

Transcript

Ohio Department of Transportation ★ Employee Newsletter

April/May 2006

DRIVERS SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WORK ZONE SAFETY

Joel Hunt, Central Office

THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION participates in Work Zone Safety Awareness Week (WZSAW) each spring in order to save lives and prevent injuries in work zones. This year, WZSAW was observed across the nation the week of April 3 – 8.

The theme for the 2006 WZSAW campaign was *Working at the Speed of Night*. Many states, including Ohio, are now completing construction work at night in order to reduce congestion and inconvenience fewer motorists. Of Ohio's 45 interstate improvement projects and five mega projects for 2006, all include at least a portion of night work. "Although traffic volumes are lower at night, so is visibility," ODOT Assistant Director Richard Martinko said. "Drivers need to stay alert and expect the unexpected

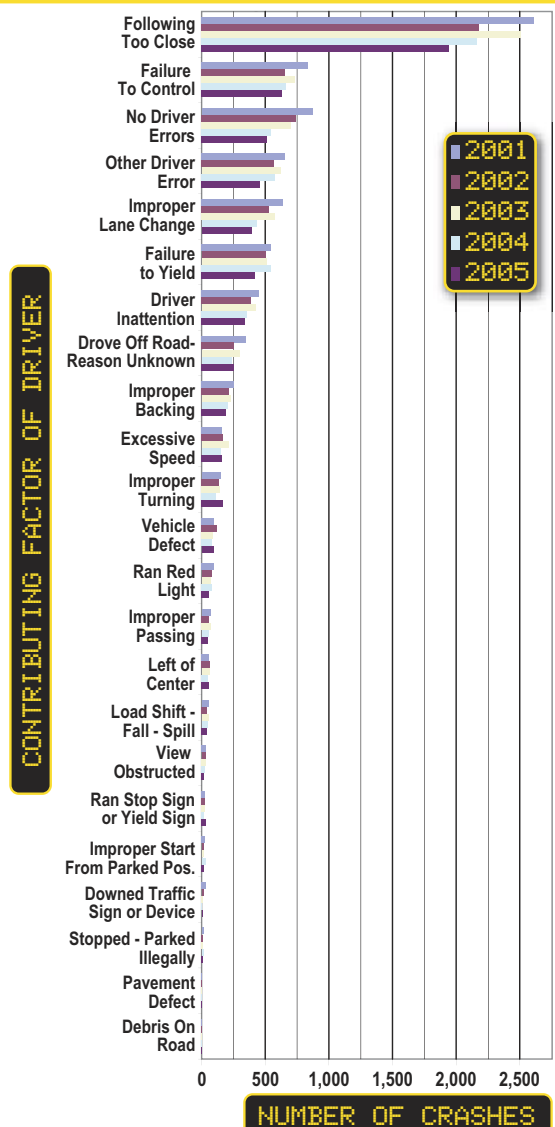
when driving through work zones at night."

In Ohio, there were 6,389 work zone crashes in 2004. Of those crashes, 14 people were killed and 2,250 people were injured. In 2005, there were 5,854 work zone crashes with 20 fatalities and 2,076 injuries. While overall work zone accidents and injuries have gone down, fatalities have gone up. ODOT continues to expand its efforts to make work zones safer, but these efforts can only go so far.

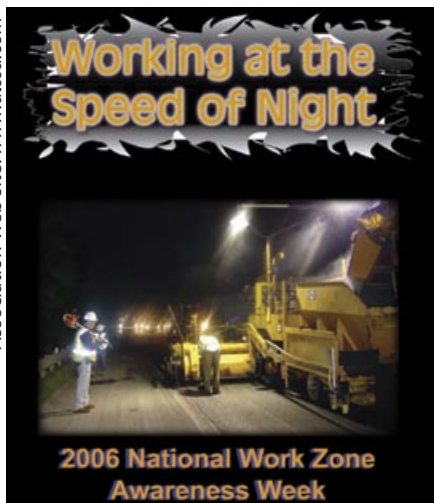
"ODOT studies work zones extensively and spends additional funds each year on extra signs and warning devices to increase safety in work zones," said ODOT Director Gordon Proctor. "But motorists who exercise caution and good judgment make the largest impact on reducing work zone crashes."

