

The Future of Transportation

Michigan Summit Seeks Collective Vision for 21st Century

A rare opportunity to gaze into the future and create the vision for a safe, effective and flexible transportation system for Michigan was the challenge put to more than 500 participants at a first-of-its-kind Transportation Summit. The Lansing event, held on Dec. 3 and 4, 2003, also was Webcast, enabling people to view the activities and participate via the Internet.

The Summit, which was conceived by Gov. Jennifer Granholm and MDOT Director Gloria Jeff, brought together transportation specialists, stakeholders, and individual citizens from Michigan, other states and Canada to project into the future and participate in discussions to help craft a broad-voiced transportation plan.

“It’s not wise for MDOT or anyone else to operate in a vacuum,” said Director Jeff. “We need to bring everyone together to determine what transportation should be in Michigan. Without a shared vision about its transportation needs, it would be hard for the state to become a magnet for jobs, growth, people and economic activity. To my knowledge, nothing like this summit has been done in the past 30 years.”

The two-day session opened with a welcome from Gov. Granholm and comments from Director Jeff. These were followed by comments from Rodney Slater, former director of the U.S. Department of Transportation, and Harinder Takhar, Canadian Minister of Transportation, that provided participants with a broader perspective on national and international transportation issues.

Continued on page 3



For more information and updates about the Michigan Transportation Summit, go to:
<http://www.michigan.gov/transportationsummit>

Gloria J. Jeff

Michigan Summit Seeks
Collective Vision

Director's Column
We're Not Done Yet!

Tackling Old Man Winter

Snow Management
in Houghton County

Multi-Modal Transportation
in Presque Isle County

MDOT Is Ready To Rumble

Storm Water Program

Good News

OHR Update

MDOT Family Tree

WANTED!
Transpo Club Members

State Transportation Commission

- Ted B. Wahby, Chair
- Betty Jean Awrey, Vice Chair
- Linda Miller Atkinson
- Robert G. Bender
- Vincent Brennan
- John W. Garside

We're Not Done Yet!

I could not be more proud of the extraordinary and committed group of people who are Team MDOT. Thanks to your hard work and dedication, 2003 was a productive year. We faced many challenges, we advanced our mission, and we helped grow Michigan's economy.

Together we did great work! We delivered 95 percent of our announced commitments, rehabilitating or reconstructing 550 miles of roadway and improving 1,500 miles of roadway under the Capital Preventive Maintenance Program. In addition to our announced work, we were able to do more: 41 additional road projects and 21 additional bridge structures. Additionally, our work in support of public transit and intercity transportation helped move more than 80 million riders.

We also enriched our working partnerships with transportation providers, citizens, local government and private industry – an effort that culminated in Michigan's first-ever Transportation Summit. The result was a collective vision for a comprehensive, fully multi-modal, 21st century transportation system for Michigan. Nine action teams are meeting now on a regular basis to work on those issues identified at the Summit.

Yes, we accomplished much in 2003, but we are not done yet! Michigan's success as a state depends on a well-constructed, efficient and well-maintained transportation system that moves Michigan, and Michigan's economy, forward. As always, Team MDOT needs the help of every employee to reach our goals.

In 2004, we will continue Gov. Granholm's "Preserve First Initiative" and maintain existing roads and repair



Team MDOT members from the Houghton Maintenance crew joined the L'Anse Maintenance staff for Director Jeff's recent visit there. Pictured are (left to right): Mike Bishop, John Dault, Thomas Deschaine, Rick Bukoski, Jeff Collins, Director Jeff, Jan Streiter, Mark Hiltner, Dan Coleman, Bob Groop, Paul Paavola, and Bob Snyder. (See related story on page 5.)

bridges before adding new capacity. Whenever possible, we will take a Context Sensitive Solutions approach to transportation design, mindful of the human, cultural, and land use-related aspects of our work. We will continue our emphasis on partnerships and increased communication with stakeholders and transportation providers. We will focus on improving the health and safety of MDOT employees in all aspects of their work.

Transportation is integral to our state's commerce, trade, tourism and economic development. With this in mind, we will work toward improving performance and delivering a transportation system for Michigan that is second to none.

We also pledge to fully utilize our expertise to save millions of dollars that can be redirected into system preservation.

These 2004 priorities are intended to lead and guide every garage, TSC, region, unit and bureau of Team MDOT in making choices, meeting challenges and addressing changes.

Team MDOT is my favorite team. With your help, I look forward to another all-star season! 🐾

Team MDOT needs the help of every employee to reach our goals.

— Director Jeff

The Future of Transportation

Continued from page 1

"To create the transportation system that you want, to create a truly inclusive system, it takes more than your governor, your director and members of Team MDOT... it takes all of you," said Rodney Slater, pointing to the audience at the Lansing Center event.

"I applaud the Michigan Department of Transportation for taking the initiative to organize this important event," Takhar said. "Ontario understands that we need to work together. American and Canadian businesses need to be able to rely on safe, efficient borders to ensure they get their goods and services to market on time. Local residents need to be assured that their concerns about environmental issues, traffic and land use are being addressed."

"We are committed to listening to stakeholders and working together with the business community, the transportation industry, and all levels of government, to find solutions to the challenges we face at our borders," Takhar said.

The Summit focused on nine key transportation-related subject areas which were discussed in a series of breakout sessions throughout the two-day event. Expert facilitators in each breakout session guided participants as they worked together to identify the

We couldn't have done it without you! And you, and you and you! There were many, many MDOT staffers who helped with the behind-the-scenes arrangements for the Summit. This letter from Diane Kempen, Kalamazoo, sums it up:

"Thank you for a dynamic Summit. I experienced two exhausting, yet exhilarating, days in Lansing... Team MDOT brought together a diverse group of people, people with potentially opposing views – and you brought us together so that we found our strength as a group.

We listened to viewpoints other than our own. We formed new alliances and ultimately drew the group conclusion that we need each other.

Thank you to the 'behind-the-scenes team' – to all of you who did the tasks and the planning – it was a remarkable bit of teamwork."

