

Country Roads & City Streets

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MAKING “CENTS” – FUNDING WEST VIRGINIA’S ROADS

By: Don Williams, WVDOH



The New River Gorge Bridge is just one of the many roadway structures for which the WVDOH is financially responsible.

An exciting event occurs every two weeks for most of us: it is called pay day. On this special day, our employers distribute to us the fruit of our labor. For many, the amount does not change. Another special day then arrives: exchange day. The bills that so graciously arrive at this same time are prioritized and paid, with distributions made for utilities, mortgages, and services rendered. Once the whole bill process is finished, we hope to have enough money to tide us over until pay day. This cycle continues every pay period.

The operation of our state and local governments is surprisingly

similar. While there is more income and more distribution, the concept of money generated (revenues) and bills to be paid (expenses/disbursement) is common. Monies received are often not at the desired level, and our agencies are often faced with unexpected expenses.

Although there are many similarities in personal and agency financing, there are distinct and critical differences. One significant difference is the source of the income, and the other is the resulting outflow. Over the last several months, I have had the privilege of speaking to various groups and presenting information

Continued on page 2



IN THIS ISSUE

Pages 1, 2 & 3

Making “Cents” – Funding West Virginia’s Roads

Page 4

The City of Morgantown Plows Ahead

Page 5

Congratulations to our 2006 Roads Scholar Graduates

Page 6

Update on WV LTAP Lending Library

Page 7

- Roadway Management Conference Date Set!

- Upcoming 7 Habits for Highly Effective People Training

Country Roads and City Streets is a quarterly publication of the West Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program (WV LTAP). The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information that is beneficial to roadway construction and maintenance personnel.

The material and opinions contained in this newsletter are those of the West Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Highway Administration or the WV Department of Transportation. Material contained in *Country Roads and City Streets* is a combination of original and borrowed material. Every effort has been made to ensure the integrity and accuracy of this material. However, the West Virginia LTAP does not assume responsibility for any incorrect material.



regarding the Division of Highways. I often discuss how the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) is funded and resulting disbursements. I begin the session with a short quiz when I speak to various groups, and I often find a common theme: People in these sessions rarely understand the source of highway funding and how the monies are spent. The following is a question I always ask:

What is the primary generator of highway funding in WV?

- A.) General Revenue Fund
- B.) Lottery
- C.) Property taxes
- D.) Gas Tax
- E.) Tax on Interstate Shipping

If you answered D, then you are correct. However, most people presented this question usually miss this. Most people in the sessions think our highway funding comes from the general revenue fund. With this introduction, we will begin to examine some information concerning the West Virginia Division of Highways and the organization's funding.

Did You Know?

Known as the Mountain State, West Virginia has some of the most diverse terrains and weather conditions that impact the construction and maintenance of road systems. From mountains to river valleys and floods to blizzards, these conditions make roadwork difficult in our beautiful state.

As the following numbers indicate, West Virginia has an extensive road system—34,610 miles. Specifically, the state has a population of approximately 1.8 million people who drive 1.3 million vehicles.

In our current road system:

- 21,000 miles are paved.
- 26,000 miles are not eligible for federal funds.
- Between 1980 to 2000, vehicle-miles traveled in West Virginia increased 79%.
- It is anticipated that the vehicle-miles traveled will go to 26 billion by the year 2025.
- The US average for state maintained roads is 20% of the system.
- The state of West Virginia maintains 92% of its roads.

What does all this mean? West Virginia is one of only four states that has jurisdiction over both state and county roads, meaning West Virginia has the sixth longest road network in the United States (Texas has the longest with 79,164 miles).¹

Problems that Exist

It is reasonable to conclude that there will be challenges when a small state, in terms of population, has such a large network of highways to maintain and construct. Some statistics to consider:

- At 2.19 per 100 million vehicle miles, West Virginia's traffic fatality rate is nearly 50% higher than the national average of 1.50.²
- Thirty seven percent of West Virginia's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.²
- The average age of West Virginia's Interstate bridges is 34 years. Older bridges typically need significant repairs, reconstruction or replacement at approximately 50 years.²
- Forty six percent of the bridges on the state's interstate highway system will need significant repairs or reconstruction by the year 2026.²

- Twenty seven percent of West Virginia's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition.²
- West Virginia leads the country in percentage of narrow lanes — 67% of its major roads are less than 10 feet wide.²
- Miles of roads in West Virginia being paved each year has dropped 50% during the past 5 years and is expected to drop another 88% by 2011 unless action is taken.²

Funding of West Virginia's Highways Systems

The West Virginia Department of Transportation is independent of the General Fund. Other than special appropriations, funding for highways is not allocated from the State's general fund. State income taxes, personal property taxes, etc., do not fund the maintenance, operation or construction of highways in West Virginia. At the end of fiscal year 2005, the total revenue for highways was approximately \$589 million. Sources for our funding include, but are not limited to:

- Gasoline and special fuel taxes
- Wholesale motor fuel tax
- Motor vehicle privilege tax
- Motor carrier road tax
- Vehicle registrations and licenses
- Permit fees
- Highway litter control
- Miscellaneous sources

Of these sources, the gasoline tax provides the greatest amount of revenue with approximately \$311 million. The motor vehicle privilege tax accounts for approximately \$177 million and vehicle registrations and licenses include approximately \$88 million. These three taxes alone account for 98% of total revenues. It has been approximated that 5 cents on the gas tax equates to \$55 million in revenue.

