

Office of Real Estate Services Newsletter

2009 Volume 2, Number 3



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration



PINK - Temporary
RED - Electric Power Lines, Cables



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Message from the Director - Gerald Solomon

Thoughts on PEAR



We have now entered into Fiscal Year 2010. The end of the last year was intense — but no time to reminisce. This year gave us PEAR. For those outside of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and for those within FHWA

that somehow missed learning about this, PEAR was a four-day training session in Phoenix for FHWA Division staff involved in the disciplines of Planning, Environment, Air Quality, and Realty. It has now come and gone. And yes it was hot — the average daily temperature was 115 degrees.

As I am writing this, I have only been back to Washington, DC for about a week. While survey results have not yet been received, my personal observations suggest that it was extremely successful. For our discipline, the success of the endeavor was not the result of fate but rather was due to all the efforts of many Headquarters and Division Realty staff that invested their time into planning and preparing for the event. There are too many to name — they coordinated with Human Resource staff and other Discipline Champions to develop the program, created training and resource materials, offered instruction, provided administrative support, etc. They are the Realty Family.

This discipline training was one in a series of similar programs offered by the Executive Director and FHWA Leadership in advancement of the Agency's Corporate Capacity Goal. It was intended to ensure that those professionals that deliver the program have the necessary core training to carry out their responsibilities. As part of the Learning Highway, it also supports individuals in their career development and the Agency in its succession planning.

It was the “Field of Dreams” of Discipline Training — People will come. They'll come to Phoenix for reasons they can't even fathom. They'll turn up the driveway not knowing for sure why they're doing it. They'll arrive at our door as innocent as children, longing for the training. Of course, we won't mind if you stay around, you'll say it's only 120 degrees in the shade. They'll stay without even thinking about it, for it is coolness they have and training they lack. This training, this workshop: it's part of our past. It reminds us of all that once was good, and it could be again. Oh, people will come. People will definitely come.



PEAR participants - Phoenix, AZ 2009

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And they did come. They came from Hawaii, Alaska, Florida, Maine, and everywhere in between. Almost all of the Realty professionals from the Division offices, and many from Headquarters, were in attendance. There were those with 30+ years of Right of Way experience, those who were in the first year of the Right-of-Way Professional Development Program, and those who were in other disciplines but came to the Realty Training sessions because they had an interest and wanted to learn more about it. They came, they taught, they learned, they networked, and they overheated. Did I mention the heat — the average temperature was 125 degrees.

It was intense with sessions starting first thing in the morning, and continuing throughout the day and into early evening. Nobody objected — all sessions were filled and those in attendance were fully engaged. This was the case both for those discipline specific sessions as well as for the plenary sessions. Combining the several disciplines into a single program provided the unique opportunity to participate in a variety of training that, to a great extent, met individual preferences and Division operational needs. The discipline-specific sessions focused on core aspects of the programs as well as hot topics. The plenary sessions addressed aspects of the highway program that involve multiple disciplines, emphasizing the need to eliminate stove piping. Did I mention that it was hot — the average temperature was 130 degrees.

Realty staff met each other, many for the first time. Since I have been with FHWA, there has not been a meeting among all Division Realty Offices. Some have the opportunity to attend conferences or an annual meeting of one of the various professional organizations or associations such as the Transportation Research Board, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, International Right of Way Association, or National Alliance of Highway Beautification

Agencies. Most of the communication, particularly among the more recent Realty staff, has been via email. It was wonderful to see the interaction, not only during the formal program but also at the morning breakfasts and during evening socializing. A thank you goes to our local Realty Officer — Layne Patton — for hosting us for an evening in the Ramada at Papago Park where many Realty professionals, and a few others, got together to enjoy the beauty of the local area, the camaraderie among colleagues, and the heat — the average temperature was 135 degrees.

I expect that more will be said about PEAR in the upcoming months, through the survey responses and input from attendees and others. I appreciate the support it had from Leadership and I hope that others see it in the same positive light as I did. I truly feel that continuing this program on a regular basis, or something similar to it, is worthy of consideration.



FHWA PEAR Presenter Don Keith and Division participants.

PEAR convinced me of several things. Among them is that FHWA's investment in the Realty and other disciplines is worthwhile and will pay dividends. Also, it evidenced that those who believe that "dry heat" is not as hot have been outside in the sun too long.