20 Transportation Summit: MICHIGAN PARTNERSHIPS 03

The Summit's collective vision for a 21st century transportation system

Michigan will lead the 21st century transportation revolution as it led innovation in the 20th century. We will move people and goods with a safe, integrated, and efficient transportation system that embraces all modes, is equitably and adequately funded, and socially and environmentally responsible. Michigan's transportation community will work together to ensure that resources are in place to deliver the system.

respective issues, goals, and action steps for: 1) Asset Management; 2) Research and Evaluation; 3) Land Use; 4) Mobility Options; 5) Communications, Consciousness Raising and Public Involvement; 6) Safety; 7) Commerce and Trade; 8) Coordination, Cooperation and Connectivity; and 9) Funding.

"For two days in December, we dreamed collaboratively and created a shared vision for a transportation system that makes every citizen mobile, that fuels our economy and enhances our quality of life in every community," said Director Jeff. "We worked together to identify goals and issues, and we have determined the actions we must take to reach those goals."

Since December, Summit workgroup leaders have met to develop operating charters. These charters describe how each action team will achieve the goals which address the issues agreed upon at the Summit.

Summit Planning Team members also will collaborate on post-Summit follow-up sessions in public forums across the state where the vision will be honed and refined into a single, statewide strategy.

"What we need in Michigan is a world-class transportation system," said Jeff. "It's a key to economic development and a key to our quality of life in Michigan. 🇺🇸"



ABOVE: A diverse group of people from across Michigan brought together their views to work on nine key transportation-related subject areas. Here, Planning's Susan Mortel (right), and two participants labor over creating goals and action steps for one of the issues.

BELOW: Attendees viewed large-screen viewing monitors in the full session. Anyone with Internet access could monitor the discussions via a live Webcast.



WORTH repeating

A proverb is a short sentence based on long experience.

— Miguel de Cervantes

Tackling Old Man Winter

The View from Inside the Snowplow

Slick highways don't stop them. Snowy, dark mornings fail to intimidate them. MDOT's snowplow drivers are a hardy breed – stopping only for coffee, or maybe to mount the front plow blades. Drivers keep a watchful eye on the road and another on the controls, with a sixth sense always in high gear to spot any shadowy vehicles or figures that might be just outside their line of vision. It's a gut-jarring ride on a truck carrying about six tons of salt.

Each storm is different and how each snowplow operator reacts is determined by several factors, including how much snow is predicted, the duration of the storm, and the ever-changing weather conditions. And the most important factor of all: the driver's skills.

That's why each year in the fall, the same drivers participate in a friendly, yet serious, competition called the Midwest Regional Snowplow Rodeo, held in Wyoming, Mich. Ten drivers from five of MDOT's seven regions compete for the top prize: a trip to Colorado for the national snowplow rodeo, and bragging rights as MDOT's best snowplow operators. The drivers are selected for the rodeo because they finished in first or second place at the rodeos held in their respective regions.

Who won those rights this year? Jeanne Owsiany-Houdek from the Southwest Region's South Haven Garage is the one – now the Grand Champion MDOT driver for two years in a row, a feat never before accomplished. Jeanne scored 945 points, out of a possible 1,320, to top all MDOT competitors. Ken Dyer from the Williamston Garage in the University Region was just five points behind in second place. Scott Russell, North Region's champion from the Marion Garage, took third place with a total score of 920 points.



The competition at the Midwest Regional Snowplow Rodeo is always tough. Here are the MDOT competitors (from left to right): Ron Jackson, Metro; Eric Johnston, Southwest (loader); Rick VanOver, North; Darrell Swinehart, Southwest (loader); Jeanne Owsiany-Houdek, Southwest; Ken Dyer, University; Mike Betts, University; William Bair, Metro; Greg Cerecky, Southwest; Scott Russell, North; Aaron Oberle, Superior; Rus Allen, Superior

The first-place team among MDOTers was Ken Dyer and Mike Betts, from the Charlotte Garage in the University Region. They scored a whopping 1,810 points working together to navigate the course and complete a truck diagnostics test.

The entrants for MDOT in the front-end loader competition were Eric Johnston and Darrell Swinehart from the Southwest Region's Kalamazoo Garage.

Clearing snow off Michigan highways and freeways is a tough job, but experience is the best teacher. Experience, that is, and the Snowplow Rodeo! 🦶



Jeanne Owsiany-Houdek from the South Haven Garage was the MDOT Grand Champion!



The first-place team among MDOT participants was Ken Dyer, Williamston Garage; and Mike Betts, Charlotte Garage.

MDOT Slides into Snow Management in Houghton County

There is a reason Houghton County residents consider less than a foot a dusting: They are accustomed to snow, and lots of it. In Houghton County the average annual snowfall is 18 ½ feet. The record is 356 inches. October averages almost four inches of snow. In fact, on Oct. 23, 1979, 11.1 inches turned Houghton County into a premature winter wonderland.

This is the reality the Superior Region faced in October. The region could not agree to the special conditions that the Houghton County Road Commission wanted to add to the new maintenance contract. “It was October 23 and we were running out of time,” said Ishpeming TSC Manager Andy Sikkema. “We knew the snow was about to fly and we weren’t getting any closer to an agreement.”

The HCRC wanted payment for unaudited stand-by equipment costs. Without it, they would only plow from 5 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. “The way it snows up there, the people need 24-hour coverage,” said John Dault, Transportation Maintenance Supervisor.

“They gave us a signed contract with some unacceptable special conditions added,” Sikkema said. “At the same time, we got a one-year termination letter saying they were going to end trunkline maintenance services.”

So there they were, in late October, with no contract – and forecasters predicting snow was headed their way. Superior Region Engineer Randy VanPortfliet gave the go-ahead to assume plowing immediately. “It was the right thing to do,” Randy said. “We had to carry out our responsibility to ensure adequate trunkline winter maintenance services to those residents.”



The view behind the stats: This is what a used-car lot looks like in da U.P. during the winter. It's not likely this Houghton County lot will sell any cars on this day.



