

Transcript

January 2005

New Year Brings Month of Flooding, Ice



Joel Hunt
Central Office

WIDESPREAD FLOODING DUE TO heavy rain and thawing snow and ice resulted in as many as 146 road closures around the state and evacuations of entire towns in early January.

Central Ohio received more than 8 inches of rain in the first 13 days of 2005. Similar rainfall amounts were recorded around the state; however, extreme northern Ohio had more snow and ice than rain. According to WBNS 10 TV meteorologist Chuck Gurney, typical rainfall amounts average 2 inches to 3 inches in central Ohio in January.

ODOT Director Gordon Proctor said despite the weather phenomenon, the de-

partment had the resources necessary to keep Ohio's roads safe. "Our forces worked around the clock over the holidays to clear roads and keep them safe. Now we must concentrate on all the things associated with flooding, including crippled bridges and culverts, mud slides and debris in the roadway, in addition to being prepared for more snow and ice."

Prospect, a town in Marion County which sits along the Scioto River, was the first Ohio town to flood. In early January, Marion County sheriffs went to 150 homes asking residents to voluntarily evacuate when the river was at 14 feet 5 inches – more than 5 feet above flood stage.

In the eastern part of the state, West Virginia authorities closed Interstate 70 at the Ohio/West Virginia state line Jan. 4 after 14 barges broke free from their moorings. Two of the barges struck the Fort Henry Bridge which carries I-70 traffic over the Ohio River. West Virginia authorities said rising water and the rivers rapid current contributed to the barge accidents.

Gov. Taft declared states of emergency in 56 counties as a result of the snow, ice and flooding enabling the counties to qualify for federal aid for cleanup.

Additionally, Pres. George Bush declared a presidential emergency for 17 Ohio counties, making them eligible for federal reimbursement.

In central Ohio, floodgates went up for the first time in Franklinton, a Columbus neighborhood, since the floodwall

(see **NEW YEAR** on page 8)



Winter Blast Tests Crews

Jennifer Sradeja
Central Office

AS SEVERAL INCHES OF SNOW BLANKETED the majority of the state in the days before Christmas, ODOT employees gave their time to help out those in need. Employees from districts 5 and 9 traveled up to three hours to the area in and around Dayton to assist in the snow control efforts.

Thirty-eight men and women from District 5 and 11 from District 9 spent Christmas Eve and Christmas Day helping to clear the roads in Montgomery County instead of spending that time with their families. These dedicated employees offered several hours of their time to help local governments in making the roadways passable.

"The people in Montgomery County

needed help and I knew that I could make a difference," said District 5 snowplow driver Clarence McCormick. "Everyone appreciated the work we did and that made it worth while."

On Christmas Eve, Bill Harrison, District 7 deputy director, was informed of a woman trapped in her house without her insulin. Her husband had contacted the Montgom-

(see **BLAST** on page 2)



District 1 crews gang plow northbound I-75 between SR 309 and the High Street Overpass in Lima on Dec. 28 .

photo by Dwight Hackworth, District 1

BLAST (from page 1)

ery County Emergency Operations Center as a last effort to obtain her necessary medicine. Greene County snow plow drivers Darryl Kinser and Bob Bynum agreed to go to the woman's pharmacy and pick up her insulin. The drivers paid the co-pay and delivered the prescription while clearing the couple's road.

"I am very proud of all ODOT employees who helped in our snow efforts," said Director Proctor. "I especially appreciate those who lent a hand in working outside their district, and went the extra mile to provide outstanding service to the people hit hardest by the storm."

In addition to those who gave of their time, employees in the counties hit by the storm joined together to battle the snow and ice. Many crews and snowplow drivers worked 16-hour shifts or more to keep the roads open. The majority of this overtime was put in on a day that was intended to be a holiday and a time spent with loved ones. Through the sacrifices of ODOT crews, citizens were able to keep their holiday travel plans.

