



Transcript

March 2004



John Hackley
Central Office

Construction Season Sets Future Tone

TOPPING \$1 BILLION AND TOTALING more than 700 projects ODOT's 2004 construction program starts work on projects identified in Gov. Taft's Jobs and Progress Plan.

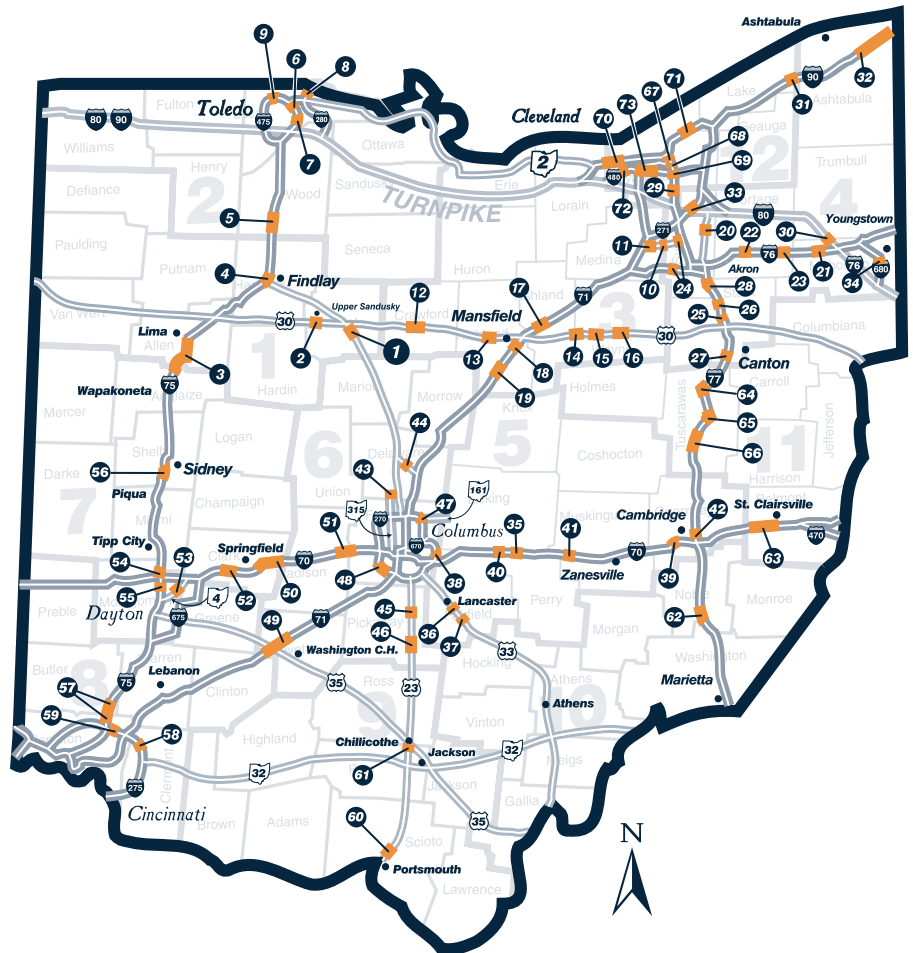
The governor's Jobs and Progress Plan represents Ohio's largest transportation initiative since the original creation of the interstate highway system. The plan will invest \$5 billion over the next decade to rebuild Ohio's urban interstate networks, address high-crash and congested locations, and complete the state's rural macro-corridors.

The 2004 construction program has grown to \$1.13 billion, up from last year's total of \$1.1 billion. The infusion of \$250 million generated from last year's state gas tax increase is primarily responsible for the expanded program.

This year's program also marks the beginning of ODOT entering into the era of "mega projects." Over the next several years, high-cost projects such as the Innerbelt in Cleveland, the Interstate 70 and Interstate 71 "split" in Columbus, and reconstruction of Interstate 75 corridor will dominate the department's program for the next decade.

"The upcoming ODOT projects not only strengthen the state's all-important infrastructure, but also provide jobs to many Ohioans," said Andrew E. Doehrel, president of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

Aside from the benefits of new or improved highways, the need to update the state's transportation system will give Ohio's job market a boost. Federal sta-



Map of ODOT's major construction projects on Interstates, U.S. Routes and State Routes for 2004. Visit www.buckeyetraffic.org for details on each project.

tistics indicate each billion dollars invested in the transportation network supports 47,000 jobs. ODOT's \$1.13 billion construction program for 2004 will result in more than 60,000 jobs.

