

TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS

A publication of the Meramec Regional Planning Commission
Transportation Advisory Committee



Representing Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski and Washington Counties



Spring 2015

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Depue retires, Whitfield to take over as Highway Safety Director

After more than a decade as MoDOT's Highway Safety Director, Dr. Leanna Depue stepped into retirement.

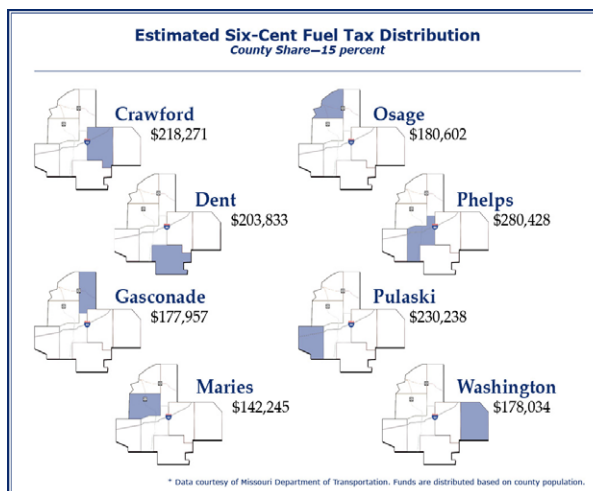
Depue led MoDOT's Highway Safety Department through three versions of its Blueprint to Save More Lives, and has been at the helm through the largest decrease in roadway fatalities in Missouri history.

She was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the most recent Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety conference held in St. Louis in October 2014.

Bill Whitfield has been named to take her place as Highway Safety Director as of April 1.

Whitfield comes to the position with 32 years of Highway Safety experience, most recently as MoDOT Safety Program Director.

Senator introduces bill to increase gas tax



The above graphic depicts the estimated annual distribution of fuel taxes that a six cent per gallon increase would create per county. Cities would also share in 15 percent of the funds.

A bill aiming to increase Missouri's gas tax by six cents per gallon over three years to provide additional transportation funding was introduced in the Missouri Senate on Feb. 28.

It is estimated that the additional six cents per gallon would generate a total of \$235 million per year for transportation projects in Missouri.

The bill, SB 540, calls for an initial increase of two cents per gallon on motor fuel taxes, followed by additional two cent increases in the following two years. This would change Missouri's gas tax from the current rate of 17.3 cents per gallon to 23.3 cents per gallon by August of 2017.

Whitfield will also fill the role of chairperson for the Executive Committee of the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety and will lead the next blueprint revision in 2016.

Owensville students hear safety lesson from 'Buckle Buddy'



Owensville students in kindergarten through second grade received a special visitor Tuesday as "Buckle Buddy" came to Owensville Elementary School to talk about seatbelt and booster seat safety.

Above, kindergarten students volunteer to see if they are tall enough to ride in a car without a booster seat.

The Buckle Buddy program is sponsored by the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, and is available to schools, libraries and preschools in the Meramec Region through Meramec Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) in St. James.

The program aims to teach children the importance of proper seatbelt and booster seat use and start them on the path toward lifelong seatbelt usage. It includes a stuffed-animal dragon, "Buddy," a story and a song.

For more information on the Buckle Buddy program, contact Bonnie Prigge at 573-265-2993 or bprigge@meramecregion.org.

Richland passes primary seatbelt ordinance

First government in the region

The city of Richland recently passed a primary seatbelt

The act contains an emergency clause making the initial two-cent increase effective Aug. 28.

The bill, if passed, also makes the motor fuel tax adjustable for inflation beginning in 2018. Like Constitutional Amendment 7, the transportation sales tax placed before voters in 2014, SB 540 distributes some of the revenue generated to Missouri cities and counties for local transportation projects.

As it is currently written, 70 percent of generated revenue would go to the state level with 15 percent going to the cities and 15 percent going to counties. Fifteen percent of the revenue is estimated to be approximately \$35 million.

In addition to providing additional funding for transportation projects at the state, county and city level statewide, the additional gas tax revenue would ensure that Missouri was able to match federal transportation dollars in the upcoming years.

If Missouri is unable to match those dollars, the state will be unable to accept federal transportation dollars as soon as 2017. District 25 Senator Doug Libla, who represents eight counties in the southeast corner of the state, introduced the bill, SB 540.

It has been read a second time on the Senate floor and the Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee held a hearing March 18. Sen. Libla chairs the committee, and 6th District Sen. Mike Kehoe, who represents a portion of the Meramec Region, also sits on the committee.

MoDOT Director to Retire in May



MoDOT Director Dave Nichols

JEFFERSON CITY - This spring, the Missouri Department of Transportation will see a change in leadership when MoDOT Director Dave Nichols retires on May 1.

Nichols announced his plans for retirement on Feb. 5, and the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission will now begin the process to replace him.

"The commission is grateful for Dave's long career of dedicated, results-oriented service to MoDOT," said Commission Chair Stephen Miller. "He exemplifies exactly what it means to be a public servant,

ordinance that allows its officers to ticket drivers and passengers for not wearing their seatbelts. The city was the first in the Meramec Region to take such action. They are the 45th local government to establish a local primary seatbelt ordinance and the 45th in the state, with St. Louis County being first in 2007. As a state, Missouri does not have a primary seatbelt law. A driver must first be stopped for another offense before a driver or passenger can be ticketed for failure to wear a seatbelt.