So, where does the money go? The following is an approximation of how revenues are distributed:

- Federal construction through matching funds: 49.73%
- Maintenance: 25.16%
- Contract paving: 4.87%
- General operations: 4.33%
- Debt service: 4.09%
- DMV: 3.64%
- Bridge repair: 2.92%
- Non Federal construction: 2.43%
- Equipment: 2.14%
- Other agency/association/program draw downs: 0.45%
- Inventory: 0.19%
- Claims: 0.04%

Almost half of the revenues that West Virginia generates are distributed to match federal funds, which are a 20/80 match. West Virginia is 49th of states in capital investment per state highway mile maintained, spending only \$7,574 per lane mile compared with the national average of \$23,967 per lane mile.¹

Conclusion

The bottom line is that West Virginia has the sixth longest roadway system in the United States. That in itself is an amazing fact. Couple this with the revenue generated to maintain the sixth longest system, and it is easy to realize the importance of revenue management. The Department of Transportation has taken an aggressive position of funding and approving only those roads the state can fund. A six-year plan for new construction has been developed based on anticipated funds. The wish list for new roadways stretches over several billion dollars and revenue will continue to be an issue.

WVDOH still faces many challenges. Material costs and federal funds will

continue to increase, thus increasing our match. It is important that all tax payers become more informed about how our roadway systems are funded. By working together to develop solutions, we will be able to not only maintain, but also to improve our infrastructure.

Bibliography

(1) Drs. Mann, Tosum and Witt, *Future of West Virginia's Highway System: A Comprehensive Analysis of the West Virginia State Road Fund and Policy Options*, Bureau of Business and Economics Research College of Business and Economics, West Virginia University.

(2) West Virginians for Better Transportation. Their website is an excellent source of information regarding the highway system in West Virginia. www.keepwvmoving.org.

About the Author: Don Williams is the Construction Engineer for the WVDOH District 4, and is a member of the WVLTAP Advisory Board. He often speaks to groups around the state regarding proposed and current roadway construction projects.

Food For Thought - WV has:

- 37,370 miles of public roads.
- 34,610 miles of state highways (1.4 times the circumference of the Earth)
- 88 miles of West Virginia Turnpike
- 549 miles of Interstate system
- 1,736 miles of National Highway System
- 6,343 bridges (32% greater than 100 feet in length.)
- 2 national and 8 scenic byways
- State covers 24,231 square miles

THE CITY OF MORGANTOWN PLOWS AHEAD

By: Weslie Boyd and Tom Crozier

The City of Morgantown will soon be plowing snow-covered city streets with colorful truck-mounted plows as the result of a project involving students from local schools and the Morgantown Public Works Department.

“When it snows, people either love us or hate us,” said Bill Rumble, assistant public works director. This snow plow painting program was implemented to increase school spirit and community involvement in public works. It was also designed to make children interested in winter operations. “We try to reach the community,” said Terry Hough, public works director and city engineer.

Students from Suncrest Middle

School, Morgantown High School, Woodburn Elementary School, and South Middle School were supplied blank plows and paints in colors of their choosing after the plows were cleaned and primed by an employee at the City’s body shop. The students were provided basic parameters and were asked to make their plows bright and joyful. The design on each plow incorporated the school’s mascot. Once painted by the students, the plows were returned to the city garage where workers applied clear, protective coats to the equipment.

Mrs. Tracy Cottingham and Mrs. Connie Jordan, teachers at Woodburn Elementary School, remarked that the students learned cooperation. “The students learned to work in

groups, and they had great ideas,” they said.

The program also boosted the morale of the public works employees.

Hough and Rumble learned about the project at the American Public Works Association Snow Conference. Jerry Pickett of Greely, CO was promoting his plows at the public works fair.

When asked if the program would develop into an annual event, City Engineer Terry Hough said “Absolutely!”

If your agency is interested in developing a similar program, or would like more information, please contact Weslie Boyd, at (304) 293-3031 ext. 2662, weslie.boyd@mail.wvu.edu.



The participating students and their advisors display their plows at the Morgantown City Garage. The following week, these plows made their city debut in the Morgantown Holiday Parade.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2006 ROADS SCHOLAR GRADUATES!