The projects to rebuild Ohio's urban interstates will address the pressing congestion problems in the state's metropolitan areas.

One significant urban highway

project will rebuild the State Route 18 and Interstate 71 interchange just east of Medina. At a cost of nearly \$8 million, the project will help to improve safety and mobility in that area. Another major urban mega project will rebuild Interstate 270 at State Route 16 and State Route 161 and Sunbury Road in Columbus. The

(see **CONSTRUCTION** on page 2)

CONSTRUCTION *(from page 1)*

\$130 million interchange improvements will help to alleviate the congestion in one of the fastest growing areas of Franklin County.

“Many are saying we are in a jobless recovery,” said District 6 Deputy Director Jack Marchbanks. “Believe me: there is nothing jobless about a \$130 million highway project in Columbus.”

Another dominant focus will be on projects that will make substantial improvements in the areas of safety and congestion. These range from simple low-cost projects to complex high-cost fixes to improve safety and congestion hot spots. This year marks the beginning of the increased funding for the safety program through Gov. Taft’s Jobs and Progress Plan. Beginning in 2004 ODOT has doubled to the funding for this program from \$30 million annually to \$60

million per year.

“Safety has been ODOT’s top priority for more than 30 years, and with the strong emphasis on the Safety and Congestion program during the 2004 season, the department is geared to make vast strides in the coming year,” said ODOT Safety and Congestion Manager Jennifer Townley.

In Stark County, the section of Interstate 77 from U.S. Route 30 to just south of State Route 172 is a high crash location. It is in the 12 percent of Ohio’s freeway system that contributes to 43 percent of crashes in the state. Projects will widen this route at this location and improve ramps, service roads, and bridges.

Construction this year in Warren County will rebuild portions of the State Route 48 and State Route 73 intersection and widen four approaches in the area. This is a high-crash location and has been identified as a priority safety project.

The 2004 construction program continues ODOT’s effort to complete the state’s rural macro-corridors. Once completed, this network will place more than 90 percent of Ohio’s population within 10 miles of an adequate highway corridor and help new areas reap the economic benefits some parts of Ohio already experience.

In the effort to connect rural corridors, a \$36 million project this year in Wayne County will construct a four-lane divided highway from U.S. 30 to Apple Creek Road.

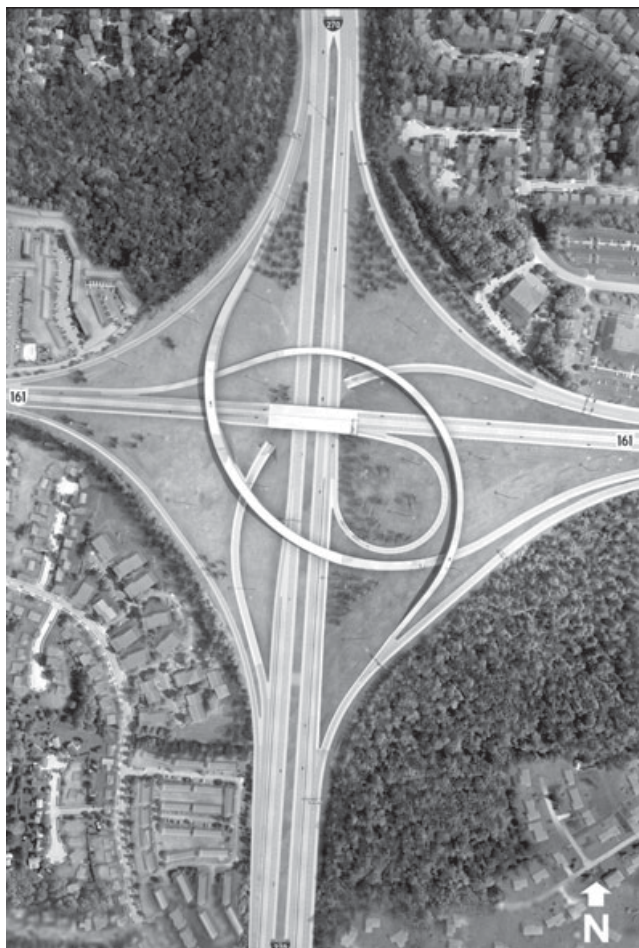
Additionally, work on two significant southeastern Ohio projects will continue this year. The \$140 million Lancaster Bypass project, when completed in the Fall of 2005, will enhance mobility and safety throughout southeast Ohio by eliminating traffic lights and intersecting roadways. The project is about 75 percent complete, and the cost for 2004 will be about \$27.6 million.