The morning after he had just completed a 16-hour shift, District 1 employee Steve Harpster returned to work. After walking a mile and a half to the outpost, Harpster discovered that two snowplows had become stuck while trying to

clear the roads. Harpster immediately got a backhoe and dug out the two plows in addition to one that had been sent to rescue the others.

Statewide, ODOT spent close to \$6 million in labor, equipment and material

costs on the holiday winter blast. This includes 81,000 tons of salt and more than 76,000 hours of plowing. From December 23 to 30, ODOT snowplow drivers plowed or treated more than 888,000 miles of roadway. ●

December 27, 2004

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)
1980 W. Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43223
Attn. Gordon Proctor, Director

Susan M. Drehs Gassner
5898 Windermere Lane
Fairfield, OH 45014

Dear Mr. Proctor,

I certainly hope that you have received many letters like this one. As I traveled north on St. Rt. 127 on Christmas Eve, I was not only amazed but also extremely thankful to all the ODOT employees who made my trip home for the holidays safe and virtually carefree.

After our record-breaking snowfall, needless to say, I was quite nervous about the potential road conditions traveling to Greenville, Ohio. But much to my disbelief, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the road had been practically cleared of snow and as I traveled north, I continually passed truck after truck plowing and salting the highway. I literally cheered them out loud and wished that I could personally give them a personal "THANK YOU".

Kudos to these drivers for their efforts! Thanks to them, my journey, along with the other travelers, was a safe one while our destinations were attainable. Had it not been for them, I might not have been able to spend Christmas with my family. I'm sure that they would've much rather been home with their families, hence, all the more reason for my appreciation.

Please give them a "pat on the back" for me and tell them that they gave me the **BEST** Christmas present ever. I just hope that they all know how very much their efforts were appreciated.

Very Sincerely yours,



Susan M. Drehs Gassner

photo by Joyce Dunford, D-3



District 3 Highway Technician Chip Smith helping out a stranded motorist along I-71 in Ashland County.



photo by Terry Hoylman, D-7

District 7 employees Frank Marino, Ray Burden, Phil Anderson, and Fred Humphrey clear the snow from U.S. Route 68 in Champaign County.

Our Customers Have Spoken

LAST NOVEMBER, THE UNIVERSITY OF Cincinnati's Institute for Policy Research released the preliminary ODOT 2004 customer and stakeholder survey results showing a comparative rise in positive ratings for the department's services. In comparison to the first survey taken in 2002, and a shorter Ohio Poll survey conducted in 2003, ODOT received higher positive ratings in areas such as relieving traffic congestion, smoothness of the roads, maintaining visibility of road stripes and pavement markings, keeping construction zone signs easy to read and understand, and maintaining two lanes of traffic at all times during interstate construction.

The survey also identified the public's major concerns, including the lack or need for public transportation or alternate modes, maintenance and condition of roads and highways, the price of gasoline and traffic congestion.

The customer survey included telephone responses from a random sample of 1,516 Ohio residents, while a separate mail or e-mail survey was distributed to more than 1,000 randomly selected local-elected officials, planners, Metropolitan Planning Organization staff and members, and ODOT staff statewide identified as stakeholders. The stakeholder survey has not yet been fully tabulated.

The Office of Urban and Corridor Planning in Central Office is working on an analysis of the complete findings over