National Forest conducting survey

Road study looks for priority Mark Twain forest roads

The Mark Twain National Forest is conducting a road study, and public input is requested. The study takes a broadbrush look at the roads across the entire forest as well as the issues, risks and benefits for all users and associated forest resources.

With this information, forest personnel can consider opportunities for road changes. The study is not intended to close more roads and will not affect access to private property, mineral leases or permitted use areas, forest officials say.

The Mark Twain National Forest, a federal agency, is anticipating a \$700,000 deficit in funds available for annual road maintenance in 2015. The forest maintains 2,200 miles of roads within its system.

There is only one survey question: Please share what national forest road is important to you and why. Be as specific as possible.

You can provide input by:

- Using the online mapping tool at <https://my.usgs.gov/ppgis/studio/launch/34901>

- Visiting your nearest Forest Service office and ask for a comment form.

- Email your comments to comments-easter-mark-twain@fs.fed.us with "Road Study" in the subject line. Be sure to include the name of the road, your specific comment, your name and contact information.

Comments need to be received by May 22, 2015.

There are three Forest Service offices within the Meramec Region:

- 401 Fairgrounds Road, Rolla, MO
- 10019 West State Highway 8, Potosi, MO
- 1301 South Main,

having spent the last 30 years of his life doing great work for the citizens of Missouri."

Throughout his career, Nichols watched the department evolve into a nationally-respected leader among state transportation departments.

"MoDOT is filled with talented and dedicated employees, and it has been a great privilege to work with them," said Nichols. "I have watched this team rise to whatever challenge they've faced time and time again, and I know they will continue to lead and innovate."

Nichols became director of MoDOT in April 2013, after having served as chief engineer for two years. In his 30-year span at the department, he has held a variety of leadership roles, including the department's first director of program delivery, a position he held for 11 years. He also served as district engineer for the department's Northwest District, headquartered in St. Joseph, and worked in MoDOT's Kansas City District.

At its April meeting, the highways commission appointed Roberta Broeker, the agency's long-time financial officer, to serve as interim director. A nationwide search is planned for a new director.

MoDOT Performance Management Tool Celebrates 10-Years

JEFFERSON CITY - The Missouri Department of Transportation is celebrating the 10th anniversary of its performance management tool, Tracker, this year.

Tracker allows MoDOT to measure how well products and services are delivered to its customers and has made the department a national leader in the area of performance management. MoDOT's mission and values provide the basis for the department's performance as Missouri's state transportation agency.

From those values, MoDOT established its tangible results, which are the broad categories of what Missourians expect the department to accomplish: Keeping customers and employees safe, keeping roads and bridges in good condition, providing outstanding customer service, delivering transportation solutions of great value, operating a reliable and convenient transportation system, using resources wisely, and advancing economic development. Each performance measure listed in Tracker is linked to one of these tangible results.

A decade ago, Tracker focused on more than 100 performance measures and 18 tangible results. Those numbers have since been narrowed to just seven tangible results with 59 performance measures focused on core MoDOT functions.

Two measures that have been tracked for the past 10 years include MoDOT's customer satisfaction rate and percentage of major highways in good condition. Both measures have seen significant improvement since 2005 with MoDOT's customer satisfaction increasing from 67 to 85 percent, and the state's major highways in good condition going from 60 to 89 percent in good condition.

"As we move forward with a \$325 million budget, Tracker will be more important than ever," said MoDOT Director Dave Nichols. "Although Tracker has helped us note progress in both the condition of our transportation system and overall customer satisfaction for the past 10 years, meeting our customer's expectations will be a challenge as our funding drops."

Tracker not only measures MoDOT's performance on a statewide level, it also helps manage the functions and activities that are most important at the division and district levels.

Salem, MO

Upcoming Meetings

- MRPC Transportation Advisory Committee meeting at MRPC, 4 p.m. on April 9, 2015
- MRPC Transportation Advisory Committee meeting at MRPC, 4 p.m. on June 11, 2015

"As we celebrate the anniversary it's exciting to look back at how much we've accomplished through the use of Tracker, and to look ahead at how much we can continue to improve by using it," said Machelle Watkins, transportation planning director. "Tracker gives us that snapshot of how we perform through all aspects of the organization, including everything from the length of time it takes us to clear roads after a snowstorm to the amount of recycled material we use."

Tracker is published quarterly to ensure accountability and allow customers to see the progress MoDOT makes toward those results that they expect. For more information about Tracker, and to download this quarter's report go to <http://www.modot.org/about/Tracker.htm>.

The MRPC TAC is a transportation advisory committee . . . your transportation advisory committee! For many years, transportation users outside of the urban areas were planned for, not planned with. Citizens in rural areas had virtually no role in the development of the transportation plans affecting their community. That changed with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), and its 1998 successor, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21). These acts require that long range transportation planning includes statewide public, private and governmental input—meaningful input—from the grass roots level which will be considered and used in the development of transportation plans. That same effort has continued with SAFETEA-LU - The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Safety Act: A Legacy of Users - in 2005 and MAP-21 - Moving ahead for Progress - in 2012.

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