An analysis of Ohio work zone crashes from 2001-2005 revealed the number one cause of work zone crashes was following too closely. Other causes include failure to control, improper lane change, failure to yield, driver inattention and exces-

FREQUENCY OF OHIO WORK ZONE CRASHES BY CONTRIBUTING FACTOR AND YEAR



From the American Traffic Safety Services Association Web site: www.atssa.com



National Work Zone Awareness Week program guide cover for the April 4, 2006 event in Washington, D.C.

(see **WZSAW** on page 2)

WZSAW (from page 1)

sive speed, making motorist error the number one cause of work zone crashes by an overwhelming majority.

Last year, ODOT spent \$35 million to reduce work zone congestion and accidents by: conducting more work at night and on weekends when fewer motorists use the roadway; rewarding contractors for early completion and penalizing them for delays and maintaining two lanes in each direction on the interstates during peak hours whenever possible. ODOT will continue to use these methods to



reduce congestion and accidents in work zones.

ODOT is also continuing a pilot program in 2006 to closely monitor

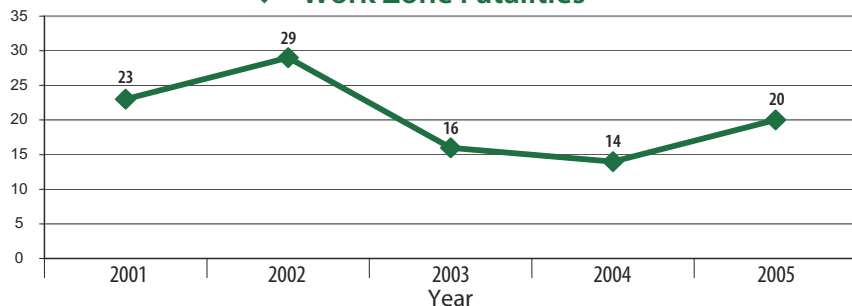
Reduced visibility is one of the reasons drivers need to use extra caution in work zones, especially when night work is being performed. Nighttime and daytime views of this project on Interstate 280 in Toledo demonstrate that there are more visual work zone cues for motorists in the daytime. An analysis of crashes in this work zone resulted in the application of extra delineation (reflectors on the wall) to aid in nighttime navigation.



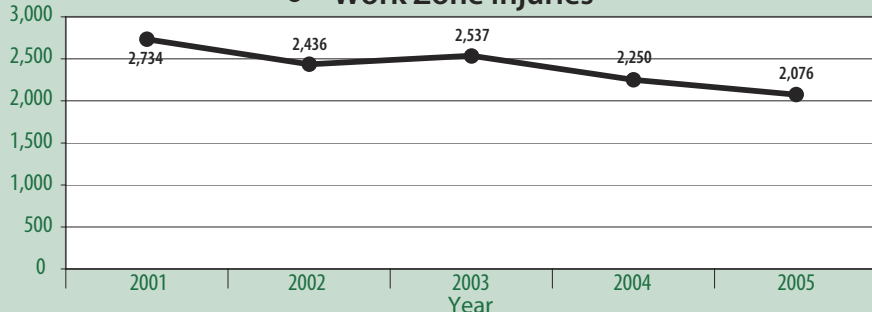
Photos courtesy of Traffic Engineering

Ohio Work Zone Summary Statistics (2001 - 2005)