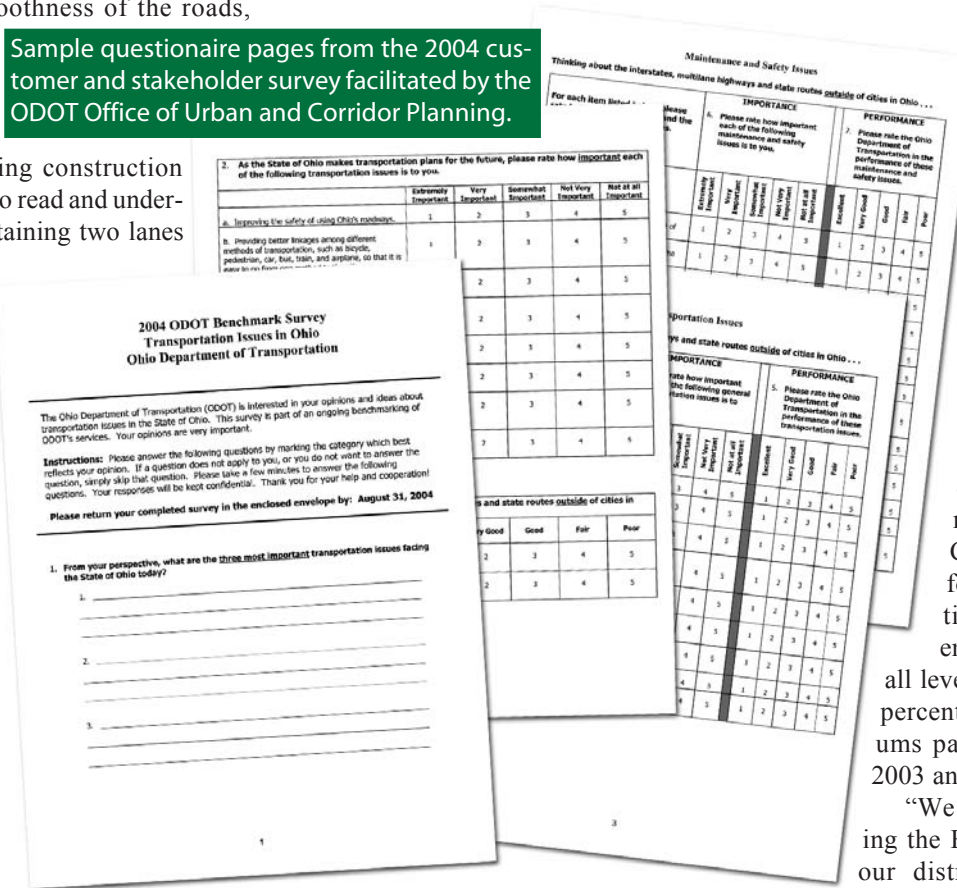


Ron Poole
Central Office



the next few weeks. These will be compared to independent customer surveys being conducted by ODOT district offices. Transcript will be reporting on the full results in a future issue. ☺

Sample questionnaire pages from the 2004 customer and stakeholder survey facilitated by the ODOT Office of Urban and Corridor Planning.



No Time Lost

2004 MARKED THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE year that county garages in Putnam, Henry, Ottawa, Pickaway, Darke, Monroe and Hocking counties had no lost time work injuries among their staff.

"Lost time is counted as injuries that keep someone out of work for eight or more days – what we think of as major injuries," said Regan Morrison, District 6 safety coordinator. "The managers of Pickaway County laid a solid safety foundation, and I commend them for their ef-

forts."

Though always concerned with the safety of employees on the job, district offices have been applying more proactive approaches to their safety programs in recent years. Prior to going on the road,

garage work crews may participate in tailgate meetings where they discuss safety issues and make certain they have the proper equipment. Other districts have implemented programs rewarding safe behavior. In April 2003, ODOT introduced the 10-step Safety Business Plan developed by the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, which focuses on the prevention of injuries. The emphasis on safety on

all levels has resulted in a 2 percent reduction in premiums paid to BWC between 2003 and 2004.

"We are definitely following the BWC 10-step plan in our district," said Hocking County Manager John Pallo,

"We work constantly to keep safety on the minds of our employees."

Pickaway County Garage Manager Jerry Riebel meets with a safety council in his county with 75 members from area public and private organizations to exchange new ideas or undergo safety training. His garage has received a plaque from BWC in recognition of their 35,000 to 40,000 hours without time lost last year.