Also, the completion of the more than \$70 million U.S. Route 33 Athens to Darwin project later this summer will help to open the Appalachian region to new economic development opportunities. It is 81 percent complete and the cost for 2004 will be about \$14.6 million.

Fueled by Gov. Taft’s Jobs and Progress plan and increased funding, ODOT will launch many important construction projects in its record-breaking 2004 construction season.



An aerial view of the existing Interstate 270/State Route 161 interchange in Northeast Columbus.



A rendering of the completely reworked Interstate 270/State Route 161 interchange. Construction is scheduled to begin this May and be completed in 2008.

images courtesy of module, LTD.

Last Blast?

THE MID-MARCH STORM THAT LEFT Ohio knee deep in snow halted highway workers post winter maintenance activities and forced them back into plow trucks.

Warmer temperatures in late February and early March allowed highway crews to repair potholes and begin litter pickup. However, the snowstorm around the St. Patrick's Day holiday replaced that early spring work with end of the winter salting and plowing.

While this year's salt usage and costs associated with snow and ice control were more than the state averages they are nowhere near last winter's record-breaking statistics – the highest in 30 years.

“As of March 17, we have used 638,376 tons of salt statewide and spent \$48 million on snow and ice,” said Keith Swearingen, administrator of the Office of Maintenance Administration. “In an average year the department uses 480,000 tons of salt and spends \$36 million.”

Last year the Office of Maintenance Administration began tracking costs associated with potholes. In State Fiscal Year 2003, ODOT spent \$4 million patching the state's 317,000 potholes. As of March 17, 2004, the department has spent \$4.4 million. “The costs of repairing potholes are significant,” Swearingen said. “We need to establish a baseline so we can see how we can cut costs.”

DOT Close-Up

Joel Hunt
Central Office



Keep America Beautiful Praises Ohio

THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION was one of six state DOTs to receive the 2003 Keep America Beautiful Partnership awards in Washington D.C. for preventing litter and beautifying and improving public spaces.

Keep America Beautiful is a national, nonprofit public education and community improvement organization. It has a network of more than 500 city, county, and state affiliates and millions of volunteers who annually clean up and beautify their communities.

“Our Partnership Award winners exemplify the great success that can be achieved when our state affiliates work with these departments of transportation,” said Keep America Beautiful President Raymond Empson.

The Office of Maintenance Administration's Scott Lucas said ODOT was recognized by Keep America Beautiful because of the department's Tree Legacy, Wildflower, and Adopt-A-Highway programs.

“Each year, ODOT and its Adopt-A-

Highway volunteers collect more than 18,000 bags of litter which is 400,000 pounds or 200 tons of trash removed from the roadside,” said Lucas. “The department also plants seedlings and wildflowers which reduce soil erosion and beautify Ohio's roadsides.”

Dangerous Trash

SEVERAL STATES WERE CAUGHT OFF guard when chemicals and containers used in the production of the illegal drug methamphetamine (meth) began appearing along their roadsides. While this has not yet been problematic in Ohio, precautionary warnings on what to do if these items are encountered here have been provided to ODOT highway workers and litter control volunteers.

“What we most fear are volunteers opening containers and being overcome by toxic fumes,” Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator Scott Lucas said. “What looks like trash could be harmful.”

ODOT and the Ohio State Highway Patrol are working together to increase awareness of the potential hazards of materials used in meth production. The two agencies want to prevent accidental injuries and help law enforcement find and arrest those responsible for making meth.

Lt. Richard Fambro said the OSHP's focus is on the transportation of meth labs since the drug can be produced in vehicles. “It's important we immediately remove these vehicles from the road because of the volatility of some of these chemicals.”