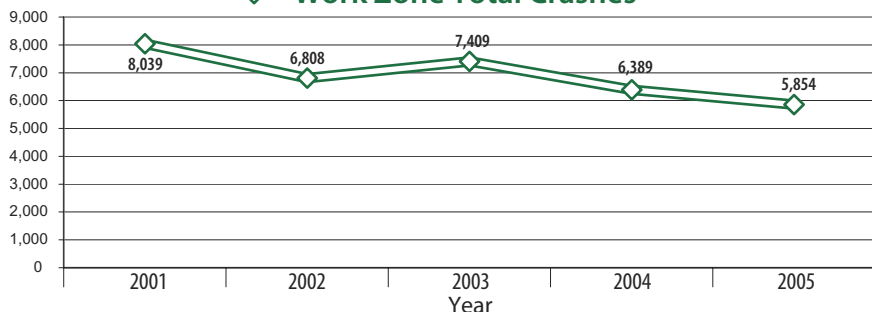
◆ – Work Zone Fatalities



● – Work Zone Injuries



◇ – Work Zone Total Crashes



and add increased law enforcement to work zones around the state. In 2005, work zones with increased law enforcement had a 17.7 percent lower crash rate than those without increased law enforcement. In addition, by closely monitoring work zone crash patterns in real time, ODOT is working to respond to crash problems quickly and do everything possible on its end to reduce the likelihood of work zone crashes.

To do their part, when driving in work zones, motorists can increase safety by following these guidelines:

- Stay alert and give driving your full attention.
- Follow all posted signs and obey flaggers.
- Don't tailgate or speed; Most crashes in work zones are rear-end collisions.
- Expect the unexpected; Work zones are changing environments.
- Be aware that normal traffic patterns may be shifted.

Every year more than 1,000 people nationwide – both motorists and highway workers – are injured or killed in work zone crashes. In 2004, the most recent year for which complete nationwide statistics are available, 1,068 people died in work zone crashes.

For a complete list of work zones ODOT is targeting for 2006, log onto our Web site at www.dot.state.oh.us.

ODOT asks: 'Don't Trash Ohio'

Photos by Leslie Dellovade, Central Office



Highway Technician 2s Mike Charlton (left) and Curtis George from ODOT D-6's Westerville Garage pick up trash on Interstate 270 near Columbus.

"Litter is an expensive public concern as well as an eyesore," said ODOT Director Gordon Proctor.

Between January 1 and April 19 this year, ODOT has spent more than 110,000 hours on litter clean up statewide and collected almost 197,000 bags of trash. The cost to taxpayers: \$2.1 million – money better spent fixing roads.

In 2005, ODOT spent \$4.2 million on litter removal and picked up 484,118 bags of trash, taking 239,210 man hours.

"Not only is litter a costly problem, but it also means that we have to put highway work on the back burner while we're battling litter," said Tony Vogel, deputy director of ODOT's Division of Highway Operations.

ODOT's campaign to the public stresses that litter is a preventable problem. Most litter collects along the highways in one of two ways: People intentionally throw trash from their cars or trash falls from trucks whose loads have not been properly secured.

"We work hard to keep the highways looking good for the traveling public," Vogel said. "But litter isn't like normal road repair. We can find a remedy for just about every other problem on the road, but litter keeps coming back." ☺

Joel Hunt, Central Office

EACH YEAR, THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF Transportation is forced to pull skilled workers off highway repairs

to clean other people's trash. In conjunction with Earth Day, ODOT announced its new 'Don't Trash Ohio' slogan to spread the word that litter is everyone's responsibility.

Handy Litter Cards Help Law Enforcement

Joel Hunt, Central Office

OHIO'S LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS have a lot to remember, specifically more than 90 motor vehicle laws and 65 laws relating to equipment and loads – and this is just for traffic violations. To help them help ODOT control litter, ODOT District 6 began printing wallet-size cards in April, which spell out five litter laws in the Ohio Revised Code.

"The cards are meant to help officers when they issue litter citations, but more importantly, serve as a constant reminder that they should keep an eye out for littering," said Kristine Adams-Wolfe, District 6 Adopt-A-Highway program manager.