"I just have really good employees who care about safety," said Riebel. "They make the right decisions." ☺



Versatile Snow Fighter Battles Winter Storms

Ron Poole
Central Office

THIS YEAR'S WINTER blasts have provided ODOT ample opportunities to test a new snow and ice truck capable of clearing winter roads with more treatments than a conventional vehicle. The prototype Multi-Purpose 1 (MP1), designed by District 4 personnel and built in-house in January 2004, provides faster, more economical and more effective clearing of ice and snow.

"We specified the truck to do the job of at least two or more vehicles," said Ron Milliron, equipment manager with District 4. "The MP1 can pre-treat a road with brine prior to a storm; when the weather hits, the truck can apply brine, rock salt and a third de-icer like liquid calcium separately or in different combinations. The driver decides what will be applied using a control panel in the cab. The truck also has a plow for snow removal."

The truck's ability to combine substances can increase its effectiveness. For example, a conventional truck can spray brine which instantly melts ice on contact, but loses its melting power within a few minutes. The MP1 can flood a roadway with as much as 120 gallons of brine per lane mile – more than a conventional brine truck – and lay down rock salt at the same time. The rock salt acts to further extend the fast melting effects of the brine, resulting in more ice removal.

Where a conventional truck might



photo by John Thorpe, D-4

The Multi-Purpose 1 (MP 1) combines several snow and ice fighting activities onto a single truck. The truck can pre-treat roads with brine, apply rock salt or spray liquid calcium separately or in different combinations depending on which material is needed to treat the roads.

have to go over the same roadway more than once to remove all the ice, the MP1 can often accomplish the job with only one pass. The MP1 also saves money by using less snow and ice removal materials. Though results are still being analyzed, District 4 employees estimate the truck saved the state \$2,700 in materials used during five snow storms in 2004.

"I am extremely pleased with the way it works," said Highway Technician Jim Miller. Miller co-designed and drives the truck for District 4. "During the Dec. 22 snow storm, I had the MP1 out along Interstate 77, between Canton and the Akron-Canton Airport. The road sees up to 100,000 vehicles a day, and keeping it safe is a major priority. The MP1 delivered an instant level of service, clearing the roadway and keeping it clear even when the temperature dropped to 3 degrees."

The prototype MP1 is currently the only vehicle of its kind in the nation and was \$121,000 to construct. The vehicle

was featured at the Team-Up ODOT event held in May 2004. Prior to Team-Up, the truck appeared at the American Public Works Association's North American Snow Conference in Kentucky. The MP1 was a subject of considerable interest among representatives of other transportation agencies. A demonstration of the MP1 was held in Indiana for that state's Local Transportation Assistance Program. Additionally, the Washington and Virginia DOTs have been looking into creating similar vehicles based on ODOT's design.

"I am not surprised the value of the truck is being recognized by other agencies because we developed the MP1 based on what drivers wanted in a snow-fighting vehicle," said Transportation Manger and truck co-designer John Thorpe. "We wanted to give drivers the ability to decide how best to treat each storm, and supply them with all the materials they would need to do it. After all, they are the experts." ●



Ryan Larzelere
Central Office

News From the Road

Workshop Used to Help Identify Progress of Major Projects

A NEW STRATEGY DEVELOPED TO ENSURE projects in Gov. Taft's Jobs and Progress Plan are successfully completed on time and on budget was tested during a late January workshop. The initial trial of this strategy analyzed the project development process involved with an Interstate 75 project through downtown Dayton.

The strategy consists of several areas involved with typical projects such as project timelines, design development and contracting activities. The strategy focuses on all these issues to maximize efficiency, minimize redundancy ensuring costs are kept in check and aggressive project schedules are met.

"The department made good progress in the first year of the Jobs and Progress Program in terms of keeping the massive program on schedule," said ODOT Director Gordon Proctor. "It is now time to consider the next stages of these projects, especially the important construction and maintenance of traffic phases."

