

## In this issue >>>

Army Corps of Engineers Liaison for State Aid Projects (pg. 1)

County Road Safety Plans Update (pg. 3)

Public Involvement on Projects with Federal Funds (pg. 2)

New Update to Pavement Information (pg. 4)

Employee News (pg. 2)

PM Writer Tool (pg. 4)

MPCA 401 Certification (pg. 3)

New Minnesota SRTS Resource Center (pg. 4)



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# State Aid E-Scene

## Army Corp of Engineers Liaison for State Aid Projects

By: Gary Reihl, Project Development Engineer

The time has come. On September 1, 2015, Ben Orne of the St. Paul District Corps of Engineers Office began reviewing Section 404 permit applications for MnDOT and State Aid (50/50).

Ben has been a Project Manager with the Corps for the past five years. Recently Ben helped to draft the RGP-004-MN General Permit for work associated with public road projects.

As this new liaison position gets off the ground, it's intended that Ben will review all Letter of Permission and Individual Permits for the city and county federal aid

projects. The new RGP 004 permit is projected to significantly reduce the number of LOPs and Ben should be able to handle this workload. In a few months, this proposal will be re-evaluated to see if the workload is correct for a part time position.

There is some discussion about how the Corp will identify the LOPs and IPs in a timely manner so they are directed to Ben. There will be more information as the submittal process for these types of permits is decided.

The State Aid Office will provide specific direction for Ben if there is

a unique project that we feel requires his personal review. And we will provide strict direction on the project's priority.

To get Ben started, he checked with the Corps field PMs to identify any current LOPs/IPs and help those individuals who may have had too much to do. I have also contacted the cities and counties to see if there are any permits that might be delaying a project from the current letting schedule.

The RGP-004-MN General Permit is scheduled to be in use by late September 2015.

If you have any questions on this issue please contact Gary Reihl at [gary.reihl@state.mn.us](mailto:gary.reihl@state.mn.us) or 651-366-3819.



# Public Involvement on Projects with Federal Funds

By: Lynnette Roshell, Federal Aid Agreement & Special Programs Engineer

Last month we had a question on the need for a public hearing versus the need for a public meeting. I realized that I had become lax by referring to the two terms almost interchangeably. This is not the case and should be clarified.

In most cases, the amount and level of detail you go into for public involvement is up to you. You know the community, history of the project, and level of support or controversy better than any of us in St. Paul. Be sure to include social media methods when communicating with the public, as social media has become an increasingly central part of many people's daily lives. Additionally, keep in mind that English may not be the first language for members of your community, or there may be a need for sign language interpretation. It is your responsibility to offer those alternative forms of communication. The location of your meeting must also be ADA accessible.

These are not just nice details, they're required by Title VI and could result in loss of federal aid funds or additional fines if not followed.

Certain levels of National Environmental Policy Act documentation require public hearings or at least the offer of a public hearing. If your NEPA document is an Environmental Assessment or and Environmental Impact Statement then you need to publish an offer of a public hearing and hold one if it is requested. If your project has 106 impacts and they have been determined by the MnDOT Cultural Resources Unit to result in an adverse effect, you also need to publish and offer a public hearing, and hold one if requested. If your project has a 4(f) impact, but is proceeding as a DeMinimis determination, then you need to offer an opportunity for public comment.

Public meetings can be held in any

Format you feel is appropriate for the project.

- Meeting that is part of a regular council or board meeting
- Information meeting on a group of proposed projects
- Information meeting on a specific project
- Open house format

Public hearing can also be in any format you feel is appropriate, but should include a court reporter to take testimony and questions about the project that is recorded for posterity.

Again, unless your project meets specific high thresholds of impact, you are at liberty to determine the amount of public input necessary for your project. MnDOT's information for the public on the importance of giving input at public meetings can be found on the [Public Involvement Tools webpage](#).

## Employee News

We are pleased to announce that Ann McLellan is the new State Aid Accounting Supervisor, effective July 15. Ann is replacing Kim Kildal, who accepted a permanent position in the MnDOT Budget



(Ann McLellan)

Department earlier this spring. Ann has 14 years of financial and accounting experience working with several state agencies including MnDOT, with her most recent experience being the Financial Services Director at the Department of Employment and Economic Development. Ann has an undergraduate degree in Chemistry from the University of Wisconsin, River Falls and an MBA in Business Administration from the University of St. Thomas.