Rick Bukoski buckles up for safety as he prepares Director Jeff for her run around the L'Anse maintenance facility parking lot in the snowplow truck. The director plowed a pass around the grounds before heading out with Bukoski on his run. The area received about eight inches of snow that day, providing Director Jeff with a good sense of winter life in the U.P.

Within hours, three trucks were parked under the Houghton/Hancock Lift Bridge. An MDOT service facility located in neighboring Baraga County expedited the effort by providing equipment and manpower.

“Everyone understood this was a serious move,” Andy said. “There aren’t many places that even come close to experiencing the winters they have in Houghton County. We knew we had a big job at hand.” It was a job that started that afternoon. As the snow began to fall, the big orange trucks rolled out.

As word about the situation spread, calls came in with offers of equipment from MDOT service facilities in every region. “The MDOT support network was activated,” Superior Region Maintenance Supervisor Terri Reid said. “In a week, a million and a half dollars worth of equipment was transferred to Houghton County.” Within a month, a facility had been secured and eight vehicles, two graders, a loader, backhoe and other equipment stood ready for the 14 workers, including several limited-term employees who were extended. All in the nick of time. November averages 24 inches of snow. The December average is 60 inches.

“It’s been a massive, cooperative effort,” Andy said. “I’m so proud of all the guys who made it happen. No one questioned the decision or complained about the long days ahead; they just rolled up their sleeves and got the job done.”

*Editors’ note: Andy said that employees “just rolled up their sleeves,” but we think they more than likely “rolled down their sleeves and put on their snow gear.” 🦶

Continued on page 14

Multi-Modal Transportation Investments Abound in Presque Isle County

Busy, busy, busy! 2003 was an unprecedented year for construction in Presque Isle. The Presque Isle County Development Commission and the Board of Commissioners teamed up with MDOT to host multiple ribbon-cutting ceremonies, wrapping up one of the busiest years of construction ever for this northeast Michigan county and Rogers City.

Projects totaling more than \$7 million included: major improvements to the Presque Isle County Airport in Rogers City, resurfacing eight miles of US-23 from M-65 to Forest Avenue, replacement of the bridge deck over the Trout River, completion of a three-mile extension of the Huron Sunrise Trail – a non-motorized trail from Rogers City to Hoeft State Park – and replacement of transit buses for public transportation.

Yards of ribbon helped celebrate the opening of multiple projects on a day that was dubbed Multi-Modal Transportation Day.

“These projects demonstrate what effective partnerships and multi-modal transportation improvements can do to enhance a community’s economic vitality and quality of life,” said MDOT Director Gloria Jeff.

Here’s how the day went: MDOT officials, along with members of the public and other dignitaries, cut a ribbon on the runway of the newly rehabilitated Presque Isle County Airport. The revamped airport with an extended runway now can accommodate larger aircraft. “I think it will have a far greater impact than people realize,” commented Rogers City Mayor Beach Hall.

From there, the group cut yet another ribbon and boarded a public transit bus to the bridge over the Trout River and cut a ribbon celebrating US-23 resurfacing and the bridge deck replacement. The final leg ended on the Huron Sunrise Trail where two ribbons were simultaneously cut – one for the trail extension to Hoeft State Park, the other for the safety trail in Presque Isle Township. Director Jeff, along with Scott Thayer of the Alpena TSC, cut the yellow tape while sitting on a covered, four-wheel bike.

No doubt about it, the multi-function event drew lots of attention from the community. “It does my heart good seeing everyone pulling together,” said County Chair Allan Bruder. “It will all help the county in the future.”

“Transportation and economic development go hand in hand,” said County Development Commission Director Mary Ann Heidemann. “These improvements solidify our county’s future growth potential.” 🐾

Thanks to the following people for their roles in these successful projects!
 Alpena TSC Development/Delivery staff
 North Region staff
 Multi-Modal Transportation Services Bureau staff
 Office of Economic Development and Enhancement staff

Multi-Modal Transportation Day



ABOVE: It started off with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the runway at the Presque Isle County Airport in Rogers City.



LEFT: Guests cut a ribbon for the new public transit bus.



ABOVE: On to US-23 and the bridge deck replacement over the Trout River and yet another ribbon-cutting!



LEFT: And last, Director Jeff and Alpena TSC Manager Scott Thayer help open a section of trail on the Huron Sunrise Trail.

MDOT Is Ready To Rumble – To Save Lives



Every year, falling asleep while driving is the cause of at least 100,000 automobile crashes, 40,000 injuries and 1,550 fatalities nationwide.

On most major highways in Michigan, motorists whose cars drift toward the shoulder of the road will hear the familiar sound of a rumble strip – designed to awaken a drowsy driver or alert a distracted driver to imminent danger.

A new MDOT project announced last fall has resulted in a new and improved rumble strip on hundreds of miles of state highway, including nearly 600 miles in Grand Region alone.

Rumble strips are traditionally located two feet from the edge of the highway. The new design will place them only four inches away, giving a drowsy or distracted driver more time to recover from inadvertently driving over the highway edge line.

MDOT is using the latest technology to enhance the rumble strip's lifesaving potential. The strips are painted to be more visible to drivers and to better define the edge of the roadway at night. Preliminary tests indicate pavement markings in rumble strips may last longer, reducing the frequency of replacement. Because the paint is submerged into the pavement, traffic and snowplows do not come in direct contact with it, resulting in less wear on the strip.

“The new rumble strips definitely put drivers on notice,” said Rick Liptak, Cadillac TSC manager. The new US-131 freeway around Manton, north of Cadillac, incorporated the new rumble strips.

MDOT is also studying the use of center-line rumble strips. 🚗

New rumble strips are located only four inches from the highway edge on I-96 in Kent County.

Two thumbs up for the Mackinac Bridge Walk



Approximately 70 employees joined Director Jeff to walk the Mighty Mac for the 46th Annual Labor Day Mackinac Bridge Walk. A charter bus carrying 40 sleepy MDOTers left Lansing at 3:45 a.m. headed to St. Ignace to meet up with another 30-some MDOT walkers. Team MDOT bridge walkers, wearing bright yellow MDOT Bridge Walk T-shirts, pose with Gov. Granholm to give the event a “thumbs-up.”



