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### **Contributing Editors**

**Acting Director:** Marlys Osterhues

**Managing Editors:** Mike Jones and Dave Leighow

## **Message from the Director**

### **A Time of Transition**

It is an exciting time to be at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Real Estate Services (HEPR), as many changes and transitions are underway. Nelson Castellanos, the former Office Director, retired on November 1, 2013 after 40 years of Federal service. A civil engineer by training, he worked in various FHWA Division Offices for most of his career and served for the last three years as the Office Director for HEPR. Over those three years, Nelson focused on improving HEPR outreach to the Division Offices and enhancing HEPR collaboration with the Resource Center. As part of that effort, he established regional points of contact (POCs) within HEPR to serve as liaisons with the Division Offices. Over the past year, Nelson's team has focused on implementing regulatory changes in compliance with the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) legislation.

Marlys Osterhues has assumed responsibility as Acting Director until HEPR hires a permanent Office Director. She is the Project Mitigation Team Leader for the FHWA Office of Project Development and Environmental Review (HEPE), and has worked for FHWA for over 13 years. She is glad to have this opportunity to expand her knowledge of the right-of-way (ROW) function and build a stronger relationship between HEPR and HEPE. The new Office Director will assume the position in early 2014.

HEPR has many priorities for 2014, including the following:

- Complete updates to regulations to address MAP-21 changes related to early acquisition and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act)
- Update Federal-State agreements on outdoor advertising
- Unveil a ROW bootcamp training program for new staff (developed over the last several months of 2013)
- Implement 2014 National Program Stewardship and Oversight Plan (see article on page 3)
- Host webinars to address topics in the five realty areas of appraisal, acquisition, relocation, property management, and outdoor advertising/junkyard control (see list beginning on page 8)
- Continue to offer sessions of the new National Highway Institute (NHI) course on acquisitions (unveiled in 2013)
- Complete a new NHI course: "Eminent Domain for Attorneys and Appraisers"
- Emphasize oversight and stewardship of the local public agency (LPA) program through training and technical assistance through the Division Offices

HEPR looks forward to welcoming the new Office Director and continuing to strengthen relationships with the Division Offices in delivering the ROW program in 2014.

## **News from FHWA Headquarters**

### **2014 National Program Stewardship and Oversight Review**

One important element of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) 2014 Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) is a national Review of the Realty Program Stewardship and Oversight Activities. The Office of Planning, Environment, and Realty (HEP) has overall responsibility for this review, which will examine the efforts of the Division Offices to oversee the Federal-aid Realty Program. The Headquarters Office of Real Estate Services (HEPR) will lead this initiative with the assistance of the Resource Center, and will conduct reviews in up to 10 Division Offices. The reviews will identify the successful practices and oversight efforts that participating Division Offices have utilized in delivering the Realty Program.

Through this effort we hope to raise the bar of the Administration's Realty staff, facilitating greater consistency and efficiency in the delivery of the Federal-aid Realty Program on a national level.

The 2014 reviews will consist of interviews with 10 Division Offices: Florida, Idaho, Maine, Mississippi, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Washington, and West Virginia. HEPR plans to repeat this annually, interviewing approximately 10 Divisions each successive year. This will provide a true national perspective on the successful practices that Divisions are employing to ensure innovative and effective oversight of the Federal-aid Realty Program.

The review team for each geographic region will include the HEPR Point of Contact (POC) for that Director of Field Services (DFS) region and a representative from the Resource Center. Most, if not all of the interviews are planned to take place via phone or videoconference. The review teams may conduct one Division Office interview in each of the four DFS regions "in-person", depending on available funding and other issues. At the conclusion of the 10 interviews, HEPR and the Resource Center will prepare a report and submit it to the interviewed Division Offices for review before finalizing it. The final report will enable all of the Division Offices nationwide to learn about successful practices for program oversight. We will showcase some of the successful practices identified during the 2014 reviews in a future edition of the newsletter.

## **News from the Regional POCs**

### **News from the Northern Corner**

*(Article by Rosemary Jones, POC-North)*

#### *Updates from Connecticut*

- During the months of July and August, 2013, Michael Butler, the Northeast Division Cluster Realty Team Leader and the Realty Officer for the Connecticut and Rhode Island Divisions, participated with Carolyn W. James, National Local Public Agency (LPA) Realty Coordinator from HEPR, and Connecticut State Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) in coordinating and successfully implementing a two-day training session on realty for LPAs, which reached 90 representatives from local agencies. Michael arranged a meeting with ConnDOT to discuss its stewardship and oversight of the LPA program and also arranged site visits to three LPA projects. As a result, the team was able to incorporate up-to-date project experience and procedures into the delivery of the LPA course.
- The Connecticut Division Realty Officer invited the Massachusetts and New Hampshire Division Realty Officers to participate in the training and site visits. As a result, there was a request to deliver the training in New Hampshire in November 2013, and a request from LPAs to provide training in other areas of Connecticut.