ODOT Director Gordon Proctor said the agency recommends people always wear gloves and eye protection when removing litter from the roadways, and not to shake liquids out of bottles.

“ODOT crews and Adopt-A-High-



photo provided by OSHP

ODOT and the Ohio State Highway Patrol warn that materials – such as these recently discovered items found alongside an Ohio roadway – used in the production of the illegal drug methamphetamine are potentially life-threatening.

(see **CLOSE-UP** on page 4)

CLOSE-UP (from page 3)

way volunteers do a great job of keeping the highways looking great and our main priority is to keep these people safe in accomplishing this,” Proctor said.

Potentially harmful substances such as anhydrous ammonia, acid, sewer cleaner, lye, antifreeze and ethanol are some of the main ingredients used to make meth. After the meth is produced, disposable materials such as plastic bottles, red chemically-stained coffee liners, camping fuel cans, ketchup bottles and battery casings are often left along roadside.

Smells similar to ammonia, fingernail polish remover, or cat urine could be a sign of recent meth production. Lucas said not to touch any materials or containers found with these odors or any other items that look suspicious. Contact the local law enforcement department immediately if any of these things are discovered.

Pickaway Bridge Wins National Merit Award

THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS of America selected ODOT’s bridge replacement on U.S. Route 22 as Merit Winner in its Design-Build Renovation category. Of the nearly 70 projects nominated for the award, the judges selected 14 Build America Award winners and 10 Merit Award winners.

Replacement of the 45-year-old

bridge in Pickaway County was one of the first “Fast Track” bridges built in Ohio. The Fast Track Program uses innovative materials, prefabrication, and contractor incentives and disincentives to speed the pace of bridge work.

Tony Hurless, vice president of Ruhlin Construction’s Heavy Civil Division – the primary contractor on the U.S. 22 project – said it was the most “partnered” job he has ever had. “ODOT, E.L. Robinson – the designer – and Ruhlin worked great together. Every problem was solved on-site.”

Ruhlin Construction accepted the award on behalf of ODOT and E.L. Robinson on March 12 in Orlando, Florida.

Top 10 Contract Award Winners

ODOT SPENT \$708 MILLION PRESERVING Ohio’s bridges and pavement and on new construction in 2003.

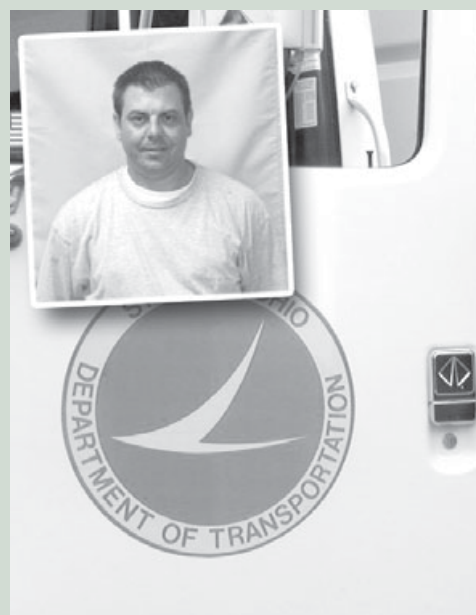
Here are the top 10 contract award winners:

1. Kokosing Construction Co. Inc. . \$104 million
2. Shelly Company \$85.4 million
3. Shelly & Sands Inc. \$79.9 million
4. John R. Jurgensen Co. \$63.3 million
5. Great Lakes Construction Co. ... \$47.9 million
6. Mahan/National \$45.8 million
7. Smith & Johnson Const. Co. \$30.4 million
8. SE Johnson Companies Inc. \$27.5 million
9. Keffler Bridge/Keffler Const. ... \$25.5 million
10. Elmo Greer & Sons Inc. \$22.1 million



A snapshot from July 12, 2003 of deck work being performed on the award-winning, “Fast Track” U.S. Route 22 bridge in District 6’s Pickaway County.

photo by Carole Howell, District 6



Scott Miller, inset, and Kevin Niese, from District 6, helped find a missing Chicago-area man by helping a missing Chicago-area man.

Lending A Hand

Rhonda Pees, District 6

A 77 YEAR-OLD MAN IS MISSING. His family waits to hear news. Enter Kevin Niese and Scott Miller of Putnam County.