After many years at MnDOT, Stu Peterson, District 8 DSAA has retired. Stu will be coming back under the PRO (post retirement option) Plan for approximately 4-6 months to help train in and work with the new person.



(Stu Peterson)

# MPCA 401 Certification

By: Gary Reihl, Project Development Engineer

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency made some changes to the 401 Certification to go along with the new EPA and USACE of the U.S. rules. The changes are not major. They have added a requirement to stake/identify aquatic resources in the field (which is a pretty standard condition) and added some language about dewatering. The language about dewatering should be identical to what is in the certification for RGP-003 and is intended to make sure nothing was missed in cases where a road project might require dewatering.

Many of the changes are just to be more clear and clearly enforceable (if needed!) and to make sure that the best management practices' that are being used are being documented somewhere in the



construction planning. MPCA also added a few more things in the notifications sections that they wanted people to be aware of.

The plan is to have this published in the State Register on September 14, 2015 for a quick comment period ending on September 25, 2015. They will issue the new

certification shortly thereafter, assuming there is not a landslide of comments.

If you do have questions or comments on this issue please contact Gary Reihl at 651-366-3819 or [gary.reihl@state.mn.us](mailto:gary.reihl@state.mn.us).

## County Road Safety Plan Updates

By: Sulmaan Khan, Program Support Engineer

Following the completion of County Road Safety Plans for all 87 counties within Minnesota, the State Aid Office in partnership with the Office of Traffic, Safety and Technology are in the process of preparing for a second round of safety plans for counties that are interested in updating their existing plan. The focus for the updated plans will still be to reduce the number of fatal and serious injury crashes on the county roadway system and to also be consistent with the Minnesota Strategic Highway Safety.

The updated plans will incorporate new safety methods and new research in order to develop a comprehensive data-driven plan that will provide project recommendations and strategies that each county can implement on their roadway system. Feedback is currently being gathered to help set the direction of the plan updates. We are currently anticipating to start the first round of plan updates in early 2016. If you have any questions about this project or if you would like any additional

information, please contact Sulmaan Khan at 651-366-3829 or [sulmaan.m.khan@state.mn.us](mailto:sulmaan.m.khan@state.mn.us).



# New Update to Pavement Information

By: Joel Ullring, Pavement Engineer

The State Aid website containing pavement related information has been updated. It can be found on the top navigation bar on the State Aid homepage. It features three separate areas covering pavement design, preservation and management along with contacts and resources to assist you with

your pavement related needs and questions. I hope you find this update very useful. If you have questions, can't find something,

or have suggestions, please contact Joel Ullring at 651-366-3831 or [joel.ullring@state.mn.us](mailto:joel.ullring@state.mn.us).



## PM Writer Tool

By: Gary Reihl, Project Development Engineer

The PM Writer Tool is out there and has been used by 50 registered users since it was released. If you were one of the users and have any comments or suggestions please take the time to provide feedback to the design team.

We want to make it the “best it can be.”

Even if you are an “old pro” at writing PMs, please don't be afraid to give the new tool a try, it might just teach you something new or remind you of something you had

forgotten. And of course, the input of an “old pro” would greatly be appreciated.

If you have questions or comments on this issue please contact Gary Reihl at 651-366-3819 or [gary.reihl@state.mn.us](mailto:gary.reihl@state.mn.us).

## New Minnesota SRTS Resource Center

By: Mao Yang, Assistant Project Development Engineer

A new online Minnesota Safe Routes to School Resource Center is now live! The MnSRTS Resource Center is a source for partners and interested community members to find information about the SRTS Program, share or learn what others are doing with SRTS

across the state, find resources to get started, and more. Learn more about the resource center at [www.mnsaferoutestoschool.org](http://www.mnsaferoutestoschool.org)!

The MnSRTS Resource Center was identified as a core resource to support local efforts in the

[SRTS Strategic Plan](#) (PDF). The online MnSRTS Resource Center and SRTS Strategic Plan were collaborative efforts between MnDOT, members of the SRTS Steering Committee, and multiple stakeholders from various groups and agencies.



### State Aid for Local Transportation

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