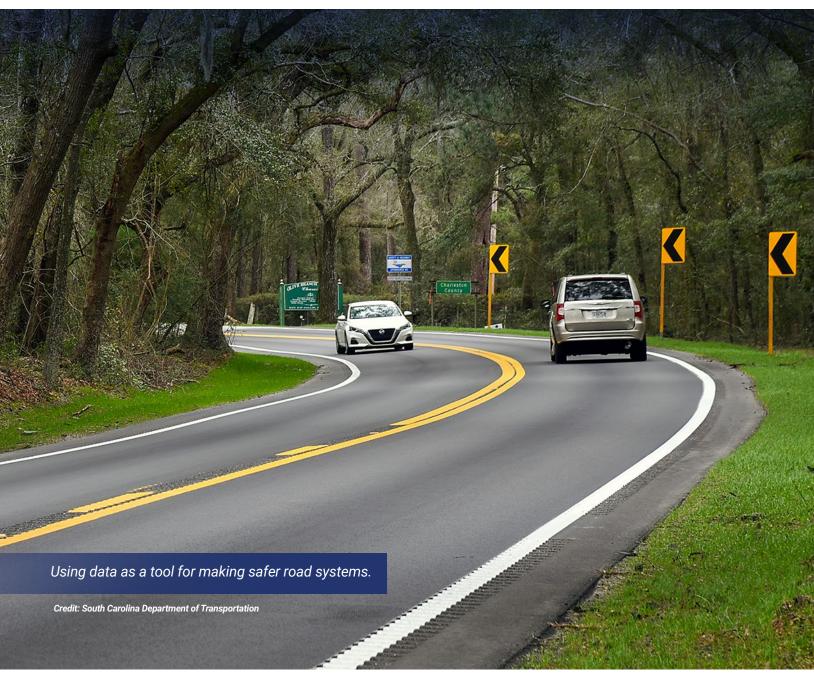
U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

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- **States Use Data to Drive Road Safety** 2 **Improvements**
- 4 U.S. DOT Leadership in Innovation: The Digital Revolution in Project Development and Delivery
- 6 The Fight to Reduce Rural Roadway Departures: FoRRRwD's Legacy

- 8 Building Relationships that Advance Innovation
- States Innovate!
- **12** Learn about EDC-7 Innovations

States Use Data to Drive Road Safety Improvements

We've all heard of big data. Big data in software, healthcare, economics, and many other parts of our lives. Did you know transportation practitioners are now using big data to save lives?

It's called data-driven safety analysis (DDSA). DDSA is a suite of tools and approaches that harness the power of information to help agencies make more informed decisions, better target their investments, and reduce severe crashes nationwide.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently developed 20 case studies that demonstrate the power behind DDSA.

"Gradually, State departments of transportation (DOTs) are taking on data as a tool to make safer road systems," said Jerry Roche, the Safety Integration Team Lead for the FHWA Office of Safety. "DDSA gives DOTs the tools they need to understand the state of their road systems and the potential for safer systems. Not only does it support intelligent road design, but also prioritizes safety as a necessity in the design process, often in a proactive way."

Following are peeks at four of the new case studies where States used DDSA to do just that.

Alabama

For years, Alabama's West South Boulevard between I-65 and Davenport Drive in Montgomery was the standard example of a high-speed, high-volume suburban arterial. It provided access to gas stations, hotels, fast food restaurants, and other businesses that kept the local economy going. Beside attracting lots of foot traffic, it also became a hotbed for crashesparticularly pedestrian crashes.

In response, the Alabama DOT (ALDOT) redesigned the arterial using the Interactive Highway Safety Design Model (IHSDM), which assessed

the predicted safety performance of both the existing condition and proposed redesign. Based on the data, ALDOT found it could improve safety for pedestrians without interfering with vehicular and pedestrian access to businesses.

ALDOT implemented several improvements: reducing West South Boulevard from six to five through lanes, adding raised divided medians and removing the two-way left turn lane, installing lighting, and closing driveways.