On March 16, the two helped orchestrate a reunion between a man reported missing from a Chicago suburb with his family.

Niese was plowing on State Route 15 in Putnam County and had stopped to turn around when a man in a white Ford Taurus pulled in behind him. He asked Niese for directions to a town near Chicago called Melrose Park.

Niese gave him directions. “He kept hesitating like he couldn’t get it,” said Niese, so he wrote down the directions on a napkin. The man, whose name he later learned was Al Brocca, then asked Niese to sit in his car with him and talk him through it.

“I had an idea that something might be fishy,” said Niese, so he asked Brocca to follow him back to the garage.

Once in the garage, Niese walked Brocca into the office of Scott Miller, Putnam County timekeeper.

Miller remembers the first words

dist





photos by Rhonda Pees, District 1

OD-1's Putnam County garage, went the extra mile to help a man with Alzheimer's find his way home.

Helping Hand

District 1

Brocca spoke. "Hey, you've got to remember I'm one of Uncle Sam's boys."

"That sent up a flag for me," said Miller. Putnam County Manager Mike Pollock, whose mother suffers from Alzheimer's disease, immediately recognized Brocca's demeanor as that of a person with the disease.

"Don't let him go," said Pollock, who then called local authorities who ran a check on his license plates. Brocca had been reported missing by his family in Chicago on March 14.

Miller was able to get a phone number from Brocca and contacted his family in Chicago.

"You are my angel from heaven," said Joe Brocca, the son of the missing man, to Miller.

While the younger Brocca flew to Fort Wayne, Ind., Miller and his father, John, arranged to drive Brocca to the airport that same night for the reunion.

"I'm glad we just didn't brush him off and send him on his way," said Niese. "It was a pretty neat deal we got him back safely."

"It was a good feeling," said Miller. "I'd want someone to do the same for me."

Washington Action

ON WASHINGTON'S CAPITOL HILL the debate over billions of dollars in federal transportation funding is heating up.

Governor Taft and Director Proctor have led Ohio's charge to increase the state's federal funding levels.

The governor and the director have worked with Ohio's congressional delegation for nearly two years to eliminate the "ethanol penalty" and increase the state's rate of return from 90 percent to 95 percent.

Initial indications are the work has paid off as Congress is poised to address the ethanol usage issue which could bring an annual \$150 million increase in federal funding to Ohio. However, increasing the rate of return is still being heavily debated.

The recent discussions involving "core program" funding levels has potentially created a new problem. A proposal is to lower the current level from the existing 95 percent to 84 percent.

"A drop in core program funding will limit our flexibility in using these funds and may impact our ability to issue bonds for future projects," said Proctor. "Federal funding levels will also impact our ability to fully implement the governor's Jobs and Progress Plan."

Noting the current extension of the existing federal transportation funding bill is set to expire at the end of April, Proctor said it is important to address these issues quickly.

So, before final decisions are made in Washington, Gov. Taft, Director Proctor and Ohio's congressional delegation will continue their work to ensure Ohio receives an increase in federal funding levels. The new six-year federal transportation funding bill is expected to be finalized in late spring or early summer.



J. Brian Cunningham, Central Office

Gall Returns to the DOT

NEW EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE Director Andrew Gall has taken over the responsibilities formerly under Bob Campbell. Campbell has moved to the private sector and is now with TranSystems Corp.

"Unfortunately, Bob has moved on, but I am glad someone of Andrew's caliber will take his place," said Proctor.

Much of Gall's responsibilities will be on policy issues and facilitating ODOT's involvement in the governor's Jobs Cabinet initiative.

"Being part of the team again presents great opportunities," said Gall. "I look forward to getting to work."

Economic development is a primary focus of the governor's Jobs Cabinet. As ODOT's point person, Gall will promote transportation as key to opening new development opportunities statewide.

"Returning to the department was not a difficult choice," said Gall. "There have been many positive changes over the past few years, and I look forward to contributing to future improvements."

ODOT's 2004 construction program will require some of Gall's attention.

New duties will involve Gall serving as the department's liaison on the Ohio Security Task Force and working with the public on constituent issues.