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Field Articles

Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Statewide Access Management Plan

In 2005, ADOT recognized the need to implement a Statewide Access Management Plan (Plan). We needed a system that would align access decisions with long-term highway purpose and planning. Increasing traffic and development has created a burden on the State Highway System. The Engineering Districts issued access permits inconsistently and sometimes succumbed to political pressure. Reducing driveway frequency, while ensuring safe ingress/egress to lands adjacent to the State Highway System, is a priority for ADOT. However, once a driveway is in place, planned improvements to the highway which require a change of access can be costly. The implementation of a thoroughly developed access management plan provides notice and information to developers, and assists the Right-of-Way (ROW) Group in valuing property rights needed for a construction project.

ADOT developed eight access categories with assignment schedules. These categories classify highways into differing levels of service and access. A balance between the long-term function of a particular segment of highway and the adjacent land use is given consideration through the assignment process. Private developers, cities, counties and local municipal planning organizations were contacted for input throughout the study. The Right-of-Way Group had extensive input during the development phase.

The Plan will be used during highway project development. It will also be used occasionally when ROW dedications are necessary by a developer

for new or improved access locations. The Plan sets forth the criteria necessary to dedicate ROW, including the form of dedication, title documentation, supporting technical survey data, and planning data.

ADOT intends to implement the Plan as an administrative rule. This will result in fewer approved variances which can only be approved by the State Engineer. Due to budgetary constraints, a Statewide moratorium on rulemaking is in effect. Once this constraint is lifted, it is the intention of ADOT to proceed with rulemaking and implementation. For now, ADOT intends to begin implementing the Plan via a written policy. For further information on access categories or the proposed rule contact Paula Gibson at PGibson@azdot.gov or Layne Patton at Layne.Patton@dot.gov

Environmental Justice Mitigation Plan for Rockford, Illinois



West State Street, Rockford, Illinois

West State Street/U.S. 20

What do you do when your Federal-aid right-of-way and construction project has disproportionate adverse impacts on low income and minority

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community groups due to displacement of small businesses and churches that serve the low income and minority community residents? What do you do when the benefits under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (Uniform Act) and 49 CFR Part 24 will not adequately provide for the successful relocation of said churches and small businesses **within the same community**? These questions were successfully addressed by the Illinois Division office while processing the Environmental Assessment, starting in April 2006. The following synopsis explains how we plan to mitigate disproportionate impacts by supplementing Uniform Act provisions with additional mitigation under Executive Order (E.O.) 12898, Environmental Justice.

The Federal Highway Administration, the city of Rockford, and the Illinois Department of Transportation, are overseeing reconstruction of four miles of West State Street in Rockford, Illinois. The improvement includes reconstructing West State Street with a four-lane cross-section; adding right and left turn lanes at major intersections; removing full access at minor intersections; as well as adding traffic signals, a raised landscaped median, bike paths, and bus turnouts. The project requires acquisitions from 761 parcels. Total acquisitions are required for 20 commercial or industrial properties, four churches, and 97 residential units.

During the Environmental Assessment review, we concluded that the provisions of E.O. 12898 are applicable. There are four churches and one funeral home being displaced. These properties are identified as particularly critical and sensitive relative to relocation needs and the need to stay within the community. If we cannot successfully relocate these critical and sensitive properties within the community, disproportionate impacts to the low and minority community residents will occur. All five displacement properties are located within a couple of blocks of each other.

A search of the Rockford Association of Realtors Multiple Listing Service found 17 properties listed for sale that could potentially be replacement properties, but **only if they are extensively remodeled** into churches. The 17 replacement properties identified range in prices from \$95,000 to \$600,000—again, not taking into account the extensive remodeling necessary to accommodate a displaced church. With the exception of one of the 17 listed properties, all are located a considerable distance from the displacement properties. Moving to one of the listed properties, away from the corridor community, would take them beyond the reach of their present congregations.

On average, commercial property values in the West State Street Corridor are the lowest in Rockford. When the churches and the funeral home relocate, they will be faced with paying significantly greater prices per square foot for replacement properties. Additionally, the listed properties will require extensive remodeling to make them suitable for church operations.