South Carolina

When the South Carolina DOT (SCDOT) learned that 5 percent of the worst-performing rural roads in the State accounted for 30 percent of all roadway fatalities and serious injuries, the agency knew something needed to change. After examining a 1.3-mile rural non-interstate corridor (SC 61 in Dorchester County), SCDOT used Highway Safety Manual (HSM) spreadsheets to assess the safety impact of various alternatives to the roadway's current configuration.

The HSM analysis suggested 58 percent of traffic injuries could be reduced through a contextually sensitive design that preserves the historic and natural aesthetics of the corridor, which is a designated Scenic Byway. By expanding the lane width to 11 feet, shoulder width to 4 feet, and clear zone to 12 feet, SCDOT would be on its way to reducing traffic injuries by more than half, according to the predictive tool.

SCDOT found that DDSA tools allowed for sound engineering judgment and could prove to be very effective when special circumstances may not allow for standard design plans.

Indiana

As part of a major mobility and operational redesign of State Road 37, the Indiana DOT

Cover photo: A completed section of SC 61.



Aerial photos of Alabama's West South Boulevard before (left) and after (right) pedestrian safety improvements such as reduced lanes, a raised median, and lighting installation were made. Watch a <u>video about the project</u> to learn more.

(INDOT) identified five intersections for potential interchange alternatives. The agency used the IHSDM to assess the safety impacts of build and no-build alternatives over a 21-year analysis period from 2018 to 2038.

The data showed that total crashes over the period would be fewer, particularly fatal and injury crashes, using the build alternative. However, the analysis also showed that the interchange improvements would result in a slight uptick in intersection crashes.

The IHSDM allowed INDOT to tailor the analysis to reflect local conditions and project-specific challenges and to document the safety benefits under the build scenario.

Arizona

The Arizona DOT (ADOT) determined that by focusing on improving the quality of its agencywide linear referencing system (LRS), it would also improve information sharing between data systems.

To do this, ADOT reviewed its major transportation-related data systems, including the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS), bridges, pavement, assets, and safety. Noticing a pattern of siloed data, ADOT then developed a framework to identify critical issues such as gaps and overlapping data so the agency could trace systemic issues and correct them programmatically.

In addition to streamlining data collection, ADOT's approach is a prime example of being proactive with data management, which, in turn, informs better safety treatments.

Data in the Driver's Seat

These **case studies** show that using available data can help agencies make more informed safety decisions. Roche emphasized the importance of working together to get the best data possible.

"The bottom line is that robust, repeatable safety analysis relies on robust safety data," added Matthew Hinshaw, DDSA program manager for the FHWA Office of Safety. "Programs that actively engage stakeholders within an agency and meet user requirements tend to have stronger enterprise data systems, and as a result, tend to have expanded capabilities."

MORE INFORMATION

- Visit FHWA's Roadway Safety Data Program webpage for a look at these and additional safety data case studies.
- Contact Matthew Hinshaw for information on data-driven safety analysis and technical assistance.



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U.S. DOT Leadership in Innovation: The Digital Revolution in Project Development and Delivery

Project development and delivery technology is advancing at a rate that could leave an unsuspecting practitioner behind if they are not acutely aware of the changing landscape. During a panel at the 2023 Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting, Amy Lucero, FHWA Associate Administrator for Innovation and Workforce Solutions, joined transportation leaders from across the country to discuss this topic.

Other panelists included Tony Tavares, Director of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans); Mary Leary, Acting Associate Administrator for Research, Demonstration, and Innovation for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); and Molly King, Executive Vice President of Project Connect Integration for the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CapMetro) in Austin, TX.

The Every Day Counts (EDC) program took center stage during portions of Lucero's discussion as she highlighted innovations promoted by EDC that have advanced digital project development and delivery. These included 3D engineered models, e-Construction and partnering, collaborative hydraulics: advancing to the next generation of engineering (CHANGE), and e-Ticketing and digital as-builts.