US-131 Manton Bypass opens early and under budget!

The Freeway Open sign is unveiled at the Manton Bypass grand opening ceremony. Left to right: Cadillac TSC Manager Rick Liptak; Director Gloria Jeff; Dave McKerverve, Cadillac TSC; Ray Kimbel, Mayor of Manton; and North Region Engineer Brian Ness.

The Cadillac Rolling Relics Club was just one of the many travel enthusiast groups eager to drive the newly completed 11-mile stretch of US-131.





MDOT's Storm Water Program Working Together...Better Roads, Cleaner Streams

A rain garden in Grand Region... a storm water infiltration system installed by the Mt. Pleasant TSC in Harrison...these are just two examples of how Team MDOT works with local communities and watershed groups to protect and preserve our rivers, lakes and streams.

Every day, MDOT staff demonstrates how important even the smallest decisions can be. Just ask the Grand Rapids TSC. They are working on a severe erosion problem along US-31 in Holland that originally was expected to be solved with an enclosed pipe to carry storm water. Instead, thanks to the forward thinking of the Grand Rapids TSC team, in cooperation with the city of Holland, storm water now will be allowed to flow along a grassy ditch, which will remove up to 80 percent more pollution than using an enclosed pipe.

"The decisions on this storm water solution were not only mine, but also others who value the same issues of clean water," said Art Green, Grand Rapids TSC. "We really are a team."

Why is MDOT putting so much effort into storm water control?

"There are two reasons," Seth Phillips, storm water program manager, explains, "First, storm water is a significant source of pollutants to our rivers, lakes and streams, and we all have a responsibility to prevent pollution of our water resources. Second, the federal Clean Water Act of 1972 established a program to clean up the nation's polluted rivers, lakes and streams with the goal of making them 'swim-able and fish-able.' A significant and growing part of this program is the storm water control program."

In contrast to pollutants from point source (end of pipe) discharges from industries and sewage treatment plants, non-point source pollutants are widespread, originating from the land surface and entering rivers, lakes and streams through drainage ditches and storm sewers. Runoff from these sources includes common pollutants such as oil and grease, agricultural chemical runoff, organic materials, sediment, and trash.

As an operator of storm water systems on all state roads, MDOT is one of the many public entities required to implement a program to prevent surface water pollution from storm water.

"We are surrounded by the world's largest supply of fresh water. Team MDOT's actions to protect this valuable resource reflect the value we place on our rivers, lakes and streams," said Bobbi Welke, Southwest Region engineer, and a strong supporter of MDOT's storm water program.

Storm Water Program Expands its Horizons into 350 Communities

MDOT has been actively working for years to control storm water runoff on state roads. Up to now, the effort has been focused in six Michigan communities under existing permits: Ann Arbor, Flint, Grand Rapids, Sterling Heights, Warren, and Livonia.

On March 10, 2003, federal regulations went into effect that require storm water control programs in smaller communities which are known as Phase II communities. This added more than 350 communities in Michigan to the Storm Water Management Program.

As in Phase I, MDOT must obtain permit coverage of our storm water discharges within these communities. Rather than administer 350-plus separate permits, MDOT has negotiated with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for a single statewide permit to meet this requirement.

"We now have a statewide permit issued by DEQ on Jan. 22 which took effect April 1, 2004," said Phillips. "The permit will require public and employee education, elimination of illicit discharges to our storm water system, construction site runoff control, post-construction runoff control, and pollution prevention measures in all of the Phase II communities as well as some activities on a statewide basis. The MS4 team and I coordinate these activities for the department and local communities."

"MDOT staff can expect to see more information, training, and activities and procedures developed in the near future," he said.



They are the protectors of Michigan's rivers and lakes. The Lansing area Storm Water Management Team is comprised of (left to right): Molly Lamrouex; Gary Croskey; Seth Phillips (manager); and Mike O'Malley. Not in photo: Coreen Strzalka

| Storm Water Program Manager | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Seth Phillips | 517-373-1908 |
| Lansing Support Areas | |
| Gary Croskey | 517-335-2171 |
| Molly Lamrouex | 517-373-8351 |
| Coreen Strzalka | 517-373-3397 |
| Mike O'Malley | 517-335-2434 |
| Region Storm Water Coordinators | |
| Bob Batt (University Region) | 517-750-0410 |
| Steve Houtteman (Grand Region) | 616-451-4595 |
| Cary Rouse (Bay Region) | 989-754-0878 |
| Sharon Ferman (Metro Region) | 248-483-5136 |
| Dan Hamlin (Superior Region) | 906-786-1830 |
| Gary Niemi (North Region) | 231-941-1986 |
| Nicholas VanWoert (Southwest Region) | 269-337-3936 |
| Construction & Technology | |
| Dave Gauthier | 517-322-5710 |
| Maintenance | |
| Darwyn Heme | 517-322-3312 |
| Real Estate | |
| Joe Rios | 517-241-2103 |

"Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System" – a.k.a. MS4

The MS4 Team is charged with the oversight and development of MDOT's Storm Water Management Program. The team is responsible for providing information about current activities and requirements, ensuring consistency and coordinating storm water program activities with their respective regions or other operating areas of MDOT.

The MS4 Team includes representatives from Planning, Real Estate, Maintenance, MDOT Regions, and Design Support. These MS4 Team representatives are available to help MDOT staff with storm water questions.

Storm Water Management Plan

MDOT is working to protect water quality by implementing a Storm Water Management Plan. This plan has a common theme: Together...Better Roads, Cleaner Streams.

A new plan to address the larger Phase II program will be developed next year with significant input from MDOT staff and the general public. The six major components of the current plan address the six minimum measures required by the EPA and include:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Participation/Involvement
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Runoff Control
- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping

A Valuable Resource: MDOT's Drainage Manual

The recently completed manual was developed to provide guidance for the design of MDOT drainage facilities. It is a contract and training document for MDOT development and delivery personnel that outlines some transportation-related storm water Best Management Practices (BMP). The manual is available online at <http://www.mdot.state.mi.us/stormwater/drainagemanual.cfm>.