We determined that the churches and the funeral home will not be able to successfully relocate within the community using the relocation assistance and payments provisions provided by the Uniform Act, unless those provisions are supplemented by a mitigation package under E.O. 12898 and 23 CFR 710.513(a), Environmental Mitigation. The four churches and the funeral home do not have the financial resources to make up the difference between the fair market value of their acquired properties and the cost of new construction or the cost of extensive reconstruction of existing buildings.

The Environmental Justice Mitigation Plan. The Finding of No Significant Impact, signed September 2008, contains a commitment of financial assistance for new construction of replacement properties above and beyond current provisions of the Uniform Act. This assistance is provided with certain safeguards or commitments. The additional assistance will take

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the form of **deferred mortgages** up to \$150,000. The city of Rockford has successfully used deferred mortgages in their residential rehabilitation program for the past 25 years. Deferred mortgages will be for 15 years, with the following safeguards:

1. The 15 year deferred mortgage is signed by the property owner/s and recorded against the property just like other mortgages.
2. There are no payments on the deferred mortgage.
3. One 15th (up to \$10,000) of the original dollar amount is forgiven each year.
4. If the property is sold, or the title transfers at any time during the 15-year term of the deferred mortgage, the balance is immediately due and payable.
5. If the owners (individual or corporate) file for bankruptcy, the balance is immediately due and payable.
6. Like other mortgages, there are requirements to keep the property insured and in good repair.
7. There will be language included in the deferred mortgage stating if the mortgaged property is boarded up, or vacant for an extended period of time (for example, more than one year), the balance is immediately due and payable.
8. Assuming the churches and funeral home have other mortgages on their displaced properties, and similar sized mortgages are placed against the newly constructed properties, the deferred mortgages would be behind them in order of priority; i.e., the deferred mortgage will become a 2nd or 3rd mortgage.
9. There will be restrictions on the use of the replacement property during the 15- year deferred mortgage; i.e., they will have to continue their current uses with similar safeguards as in 4 and 5 above.

The deferred mortgages will allow the displaced churches and funeral home to stay in the corridor community by building new facilities, without incurring a large amount of debt on which they



West State Street, Rockford, Illinois

could never hope to make monthly payments. The deferred mortgage will provide them a stake in staying in their replacement property and community long after the completion

of construction. To safeguard our investment, they will not be able to sell the property immediately after the project's conclusion, take a profit, and move outside the community.

The Division will closely monitor the mitigation commitments to see that they are properly carried out. Assuming that we are successful, this could be an exemplary human environment initiative that all parties will be proud to showcase. For further information contact Don Keith at Don.Keith@dot.gov.

Parcels Held in Fee Title

Back in the late 1950s and early 1960s, South Dakota did not have statutory authority to acquire right-of-way (ROW) through the power of eminent domain. This, of course, was during the Interstate heyday. The Bureau of Public Roads (Bureau) under the Department of Commerce, which later became the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under the Department of Transportation, did have the power of eminent domain to acquire ROW. During the early days of the Interstate system, many parcels of land were condemned and acquired in fee title in the name of the Bureau.

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When FHWA succeeded the Bureau it was mandated that the new agency could not hold title to the ROW and all such property had to be transferred in fee title to the state highway agency. The transfer from Federal to State ownership was made during a time when the South Dakota Highway Department could only hold title to property under a perpetual easement and in fee title. South Dakota continued to acquire ROW and build highways on parcels owned as a highway use only deed until July 1, 1986. After that date in 1986, all ROW in South Dakota has been acquired in fee title.

In 2006, the South Dakota Department of Transportation (DOT) had a parcel of land that was no longer needed for a particular roadway and was therefore declared to be excess to the needs of the DOT. In past years, when an excess parcel was disposed, the value of such parcel was credited back to the FHWA. A quit-claim deed was prepared and recorded stating that the DOT was dissolving its ownership in the property. Recently, during a title search it was discovered that title to these parcels would revert to the FHWA, which cannot own property.

And now, for the rest of the story... it has been decided that these properties which were acquired by the Federal government and later transferred to the state, need to be "re-transferred" to the state in order that the South Dakota DOT will have full ownership rights in fee title to these properties.