Taking part in the workshop was the Federal Highway Administration, project consultant CJ2M Hill, and ODOT employees from a number of disciplines including Real Estate, Roadway Design, and Geotechnical Engineering. The workshop participants provided information on how each of their particular disciplines was involved with the project. The goal was to identify potential risks and develop strategies to resolve them before they impact project development.

As part of this strategy the Division of Information Technology developed a business process and a Web-based system called "Tracker" for monitoring the performance of projects outlined in the Jobs and Progress Plan. The system tracks project cost, scope and schedule to ensure each is current and accurate.

The Tracker breaks each project down into more than 80 major steps which reflect ODOT's Project Development Process. This software will provide automatic flags and reports to indicate when steps are late or when projects are at risk of not complying with the budget, scope or schedule. The software links ODOT's business practices in a way which will help ODOT deliver the Jobs and Progress Projects according to the schedule and budgets approved by the Transportation Review Advisory Council.

Similar workshops involving other major ODOT projects are expected in the future. The strategy's focus is to ensure Jobs and Progress projects are delivered on time and on budget, have the least possible impact on neighborhoods, and have minimal disruption to motorists. ●

Small Bat Given Big Consideration

EACH YEAR ODOT CONSTRUCTS nearly 700 projects throughout the state. Each of these projects has unique characteristics but they all have obstacles that must be addressed prior to construction. One common obstacle is the potential that a project could negatively impact the federally endangered Indiana bat or its habitat.

However, because of ODOT's diligence this little creature is being protected, while projects are kept on schedule and the bat and its environment are sustained. There are about 350,000 of

the 3-inch bats in existence in 27 states, including Ohio. In 1967, the bats were declared an endangered species and are currently listed on both the federal and state endangered species lists.

The migratory bats hibernate in caves during the winter, and spend their summers beneath loose bark, in open cracks and in cavities of living or dead trees. Trees required to be removed for a project are cut between September 15 and April 15, after the bats have taken their winter migration, to avoid harming the animal. During project development, the department conducts an analysis to determine impacts to suitable summer habitats for the bats within project areas.

ODOT and the Federal Highway Administration have worked with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to ensure precautionary measures are in place to preserve the bat population and its habitat.

ODOT has also provided two years of funding to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for a position that will be responsible for collecting information on the bats presence in Ohio. Additional responsibilities include assisting the department in the development of a systematic approach to help ODOT avoid impacting the bat and its habitat when constructing a project. Consultants have also been hired to consolidate a variety of documentation and records on locations where the bat could be found into a single database. This database will be a valuable tool to the department in determining the likely presence of the bat as projects are being developed. ●



stock photo

ODOT is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure the endangered Indiana Bat and its habitat is not negatively impacted by highway construction.

TRAC

Transportation Review Advisory Council

New Draft List Approved



Ryan Larzelere
Central Office

IN EARLY JANUARY THE TRANSPORTATION Review Advisory Council (TRAC) approved a modest draft list totaling \$717.5 million to fund major new projects in 2006 through 2011. The list contains funding for the construction of nine projects and the continued development of 11 projects. Currently, the TRAC has 89 projects under construction, or designated to be constructed, totaling \$4.8 billion.

“Today we continue our focus on rebuilding Ohio’s highway network,” said

Director Gordon Proctor after the list was approved. “This funding will help construct a number of projects that will improve our transportation system and enhance the lives of people throughout Ohio.”

The most recent TRAC list represents the second year of funding commitments for projects that make up Gov. Taft’s Jobs and Progress Plan, unveiled in August 2003.

The plan devotes \$5 billion over 10 years toward Ohio’s highway network

and is the state’s largest transportation initiative since the original creation of the interstate system. It is expected to generate more than 4,000 highway construction jobs, ease freeway congestion, improve road safety and connect rural regions.