Learn More

For more information about MDOT's Storm Water Management Program and to download referenced resources, check out the storm water site on the Interchange or visit MDOT's public storm water Web site at <http://www.michigan.gov/stormwater>.



The Grand Rapids TSC staff came up with a creative solution to keep pollution risks low. (From left to right) Mike Eastman, TSC Development Engineer Art Green, Rita Levine, and Brent Hadfield helped find the answers.

New faces in new places

Meet our new Superior Region Communications Representative Dawn Garner who joined MDOT in September after Jim Pinar left MDOT for another position. You can reach Dawn in the Superior Region office at 906-786-1830 (ext. 323) or e-mail GarnerDa@michigan.gov.



Dawn Garner

Coleen Hines returned to MDOT in October as the new administrator for the Performance Excellence Division, replacing Nancy Foltz who accepted a position with the governor's office. Coleen has been working as the director of IT Services to MDOT in the Department of Information Technology (MDIT).



Coleen Hines

Cheryl Strayhorn joined MDOT on Jan. 5 to serve as our Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) officer. To promote administrative efficiency regarding EEO functions, this position now reports directly to Director Jeff. Cheryl is responsible for all statewide EEO issues.



Cheryl Strayhorn

Barbara Hicks is the new communications manager in the Office of Communications, effective Jan. 5. Barbara will be developing, supervising and coordinating internal and external Office of Communications projects.



Barbara Hicks

OHR introduces Groundhog Shadow Day to MDOT

MDOT hosted its first-ever Groundhog Shadow Day on Monday, Feb. 2.

As the name implies, the one-day event was held on Groundhog Day and provided an opportunity for approximately 145 students, aged 8-18, to visit MDOT and shadow an employee or sponsor to learn about the world of work.

The future MDOTers played "Who Wants to be an MDOT Millionaire," took a tour of the Van Wagoner Building in Lansing, and shadowed an MDOT employee at work.

One MDOT employee commented: "My grandson enjoyed the day so much – and took in so much information – he had more than an hour's worth of experiences to tell his mother. His mother said it was the most he had ever shared with her about his day."

Another MDOTer said he hoped Team MDOT continues to sponsor such opportunities to show children what our work world looks like. Research suggests that events such as Groundhog Shadow Day help children understand and prepare for the workplace which they'll be a part of after they finish school.

MDOT plans to make Groundhog Shadow Day an annual event, replacing the former Take Your Child to Work Day.

Special thanks to the facilitators, Michelle Myers and Bob Kuehne, for the event's outstanding success.

RIGHT: Dave Phillips, Grand Region Materials & Technology Engineer, explains the composition of a Hot Mix Asphalt pavement core to the Groundhog Shadow Day participants. Other Grand Region activities included trivia games, a tour, a trip to the sign shop, and a chance to see a snowplow up close.



U.P. Sled Dog Association President Pat Toreano, right, and Director Jeff acknowledge the crowd during the 15th running of the U.P. 200 Sled Dog Championship.

MDOT joins in on 'da U.P. 200 Sled Dog Championship

The U.P. 200 Sled Dog Championship celebrated its 15th anniversary this year on Feb. 20-22 as MDOT joined the action for what is hoped to be a long ride. A number of MDOT employees and their families – from both the Upper Peninsula and downstate – joined an estimated crowd of 10,000 along the race trail in Marquette as Director Jeff kicked off the race as the official starter.

The race is a full year in the making, involving more than 500 volunteers who plan out every inch of the 240-mile challenge. This year's event was complicated by Mother Nature, who increased the level of difficulty for the 26 teams by dumping a foot of snow on parts of the trail.

When the top eight finishers made it to the finish line in Marquette, the others were stopped in Deerton due to



LEFT: These children thoroughly enjoyed taking part in Groundhog Shadow Day at the Grand Region TSC. Activities included playing "Who Wants to be an MDOT Millionaire," and doing a crossword puzzle.



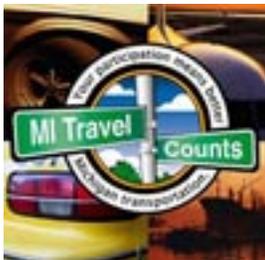
Lyle Ross, of Michigamme, and his team of 10 dogs exit the chute. Ross was one of seven mushers who withdrew from the race after experiencing trouble on the trails.

the severe weather conditions and late hour. The fresh, deep snow slowed the teams down so much that the winner finished 10 hours behind previous years' winners. Typically, teams come in early Sunday morning with a closing ceremony scheduled for 2 p.m. However, this year the winner didn't cross the finish line until after 8 p.m. Although it doesn't appear she'll be trading in her cocker-mix pup for a sled dog team anytime soon, Director Jeff said she did enjoy her February venture to 'da U.P. for the U.P. 200.

"As a sports fan, I was amazed to see these canine athletes raring to go before the race," Director Jeff said. As the official race starter, she had the best spot in town to watch the event. Standing at the starting line, she counted down the teams as they took off, one at a time, in two-minute intervals. Director Jeff looked on as the mushers gave last minute words of encouragement to their teams before hopping on the sleds and taking off on their 240-mile trek. The U.P. 200 Sled Dog Championship is one of the premier sled dog races in the lower 48 and serves as a qualifier race for the Iditarod in Alaska.

MI Travel Counts – the largest household transportation study in 30 years

You could receive a phone call as the Bureau of Transportation Planning undertakes MI Travel Counts, the largest statewide household travel data collection effort in the past 30 years. This study will provide the data necessary to update MDOT's travel demand



models and allow us to better understand how daily travel affects Michigan's transportation system. Travel demand models are tools used by planners to project future travel, based on household and socioeconomic characteristics. These updated models are expected to help MDOT identify future needs, prioritize projects, and make detour, land use and air quality analyses. The results of the study will be used to develop a 21st century transportation system which provides mobility to every Michigan citizen and community.