For additional information contact Ken Erlenbusch at: Ken.Erlenbusch@dot.gov

Cost Estimating

Right-of-Way Cost Estimating

National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 625, entitled "Procedures Guide for Right-of-Way (ROW) Cost Estimation and Cost Management" is now available at this website: http://trb.org/Publications/Public/Blurbs/Procedures_Guide_for_RightofWay_Cost_Estimation_an_162271.aspx. The Guide examines ways to track and manage ROW cost during all phases of project development, including planning, programming, preliminary and final design. A companion report that describes the methodology used to create the guide is available at, <http://www.trb.org/Publications/Public/Blurbs/162358.aspx>. This web-only document 132 is called "Right-of-Way Methods and Tools to Control Project Cost Escalation." The NCHRP study was initiated to define processes, methods, and tools which focused on ROW cost estimation and management, as a complement to NCHRP Report 574, which is focused as a cost estimation guide for projects. There are numerous factors that influence project cost escalation.

Previous research found that:

1. **Actual cost of project ROW is greater than the estimates of such cost that were produced during early stages of project development;**
2. **Management of the ROW estimating process itself can contribute to cost estimate consistency and accuracy throughout the project development process;**
3. **There is an opportunity to develop specific ROW methods and tools from successful practices around the country; and**
4. **There is a need to provide guidance on how to implement new strategies, methods, and tools in order to develop improved ROW cost estimates.**

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Iowa and Arizona DOTs agreed to share their right-of-way cost estimating practices in today's newsletter.

Iowa DOT Right-of-Way Cost Estimate Procedure

There are three separate steps we use to establish and update cost estimates:

Type	Cost Estimate per Mile	Access
Four-lane Interstate: Urban	\$14,170,000	
Four-lane Interstate: Rural	950,000	Full Access
Super-Two	300,000	
Two-lane Highway	275,000	Limited Access
Two-lane Highway	325,000	Full Access
Four-lane Expressway	725,000	Limited Access

Appraisal Estimate	\$5,500,000
Contingency Costs = 25 Percent	\$1,375,000
Total ROW Cost Estimate	\$6,875,000

Step 1 - Information is drawn from a database where all project costs for completed **major** projects are recorded. This includes a cost per mile for all types of projects. *See Table 1 above.* Then all **small**

project costs are added up separately to determine the average per parcel cost. Small project estimates are based on a per parcel cost. The information from these two sources is used with the original concept of a project. This cost figure is further adjusted by the location of the project, as well as historical information (historical predictors we analyze).

Step 2 - An updated cost estimate is made after the project is submitted to ROW.

Step 3 - A **second** updated cost estimate is made when the design layout is complete. The project is reviewed and updated when the next year's program is put together. This information is tracked in a database. When a cost estimate is needed, the Appraisal Section is provided an exhibit, or set of plans, with the ROW design layout and area calculations. The Appraisal Section then provides a per parcel value, including any estimated damages and relocation cost. Historical predictors are then factored in. Historically, 90 percent of the parcels are acquired at 23 percent above the Appraisal Estimate; and 10 percent of parcels are acquired at 40 percent above the Appraisal Estimate (parcels that will be condemned). This results in an overall contingency factor that is 25 percent above the Appraisal Estimate. *See Table 2 - left.*

For additional information contact Dave Widick at the Iowa DOT, David.Widick@dot.iowa.gov.

Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Right-of-Way (ROW) Cost Estimates

The ROW cost estimates prepared for ADOT are valuable tools used to meet several of the ADOT's responsibilities and goals. As the Department is tasked with establishing the Five Year Construction

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Program and long-range planning, the estimates are used for project planning and for programming several types of funding. Estimates are developed and updated every six months. Estimates for the Phoenix metropolitan area must be certified to meet the requirements imposed under a half-cent transportation tax. Throughout the development of projects, ROW cost estimate information is entered into a database, along with the actual appraisal information for each parcel as it becomes available. Subsequent evaluation of cost estimate data and appraisal information serves to validate estimates or improve future cost estimating techniques.

The ADOT ROW Project Management Section is responsible for completion of ROW project cost estimates. When sufficient preliminary design information (roadway, drainage and ROW requirements) is available for each project, a cost estimate is requested from the in-house ADOT appraisal staff, or contracted to an appraisal firm. The ROW cost estimate for each project developed by in-house staff is compiled on a parcel basis, utilizing the form called Estimate vs. Actual Appraisal/Acquisition. The information, typically assembled by the appraiser for developing cost estimates, includes owner names and parcel sizes (County Assessor information); maps or plans with existing and new ROW lines, as well as parcel lines and approximate areas of acquisition; aerial photography; zoning information; external property inspections; conversations with local contractors, suppliers, and others; and various sales data sources and information.