Past rounds of EDC have provided new opportunities for collaboration and sharing as practitioners seek to eventually connect the entire project lifecycle digitally. Working together to bring legacy systems into the digital age fits with the Secretary of the U.S. DOT's innovation principles. "This work is helping future-proof our infrastructure," said Lucero. "It's something we're very committed to." She indicated that FHWA is excited about expanding the EDC program beyond highway infrastructure to promote innovation across transportation modes and to reach out to our transit partners.

Lucero also mentioned that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) includes funding for Advanced Digital Construction Management Systems (ADCMS). She said the funding provides a transformational opportunity for the transportation industry, which has traditionally been slower to adopt these technologies. ADCMS, including 3D models and Building Information Modeling (BIM) for Infrastructure, can give practitioners the right data to make the best decisions. They also offer increased promise for working together across agencies and organizations.

The panel's speakers highlighted the importance of engaging across agencies and offices to break down silos that can prevent the free flow of ideas and information. And, in terms of data, Tony Tavares recommended that agencies "collect data once and share it often across functional programs and partner agencies." Sharing data across offices means it does not need to be recreated.

Panelists also reminded the audience that most projects are not delivered by a single entity or agency, so partnerships are critical. Digital innovation offers the ability to instantly bring together the power of multiple entities. It becomes a force

multiplier for any single office or user that taps into the connected digital ecosystem.

This was the case for an emergency repair
Tavares described on California's Highway 1 near
Big Sur in Monterey County. After a rain event in
2021 washed out a 150-foot section of the roadway, agency collaboration facilitated its rapid
reconstruction. The coastal highway reopened
to traffic in 86 days. Unmanned aerial systems
(UAS) were one of the technologies used that
helped improve data gathering and sharing. UAS
also minimized exposure of field staff to risk at
this cliffside location along Rat Creek.

Project Connect in Austin, TX, is a comprehensive transit expansion plan that includes zero emission buses, new light rail and commuter lines, and expanded and better bus service. Molly King said the project integrates technology as a key element and the IT team is a critical partner in evolving legacy systems to support this digital transformation. A piece of advice she offered was to use process mapping and develop an IT plan early on.



The Caltrans District 5 Construction Drone Team <u>gathered</u> <u>video footage</u> after a portion of Highway 1 collapsed and during its reconstruction.



This <u>promotional video</u> for Project Connect highlights mobility improvements planned for the Austin, TX, area.

Mary Leary of FTA dove deeper into a reoccurring theme throughout the panel discussion—the importance of Information Technology (IT) Offices and software providers as a partner in an agency's digital evolution. She noted the importance of the data element of technology integration, particularly when trying to link systems together that may not originally have been designed to communicate with one another. She also noted the critical role of planning and benchmarking with strong involvement from all functions in an organization, and the need for program managers of major enterprise solutions like ADCMS to engage senior leadership early and often as champions.

Lucero also shared advice for other agencies on the digital revolution they find themselves in the midst of: Be a champion for change. Take the first step. Innovation does not have to be a new technology—agencies can innovate by implementing existing tools or practices in their jurisdiction. Also, ask for help when needed and be open to results when things do not go according to plan.

MORE INFORMATION

- 🔭 Learn more about Building Information Modeling on FHWA's BIM for Infrastructure webpage.
- Review the Advancing BIM for Infrastructure: National Strategic Roadmap.
- Visit the FHWA Office of Construction's Technologies and Innovations webpage for resources on digital project delivery.

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The Fight to Reduce Rural Roadway Departures: FoRRRwD's Legacy

Half the traffic fatalities in the United States are because a vehicle leaves its lane. Nearly 11,000 of those deaths happen on rural roads. That's losing 30 people today, and every day.

The FHWA **Every Day Counts (EDC) program** has worked for years to help State and local agencies reduce these numbers.

The Focus on Reducing Rural Roadway Departures (FoRRRwD) team was formed in 2018 for EDC round 5 (EDC-5). The goal was to provide 2 years of focused outreach, training, and technical assistance to help agencies tackle this problem.

"Lane departures are the most common severe crash type, and the majority of those are on rural roads. Forty percent are off the State roadway system," said Cate Satterfield, Safety Engineer for FHWA's Office of Safety and co-lead of the FoRRRwD implementation team. "If we as a country can reduce them on all public roads, we can really make a dent in our traffic fatalities nationwide."