#### *Updates from Delaware/Maryland*

- The Delaware and Maryland (DelMar) Division recently hired a new Realty Officer, Melissa Corder. Melissa is a mid-career hire with many years of ROW experience with the Virginia DOT. The Delaware Division will greatly benefit from her relocation and property management expertise.
- The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), California DOT, and Utah DOT are participating in the MAP-21 Relocation Streamlining Demonstration Program. This program allows States to utilize a lump sum payment for acquisition and estimated relocation costs on residential parcels. Participating State DOTs will report outcomes to FHWA, indicating if the burden on the displacees is lessened, and if time is saved by streamlining the process providing relocation assistance. Maryland is the first State to offer this option to displacees and reports that they have several property owners taking advantage of the lump sum payment. The participating States will also report on how many displacees opt in or opt out of the program and whether any pitfalls are encountered when implementing it.

#### *Updates from Massachusetts*

- The Massachusetts Division held a process review of the MassDOT ROW Bureau's acquisition process in November 2013 to ensure statutory and regulatory compliance. Lindsey Svendsen, Massachusetts Division Realty Specialist, took the lead. Her team included Cheryl Malin, New

York Division Realty Officer; Michele Palicka, Realty Officer with the Resource Center; Jim Hoyle, Massachusetts Division Area Engineer; and Rosemary Jones, DFS-North Region POC from HEPR. The MassDOT ROW Bureau acknowledged that they have numerous challenges facing them, expressed a desire and willingness to make the necessary changes, and thanked the team for conducting the review.

## *Updates from Ohio*

- In November 2013 the Ohio Division Realty Officer, Abraham Geevarghese, approved a new chapter in the Ohio DOT (ODOT) ROW Manual titled "Certifications." This new chapter will enable all ODOT districts to follow the same procedures for certification and was the result of recommendations from a ROW Certification Review in the last fiscal year. Certification training for the districts is planned to start in January 2014.

## *Updates from Pennsylvania*

- The Pennsylvania Division Office ROW Program achieved a very important goal this year in regard to ensuring the protection of property owners and tenants during Federal-aid projects. The Realty Officer, Christian Christoffers, and the Environmental Program Manager, Camille Otto, collaborated with the Pennsylvania DOT (PennDOT) ROW and Environmental Program Managers to evaluate the statewide process for ROW analysis during project development. This effort resulted in updates to the PennDOT ROW Manual and electronic environmental documentation forms. The updates focus on improving the data collection and documentation processes submitted in conceptual stage reports for projects with persons displaced from residences and businesses. In addition, Christian requested a ROW/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Integration class from the Resource Center to be delivered to PennDOT ROW and Environmental Program staff. The class was developed in coordination with Michele Palicka, Realty Specialist with the Resource Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Michele delivered the fully-booked one-day workshop on November 21, 2013. The Pennsylvania Division Office is very encouraged that this pilot course will result in future offerings.

## **News from the Western Corner**

*(Article by Dave Leighow, POC-West)*

## *Updates from Arizona*

- The Division Office Realty Officer directed a team that reviewed appraisals and the quality of appraisers' products. The HEPR Appraisal Specialist and the HEPR POC-West participated in the on-site review and follow-up activities. One result of the review is a detailed matrix for use in future appraisal reviews. The matrix should be available soon to add to HEPR, Division Office, and Resource Center personnel toolkits.

## *Updates from California*

- The California High Speed Rail (HSR) Authority has embarked on the first leg of its major HSR project that will eventually link northern and southern California. The first segment is the Central Valley Construction project, which runs from Madera County to Kern County. In October 2013 FHWA participated with the Federal Railroad Administration in an on-site review of realty activities for the first segment to examine the progress of acquisition, relocation, and compliance with the Uniform Act.