The totals of the various types of information compiled on the Estimate vs. Actual Appraisal/Acquisition format are then recited in a report titled *ROW Project Cost Estimate*. Each *ROW Project Cost Estimate* is updated every six months.

The *ROW Cost Estimate* form includes two entries which are not compiled in the Estimate vs. Actual Appraisal/Acquisition form. The figure representing the Estimated Plans/Survey Costs is developed by the ROW Plans Section utilizing a variety of information, including project location, topography, project length, and historical cost data. An estimate called “Estimated Miscellaneous Costs” is intended to cover the risk of administrative settlements and condemnation settlements. This is computed at 50 percent of the amount compiled for the “Total Acquisition Estimate.” For copies of forms or further information, contact Layne Patton at Layne.Patton@dot.gov, or Paula Gibson at PGibson@azdot.gov.

Outdoor Advertising Control

2009 National Alliance of Highway Beautification Agencies (NAHBA) Conference



From left to right: Norm Snead, Gerry Solomon, Michele Lindberg, Mel Cooper, James Hall, Kathy Facer, Ed Kosola, Jeff Robinette, Michelle Hilary, Woody Woodruff, John Knowles, Don Keith

The 2009 National Alliance of Highway Beautification Agencies (NAHBA) conference was held at the Chateau on the Lake in Branson, Missouri, August 9-12, 2009. This was NAHBA’s 12th annual education conference and provided outdoor advertising sign professionals with unparalleled learning and networking opportunities. Ninety-four attendees had the opportunity to learn best practices, share program challenges, and hear solutions from

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Federal and state officials as well as industry leading professionals. Information on presentations are available online at http://www.modot.mo.gov/business/Outdoor_Advertising/index.htm.

Each year NAHBA recognizes programs, individuals and innovations that have made outstanding contributions to enhance the outdoor advertising control (OAC) program. NAHBA Awards of Excellence include Streamlining and Integration; Innovations in Outdoor Advertising; and the Chairman's Award.

Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) received the Streamlining and Integration Award. MDOT moved from a paper environment to a digital interactive process implementing state-of-the-art technologies. Over 78,000 documents were scanned and inventoried; 6,000 signs covering 7,000 miles were cataloged; and a database was developed to manage Mississippi's OAC program. This effort included statewide imagery, GPS coordinates, and digital photography allowing MDOT to transition to a centralized web accessible application and database.

Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Right of Way Division received the Innovations in Outdoor Advertising Award for the county billing classification system. This process allows staff to effectively and efficiently control outdoor advertising by concentrating on a particular county. Outdoor Advertising Permit Specialists are able to focus their efforts in documenting permitted sign structures; locating, researching, and processing illegal signs; and investigating salvage yards.

MoDOT Right of Way Outdoor Advertising Manager, Joyce Musick, received the Chairman's Award in Outdoor Advertising. Joyce has been involved with the OAC program throughout her MoDOT career, which began in 1986. During this time, Joyce has been instrumental in the advancement of the Federal outdoor advertising control program through

her involvement with various national and local organizations. She continues to successfully integrate OAC into MoDOT's diverse transportation system in accordance with MoDOT's mission, values, and tangible results.

NAHBA would like to thank FHWA for their support. FHWA participation, representation, and assistance contributed greatly to the success of this conference. For additional information contact Joyce Musick at Joyce.Musick@modot.mo.gov.

Excellence in Outdoor Advertising Control Award



Peter Osborn, FHWA Rhode Island Division Administrator, and Michael Butler, FHWA Rhode Island Division Right-of-Way and Environmental Officer.

The Office of Real Estate Services presented the Excellence in Outdoor Advertising Control Award to Michael Butler, Rhode Island FHWA Division. The award is in recognition of his

outstanding contribution to the management of the FHWA Outdoor Advertising Control Program. Mike has cooperatively worked with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to revise and improve the rules and regulations for outdoor advertising control in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965; and with the Real Estate Section to strengthen enforcement of the Federal and State laws regarding outdoor advertising activities. Mike has also put forth a great deal of effort working with the Attorney General's office to discuss options available after the Federal court decision in the Vono case, which struck down part of the State's law and regulation.