Proven Strategies for a National Problem

A large part of the effort involves helping practitioners implement safety countermeasures that are proven to work. FHWA has compiled 28 proven safety countermeasures, many of which apply to rural roadway departures. Several are relatively low cost.

For instance, simply widening edge lines on rural roads can reduce fatal crashes by up to 37 percent, with a benefit-cost ratio of 25:1.

Enhancing delineation on horizontal curves with countermeasures like chevron signs can reduce nighttime crashes by 25 percent. Center line rumble strips can drop head-on fatal and injury crashes by up to 64 percent on two-lane rural roads. In addition, Local Road Safety Plans provide a framework for prioritizing improvements on local roads.

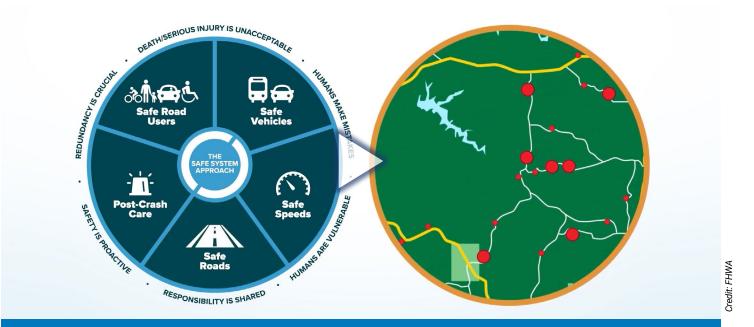


FoRRRwD is supported by four pillars that work together to reduce rural roadway departures on all roads.

Systemic Deployment: Making Money Go Further

"Agencies everywhere are dealing with limited budgets, especially those in rural areas," said Dick Albin, Senior Safety Engineer for FHWA's Resource Center and FoRRRwD co-lead. "That's why it's especially encouraging that these cost-effective countermeasures are proven and available. And they can be deployed systemically, at locations with the highest risk of severe crashes. This targeted installment can make dollars go even further."

The systemic approach to safety investments has also been a pillar of the FoRRRwD team. This approach starts by analyzing lane departure crash data to identify roadway and traffic features that correlate with severe crash risk, like rural curves with a tight radius. After compiling a list of risk factors that are associated with higher-than-normal chances of a rural roadway departure, practitioners look for other locations across their roadway system with those same factors. They then implement low-cost countermeasures targeted at those locations.



Watch <u>Driving FoRRRwD to a Safe System</u> to learn how FoRRRwD's four pillars align with Safe System principles.

"The systemic approach is a win-win," said Jerry Roche, Safety Integration Team Leader for FHWA's Office of Safety. "It helps stretch investments while putting treatments at the locations with highest risk of a roadway departure."

Swiss Cheese and a Safe Roadway System

Proven countermeasures and the systemic approach are part of an overall strategy called the Safe System Approach. This holistic approach was first adopted in Sweden in 1997 as Vision **Zero** and has since spread around the world.

Under the Safe System Approach, engineering efforts like those in FoRRRwD are partnered with behavioral methods like safe driving speeds and buckling up, as well as new technologies to make vehicles safer. This "Swiss Cheese" model of redundant protection for road users assumes that humans make mistakes and these frailties must be accounted for.

"Road users bear responsibility to drive safely," said Mark Doctor, Team Leader for the FHWA Resource Center's Safety and Design Team. "But we know people are not perfect. We inevitably make mistakes. But it is unacceptable that those mistakes should be fatal."

How Does FoRRRwD Move Forward?

EDC-5 (2019-2020) was not the end of the FHWA focus on reducing rural roadway departures. The agency has a full roadway departure program that carries on the work of the FoRRRwD team. Experts from the FHWA Office of Safety and Resource Center offer peer exchanges, webinars, outreach materials, and technical assistance to State and local agencies.