## *Updates from Oregon and Washington*

- The Columbia River Crossing is a major project in the Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington area to improve safety and freight mobility, reduce congestion, and provide better transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities between the States of Oregon and Washington. The current cost estimate to replace the bridge and make other improvements in this section of the I-5 corridor is approximately \$3.5 billion. The project offers some unique realty challenges, including the relocation of a number of houseboats. Construction was originally slated to begin in late 2014, but as of the time this article was written, the project was pending the resolution of State funding; the Washington legislature voted down funding and it is unclear how Oregon will proceed, since Oregon was to fund the other half of the bridge project.

## *Updates from Montana*

- In September 2013, the Montana DOT (MDOT) held its annual ROW conference, which was well attended by MDOT's ROW and design staff from around the State. The FHWA Division Office Realty Officer and HEPR POC-West also participated in the meeting and provided input on a number of topics, including the appraisal of outdoor advertising signs.

## **News from the Southern Corner**

*(Article by Mike Jones, Senior Member International ROW Association [SR/WA], POC-South)*

### *Division Staffing Notes*

First, we want to welcome Neosha Price, the new Realty Officer in the Georgia Division. Neosha formerly served in the Ohio Division and is a great addition to the Georgia Division.

Kudos to David Whitworth, the Realty Officer in the Kentucky Division, for graduating from the FHWA Leadership Development Academy in September 2013. That's no small achievement. Congratulations, David!

The International Right of Way Association (IRWA) recently named the Louisville-Southern Indiana Ohio River Bridges Project as the IRWA 2013 Project of the Year. Read the [November/December 2013 issue](#) of *RIGHT OF WAY* magazine for a very informative article about the cooperative effort between the two State transportation agencies to improve the northbound side of I-65 in the Louisville, Kentucky

metropolitan area. The magazine article refers to the strong emphasis placed on Uniform Act compliance and the utilization of FHWA's Every Day Counts Toolbox to help complete the project ahead of schedule and under budget.

## **Lifetime Learning**

*"Everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects."*  
- Will Rogers

The above observation is an example of the wit and wisdom of American humorist Will Rogers. This quote ties into the twin themes of the remainder of this article:

- Lifelong learning is an extremely important element of a healthy, happy, and productive life.
- On a national level, we should recognize and promote two of the most effective technical information sources available to practitioners in the Federal and Federal-aid Realty Program.

In case you have not guessed, the two information sources I'm referring to are the technical assistance and training resources available from HEPR and the Resource Center.

*"It's what you learn after you know it all that counts."*  
- John Wooden

Okay, be honest—at some point, as you stood around the office coffee maker or had lunch with co-workers—have you ever shared your “feigned” expertise about the real root of our national security problems, how to fix the problems with the red-zone defense on your NFL team, the mysteries of the opposite sex, or some other imponderable problem?

We have all done it at some point or another. This occurs because, over the millennia, human nature and social convention have conditioned us not to freely admit our personal ignorance on any topic, regardless of the subject matter. To do so might connote a personal flaw or weakness. This is frequently true regardless of the complexity of the matter and our personal expertise. It's a natural response. But have you ever done something like that and had it come back to bite you? That's never good . . . So where am I going with this, you ask? This is just my way of reinforcing the fact that it is perfectly acceptable to seek information from our peers and to benefit from their knowledge, experience, and assistance on topics that we're not 100 percent certain about. The Uniform Act, Federal regulations, policies, and guidance that apply to our Realty and Outdoor Advertising and Junkyard Control Programs are very complex. In some cases, it may take a few colleagues to adequately answer a complex or unique question. It benefits each and every one of us working in the program today (Federal, State, local government employees, or private consultants) to lean on our peers. In fact, I would wager that no one—and I mean no one—has all the answers, or has even heard all the questions! We should not shy away from the experience of sharing our knowledge and experience with our peers.

## Office of Real Estate Services Newsletter

*"Prepare for the unknown by studying how others in the past have coped with the unforeseeable and the unpredictable."*  
- George S. Patton

Anyone working in the ROW profession knows that it is fraught with the unforeseeable and the unpredictable. With that in mind, it is important to recognize that the technical assistance and program workshops provided by HEPR and the Resource Center are among the most valuable tools available to practitioners in our program and for FHWA staff at all levels, in connection with our program stewardship and oversight responsibilities. If you ask any of my DFS-South Division Office Realty partners, they will probably agree that I regularly "beat the drum" to promote the ability of our staff to provide technical assistance and program workshops, and encourage their State/local government and Tribal partners to take advantage of these resources.

I'm pleased to report that more and more Division Offices are doing so, including many from the DFS-South. I know I speak for all our Realty staff in HEPR and the Resource Center when I say that we look forward to the opportunity to serve all of our Divisions, and through them, our State, local, and Tribal customers.