Emphasizing the importance of ODOT's work to Ohio's economy, Gall added he looks forward to getting involved in the implementation of the governor's Jobs and Progress Plan.

Recent Retirements

Central Office

Raymond Harris
Norma Julio
William McPherson

District 1

Herbert Odenweller

District 3

John Keys
Thomas Williams

District 4

Raymond Fitch

District 5

Rudolph Helbing
Robert Jolliff

District 8

Timothy Guthrie
Cynthia Holmes
Jerry Silcox

District 9

Robert Bellaw
Everette Kellough
Ruth Smith

District 11

Roy Champer
Theodore McCort

Production Report

John Hackley, Central Office

THE DEPARTMENT'S ON-TIME DELIVERY rate for prescheduled projects to be sold in Fiscal Year 2004 finished at a rate of 90.88 percent – exceeding the established 90 percent goal. This is an improvement over last year's 87.77 percent.

“Our steady focus on submitting projects on-time is essential for delivering ODOT's annual construction program in accordance with our 20/30/30/20 strategy,” said Rand Howard, deputy director for the Division Production Management. “Smoothing out the overall program by prescheduling projects for bid

openings provides construction contractors with more control over their prospective workloads, as well as allowing them to develop bids more responsibly in advance of the construction season.”

Howard added, the districts have steadily improved by not allowing projects to slip into the fourth quarter. Also, significant strides have been made in bringing the largest and most complicated projects to market in the middle of the year, but there is still room for progress.

Since 2000, ODOT has focused on spreading projects throughout the year. The goal is to get no more than 20 percent of the program to market in the first

quarter, at least 30 percent in each of the second and third quarters, and no more than 20 percent in the fourth quarter. This strategy helps to maintain a consistent project schedule and fund distribution. Previously, more than 60 percent of the department's construction program was going to bid during May and June, which is typically the busiest time of year for the contractors.

“We were paying a significant premium in bid prices when we bunched most of our projects into fourth quarter sales,” said Howard. “When we put too much work out on the street at one time, there was less competition for each project.”

ODOT Production Report FY04 Construction Sales Program ODOT-Let Projects

District	Projects Originally Scheduled		Projects Awarded (Actual thru 3 rd Qtr)		Projects Awarded (Projected thru 4 th Qtr)		Projects Submitted On-Time to meet scheduled letting	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	YTD%	(On-Time/Total)
1	23	\$18,482,000	23	\$18,651,423	29	\$20,910,803	96.77%	(30/31)
2	47	\$58,035,500	44	\$45,760,753	56	\$68,424,400	84.75%	(50/59)
3	63	\$185,455,781	53	\$144,247,035	68	\$153,181,575	92.06%	(58/63)
4	76	\$190,253,120	72	\$151,028,072	95	\$201,193,880	90.24%	(74/82)
5	39	\$39,257,241	37	\$35,276,222	51	\$47,324,326	95.45%	(42/44)
6	43	\$92,360,960	31	\$34,401,199	51	\$251,115,656	89.58%	(43/48)
7	70	\$55,313,647	58	\$44,948,468	84	\$66,764,887	91.03%	(71/78)
8	64	\$66,841,942	54	\$77,108,150	80	\$90,053,507	94.29%	(66/70)
9	35	\$20,526,037	45	\$21,393,191	51	\$23,769,351	82.93%	(34/41)
10	45	\$21,793,202	36	\$22,406,242	51	\$27,218,702	93.75%	(45/48)
11	58	\$30,492,891	52	\$25,853,948	76	\$34,561,148	96.30%	(52/54)
12	47	\$99,007,035	35	\$51,401,350	57	\$126,971,723	84.31%	(43/51)
Total Program	610	\$877,819,356	540	\$672,476,053	749	\$1,111,499,959	90.88%	(608/669)

Trekking for a Cure

MONIQUE EVANS, ADMINISTRATOR for Research and Development with Central Office, will be leading a team of ODOT employees, called the Transportation Trekkers, on a fund-raising walk through downtown Columbus on Saturday, April 17. The walk is just one of 12 such events occurring throughout Ohio sponsored by the National Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society. MS is an adult on-set disease that randomly attacks the brain and spinal cord and can cause crippling symptoms. Daily treatments allow those with MS to lead normal lives, and there is hope for a cure.