The award was presented by Peter Osborn, FHWA Rhode Island Division Administrator

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and announced at the National Alliance of Highway Beautification Agencies Conference in Branson, Missouri on August 10, 2009. Contact: Catherine.O'hara@dot.gov

Research

2010 STEP Research Program

The Federal Highway Administration is soliciting recommendations for utilization of funding that is being provided through the Surface Transportation Environment and Planning Cooperative Research Program (STEP) for FY 2010. STEP is an FHWA-administered source of funding for research related to realty, planning, and environment. The FHWA anticipates that STEP—or a similar program providing resources for national research on issues related to realty, planning, and environment—will be included in future surface transportation legislation. Real Estate Services is one component of the STEP emphasis areas and is also further subdivided into Outdoor Advertising Control (OAC) and Real Estate Program Stewardship. We are requesting input from our partners and stakeholders who have an interest in collaborating on research plans and initiatives.

Previously, the Office of Real Estate Services through STEP has developed and delivered a number of diverse products and tools to right-of-way professionals. The Office of Real Estate Services' efforts include outreach and professional knowledge exchanges; sponsorship of international and domestic scans; and sponsorship and co-sponsorships of national meetings.

The goals of STEP are to provide improved tools to the State DOTs and Local Public Agencies (LPAs) for the performance of their responsibilities in real estate acquisition and OAC and to develop and improve methods to support

the institutional capacity of State DOTs' and LPAs' personnel in order to perform real estate acquisitions and provide relocation assistance on public projects subject to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Potential activity in support of achieving these goals through STEP research could include assessing and developing improved tools, techniques, and procedures for real estate acquisition and OAC; funding research, field demonstrations and technology transfer; developing innovative information sharing methods among practitioners; developing and enhancing communities of practice and Web sites for real estate and OAC professionals; and developing training and technical assistance.

STEP Research Initiatives Include:

- Integrating Visualization Technologies into the Right-Of-Way (ROW) Processes.
- ROW, Design-Build, and Acquisition Models.
- Commercial Electronic Variable Message Sign (CEVMS) and Driver Attention.
- Development of a ROW Competency Navigator, and Capacity Building and Training Curriculum Clearinghouse provided on the FHWA Web site.
- Identification and Development of LPA Stewardship Tools and Techniques.
- The FHWA International ROW and Utilities Scan.
- Use of Incentive Payments in ROW Acquisition and Relocation Programs

We Need Your Input and Participation

Stakeholder input is required to identify the research topics. Therefore, we are seeking input from all of our partners on the FY 2010 STEP. We will continue to work with you and our partners to identify priority research projects for FY 2010. We encourage our State and local partners to review the proposed

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FY2010 STEP Implementation Strategy and submit research topics via the STEP Web site at:

<http://knowledge.fhwa.dot.gov/cops/step.nsf/home/>

To submit research projects, click on the appropriate topic and complete the form.

Feedback is requested by **December 3, 2009**.

For further information regarding STEP, you may also contact: carolyn.james@dot.gov

Training

Office of Real Estate Services Introduces Realty Competency Building (RCB) Navigator



The Web-based RCB Navigator was introduced and demonstrated at the FHWA Planning, Environment, Air Quality, and Realty (PEAR) conference on August 31, 2009. It was designed to help public sector realty professionals, Federal, State, local, and consultants identify the key competency areas in their field. It will serve as a centralized source of credible, up-to-date information on Right-of-Way (ROW) and Outdoor Advertising Control (OAC) learning and development resources.

The first step in the Navigator's logic requires a user to choose a role. Once a role is chosen, users see a

list of top resources for that role as well as a list of competency areas. It also contains resources for related disciplines (roles) to develop an awareness or general understanding of realty.

For each role, competency areas are divided into three levels of understanding: some roles require a high level of understanding in a particular competency area, while other roles may require a lower level of understanding in that competency area. The three levels are awareness, general knowledge, and technical proficiency.