Scott Lucas, state Adopt-A-Highway coordinator, hopes the card program will soon go statewide. "ODOT has partnered

with a number of agencies over the years in order to educate the public about the problems associated with litter, but Ohio still has a litter problem," Lucas said

District 6 is printing separate cards for Delaware and Franklin counties. The Delaware County Litter Task Force and the Delaware County Sheriff's Office partnered with ODOT to develop and print the "Turn Them In" cards while the Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio and Franklin County Sheriff's Office are ODOT's Franklin County partners for the "Nail A Dumper" cards. ☺



ODOT Introduces "Safe Routes to School" Program

Ron Poole, Central Office

IN 1969 ABOUT HALF OF ALL GRADE school children walked or biked to and from school daily. But today, the sight of children getting to school by their own means is rare: less than 15 percent of all children walk or bike to school. More than half of all school age children arrive to school in private cars, with another quarter arriving in buses.

This increased use of vehicles to schools is having a real effect in the form of greater traffic congestion and environmental pollution. Though distance

plays a part in transportation decisions, parents often cite traffic safety concerns as the main reason they do not allow their children to get to school on their own.

This year, ODOT launched a new program called Safe Routes to School (SRTS) aimed at making it easier for children to make their own commute to school. This federally-funded, national and international initiative will address child pedestrian and bicycle safety issues and encourage communities to make getting to school on foot and by bicycle a safe and regular practice.

ODOT will administer Ohio's expanding program through the Office of Local Projects.

Created by Section 1404 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) – the SRTS program is funded over fiscal years 2005-2009. ODOT will administer

about \$19 million in funds. The program funds can be used to provide some roadway changes such as traffic calming, but they are also required to be used for educational efforts such as training crossing guards or teaching bicycle and pedestrian safety.

"ODOT's role will be to facilitate the planning, development and implementation of projects that will allow children from kindergarten to eighth grade to make their own way to and from school," said Julie Walcoff, ODOT's SRTS coordinator. "The program will make positive improvements not only to the infrastructure, but in the areas of education, encouragement and enforcement as well."

Because SRTS focuses on getting children to school by means other than car or bus, ODOT has identified a two-mile safety zone radius around each grade school in the state. Altogether these zones cover 40 percent of the state, as shown on the map on the next page.

"If parents cut down on driving their kids to school, these zones could benefit from reduced traffic and lower levels of air and noise pollution," said Walcoff.



Ohio Elementary and Middle Schools with Safety Zones

But beyond that goal, the program will help children become more active and more independent. Active children perform better in school and are less likely to suffer from childhood obesity, diabetes and heart disease – outcomes both schools and parents are interested in achieving.

“This is an extension of ODOT’s ever growing mission to improve safety and mobility,” said Linda Bailiff, administrator of ODOT’s Office of Local Projects. “SRTS goes beyond the infrastructure improvements ODOT is used to administering and adds an educational outreach element into our program.”

Because of this, ODOT is looking to work with other agencies and organizations such as: schools and school districts; county health departments; safe community coalitions; various departments of health and safety; sheriff’s offices and other law enforcement agencies; and both the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society. ODOT would like these agencies to assist with the development and support of the program as the department begins to distribute funds and oversee the implementation of projects.

ODOT’s SRTS program began its operations in February of this year, and is currently working on setting up its procedures, guidelines and marketing strategies. The program will start accepting applications for specific projects in January 2007. In the meantime, ODOT will begin the process of raising community awareness by meeting with a number of other agencies and community groups. For more information on the SRTS program, visit the Web site at: <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/SafeRoutes/> or contact Julie Walcoff at 614-466-3049 or julie.walcoff@dot.state.oh.us



GIS System is a Star

Ron Poole, Central Office

FOR THE LAST 19 YEARS, DIFFERENT state DOT's have volunteered to host an annual GeoSpatial Information Systems for Transportation (GIS-T) Symposium for The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). For this year's event, ODOT served as the host for a one day workshop and three-day main gathering in Columbus. It was a highly appropriate match between host and subject.

"ODOT was one of the early leaders among DOT's in working with GIS," said ODOT's GIS Manager David Blackstone. "We have had GIS within the department since around 1980, and were one of the first transportation departments to have a fully functional system."