"I'm walking on behalf of a 'solemate', – a dear friend of mine who has MS," said Evans. "I want to do whatever I can to help her and others with this disease."

Walks are scheduled in a number of communities, including Cleveland, Athens and Zanesville. For more information about your local events, visit the official website at: www.msohiobuckeye.org

Workforce Development Works

LAST YEAR, MORE THAN 500 ODOT employees used the Workforce Development Program to further their educations and benefit their careers. The program provides tuition assistance and academic counseling to those seeking educational advancement.

"I would love for more people to consider taking these classes," said Margaret Smith, lead coordinator of the program and a member of Aerial Engineering with Central Office. "Learning about what you can do through just a class or two can put an entirely new spin on your work life and your outlook."

Workforce Development was introduced to most of the state with the 1998 roll-out of the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). TAP currently offers qualifying participants up to \$3,000 per year toward achieving a degree at many Ohio universities, colleges or vocational training programs. Workforce Development has expanded since then to include career counseling and computer enrichment



Ron Poole
Central Office



training. Last year, more than 230 ODOT employees purchased computers using loans available through the Workforce Computer Purchasing Program.

District 11 Highway Maintenance Worker J.D. Marlatt used the Workforce Development program in earning his associate's degree in Applied Business Management Technology from Kent State University. Attending classes after work and on weekends, Marlatt was allowed by District 11 Deputy Director Myron Pakush to serve as an intern at the district office to satisfy a degree requirement.

"It was something I wanted to do for myself," said Marlatt. "I believe that it will open doors for me in the future that otherwise may not have been available."

Any who are interested in learning more about the current Workforce Development Program can contact their district coordinator or Margaret Smith with Aerial Engineering at (614) 725-1359.

Students Experience Engineering

NATIONAL ENGINEERS WEEK HELD IN late February, allowed ODOT

District 11 employees to provide middle school and high school student hands on training on the engineering trade. The discussions, exercises and competitions involving students and transportation professions provided an in-depth idea of about the engineering profession.

"ODOT and the Tuscarawas Valley Society of Professional Engineers worked together during National Engineers Week to focus on sharing the importance of engineering with young people," said ODOT District 11 Bridge Engineer Jim Olsavsky. "The sooner young students consider engineering as a viable career option, the earlier they can begin to make the right educational choices."

Event highlights included the annual MATHCOUNTS competition for area 6th, 7th and 8th grade math students. A Model Bridge Building competition tested the skills of high schoolers from Carroll, Holmes, Tuscarawas, Coshocton, Harrison and Jefferson counties. And two students spent the day at the District 11 Office as part of the "Engineer for a Day" program.

Founded in 1951 by the National Society of Professional Engineers, National Engineers Week is recognized annually by thousands of field professionals, students and educators in government and business. Its purpose is to help increase public awareness and appreciation of technology and the engineering profession.



District 11 Construction Area Engineer Ron Bovetsky gives a lesson in plan reading to students David Hoffman and Dale Arnold during the "Engineer for a Day" program.

photo by Lloyd MacAdam, District 11

FYI

State Fair

100 Years, Transportation = Progress

It has been 100 years since Ohio first sanctioned an official transportation department. Since transportation truly does equal progress, the state fair committee has devised a plan to incorporate 100 facts related to transportation and how it has contributed to progress in Ohio over this past century.

What do you know?

The fair committee needs your help. At the state fair, and many of the 88 county fairs, ODOT will celebrate the centennial this summer by highlighting 100 facts about transporta-

tion in Ohio. You are there, in the county garages and district offices. You have heard the sto-



ries and, yes, even the legends. Please forward them to us so

they can be shared with the citizens of Ohio.

Please jot down what you know about the department, the historical facts that have contributed to Ohio's progress, bits of information unique to your part of the state. Send them by email or inner office mail to: Julie Walcoff, Central Office, Communications.

The State Fair runs from Aug. 4 to Aug. 15 this year. County fairs begin at the end of May and run in different parts of the state until August. Hope to see you there.

Feature Photo

photo by Leslie Dellovade, Central Office



A passenger-seat view in a District 6 Hilliard Outpost truck as it plows Interstate 270 near Interstate 70 on the west side of Columbus during the March 16th storm.

Ohio Department of Transportation Employee Newsletter



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