*"Learning and innovation go hand in hand. The arrogance of success is to think that what you did yesterday will be sufficient for tomorrow."*  
-William Pollard

Below is just a partial list of some of the technical assistance and training activities that HEPR and Resource Center staff have provided over the course of the last few months or plan to provide in the coming months. There is assistance available to partners and stakeholders in every area of the program. At some point, we wouldn't mind being able to list all of our Division Offices on a list like this.

### *HEPR Workshops*

- Federal Appraisal/Appraisal Review Requirements (Arizona: 6/13), (Delaware: 8/13), (Mississippi: 5/13 – 2 sessions), (North Carolina: 9/13)
- Basic Uniform Act Requirements (California High Speed Rail Authority: 6/13)
- Introduction to Federal-aid ROW Requirements for LPAs (Wisconsin: 5/13), (Connecticut: 8/13), (New Hampshire: 11/13)  
*[Planned sessions: (Iowa: 1/14), (Tennessee: 2/14), (Mississippi: 4/14), (West Virginia: 5/14)]*
- What Federal Lands Highway (FLH) Needs to Know about LPA ROW Acquisition  
*[Planned session (Central Federal Lands: 2/14)]*

### *HEPR Webinars*

- Relocation Streamlining Demonstration Program Requirements (4/13)
- ROW Procedures, Tools and Techniques for Local Public Agencies – Part One (7/13)
- Outdoor Advertising and Junkyard Control (9/13)
- ROW Procedures, Tools and Techniques for LPAs – Part Two (10/13)

## *HEPR Reviews*

- LPA Project Compliance Review (Virginia: 3/13)
- Outdoor Advertising Control and Junkyard Control Program Reviews (Louisiana: 9/13), (Illinois: 9/13)
- Acquisition (Illinois: 6/13)
- Project Quality Assurance Reviews
- Appraisal/Appraisal Review Process Review  
*[Planned reviews: (South Carolina: 1/14)]*
- FHWA Strategic Implementation Plan ROW Reviews  
*[Planned reviews: (New York, Maine, Florida, Mississippi, West Virginia, Oklahoma, Texas, Washington, Utah, Idaho: 12/13 - 2/14)]*

## *Resource Center Workshops*

- 2013 IRWA Education Conference (5 technical presentations)
- Acquisitions/Negotiations (Georgia: 9/13 – 2 sessions)  
*[Planned workshops: (Louisiana: 1/14 – 2-3 sessions; 1/14)]*
- Basic Uniform Act Requirements for Local Public Agencies (3 sessions)  
*[Planned workshops: (Georgia: 1/14)]*
- Advanced Business and Mobile Home Relocation (Louisiana: 5/13)
- Business Relocation  
*[Planned workshops: (Mississippi: 12/13)]*
- ROW Needs in Project Development for Local Public Agencies (Maryland: 8/13)
- ROW Professionals Workshop (Minnesota: 10/13)

## *Resource Center Reviews*

- Project Compliance Reviews  
*[Planned reviews: (New York {Goethals Bridge}: 12/13)]*

## **News from the Mid-American Corner**

*(Article by Maggie Duncan-Augustt, POC-Mid-America)*

### *Updates from Texas*

Art or Advertising? The Texas Division Office has been diligently working with the Texas DOT to have the *Playboy* bunny sign that was illegally erected along Highway 90 in Marfa removed. *Playboy* stated that the installation was not an advertisement, but instead a piece of art. The Division's hard work with their State paid off, and the sign was removed on November 18, 2013.

### *Updates from Michigan*

The New International Trade Crossing Project, one of the Projects of Corporate Interest, authorized about \$5 million for ROW. The Michigan DOT is working on a Memorandum of Understanding with Canada to identify the procedures to be utilized for property acquisition.

### *Updates from Nebraska*

The Nebraska Division Office is working with the State to implement a timeline template to assist with the property acquisition for a number of large ROW projects in the Omaha region. The Division Office is hoping to share the template with all of the localities in the project area once it is complete.

## **News from the FLH and Tribal Transportation Programs**

*(Article by Rich Coco, POC- Mid America and FLH)*

### *FLH Responds to Nature's Fury*

A major flooding event occurred the week of September 11, 2013 in Colorado. Heavy rains fell over much of northern Colorado for several days and Colorado's Front Range from Colorado Springs to the Wyoming border experienced catastrophic flooding. By September 12, 2013, parts of Larimer and Boulder Counties received upwards of 20 inches of rain. The typical annual average of precipitation is 12 inches. Some areas received over 8 inches in a 24-hour period.