GIS is a computer application that can combine different kinds of data from different databases to present information in a straightforward, precise way which helps to more effectively communicate the data. For an example of a map created using GIS, see the "Safe Routes to School" graphic on page 5 of this month's *Transcript*.

"The saying 'A picture is worth a thousand words,' is true with this system," said Blackstone. "The GIS puts a number of graphic skills at our disposal. It allows us to turn data into information repre-

sented in clear, visual terms."

For ODOT and others in the transportation industry, GIS can be used to show the locations of highways, their specific features, bridges, signs and even pavement conditions with absolute accuracy. This information can be further combined with new information like traffic congestion studies and accident statistics to create understandable graphic representations.

"GIS has so many potential uses, it is important to keep current with how different agencies are applying the system," said Blackstone. "That is why we have the symposium: it is a chance for different agencies to gain new ideas and share those practices that have worked for them."

Since GIS has come to ODOT, it has become a part of many departmental functions GIS is used to help districts reach their OPI goals for addressing deficient pavements. The application produces hard copy maps pin-pointing highways with deficiencies in nine different categories. County managers use these maps as tools to plan their maintenance and repair schedules. Environmental Services in Central Office uses GIS to map out road alignments and their possible impact to nearby wetlands and archeological or historic sites. ODOT's Safety Program uses GIS-generated graphics to produce visual representations of high crash locations, so they know where to concentrate their efforts. The GIS application is even used to present different aspects of ODOT's work-plan before the Transportation sub-Committee with the state legislature to help

GIS-T 2006



Columbus, Ohio - March 27 - 29

For the 19th annual GIS-T Symposium, ODOT chose 'Taking Flight' as the gathering's theme. The chosen images represent Ohio's role in the many milestones of human flight.

the department secure its bi-annual budget. ODOT has been called upon to use the system to aid agencies outside of the department.

"Two years ago, when a highway sniper was shooting at cars moving along highways in the Columbus area, we worked with the Highway Patrol to produce maps showing off-ramps where the shooter might strike," said Blackstone. "ODOT also works with state Emergency Services to produce hard copy maps showing areas with affected roads during bad floods."

This year's gathering attracted 579 attendants from 46 states and the District of Columbia, as well as from several provinces in Canada. The visitors represented various transportation agencies at local, state and federal levels, as well as transportation professionals from the educational and private sectors. Those in attendance could choose from more than 70 presentations, 30 of which were given by ODOT. To date, this was the largest gathering for the symposium since it began. ☺

photo by Debra Alfonso, Michigan DOT



GIS-T Symposium Task Force Chairman Daris Ormsher (left), from the South Dakota DOT, presented a plaque of appreciation for hosting the 19th annual event to ODOT Assistant Director Cash Misel and GIS Manager David Blackstone.

2006 Busy Year for Rail Grade Projects

Ryan Larzelere, Central Office

THIS YEAR IS A BUSY ONE FOR ODOT'S Rail Grade Separation (RGS) program across the state. The RGS program, developed under the direction of Governor Bob Taft in 2000, is a 10 year, \$200 million program that addresses safety, mobility and economic development concerns for local Ohio communities.

Criteria for project selection includes: train frequency, traffic volumes, community input, lack of alternative routes to avoid blocked grade crossings and project cost. Project funding is awarded through a Rail Grade Subcommittee of the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC).

In total, the RGS program has 22 projects committed for construction around the state by 2010 totaling approximately \$176 million and another four projects in

the development stages. Three RGS projects have been completed to date in Butler, Lake and Lucas counties. Ohio is one of the first states in the nation to establish a successful program to help address rail grade separation issues.

"ODOT's district offices, along with the TRAC Rail Grade subcommittee have been diligently working to advance this program," said ODOT Director Gordon Proctor. "It is rewarding to see it coming

to fruition as it will help us achieve our goals of improving safety and mobility for all Ohioans." 🗣️



photo by Rhonda Pees, D-1

Bruce Merry, ODOT District 1 construction engineer, and city of Fostoria mayor Charles Dodge at the ground breaking ceremony for the Tiffin Street Rail Grade Separation Project in Fostoria.