Based on the Jobs and Progress Plan revenue, the TRAC has approved \$3.6 billion worth of projects to be funded between 2004 and 2009. In later years, the TRAC will make additional decisions

(see **TRAC** on page 7)

New TRAC-Approved Projects (Tier I) Draft List

Northwest Ohio

Lucas/Wood Counties, ITS – \$14.6 million for the Toledo Freeway Management System in SFY 2011 to install cameras, traffic sensors, and changeable message signs on freeways in the metropolitan area.

Northeast Ohio

Cuyahoga County, Interstates 71/90 – \$230 million to construct the Innerbelt Bridge and Southern Curve in SFY 2011.

Summit/Stark Counties, ITS – \$14.4 million for the Akron/Canton Freeway Management System in SFY 2008 to install cameras, traffic sensors, and changeable message signs on freeways in the metropolitan area.

Central Ohio

Franklin County, Rickenbacker – \$8.2 million to extend Alum Creek Drive through Rickenbacker Airport in SFY 2011.

Southwest Ohio

Clark County, Interstate 70 – \$29 million to add a lane in SFY 2009 from Enon Road to State Route 54.

Clinton County, State Route 73 – \$60 million for construction of the Wilmington Bypass beginning in SFY 2007.

Hamilton County, Interstate 75 – \$107 million to improve Interstate 75 and upgrade interchanges between Western Hills Viaduct and State Route 4 in SFY 2011.

Montgomery County, Interstate 75 – \$247 million to upgrade Interstate 75 and interchanges from U.S.35/I-75 to Monument Avenue (Phase 2) in SFY 2011.

Montgomery County, ITS – \$7.3 million for the Dayton Freeway Management System in SFY 2011 to install cameras, traffic sensors, and changeable message signs on freeways in the metropolitan area.

TRAC (from page 6)

to complete the Jobs and Progress Program through 2014.

The Jobs and Progress Plan is predicated on \$250 million annually in state revenue and \$250 million in new federal revenue to fund the \$500 million new construction program. Ohio made significant progress on the federal side with Congress addressing the “ethanol penalty.”

The contradictory federal penalty was eliminated in last October’s federal corporate tax overhaul legislation. This

change is expected to increase Ohio’s federal transportation allocations by \$150 million annually. Because this fuel was taxed at a lower rate, the more of it Ohio used, the less federal revenue Ohio earned. The elimination of the ethanol penalty will provide approximately 60 percent of the federal increase that Ohio seeks for the Jobs and Progress Plan.

The remaining funds needed to increase Ohio’s federal allocations by \$250 million annually comes from increasing the state’s federal rate of return and through the natural growth in federal transportation funding. Increasing Ohio’s rate of

return from 89 percent to 95 percent is expected to generate an additional \$50 million. The remaining \$50 million needed to increase Ohio’s federal funding levels by \$250 million annually comes from overall federal funding growth that typically occurs each year.

In 2004 the TRAC held five public hearings around the state to hear from project applicants why their project should be funded for either construction or future development. The draft project list is subject to a 90-day public comment period before a final list is approved by the TRAC in May. ●

New TRAC-Approved Projects Funded for Further Development (Tier II) Draft List

Northwest Ohio

Allen County, Interstate 75 – For the preliminary development of Interstate 75 from Auglaize County line to State Route 81.

Northeast Ohio

Cuyahoga County, State Route 87 – \$200,000 for the preliminary engineering phase for widening of State Route 87 from Interstate 271 to Lander Circle.

Cuyahoga/Summit Counties, Interstate 77 – Preliminary development for the addition of a lane on Interstate 77 from the Ohio Turnpike to State Route 82.

Jefferson County, New River Bridge – \$600,000 for the preliminary engineering phase of the New Ohio River Bridge.

Medina County, U.S. 42 – For the preliminary development of the widening and reconstruction of U.S. 42.

Central Ohio

Franklin County, Interstate 71 – For the preliminary development of an additional lane on Interstate 71 from the Pickaway/Franklin County line to Interstate 270.

Franklin County (Grove City), Interstate 71 – For the preliminary development of the Interstate 71/State Route 665 interchange in Grove City.