Core competency areas are linked to nine types of resources: classroom-based training, Web-based learning, guidance, legislation, research, publications, Web sites, events, and other resources. The Navigator presently contains almost 500 resources. The Web site will continue to be developed, and include additional resource material.

The Realty Competency Building Program is sponsored by the FHWA and will be utilized to develop and maintain a high level of ROW and OAC expertise for transportation agencies and their partners.

You may view the RCB Navigator at this link:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/navigator.aspx>

We invite you to beta-test and provide feedback on the functionality of this tool, and provide any suggestions to improve it.

For more information you may contact Mary Jane Daluge at maryjane.daluge@dot.gov or 202-366-2035.

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The Office of Real Estate Services Website Redesign

The Office of Real Estate Services Web Site Redesign



Transportation practitioners, researchers, public official and other professionals need credible, high-quality information to address the transportation challenges of the 21st century. To address the challenges, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) - Office of Real Estate Services is in the process of redesigning its website home page into a “topic based” format.

What is a “topic based” format?

The “topic based” format uses a set of interconnected webpages that are typically dedicated to some particular topic or purpose. When applying this format to the FHWA Office of Real Estate Services website, the main or introductory page of the website will be enhanced so that visitors can have the ability to search for information related to a particular topic of interest that pertains to realty. This is being accomplished by organizing the home page layout in an informational cluster format which makes it easier

for the search engine system to identify the requested information. Efficient and accurate searches for information are challenging and important issues that have to be addressed when seeking to make specified resources available on the World Wide Web. The “topic based” homepage will provide a starting point or a gateway to access resources on the site.

In addition to redesigning the homepage layout, the content and information currently written, published and stored on the website will be updated to ensure that the latest versions of reports and resources are being made available. The website can be used as the portal for the creation and subsequent distribution of original documents, the latest updates on regulatory changes, industry “hot topic” discussions and research within a shared environment. Our customers, practitioners and general public, benefit by being provided easy access to the most current information available without having to spend time, energy and money to secure this content.

As we continue the redesign of the website, we will solicit input from our customer base. The optimal design and use of the website can best be achieved through a collaborative effort. This effort and discussion will help with the identification of clusters of topics most needed by our internal and external website visitors and provide factors to consider in the development of the website redesign and layout. FHWA Headquarters Realty Specialists, Division Realty Officers, State Department of Transportations, Local Public Agencies, Public and Professional Organizations, and all of our customers can all become involved in the development of a user friendly informational website.

So . . . get involved and share your comments about FHWA’s realty web site.

For more information and to provide feedback, contact Bruce Bradley at Bruce.Bradley@dot.gov

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Human Interest



Mary Jane Daluge accepting a time-in-service award from Gerald Soloman.

Time-in-Service Award presented to Mary Jane Daluge

Mary Jane Daluge came to the Office of Real Estate Services (HEPR) in July 2008 as a Realty Specialist from the Florida Division where she was the Civil Rights Program Manager. This year, at HEPR, she has been primarily involved in developing the web-based Realty Competency Building Navigator and other Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Discipline Support initiatives.

Mary Jane has more than 20 years of combined State Department of Transportation (DOT) and FHWA right-of-way (ROW) experience. She has performed Divisional duties in related disciplines such as Civil Rights, Environment, and Planning. She came to FHWA in 1991 as a ROW Trainee in the Wisconsin and Georgia Divisions, and has since served as a Realty Specialist in the California Division and Realty Officer in the Oklahoma Division. While at the Resource Center in Atlanta from 2000-2004, she became a Certified National Highway Institute(NHI) Instructor and FHWA Facilitator,

where as she planned and hosted numerous multi-agency symposiums, and developed and delivered customized training for Division Offices, State DOTs and consultants throughout the country and U.S. Virgin Islands. Mary Jane earned her SR/WA designation in the International Right-of-Way Association in 1997 and holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business and Management from the University of Maryland

For further information, contact her at: maryjane.daluge@dot.gov .

