunches.



Figure 3: Mary Jane Daluge has been with FHWA Headquarters since 2008.

Later, Mary Jane worked for the Idaho Department of Transportation, where she received excellent training in right of way. She joined FHWA in 1991 and participated in the ROW Training Program for one year, working in both the Georgia and Wisconsin Division Offices. After this she worked in the California Division Office from 1992—2000, during which the last two years she served as the Civil Rights Program Manager. In 2000, Mary Jane moved to the Resource Center in Atlanta to work as a Civil Rights Specialist. She developed and delivered customized training, including Sexual Harassment Prevention. One of the most interesting trainings she delivered was to the approximately 300 Department of Public Works employees in the US Virgin Islands. Many of the participants were unable to speak or read English, and to overcome this Mary Jane relied on role-playing. Following this position, Mary Jane continued to work in other Division Offices, including Oklahoma for two years as the Realty Officer and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program Manager and Florida for another two years as the Civil Rights Program Manager.

When not working in realty, Mary Jane is an enthusiastic traveler. While living in England she took advantage of the ability to travel, visiting Sweden, Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, Austria, Greece, and Israel. In Egypt, she took a three-week course on the history and culture of the country, touring the Pyramids and Nile River along the way. Mary Jane also visited Korea while living in Japan. Since returning to the U.S., she has traveled to Brazil and Alaska. No one place has been her favorite above the others, but the search continues!

Having grown up in a small town in Wisconsin, Mary Jane now loves living in urban environments, and especially in D.C. where most of her 30-minute commute is done by walking. Nevertheless, she remains a Green Bay Packers fan. Aside from football, Mary Jane enjoys attending the theatre and seeing independent films, as well as golfing, swimming, and occasionally playing Bridge when she can find others who like to just play for fun.



Figure 4: Rick Mangrum is an avid outdoorsman. Here he holds up a catch.

Rick Mangrum

Rick Mangrum oversees the Right of Way (ROW) Program in the FHWA Mississippi Division Office. Rick works directly with the Mississippi Department of Transportation (DOT) and the State Aid Office that handles all of the county roads, where he addresses ROW issues. While ROW is a centralized function at Mississippi DOT, each district has its own ROW coordinator and Rick coordinates with each of them. In his job, Rick also reviews and approves ROW certifications, works with the public and contractors, and helps with utility relocation and property management aspects of projects (e.g., approving surplus property sales). Recently, a large focus of his efforts has been working with local public agencies. Mississippi DOT, in fact, has its own LPA division and Rick has worked with FHWA Headquarters staff to train the DOT on how to improve LPA stewardship and oversight.

Rick attended the University of Southern Mississippi where he was in the paralegal program. At the time, he wanted to get into oil and gas leasing, and did so for a little while, until the market changed. He relied on the professional contacts he had developed along the way to learn about job opportunities elsewhere. The search led to a job working in the ROW field for the Mississippi Highway Department in Division

Office 6.

Rick enjoys spending time with his children and three grandchildren. He also loves to shoot skeet, hunt deer, and fish when he can find the time. If he were not working at FHWA and assuming he could make it work financially, Rick thinks he might be a cowboy, although he would miss working in realty.

Melissa Corder

Melissa Corder is a Realty Specialist in the FHWA Maryland Division Office. (The Delaware and Maryland Division offices recently



separated to individual Division offices with shared resources, as they were formerly the DelMar Division.) Melissa’s multi-faceted job includes ensuring Federal-aid compliance in the Right of Way and Outdoor Advertising Programs, responding to industry and public inquiries, and spending one to three days in the field each week at the Delaware Division Office and Delaware DOT. Since the transition into two Division offices, Melissa will begin working with the Maryland DOT and State Highway Administration in the future as well.

Originally from Prince William County, Virginia, Melissa grew up in Richmond, VA; Boston, MA; and Baltimore, MD. In her adult life, she also lived in Berkeley Springs, WV for several years before settling in the vicinity of Winchester, Virginia. Melissa’s interest in the realty discipline is rooted in her childhood interest in cartography and topography; she has always loved reading maps, and recalls enjoying her father’s large collection of National Geographic maps. This interest led to a fascination with real estate and historic road systems. Delaware and Maryland are great fits for Melissa because of their highly varied physical and cultural landscapes, highly diverse populations, both rural and urban regions, and plentiful shoreline, which are similar to Virginia, where she developed her DOT experience and gained her credentials from the IRWA before joining FHWA.

Aside from realty, Melissa enjoys real estate investment, with many years’ experience as a broker; along with cooking and baking, having spent many years working in the culinary and hospitality fields. When asked about her favorite recipe, Melissa notes that “planning and preparing a big meal for a get together with family and friends is her passion!” She also enjoys traveling and has toured extensively across the U.S., as well as Mexico and Canada. Her favorite state, however, is home: Melissa always returns to Virginia with its beautiful coastlines in the east and mountains in the west.

Melissa also enjoys working as a Realty Specialist, but if she were to pursue another career and there were no constraints, she would be interested in volunteering her time to help property owners resolve issues they are facing with their land or homes—especially those in rural, historic or low-income areas. This could be helping them rehabilitate their homes to address problems due to deferred maintenance or previous poor workmanship, or working with them to manage issues they may face in land management or with community associations. Melissa and her husband have taken on many such projects already, and she finds the results very satisfying. In particular, Melissa is interested in historic urban neighborhoods and helping to restore them to their former grandeur.

Calendar of Events

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