



TECHNOLOGY TALKS
(excerpts from FHWA weekly reports)
Mid-January Report, 2007

Florida at halfway point on Interstate median guardrails – In order to curb crossover crashes, the Florida DOT has added median guardrails within a mile of 200 interchanges on its Interstate highways, out of a total of 436 targeted by the state. The balance of the installations, which include key interchanges on I-4, I-10, I-75 and I-95, are expected to be complete by the end of 2007. The \$49-million Interstate guardrail initiative was spurred by earlier positive results from a similar project on Florida's Turnpike. In 2004, 53 people died in crossover crashes on the Turnpike, with the number dropping after median guardrails were installed to seven fatalities in 2005 and only three in 2006. Problems caused by high-speed merging are thought to be responsible for crossover crashes near interchanges.

Kansas DOT 511 System Breaks Records: KDOT has released statistics for traveler information requests during the December 29 thru January 2 blizzard/snow event. The 511 system broke records for daily and event call volume: 64,691 calls on December 31st and 132,836 calls were received during the event, with up to 230 lines being used simultaneously. The companion 511 Website was visited 201,307 times by 125,529 unique visitors during the storm. In addition since its deployment in January 2004, the KDOT 511 System has received over 1 million calls.

Louisiana Begins 511 Service on December 27 2006 - On December 27, Louisiana launched its 511 traveler information telephone service. This becomes the thirty-second 511 system across the country and increases the number of States where 511 is available to 28. 511 services are now available to nearly 40 percent of the country's population.

Maine- Penobscot Narrows Bridge Opens to Traffic: Maine's first cable-stayed bridge, which went from concept to completion in 40 months, opened to traffic on December 30th. At the same time, the 75-year-old Waldo-Hancock Bridge was shut down to traffic for good. The dedication ceremony for the Penobscot Narrows Bridge and Observatory is scheduled for June 30, 2007.

Missouri: Travel Times to Inform Kansas City and St. Louis Travelers – The '*Kansas City Scout*', traffic management system, started posting estimated freeway travel times to key locations on about two-thirds of its existing variable message signs. Within a month, an alert service for the Kansas City area will be offered via cell phones, BlackBerries, and the internet. St. Louis' Gateway Guide will start posting estimated freeway travel times on its variable message sign system later this spring.

Ohio Governor Vetoes Anti-Red Light Running Legislation; while Iowa Court Rules Against Camera Use: On January 5, the Ohio Governor vetoed a bill which would have circumvented a municipality's ability to install cameras to prevent red-light running or speed

enforcement. Several Ohio cities including Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo, Dayton and Steubenville have installed cameras to improve safety at signalized intersections. In addition, Toledo has also installed cameras for speed enforcement. Red light and speed cameras may have contributed toward reducing Ohio's fatalities for 2006. In Iowa, an Iowa District Court ruled that the red light camera enforcement system in Davenport, Iowa, conflicts with state motor vehicle law, which says that such offenses must be reported to the Iowa Department of Transportation and also dictates scheduled fines. A similar case on camera speed enforcement was heard last summer and the court found in favor of Davenport. Both cases are in the process of being appealed to the Iowa Supreme Court.

Pennsylvania: Firms Show Strong Interest in Leasing the Turnpike: Forty-eight firms expressed an interest in leasing the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Both foreign and domestic organizations submitted their expressions of interest by the December 22, 2006 deadline set by the Governor. Domestic firms include Goldman, Sachs & Company; Bear, Stearns & Company; J.P. Morgan; Merrill Lynch and The Carlyle Group. Cintra of Spain and Macquarie Infrastructure Group of Australia also expressed an interest. Both of these firms are already active in leasing states' infrastructure.

Tennessee DOT's 'SmartWay' Camera System Now Available for the Chattanooga Area: The TDOT launched Chattanooga's SmartWay traffic camera system on December 21, 2006, just in time for the holiday travel season. The Chattanooga SmartWay camera system currently consists of 59 cameras in operation with 4 more cameras scheduled to come on line soon. The cameras are located on major travel routes along I-75, I-24, US-27 and SR-153 and can be viewed by the motoring public through the TDOT website at www.tn.gov/tdot/tdotsmartway.

Wisconsin Traffic Deaths Decline, and Less Than Expected in Vermont: Wisconsin traffic deaths declined in 2006 to the lowest level since 1998. Preliminary figures are 711 fatalities, which is 90 fewer deaths than in 2005. According to WisDOT preliminary statistics, there were 87 fewer deaths in 2006 than the previous five-year annual average of 798 deaths, an 11.4 percent reduction. **In Vermont**, the final tally for fatalities on Vermont's roads for 2006 was 88; well below the projected number of 130, had early year trend continued. The decline is attributed to stepped-up enforcement during the latter half of the year and a heightened awareness of highway safety issues due to the development of Vermont's Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

Infrastructure: Accelerated Construction Technology Transfer (ACCT) Workshop for I-70/71 South Innerbelt Project: FHWA and the Ohio DOT jointly sponsored an ACCT Workshop for the proposed \$1B I-70/71 South Innerbelt Project (aka the I-70/71 "split") in Downtown Columbus on January 9-11, 2007. More than 100 nationally recognized public and private transportation experts gathered from across the country to share and evaluate the use of state-of-the art methods, and brainstorm techniques and strategies to significantly reduce construction time, enhance safety and quality, and minimize work zone congestion on the project. Minimization of construction congestion, noise, and vibration were focus areas, as well as consideration of innovative engineering solutions to improve the economic vitality of Downtown Columbus. The I-70/71 overlap is one of the top high crash and congested locations in Ohio which serves 175,000 vehicles per day (50,000 over design) and experiences an

average of 1-2 crashes/day. The South Innerbelt is a vital transportation link for freight traffic since approximately 30 percent of all freight moving within Ohio travels through the area.

RD&T: Briefing on Nanotechnology for Administrator Capka: A briefing for FHWA Administrator Capka on *“Nanoscience as an Enabler to Innovation”*, was held January 12, 2007 at Turner-Fairbank Research Center. Nanotechnology concerns the materials science and manufacturing processes that occur on length scales between 1 and 100 nanometers. This is very relevant to many materials used in highway construction. The briefing will include a technical overview of nanotechnology research in the US, globally and specific FHWA activities. For more information, please contact Dr. Richard Livingston on (202) 493-3063 or dick.livingston@fhwa.dot.gov.