Rail Grade Separation Projects that will begin construction or will be completed in 2006:

District 1

Hancock County: Construction of an overpass on Tiffin Avenue in the city of Fostoria. **Estimated Cost:** \$7.3 million. **Start Date/End Date:** spring 2006/summer 2007.

District 3

Huron County: Complete the reconstruction of Cherry Boulevard and improvements to Southwest Street over the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks. **Estimated Cost:** \$7.7 million. **Start Date/Completion Date:** May 2005/September 2006.

Huron County: Complete the construction of a new bridge and roadway over the CSX Railroad tracks in the village of New London. **Estimated Cost:** \$5.5 million. **Start Date/Completion Date:** July 2005/September 2006.

Lorain County: Reconstruct a portion of County Road 50 to include a new steel beam bridge over the CSX Railroad tracks, curbs and gutters, sidewalks and storm sewers. **Estimated Cost:** \$6.6 million. **Start Date/Completion Date:** March 2006/August 2007.

Lorain County: Completion of project over the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks in North Ridgeville. The work includes relocation of State Route 83, bridge and drainage work, pavement markings and reconstruction of the existing SR 83 into two local roads with cul-de-sacs. **Estimated Cost:** \$6.3 million. **Start Date/Completion Date:** May 2005/September 2006.

Richland County: Construction of overpass over the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks on County Road 424. Also includes alignment of Oak Street to the new South Illinois Avenue grade. **Estimated Cost:** \$11.3 million. **Start Date/Completion Date:** June 2006/October 2007.

District 3 has two other RGS projects in the development stages set for construction between 2007 and 2010.

District 4

Ashtabula County: Construction of overpass over CSX/Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks on existing Parrish Road alignment. **Estimated Cost:** \$12.7 million. **Start Date/Completion Date:** summer 2006/fall 2007.

District 4 has three other RGS projects under development for construction between 2007 and 2010.

District 6

Marion County: Realignment and reconstruction of County Road 138 to include construction of a bridge over the existing Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks. **Estimated Cost:** \$4.5 million. **Start Date/Completion Date:** spring 2006/spring 2007.

District 8

Hamilton County: Construction of a grade separation between State Route 747 and CSX rail line. Work includes widening SR 747 from five to six lanes in the city of Springdale. **Estimated Cost:** \$12 million. **Start Date/Completion Date:** February 2004/November 2006.

Operation Feed Kicks Off to Help Those in Need

Ryan Larzelere, *Central Office*

GOVERNOR TAFT'S ANNUAL Operation Feed campaign is officially underway and will run through June 2.

Last year, state employees generated more than 250,000 meals that fed families in need in Franklin and six other surrounding counties. Central Office alone collected more than 900 pounds of food and nearly \$3,022, which is the equivalent of about 7,000 meals donated to the Mid-Ohio Food Bank. Monetary donations of one dollar are equivalent to two meals, and one pound of food donated equals one meal. Food items that can be donated are canned fruits, vegetables and pasta meals, peanut butter and macaroni and cheese.

Operation Feed is a coordinated effort by the

Mid-Ohio Food Bank and the United Way of Central Ohio and has been providing meals to needy families in central Ohio for more than 20 years. The food donations are distributed to more than 230 pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters in Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Madison, Pickaway and Union counties.

The department's goal for 2006 is to collect enough donations for 8,500 meals. Please contact your office coordinator or Emily Miller in the Director's Office at (614) 466-8991 if you have any questions. ☺



The offices of Local Projects and Transit sponsored a fundraising contest to see who could make the best display using marshmallow rabbits and/or baby chicks Peeps®. Above is a construction theme entry from Local Programs Deputy Director Carla Cefaratti. Below to the left is the contest winner, "Batt'l of thi Peeps," submitted by Brett Harris with Transit. The sizable battle scene also took second prize in an event sponsored by the Columbus Dispatch and helped the contest raise more than \$200 for the Operation Feed campaign.



photos by Andy Eline, Central Office



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