Service Awards—projected

Mary Gordon Ott, office specialist 2 with Support Services, Salem.
Eric Hansen, electrician 2 with Region 4, Bend.
Philip Johnson, compliance specialist 3 with Technical Services, Salem.
Joanne Macfarlane, governmental auditor 2 with DMV, Salem.
Eryca McCartin, principal executive manager E with Technical Services, Salem.
Sarah Schladweiler, office specialist 1 with DMV, Salem
Richard Shankle, rail compliance specialist with Rail Division, Salem.
Susan Simonsen, operation and policy analyst 1 with Financial Services, Salem.
Melinda Starbuck, transportation services office leader with DMV, Grants Pass.

Retirements

Bill Boyett, public service representative 4 with Region 3, White City, retired with 9 years of service.
Elizabeth Wagner, office specialist 2 with DMV, Salem, retired with 30 years of service.
Vera Wicks, procurement and contract specialist 3 with Support Services, Salem, retired with 21 years of service.
Linda Ziogas, office specialist 2 with DMV, Salem, retired with 42 years of service.

Obituaries

Sharon Cumbie, passed away April 14 in Silverton. She worked for ODOT for 28 years before retiring a few years ago.
Sam Fields, recently retired Fleet Engineer with Support Services, passed away April 14 in Salem. He was 75.
Michael Salisbury, retired North Portland Maintenance Crew member, passed away March 6, in Portland. He was 51.

Access Management is managing traffic conflicts

Road rage! We've all been there: stuck in stop-and-go traffic, drivers slowing down, crossing lanes and turning to enter or exit adjacent land. It can be very frustrating. When driveways and road intersections are allowed to proliferate, it disrupts the smooth flow of traffic and can cause major safety problems.

An access point, called an "approach," is where a driveway or cross-road intersects a highway.
Each access point creates a pattern of travel paths and conflicts. A crash can occur where the paths of two vehicles cross. We know there are thousands of driveways and intersections that connect to state highways. We don't know exactly how many there are or where many of them are located, because there is not a statewide road approach inventory.

As early as 1935, roadway designers recognized that frequent access points degraded roadway efficiency and caused safety problems. Between 1949 and 2000, Oregon put in a place a framework of Revised Statutes, Administrative Rules, policies, standards and guidelines to manage highway access. Now we are able to manage access better than ever before.

Why manage access?

ODOT manages access for three reasons:

- preserve public safety;
- ensure efficient traffic movement; and
- extend the life cycle of highways and reduce the cost of adding lanes and building new roadways.

Some of the main ways to manage access and reduce the number of traffic conflicts include regulating the number, location and design of access points; installing raised medians; and providing turn lanes. Even though we have come a long way, we continue to improve methods of managing access. ODOT established the Access Management Unit of Technical Services to do just that.

A median is one tool engineers can use to manage access.

Existing Road Approach Data

ODOT's Project Delivery Leadership Team recognized the need to build a statewide approach inventory to facilitate project delivery. They also realized the limits of trying to build it project-by-project. In 2005, they adopted Operational Notice No. 3 & 3A (PDLT 03/A) requiring that basic road approach inventory data be collected for certain projects in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan. Developing the PDLT-03/A and the Official Project Access worksheet helped ODOT staff agree on basic road approach inventory data: location, side of road, surface type, width and property use. This was an important first step toward building a statewide road approach inventory.

Currently, highway approach permit data are scattered around the state, stored in each District office and at the Office of Maintenance in electronic, paper and microfiche files. Since 2000, highway approach permit data has been maintained in a statewide database called the Central Highway Approach Maintenance Permit System, or CHAMPS. All permit records combined, however, do not add up to a complete inventory of existing highway approaches. In particular, recent existing approach inventories collected for projects across the state reveal large numbers of access points for which ODOT has no permit record.

Moving in the Right Direction

ODOT is taking big steps to create a complete guide to access management assets — or approaches to highways. Regions 3, 4 and 5 are currently collecting the same highway approach inventory data required under the PDLT-03/A, using the Official Project Access worksheet.

The AMU and Asset Management Integration Team are refining the basic data elements and developing a data collection manual to insure statewide consistency. A recent pilot study tested three desktop data collection methods: Digital Video Log, TransGIS Ortho-Imagery, and Google Maps. The study focused on a three-mile section of rural highway where a project team had recently completed a field inventory of existing approaches. The study concluded the Digital Video Log is a quick, easy way to collect basic inventory data comparable to data collected in the field for the STIP project.

Much work remains in building statewide baseline highway approach data, but there is a lot of enthusiasm for getting the job done. Such an inventory will simplify data collection for environmental assessment, transportation facility planning and project delivery. It will also help ODOT evaluate relationships between highway access points and traffic crash and operations data. In addition, it will allow ODOT to integrate highway approach data into other critical business areas so the benefits of access management can help state highways provide the level of safety, service and convenience people count on.

Get a glimpse of a planner's world

"Planning for Non-Planners" is a half-day course offering an overview of planning: what it is, why we do it, the types of plans, the process, and how plans are used. It's a free class geared for managers, engineers, project leaders and other project delivery staff, and employees from Tech Services, Tech Centers, Environmental, Right of Way, Access Management, Procurement and Maintenance. Instructors focus on how planning relates to the jobs of the participants and includes a brief review of the major components of planning (Oregon Statewide Planning Program, Statewide Planning Goals, the Transportation Planning Rule, state and local plans, and other material). The next class is May 26 in Salem, and you can register on the HR Training intranet site.