Randomly selected Michigan residents will be contacted and asked to participate by filling out a travel diary detailing their travel history for a two-day period. In order to obtain completed travel diaries from 14,280 households, approximately 120,000 households will be contacted statewide. You can support this effort by validating the importance of this official study if anyone asks you about it. The full study began in March 2004, and will run through June 2004, when it pauses for the summer. It will resume after Labor Day and finish up in mid-December this year. It is expected that data from the completed project will be available in May 2005.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/mitravelcounts or contact Karen Faussett at faussettk@michigan.gov.

MDOTers help Habitat for Humanity raise a neighborhood in eight days



MDOT Habitat-for Humanity volunteers worked a very long day to help turn this new foundation into a house.

No one could imagine that a whole block of houses could spring up in just eight days. But it did, thanks to many generous Habitat for Humanity (HFH) volunteers – including Metro Region staff and others who contributed their personal time to help build The Governor's House.

An entire city block was totally transformed during Habitat for Humanity's Detroit Blitz Build 2003 which took place in September throughout the city. In eight short days, hundreds of amazing volunteers built 16 houses along with 16 Detroit families in need. One of these houses is known as The Governor's House because the governor's Constituent Services division spearheaded the effort in which Gov. Granholm committed 140 person-days toward completion of the project – 20 people per day for seven days.



Eight Days a Week – Here are three views of the block during the eight-day building spree. The Governor's House is the first house on the right; The Governor's Second House is the first one on the left. Visit the HFH site to view each day's progress: <http://www.habitatdetroit.org/chapter/blitz03.html>.

Metro Region employees were among the first to volunteer. Led by Region Engineer Greg Johnson, a team of MDOT volunteers signed up for a full day of hard labor. Because MDOT had more than 34 volunteers from all over the state, employees were assigned to work on what came to be known as The Governor's Second House, located across the street from the first house. The combined efforts of all the state employee volunteers resulted in the completion of two of the 16 houses that were raised during the one-week blitz.

"It's amazing how much you can get done in one week with \$1.7 million and about 400 person hours per day," said event coordinator Mike Odette, Metro Region. Gov. Granholm thanked the MDOT team and the other state departments for all of their efforts to kick off her "Cool Cities" campaign to restore and rebuild Michigan cities.

Continued on next page



Continued from page 11

What's next? Metro Region volunteers, again led by Greg and the HFH Coordination Team of Mike Odette, Real Estate; Nakazi Ntlati, Metro Region Design; Karen Patrick-Newton, Taylor TSC; and Mia Silver, MITS Center, plan to continue this volunteer effort in 2004 to benefit the Detroit area HFH. The Metro volunteers also plan to join forces with Southwest Region staff to work on a HFH project in that region to honor the hard work and long hours that Southwest Region staff – and others outside Metro Region – contributed to Detroit Blitz Build 2003.

International Bridge celebrates a moment for the history books



International Bridge General Manager Phil Becker (center) presented Barbara and Bruce Mapes, owners of the 75-millionth vehicle to cross the bridge, with \$500 in prizes, including a framed photo of the bridge.

It took all of 41 years, but on Dec. 1, 2003, the International Bridge Administration acknowledged a moment for the history books. That moment took place at 8:20 a.m. when the 75-millionth vehicle crossed the bridge. It belonged to Bruce and Barbara Mapes, of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., who have made the trip across the International Bridge countless times.

The Mapes received a prize package valued at more than \$500. The Algoma's Water Tower Inn and the Kewadin Casino each donated overnight lodging accommodations. The IBA presented the Mapes with a framed photo of the bridge. The couple also are entitled to 75 free round-trip bridge crossings.

If traffic continues at its current level, another historic moment – when the 100-millionth vehicle will cross – is expected to take place in 2016.

Football drawings make Michigan fans happy

Director Jeff, an avid Michigan fan, donated four pairs of tickets for four University of Michigan home football games. The winners were determined by four separate random drawings. More than 300 employees entered each time the drawings were announced in *Monday Memo*.

There might have been some stiff competition if the winners had been determined based on the comments they submitted rather than with a random drawing. See the "Top Ten List" of Team MDOT Football Drawing Entry Comments.

Who were the lucky MDOTers? Matthew Brinker, Aeronautics, won tickets for the first game against Houston on Sept. 6. The second happy Michigan fan was Rus Allen, Engadine Garage, Superior Region, who won tickets to the Sept. 27 game against Indiana. The third winner – Pam Hogan, Metro Region – won tickets for the Oct. 25 game when the Wolverines took on Purdue. Richard Schmaltz, Grand Rapids TSC, was the fourth and final winner. In the photo, Rich and his girlfriend, Michelle, pause to pose for a snapshot at the Nov. 22 Ann Arbor home game where they rooted for Michigan to beat Ohio State.



COURTESY OF R. SCHMALTZ

Congratulations to all! Thank you, Gloria, for introducing some excitement into the MDOT workday! And, thank you, MDOTer ticket-winner wannabes, for your heartwarming comments (at right). You're good sports! 🐾

Team MDOT Football Drawing Entry Comments Top Ten List

[Note: Think David Letterman when reading Editors' notes]

10. **Yes I knew I would win! Hurray :-)** Go Blue!!!
(Ed. note: It just goes to show you never know.)
9. **I want those tickets.**
(Ed. note: Yeah, you and 300 other MDOTers!)
8. **Please throw my hat in the ring for the tickets!**
(Ed. note: Do what?! Throw your hat into the ring or throw your name into the hat or throw in the towel?)
7. **Please, Please, Please, Please, Please, Please, Please, Please, Please, Please pick me**
(Ed. note: Really, if begging worked, surely this would have been the winner.)
6. **ME, ME, ME**
(Ed. note: Is this guy warming up his vocal chords to sing, cheer, or what?)
5. **Hope I get picked!!!! Yeepee!**
(Ed. note: What in the heck is yeepee?!)
4. **My husband is a HUGE fan and this might even make him an MDOT fan!**
(Ed note: Does he like us NOW?)
3. **My money is going to U of M for my daughter's tuition. Hope I can win some tickets that I can't afford to buy.**
(Ed note: Hopefully, she'll graduate, get a great job, earn BIG bucks, and buy *you* some tickets one day.)
2. **I would like to have a chance to see the Wolverines beat the Buckeyes.**
(Ed. note: Although we're sure the writer meant Buckeyes, we think "Buckeyes" is way more amusing.)
1. **I hope you fare better than me. Last time I passed the hat, I didn't get it back.**
(Ed. note: Here's a real two-time loser: first the tickets...then the hat. Bummer.)