"We will never stop this work," said Satterfield. "Rural roadway departures are a persistent problem, so we will persist until and after they no longer happen. Our families, friends, and neighbors deserve nothing less. Thirty people will die today in a rural roadway departure. Let's save the people behind the numbers."

MORE INFORMATION

- ▼ Visit the FoRRRwD Resources webpage for the control of the tools, promotional materials, webinar links, and more.
- Contact Cate Satterfield of the FHWA Office of Safety or **Dick Albin** of the FHWA Resource Center for information and technical assistance.



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Building Relationships that Advance Innovation

State Transportation Innovation Councils (STICs) across the country use different approaches to select and deploy innovations. Sharing, learning, and borrowing from these different approaches is the heart of the National STIC Network.

During a National STIC Network meeting in January, representatives from Ohio described how they reinvigorated their STIC to increase participation, and Idaho representatives detailed partnerships that have produced a successful workforce development program. Ohio and Idaho were also recognized during the meeting as two of three States, along with New Jersey, to receive a 2022 STIC Excellence Award for their efforts to foster a culture of innovation.

FHWA Executive Director Gloria Shepherd, who was appointed in October 2022, opened the meeting and noted that innovation and technology are among her top priorities. She encouraged participants to continue networking and sharing ideas and innovations in science and technology as well as policy and program implementation.

Ohio Reboots Its STIC

Ohio's efforts to reenergize its STIC began by benchmarking STICs in five other States to gain best practices. The benchmarking categories included membership, meeting structure and frequency, connections with outside groups, leadership, and outreach. Richard Winning, **Executive Financial Advisor and Innovation** Coordinator for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), said this effort resulted in strong working relationships with peers at the STICs in those States and new ideas to borrow and apply in Ohio. It also led to expanding and diversifying the Ohio STIC's membership to bring in members from the State's rural transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) and higher education institutions.

Another result was revising Ohio's STIC Incentive funds application scoring process to increase transparency and objectivity. The STIC's previous process for selecting projects for funding involved an informal small group at ODOT. In revising the process, Ohio borrowed and customized a STIC **Incentive application form from Utah, created** an objective scoring criteria template, and established an application review subcommittee consisting of FHWA, ODOT, county engineers, RTPOs, and metropolitan planning organizations.

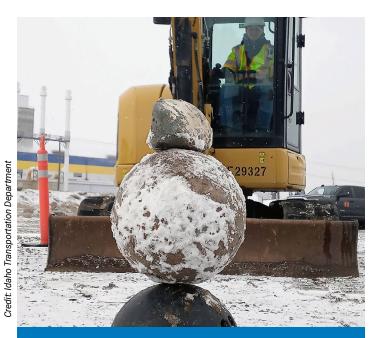
"We had a very successful venture right out of the gate," Winning said of the new process. "We opened it up to locals and all of ODOT, and we had 11 applications for STIC Incentive funds our first year."

Ohio's STIC rejuvenation aligned with ODOT's One Red Lion savings initiative, which focused on achieving \$100 million in operational savings over a 4-year period that could then be reinvested into the State's transportation network. Winning said that as of January, ODOT had received more than 2,000 suggestions overall and saved more than \$113 million dollars, and hundreds of ideas are still being evaluated.

ODOT Chief Engineer David Slatzer said one of the things they have tried to stress in Ohio is that the STIC should not be thought of just as an opportunity to seek funding, but as a forum to foster the innovation necessary to move the organization, and the profession overall, forward. "We're viewing this as an opportunity to collaborate with academia, local governments, and our industry partners to really tackle issues that are important to all of us," he said.

ODOT Director Jack Marchbanks added that their current transition from a mindset of being infrastructure stewards and owner-operators to providing mobility as a service to all of Ohio requires innovative thinking across the enterprise.

"We are in the midst of a paradigm shift when it comes to transportation, and it is as monumental as the time, over 120 years ago, when we were going from horse and buggy to combustion vehicles," said Marchbanks. "So it is absolutely



Idaho partnered to expand the reach of workforce development training.

necessary that innovation not only be something that the STIC does, but that it becomes part and parcel to our DNA—that innovation is ingrained into everything we do."