Franklin County, Interstate 270 – For the preliminary development of an additional lane on Interstate 270 South between U.S. 23 and Interstate 71.

Southwest Ohio

Butler County, State Route 4 – Preliminary development for widening of State Route 4.

Hamilton County, Interstate 75 – \$3.3 million for the preliminary engineering phase of the reconstruction of Interstate 75 and interchange upgrade between Towne Street and State Route 562.

Hamilton County, Interstate 75/275 – \$4 million for the preliminary engineering phase for improvements to the Interstate 75 and Interstate 275 interchange.

Southeast Ohio

Belmont County, Interstate 70 – \$900,000 for the preliminary development for the reconfiguration of existing Interstate 70/Mall Road interchange.

Lawrence County, State Route 7 – Phase 2 of the Chesapeake B

photo courtesy of WVDOT



Runaway barges hit the I-70 Fort Henry Bridge spanning the Ohio River between Ohio and West Virginia, outside of Belmont County.

NEW YEAR (from page 1)

was completed in 2004. After two days the wall was dismantled, only to be reconstructed five days later because additional rainfall raised the Scioto River to dangerous levels.

In Cincinnati, District 8 employees monitored Ohio River levels throughout January to determine if floodgates along Fort Washington Way should be installed. According to Ron Mosby, District 8 public information officer, since the completion of the highway's reconstruction in 2000, floodgates along Fort Washington Way have never been used.

District 8 Deputy Director Mike Flynn said the Ohio River floods at 52 feet, but Fort Washington Way does not flood until the river reaches 62 feet. "When or if the river reaches 57 feet, we'll make a decision on whether or not to install the floodgates," Flynn said. "The gates take four days to install."

Mudslides plagued southern Ohio throughout the month. State Route 7 between George's Run and Rush Run in Jefferson County and State Route 152 at Dillonvale Hill also in Jefferson County were among

the hardest hit locations. ODOT assisted townships with slippages in Harrison, Guernsey, Belmont, and Athens counties. Additionally, Washington and



Flooding on State Route 60 and Pioneer Drive in Muskingum County.

photo by Lloyd Miller, D-5

Richland counties requested ODOT's help with mud and debris removal.

Mudslides from this month's storms come on the heels of 17 similar incidents Columbiana County has suffered over the past five months. Six bridges and 19 county roads and culverts were washed out by heavy rains that struck the county over a four-week period starting Aug. 28. All the road and culvert washouts had been repaired prior to this month's storms except for two bridges – Darner Road outside Lisbon and King Road in Butler Township.

Total damage to county roads and bridges from last year's floods in Columbiana County totaled \$2.24 million. Federal and state funding, along with insurance payments, will cover \$2 million of the cost.

In mid-January, the Tuscarawas County Emergency Management Agency warned residents of several area communities that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would release water from two local dams to lower the dams water levels. The release of both dams caused widespread flooding that left about 6,400 residents stranded on virtual islands for more than a week. Roads in and out of the cities sat under water.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also released controlled amounts of wa-

ter from the Delaware Dam. Although residents of the small central Ohio village of Mount Air were warned about potential flooding caused by the release, no evacuations were necessary.

Not all of Ohio was affected by floods. On Jan. 5, an ice storm dumped up to 1 inch of ice over several north central Ohio counties, crippling utilities and closing roads. Further north in Cuyahoga County, more than 3 inches of snow and freezing rain fell during the same timeframe, requiring District 12 crews to work 24-hour shifts through the week.

With the help of state and federal emergency aid, as well as insurance payments, Ohioans will spend the first part of 2005 digging out, cleaning up, and putting their lives back together. ☘

High water flowing under the U.S. Route 36 bridge over Alum Creek in Delaware Co. on Jan. 14, inset with the same bridge prior to flooding.



Photos by Ferzan Ahmed, D-6

Ohio Department of Transportation Employee Newsletter

Transcript

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