Roberta Tisdale

Introducing the HR Optimization Project



The HR Optimization project will increase efficiency in delivering routine human resource information and services to state employees. To do this, all employees will be required to access basic HR information using tools. These tools build on current self-service functionality, enhance online HR information, and create a new HR Service Center. Together, these three tools form MI HR (pronounced MY HR).

MI HR Information

Coming this fall, a new online access to HR information is tailored to you and your employment situation. It is written in an easy-to-understand format to cover the basic benefit, payroll, and HR issues most MDOT employees typically experience during their state careers.

MI HR Service Center

Also new this fall is the customer support center – just a phone call away, available from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The center has a core of trained HR customer service representatives (CSRs) whose job focus is assisting you by answering questions and resolving problems related to your HR information. They will be trained to help you understand and navigate MI HR and can assist you with making changes.

By putting these three tools together, MI HR is intended to enhance and support the self-service experience for all state employees. It is estimated that the system will be completely in place by the end of this year.

MDOT's OHR will continue to assist you with strategic issues such as classifications, selections, recruitment, labor relations, performance management, disability management and processing your payroll. 🐦

For more information about HR Optimization, visit the *Interchange* at

<http://10.7.1.8/HROptimization/index.asp>.

MI HR Employee Self-Service Gateway

Most MDOT employees already are familiar with Self-Service which can be accessed at <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs/0,1607,7-147-6878-65740--,00.html>. From this site, you will continue to be able to:

Directly update your own records

- Direct deposits
- Mailing address & home phone
- E-mail address
- Emergency contacts
- Family status
- Open enrollment
- SECC campaign
- Beneficiaries
- Qualified parking

Get updated information and forms

- Insurance coverage
- Tax withholding (W-4s)
- Savings bonds
- Flexible spending accounts
- Earnings statements
- Civil Service training record
- Leave balances
- Certifications/applicant pools

The Benefits of HR Optimization

- Centralize routine HR processes
- Reduce costs by maximizing the HR function
- Reduce errors and maximize existing technology
- Free up HR experts to work on more strategic activities
- Promote HR efficiency and consistent answers to employees

WORTH repeating

“Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.”

— Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Roberta (Bobbi) Tisdale is the Office of Human Resources administrator. To reach her, call 517-373-1680 or e-mail tisdaler@michigan.gov.

Visit OHR's intranet site at <http://interchange/ohr>.



MDOT family tree

The Family Tree column provides news about changes in the MDOT family tree: appointments, retirements, and sadly, deaths. Information for new hires and promotions, supplied by the Office of Human Resources, can be found on the OHR *Interchange* site at <http://interchange.mdot.state.mi.us/ohr/index.cfm>.

(News about an employee's or a retiree's passing is sent to us by various methods. Please contact staff if you have news of this type.) If you wish to include news about births or adoptions in your family, contact the *MDOT Today* staff or e-mail the information via GroupWise to MDOTToday@michigan.gov. Welcome to MDOT, new hires! Congratulations to all MDOTers who were recently promoted!

Appointments

Sidney Adams Jr., of Battle Creek, was named chairman of the Michigan Aeronautics Commission at its Oct. 23 meeting. Adams was appointed to the commission in July 2001 by former Gov. John Engler for a term expiring May 2004. Adams retired after a 29-year career with the Veterans Administration. Upon retirement, he established a computer and software consulting business.

Dean Greenblatt, of White Lake, was named vice chairman of the Michigan Aeronautics Commission at its Oct. 23 meeting. Greenblatt is a licensed attorney admitted to practice in Florida, Michigan, and the U.S. District Court - Eastern District of Michigan. He concentrates his legal practice in the areas of civil litigation, criminal defense, and aviation law. Greenblatt, a pilot and certified flight instructor, was appointed to the commission by former Gov. Engler in November 2002 for a term expiring May 2004.

Births/Adoptions

Brian Ulman, engineer, Bay City TSC, and wife Kimberly became proud parents for the second time on Aug. 12, when daughter Kassiday was born. Her (not so very) big sister, Clair, turned one on Aug. 17. [Ed. note: If every little girl wants a doll for her birthday, Clair must have been ecstatic.]

Terry Stepanski, Mt. Pleasant TSC manager, and wife Kim, had their second baby on Sept. 13. Baby Alexander Joseph joins his almost 4-year-old brother, Samuel.

Alexis (Lexie) Belknap, administrative assistant, Metro Region, and her husband became grandparents for the second time when granddaughter Hannah was born on Nov. 13. Hannah shares a birthday with her cousin, Alexis (Ally) Marie, who is Lexie's first grandchild. [Ed. note: Really, what are the odds!]

Kristin Schuster, engineer, Design Support Area, and her husband, Michael Moreno, welcomed fraternal twin daughters Jillian Mason and Sarah Lucille, born just one minute apart on Nov. 21. The twins have a sister, Madeline, who is 2. Congratulations twice!

Marilyn Hansen, pavement management engineer, Metro Region office, and husband George became first-time parents on Nov. 25 when their daughter, Olivia Sophie, was born.

Steve Gasser, engineering technician at the Davison TSC, and wife Amanda welcomed daughter Amelia, their first child, born Dec. 10.

MDOT Slides into Snow Management in Houghton County

Continued from page 5



ABOVE: The Portage Lift Bridge provided the first shelter for the trucks and crew members. Equipment was parked under the bridge for a month until a suitable location was identified and secured.

BELOW: Snowblowers like this one, shown in action on Quincy Hill in Houghton County, are used for specialized work in most regions, but in the Superior Region they are a regular part of routine maintenance. How powerful are they? "They can do anything but put the snow back in the sky," Dault said.