Idaho Partners for Workforce Solutions

In 2014, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) undertook a partnership program to address the challenges of attracting people to work in heavy highway construction. The result is a workforce development program called Idaho Career Opportunities—Next In Construction (ICONIC).

ICONIC ran as a heavy equipment operator training program in 2014, 2017, and 2020. The 2022 program was different in that it was offered at sites in three different parts of the State—a geographic approach that took the training to where the need and participants were located. The 2022 program also expanded training offerings to include concrete cement masonry and welding and ironwork.

The 5-week program includes additional trade skills such as forklift operation and flagging, and it boosts employment readiness through resume and cover letter writing pointers and mock interviews. In addition, ICONIC offers support services to help break down the barriers students may face when trying to seek training and enter the trades. This has included help with short-term housing and fuel and childcare costs. The program has

also purchased personal protective equipment for students such as hard hats, hearing protection, vests, and safety goggles.

The 2022 class saw an increased interest from female students, with 40 percent female participation. Also, after moving the training from fall to spring to coincide with construction season, the program's employment rate increased. To recruit the spring 2023 class, ITD Workforce Development Program Manager Jessika Phillips took a new approach to reaching potential participants by using an online form accessible with a QR code to help increase the number of applicants.

"This program wouldn't be possible without the number of partnerships that we have
built," said Phillips. Partners have included the
Idaho Workforce Development Council, Idaho
Associated General Contractors, colleges,
technical and trade schools, and local highway
construction contractors. They've also partnered
with Idaho's Tribal Nations, who help identify
students and fund some of them, and with the
International Rescue Committee, an organization
that assists refugees in applying their skills to
jobs here in the United States.

"Two unique things that I think have made this a great program," said ITD Chief Engineer Blake Rindlisbacher, "is this is a huge partnership, not just ITD and not just the State of Idaho. This is across our State and has a lot of people engaged. Also, changing the program as the dynamics require has been very good because it needs to be fluid. We intend to keep the program going—it's a great way for us to continue to attract, interest, and invite people into the highway industry."

MORE INFORMATION

- Listen to the January 2023 National STIC Network Meeting webcast.
- Contact Sara Lowry of the Federal Highway Administration for more information on the STIC Network and STIC Incentive program.



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States Innovate!

Nebraska Accelerates Beltway Project with Value Capture

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) used an innovative financing approach to complete its Lincoln South Beltway project in half the time it would have taken using traditional pay-as-you-go financing. For this designbid-build-finance project, the State developed a value capture funding mechanism known as a deferred-payment contract. The contract accelerated construction by allowing the beltway to be built in 3 years and paid for over an 8-year timeframe. According to an NDOT news release, the project is the largest and one of the most complex NDOT has undertaken. Construction of the 11-mile, four-lane beltway includes five interchanges, 21 bridges, and 11 roundabouts.

Pennsylvania Podcasts Highlight Innovation Success

As part of a series of podcasts celebrating the 10th anniversary of its State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC), the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) spotlighted successful deployments of several



Nebraska used an innovative financing approach for its Lincoln South Beltway project.

Every Day Counts innovations, including high-friction surface treatments. Their October podcast described a stretch of road that went from having 21 wet road crashes in one direction between 1997 and 2005 to zero crashes between 2007 and 2015 with the addition of HFST. PennDOT has also applied HFST to intersections and reported seeing benefits there as well. Another episode on geosynthetic reinforced soil-integrated bridge systems (GRS-IBS) described how this accelerated bridge construction method spread throughout the State. In 2018, FHWA STIC Incentive Program funding was used to update the specifications for GRS-IBS bridges. According to a PennDOT news article, each of its districts now has at least one GRS-IBS bridge and the agency is looking at future uses for overpasses and to help deal with increased flooding impacts on bridges.

