

# Common Cents

February 2009 Volume 3

NJDOT Asset Management Quarterly

## **Dave's Two Cents**

### **Debunking Funding Myths**

Funding is always a key component of any comprehensive Asset Management Program. The Department should be very proud of the stellar work it does when developing the Statewide Capital Investment Strategy, annual Capital Program and the 10 Year Capital Plan. The development of these documents is complex and challenging as a result of the funding constraints inherent to the process.

At the same time, myths regarding the amount of funding available and how it can be used are pervasive. The following information should provide better understanding of transportation funding that NJDOT uses to advance projects and programs.

**Myth #1. We have unlimited funds.** This may be the easiest to debunk – we receive an annual allotment of federal and state funds, and there is only a finite amount of each within any given fiscal year.

**Myth #2. Fund it federal because there are more federal dollars and they are unlimited.** Although we strive to use all available federal funding, we do not receive much more federal funding than state funding, and it is limited by federal apportionments, rules, and regulations.

**Myth #3. By not spending certain pots of Federal money, we are losing it.** Federal formula funds are available for three years after the fiscal year in which they are apportioned. However, obligation authority (the overall yearly cap on authorizations that Congress applies to the sum of annual apportionments) is available for only one year. Federal earmarks carry over from year to year and are not lost.

**Myth #4. Direct costs are good; indirect costs are not good.** The indirect cost additive enables the state to bill the Federal Highway Administration as a percentage of the direct salary rate. This allows the state to reduce the burden on the General Fund, which helps the State budget and can prevent further reductions elsewhere.

**Myth #5. Federal funding carries over from one fiscal year to another.** Federal formula funds and earmarks, they do carry over from one fiscal year to the next. However, obligation authority does not carry over. The Department faces a yearly challenge to draw down our annual allotment, but our record in this regard has been outstanding.



*Thomas Paine*  
I offer ...  
common sense.  
Thomas Paine

### **10 Year Performance Target for Pavement Approved**

The members of the Asset Management Steering Committee recently welcomed Deputy Commissioner Jen Godoski to her first meeting and approved a 10 Year Performance Target for Pavement on the State Highway System.

“The Committee initially considered separate performance targets for high volume highways such as interstates, with a lower performance goal for non interstate, lower volume roadways,” said Committee Member Jeff Callahan. “But the funding difference over 10 years was practically negligible. It made sense to set one standard for all of the roadways we maintain, and we’re going to do our best to meet it.”

The 10 Year Performance Target aims to classify 80 percent of pavement on the State Highway System as Acceptable. Acceptable is classified as in GOOD or FAIR condition. These can be described as:

**Good Pavement:** Pavement in this category is smooth and exhibits few if any visible signs of surface deterioration. Asphalt pavements may begin to show evidence of slight rutting (depressions in the wheel paths) and fine random cracks. Concrete pavement may begin to show evidence of slight cracking or joint deterioration.

**Fair Pavement:** Pavement in this category is noticeably inferior to those of good pavement and may be minimally tolerable for high-speed traffic. Asphalt pavement may show signs of surface deterioration such as rutting, significant cracking and extensive patching. Concrete pavement may have some joints which have opened up or deteriorated and there may be scattered cracking.

The percent of pavement in Acceptable condition on the State Highway System is currently 51 percent. In order to achieve a target of 80 percent in Acceptable condition, NJDOT has developed an innovative Pavement Preservation Plan that focuses on reducing the substantial backlog of deficient pavement while at the same time utilizing a “mix of fixes” for pavements in various condition stages.

This proactive approach utilizes sophisticated engineering and economic analyses that consider pavement performance, costs/benefits, user delay, and long-range system optimization.

This approach is designed to maintain Acceptable pavements in Acceptable condition via preventive maintenance treatments, which slow pavement deterioration and are completed at a fraction of the cost of rehabilitation or reconstruction. This frees up funding for deficient backlog reduction.

***"Common sense to an uncommon degree is what the world calls wisdom".***

***- Samuel Taylor Coleridge, poet***

---

### The Pavement Guys

Phil Bertucci and Ron Gruzlovic of NJDOT's Pavement Management Unit exemplify the teamwork and effort needed to maintain NJDOT's highway system.

According to Sue Gresavage, Manager of Pavement and Drainage Management Technology, Phil and Ron are the heart and soul of the Department's pavement management system.

"The pavement management system at its most basic level is a complex piece of software that is capable of storing and reporting pavement data," said Gresavage. "But the true power of the system is the skill and knowledge of the individuals that work with the software. Phil and Ron provide that necessary knowledge and skills."



Phil Bertucci (pictured here) is an Administrative Analyst 2 who has been with the Department for five years. He has overall responsibility for the pavement management system. He also designs and maintains the computerized software and databases used to analyze road data, assess current system conditions, predict future system performance, and formulate the annual pavement preservation plan that selects projects and treatments.

ments.

Phil is also responsible for analysis such as writing reports to the State Legislature and the Federal Highway Administration, and is instrumental to the annual Statewide Capital Investment Strategy.

"The most challenging part of the job is to remain flexible enough to juggle multiple priorities," Phil said. "In addition to my pavement management system duties, I quickly provide information to users inside and outside of DOT." - cont. on page 4





### **The Pavement Guys—cont.**

Ron Gruzlovic (pictured below) is an Engineering Technician 1 who has been with the Department for 37 years. Ron coordinates all data collection activities for the Pavement Management Unit and processes raw roadway data collected by testing vehicles. This data provides the basis for assessment of roadway conditions, including roughness, surface distress and frictional skid resistance.

Ron also designs and performs quality assurance activities to ensure data accuracy and answers informational requests.

“As Phil mentioned, we frequently respond to inquiries for pavement condition data,” Ron said. “One of my critical functions is maintaining and providing high resolution video images of the entire state highway system, which are used virtually every day for design decisions.”

Both Ron and Phil are proud of their role in the Department’s Asset Management Program. They test and maintain data that allows the pavement management system to define our assets, determine their condition, and develop an investment strategy. These efforts enable the Department to create and implement a preventative maintenance and rehabilitation program that best manages pavement assets.

“I couldn’t ask for a better or more dedicated team,” said Gresavage.



***“The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more”.***

***- Jonas Salk, MD.***

Common Cents is published quarterly

by the Division of  
Capital Investment Strategies.

Executive Director

Dave Kuhn

Writer

John Dourgarian

Editor

Shelly Gladwell