Deaths



COURTESY OF MAINTENANCE

Reva Pfaff, 47, Statewide Overhead Sign supervisor, Maintenance, died Aug. 9, 2003, after a courageous battle with cancer. Reva worked at MDOT since 1980 at which time she worked as a laborer at the Mio Maintenance Garage. In 1983, Reva became a transportation maintenance worker at the Statewide Overhead Sign Unit.

Reva Pfaff

She was the supervisor of the Statewide Freeway Pavement Marking Crew until 1992 when MDOT ceased painting operations. Reva, who was nicknamed "Bunny" because she was born on Easter, had a bubbly personality and a great enthusiasm for life which left a lasting impression on everyone who met her.



COURTESY OF J. TRANSUE

Jerome Jonson, 58, died Oct. 12, 2003, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Jerome worked in the Bureau of Multi-Modal's Passenger Transportation Division for more than 15 years, writing vehicle specifications and providing technical assistance in vehicle procurement and maintenance. Jerome's integrity and the respect he received from both his coworkers

Jerome Jonson

and the transit industry were surpassed only by his unique and wonderful sense of humor. He is survived by his wife, Kathy, and two daughters, Laura (Rowland) Wilkinson and Andrea Jonson.



COURTESY OF J. TRANSUE

Malgorzata Solarz, 46, died Nov. 13, 2003, following a battle with cancer. She was a bridge design engineer and worked in Design since 1989. Malgorzata (also known as Margaret) was born and raised in Poland. In her youth she danced with the Krakow Ballet Company. In the mid-80s she and her family fled to Italy to avoid being arrested for being members

Malgorzata Solarz

of Solidarity. While in an Italian refugee camp, she worked as a maid to earn enough money to travel to America. Due to problems obtaining her education records from Poland, she first worked at MDOT in the Project Development area as a drafting technician. In the late 1990s she went back to school and earned a degree in Civil Engineering at MSU. Most people will remember Margaret as the woman who was always dancing in the halls, and whose smile reflected her love of life. Margaret enjoyed sports, traveling and socializing in her free time. She is survived by her husband, Michael Goodknecht, and her daughter, Michalina Umnova.

WORTH repeating

Life is what happens to us while we are making other plans.

— Thomas La Mance

Mitchell S. Bahara, 79, passed away in West Bloomfield, and was buried Nov. 19, 2003, on his 80th birthday. Mitchell initially worked in the Redford office before being transferred to Pontiac, and finally to Southfield where he worked in the Permits Division until his retirement in April 1990, following 42 years with MDOT. Mitchell and his wife particularly enjoyed dancing regularly at Polish festivals and events. He was a very supportive person and a dedicated father. After retiring, he became an avid player in a West Bloomfield pinochle club. He is survived by his wife, Stella; two daughters, Diane and Joan; and a son, Ronald.



COURTESY OF AERONAUTICS

Guy Donald Gordon, 50, Aeronautics Commission, died Jan. 18, 2004, in Leland. Since September 1997, Guy represented the Department of Natural Resources on the Aeronautics Commission as designated representative to Statutory Commissioner K.L. Cool. Guy also served as the official DNR representative on the

Guy Donald Gordon

Michigan Exposition and Fairgrounds Advisory Board, and the Michigan Public Safety Communications System Advisory Board. Guy (a.k.a. "Flash" Gordon) worked at the DNR since 1992, most recently as Chief of Staff. Guy is survived by his wife, Jane, and his daughter, Jennifer.

Donald W. Krauss, 73, died Feb. 8, 2004. Don was a highway engineer for 49 years, 36 with FHWA, and 13 with MDOT. He helped pave the Pan American Highway, I-75, and highways in Saudi Arabia. He retired from MDOT in April 2003, after working in the Bay Region office. Don is survived by his wife, Bonita Lea (Gale); daughters Janine and Dianne; and son Donald W. (Bill).

Judith A. Such, 67, died Feb. 21, 2004. Judy worked as an accountant at MDOT's Finance & Administration Division from 1990-1995, at which time she left to work at DMB. She retired from DMB in May 1997. Judy loved all aspects of the theater and served on the Board of the Lansing Civic Players. She is survived by the love of her life, Merrill Wyble; two daughters, Jennifer Such and Theresa (Tim) Collett-Such; a son, Michael; two grandchildren; a brother, Dan McConomy; and her beloved cat, Romeow.



COURTESY OF REBECCA TITUS

Jon Lee Titus, 60, died March 2, 2004. Jon worked at MDOT from 1970 to 1991. Jon was a well-known graphic artist, known especially for his Wildflowers of Michigan and Michigan Roadside Trees posters. Jon volunteered at Loaves and Fishes and was a blood donor. He was always generous with his time, talent and cooking. Jon is survived by his wife, Rebecca, who works in

Jon Lee Titus

MDOT's Bureau of Multi-Modal Transportation Services; and one sister, Lana (Bill) Schaar of Mason.

WANTED!

TRANSPO CLUB MEMBERS



Transpo Club is back, but we need YOU.
Retired or active,
join today and spread the word.

Transpo Club creates and sponsors educational, charitable and recreational activities for department employees and retirees.

Employees – schedules permitting – and retirees alike are invited to attend the Transpo Club monthly meetings held in Lansing's Van Wagoner Transportation Building.

For a mere five dollars in annual dues, you can have a say in club activities. Please spread the word that MDOT retirees are automatically lifetime club members upon retirement.

To date, ideas for activities include sponsoring an MDOT Labor Day Mackinac Bridge Walk, family picnic, bowling tournament, a 5K walk to promote work zone safety, golf outing, a rummage sale/craft fair, and a children's Christmas party.

You're invited to attend the Transpo Club picnic to be held Saturday, June 26, at the Eagle Park in Eagle. Volunteers are needed to help with this event.

If you would like to join, volunteer, and/or get more information, contact Transpo Club President Sue Taylor at 517-335-2832, or e-mail taylor@s@michigan.gov.

Note: The Transpo Club Web site is under development. Look for updates in the next issue of MDOT Today.



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