South Carolina Shares Asphalt Overlay Solutions

Open-graded friction course (OGFC), a thin asphalt overlay, is gaining popularity as transportation agencies find ways to improve its durability and maintenance while still achieving safety benefits. The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) has used OGFC for years to help reduce hydroplaning on high-volume routes. When SCDOT realized it was getting about half the life expectancy out of its OGFC projects, the agency worked with Clemson University to identify ways to improve OGFC design, performance, construction, and maintenance. The research led to SCDOT adding fines to its OGFC mixture, using a 265-degree warm mix OGFC, and ensuring that compaction is completed in less than 15 minutes to prevent excessive cooling. Read more in the Every Day Counts Targeted Overlay Pavement Solutions (TOPS) January e-bulletin and listen to a December 2022 TOPS webinar for lessons learned on OGFC from South Carolina and other States.



Vermont created a video for the public describing how both motorized and non-motorized traffic will flow through the State's first diverging diamond interchange.

Colorado Earns Accolades for Concrete **Overlay**

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has used concrete overlays to rehabilitate asphalt and concrete roadways for over 20 years. Concrete overlays are used on interstates and rural areas, such as State Highway 13 (SH13) in northwest Colorado. On SH13, a 6-inch concrete overlay covering 6 miles provides a long-term solution to a distressed asphalt roadway. CDOT let this project with alternates to identify the most cost-effective approach, and a 6-inch concrete overlay provided the lowest bid received. The contractor for the project also reused the asphalt millings to establish a stable paving base on the shoulder, provide a weather-resistant surface, increase smoothness, and improve overall quality. The SH13 concrete overlay project received the Colorado/Wyoming Chapter of the American Concrete Pavement Association (ACPA) Award for Excellence in Concrete Pavement Overlays, the American Concrete Institute State Award for Excellence in Concrete Pavement Overlays, and the ACPA National Gold Award for Excellence.

Diverging Diamond Interchanges Underway in Vermont and Washington

As part of a project to enhance mobility and safety, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) is reconfiguring a traditional interchange into the State's first diverging diamond interchange (DDI). The agency's Exit 16 DDI Project is designed to address congestion and a lack of accommodations for non-motorized travel on U.S. Highway 2/7 near Interstate 89 in Colchester. A DDI improves safety by eliminating left turns across oncoming traffic. For pedestrians, a DDI's walkways are located either through the median or along the sides of the crossroad, while bicycle lanes are placed in the customary location to the right of traffic. VTrans created a video for the public describing how both motorized and non-motorized traffic will flow through the DDI, as well as how it moves vehicles through an interchange more efficiently. According to the video, 46 States now have DDIs in use or in planning and crash reductions of up to 60 percent are being reported.

The Washington State DOT recently broke ground on what will be the agency's second DDI. At one of the busiest interchanges in the State, the new DDI is the centerpiece of the Interstate 90/State Route 18 Interchange Improvements and Widening project, which is planned to keep traffic flowing and improve safety, as well as to remove old culverts and fish barriers to improve stream access for salmon and other native fish and wildlife.



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INNOVATOR

INNOVATOR, published by the FHWA's Office of Innovation and Workforce Solutions, advances the implementation of innovative technologies and accelerated project delivery methods in highway transportation.

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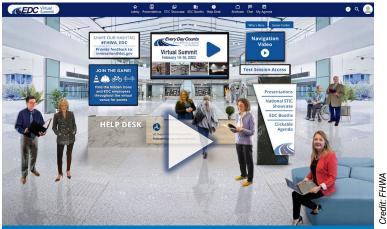
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Learn about EDC-7 Innovations

Following the kickoff of Every Day Counts round seven (EDC-7) at February's **Virtual Summit**, State and local agencies are evaluating the seven proven innovations chosen for this round and determining which to adopt over the next 2 years. If you would like to find out more about each of the EDC-7 seven:

- View the EDC-7 Virtual Summit sessions on demand and view materials from the virtual conference platform website by registering for access.
- Visit the FHWA EDC-7 webpage to find links to information on each innovation, including videos, factsheets, and other resources.
- Contact EDC-7 team leads for more details on this newest round of innovations.



View the EDC-7 Virtual Summit sessions on demand from the virtual conference platform website by <u>registering for access</u>.

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