Ralph Henderson
Lyle Matthews
Derrick Moore
Tammy Akers
Christra DiMarzio
Cheryl Garrison
Tammy Griffith

Michelle Hughes
Eva King
Bobbi Lane
Betty Malcomb
Regina Prevatt
Monique Tarantini
Cynthia Yankie



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Charleston, WV

UPDATE ON WV LTAP LENDING LIBRARY

By: *Brad DiCola*

The West Virginia LTAP Center is a part of the nationwide Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), which is funded by the Federal Highway Administration. The program also receives funding from the West Virginia Department of Transportation.

Mission:

The mission of the West Virginia LTAP is to foster a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound surface transportation system by improving skills and increasing knowledge of the transportation workforce and decision makers.

Overall Goal:

The Center's overall goal is to improve the transportation system by focusing on professional training, technical assistance, and information dissemination.

To achieve this goal, the WV LTAP does the following:

- Provides on-site training and demonstrations
- Publishes a quarterly newsletter
 - Maintains a video, CD-Rom, and publications library
 - Provides technical assistance via mail, telephone, fax, email, or site visits.

Every newsletter we send out is packed to the brim with material. In the past, we have tried to highlight new materials and resources that we receive at the LTAP Center and add to our libraries. Due to space constraints in our newsletter, we have not recently highlighted these materials in the same manner. To stay up-to-date on new materials that the Center is receiving and to obtain a complete listing of all available materials included in our library, please visit our website regularly and check the **Libraries** link, <http://wvltap.wvu.edu/library.htm>.

The databases are in PDF format and are organized by topic. Listed below are a few of the newer titles we have received. Please contact Brad DiCola if you would like to borrow any of these materials or have any difficulties accessing the library directories. Brad can be reached at (304) 293-3031 ext. 2662, bradley.dicola@mail.wvu.edu.



CD-ROM

- Forest Roads and The Environment, USDA Forest Service
- Highway Safety and Trees: The Delicate Balance, FHWA
- Meth Lab Waste Recognition, Colorado DOT

PUBLICATIONS

- NCHRP 561: Best Value Procurements for Highway Construction Projects, TRB
- CVISN Safety Information Exchange for Commercial Vehicles in Connecticut: Increasing Inspection Efficiency Through Wireless Data Access at the Roadside, FHWA
- CVISN Electronic Credentialing for Commercial Vehicles in Washington State: Easier Licensing and Credentials Processing for the Motor Carrier Industry, FHWA
- Improving Pavements with Long-Term Pavement Performance: Products for Today and Tomorrow, FHWA

VIDEOS/VHS

- Highway Safety and Trees: The Delicate Balance, FHWA
- Depositions, PennDOT

15TH ANNUAL ROADWAY MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE DATE SET!

In the fall edition of this newsletter, we had indicated that the 2007 Roadway Management Conference may be scheduled in the fall. We are pleased to report that after meeting with the VA LTAP and the rest of the conference planning committee, the upcoming 2007 conference will be held as usual in the spring of the year. So, mark your calendar for April 2 – 4, 2007 and plan to attend the 15th annual RMC in Charlottesville, VA.

A detailed conference agenda is scheduled to be mailed out by the first week of February. The planning committee is working hard to make sure that the 2007 RMC is one of the best!



CENTER STAFF & CONTACT INFORMATION

WV LTAP

West Virginia University

PO Box 6103

Engineering Sciences Building

Rm. 651 and 653-B

Morgantown, WV 26506-6103

Phone: (304) 293-3031 x 2612

Fax: (304) 293-7109

Staff

Dr. Ronald Eck, P.E.

Director

(304) 293-3031 x 2627

ronald.eck@mail.wvu.edu

Kim Carr

Program Coordinator

(304) 293-3031 x 2612

kim.carr@mail.wvu.edu

Brad DiCola

Technical Assistant

(304) 293-3031 x 2662

bradley.dicola@mail.wvu.edu

Weslie Boyd

Public Relations GA

(304) 293-3031 x 2662

weslie.boyd@mail.wvu.edu

Bill Wyant

Senior Volunteer

wwyant@hsc.wvu.edu



UPCOMING 7 HABITS FOR HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE TRAINING

The WV LTAP, through a continuing partnership with the WVDOT, is pleased to announce upcoming **7 Habits** training opportunities. Participant spaces are available in all offered classes for municipal and local LTAP customers. The cost for this two-and-a-half-days of training is \$125 per person. Please contact Kim to register or to obtain more information regarding this training.

January 9-11, 2007	Charleston, WV
January 23-25, 2007	Parkersburg, WV
January 30-February 1, 2007	Burlington, WV
February 6-8, 2007	Charleston, WV
February 27-March 1, 2007	Charleston, WV
March 13-15, 2007	Parkersburg, WV
March 13-15, 2007	Clarksburg, WV
April 17-19, 2007	Lewisburg, WV
May 15-17, 2007	Parkersburg, WV



*Happy Holidays and
Best Wishes in 2007!*

*From the WV LTAP Staff
Ron, Kim, Brad, and Weslie*

Photo of Laurel Run, Morgantown, WV

West Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program
West Virginia University
College of Engineering and Mineral Resources
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
PO Box 6103
Morgantown, WV 26506-6103

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