Conferences

2009 AASHTO/FHWA Right-of-Way (ROW) and Utilities Conference

At the 2009 AASHTO/FHWA Right-of-Way (ROW) and Utilities Conference in Oklahoma City, a panel discussed ROW issues related to ARRA projects. The panelists were Gerald Soloman, Director, FHWA Office of Real Estate Services; Bimla Rhinehart, California Transportation Commission; Matt Delong, Michigan DOT; James R. Hall, FHWA Louisiana Division; John Garner, Florida DOT; Kenneth Woodruff, FHWA Indiana Division; and Lyle McMillian, Utah DOT. While concerns varied, many common issues were shared. The timing of ROW clearance, staff pressures dealing with local projects, compliance with the Federal laws and regulations, project eligibility criteria, political pressure and review standards were discussed.

In general, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects are “shovel ready,” which means that projects have environmental and ROW clearance and are in need of funding for construction. One State used ARRA funds on projects left over from its capital improvement plan. In one State, cities

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and counties were asked to fill out applications and certify that projects would be ready to advertise in 1 year. In a normal environment, it can be difficult for local agencies to understand and comply with federal and state regulations. Overseeing ARRA projects has increased the workload for State staff who work with local agencies.

The goal of ARRA projects is to stimulate the economy; therefore, the States' and FHWA's role is to obligate the funds in a timely manner. In most cases, the ARRA funding is being used for construction. For ARRA projects, one FHWA office is treating projects that would normally be delegated to the State for oversight, as though they are subject to full FHWA oversight. This means the Division staff is monitoring these projects very closely, including increased field reviews. For further information, contact James R. Hall at James.Hall@dot.gov or Kenneth Woodruff, at Kenneth.Woodruff@dot.gov.

Fourth Annual IRWA Federal Agency Update Planning Meeting

On July 22-23, the Office of Real Estate Services (HEPR) met with the International Right-of-Way Association (IRWA) leadership, representatives from the Appraisal Institute, the utilities industry, and the Right-of-Way Consultants Council as well as the USACE, HUD, FAA, and FTA to plan and organize the Fourth Annual IRWA Federal Agency Update (FAU). The Office of Real Estate Services is a co-sponsor of the event scheduled for January 26-28, 2010 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The IRWA hosts this annual conference to provide a venue for the various Federal Agencies subject to the Uniform Act and their grantees to gather in one place for training and interaction. The FHWA will facilitate several sessions and will participate in panel presentations with other Federal Agencies related to Sustainability, Livability, Green Infrastructures, and other current topics. The Federal Agencies

that have committed to participate in this conference to date include — but are not limited to — the FHWA, USACE, HUD, FTA, FAA, DOJ, and FERC. The GSA, USPS, and BLM have also expressed interest in participating as have several foreign countries.

For more information, contact Gerry Solomon at Gerald.Solomon@dot.gov or Marshall Wainright at Marshall.Wainright@dot.gov

Transportation Research Board

Gerry Solomon and Rich Coco of the Office of Real Estate Services had the opportunity to attend the TRB's 48th Annual Workshop on Transportation Law, held in Denver, Colorado, on July 19-23. As part of the program, the Office of Real Estate Services participated in the Eminent Domain and Land Use Committee meeting as well as a panel discussion on Current Issues in Right-of-Way Management and Acquisition. The panel members addressed "Current Right-of-Way Issues" (focusing on right-of-way issues associated with ARRA funded projects), "Reducing Damage Claims by Effective Control of Access to the Right-of-Way," and Streamlining the Acquisition and Utility Processes in Eminent Domain (focusing on the results on the 2008 International Right-of-Way and Utility Scan).

For more information, contact Gerry Solomon at Gerald.Solomon@dot.gov ; Rich Coco at Rich.Coco@dot.gov

Public Sector Real Estate

On July 24, Gerry Solomon of the Office of Real Estate Services and Neosha Price, PDP in the Tennessee Division Office, met with Dr. Craig E. Hartzler, Clinical Professor and Director of Executive Education at the School of Public and Environmental Affairs of Indiana University, to further explore

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undergraduate and graduate degree opportunities with a focus on public sector real estate. The meeting involved discussion of expanding career opportunities for those either considering or currently employed in the field of public sector real estate as a means to improve efforts at recruitment, training/development, and retention.

For more information please contact Gerry Solomon in the Office of Real Estate Services, or Neosha Price in the FHWA Tennessee Division Office. Gerry is available via email at Gerald.Solomon@dot.gov; and Neosha is available via email at Neosha.price@dot.gov.

Calendar

Please visit this link for all the latest information regarding up and coming events.

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/calendar.cfm>

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