Figure 1: Emergency response personnel respond to damage from September 2013 flooding in Colorado.

The flooding caused damage in 15 counties, prompting both Governor Hickenlooper and President Obama to issue emergency declarations. An estimated 200 miles of roads, 50 bridges, and many homes were damaged or destroyed as a result of the storm.

Having a long history of responding to natural disasters, and home to the Emergency Relief Program, the Central FLH Division (CFLHD) teamed up with its partners to assess damage to roads, bridges, and drainage structures and provide support to other relief efforts. CFLHD has been working closely with Federal Land Management Agency partners—the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management—and with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Colorado DOT (CDOT), Colorado Division Office, and local counties and cities to ensure a rapid recovery.

Despite the magnitude of the damage and the impending onset of winter in the devastated area, CFLHD and CDOT set two primary goals:

- Complete emergency repairs by December 1, 2013
- Complete permanent repairs by December 1, 2014

CFLHD established an emergency response team to manage the recovery program. It is led by the CFLHD Planning and Programming Branch Chief. A CFLHD Project Manager has been assigned as the CFLHD/CDOT Liaison. Approximately 35 CFLHD staff have been involved in various aspects of the recovery effort so far, with the core response team working nearly full

time since the start of the flood event. The response team is listed at the below link: [www.cflhd.gov/2013ColoradoFloods/documents/CFLHD2013FloodTaskForce.pdf](http://www.cflhd.gov/2013ColoradoFloods/documents/CFLHD2013FloodTaskForce.pdf).

The other two FLH divisions—Western FLH Division and Eastern FLH Division—augmented CFLHD in providing assessment support to the Colorado Division Office, CDOT, FEMA, and LPAs and coordinating efforts and clarifying eligibility for Federal assistance. Colorado FLH flood response status updates can be found at: [www.cflhd.gov](http://www.cflhd.gov).

As of December 16, 2013, all major routes have re-opened. Some infrastructure repairs are still in progress or pending better weather. This contributor wishes to express appreciation to the National Guard, FEMA, Colorado DOT, FHWA and the many local resources that joined the efforts to restore some aspect of normalcy. Just in time too—it's cold out there!



Figure 2: September 2013 floods washed out culverts in Colorado.

## News from the Resource Center

### On the Move with the Resource Center Realty Team

*(Article by Marshall Wainright, Lead Realty Specialist for the FHWA Resource Center)*

CONGRATULATIONS to Clint and Christina (Chrisy) Currier on the birth of their daughter, Alexandra Hope Currier, on November 12, 2013! We are pleased to report that the family is doing well. We are also pleased to report that Chrisy will continue to serve the Resource Center Realty Team in a part-time capacity. She will continue her primary position in the Texas Division Office, which will consist of 80-85

percent of her time, and the remaining 15-20 percent of her work time will be devoted to the Resource Center Realty Team.

The Resource Center Realty Team would also like to thank you for allowing us to serve you throughout the year. Since our last edition of this newsletter, we rolled out one-day workshops on topics such as Right of Way (ROW) Negotiations and NEPA/ROW. Marshall also served as a technical expert in the development of the successful pilot course, *Successful Acquisitions Under the Uniform Act*, a three-day, instructor-led course offered through the National Highway Institute. This course and others are available at: [www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/default.aspx](http://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/default.aspx). In addition, we have delivered customized training and presentations and provided technical assistance to our FHWA colleagues and their State and local partners in five States.



Figure 3: Alexandra Hope Currier, daughter of FHWA Resource Center Realty Team member *Chrisy Currier*.

We wish you all a happy and safe holiday season and look forward to working with each of you very soon. Please do not hesitate to contact us. While Chrisy is out, Marshall may be reached via email at [Marshall.Wainright@dot.gov](mailto:Marshall.Wainright@dot.gov) or by phone at (404) 562-3692. Michele is also available at [Michele.Palicka@dot.gov](mailto:Michele.Palicka@dot.gov) or by phone at (404) 562-3918. We are willing and ready to assist you.

## Innovative Approaches and Tools

### **NCHRP Synthesis 442: Practices and Performance Measures for LPA Federally-Funded Highway Projects**

Many Federally-funded transportation programs are developed and managed by LPAs and administered by State DOTs. In the last few years, there has been a significant growth nationally in dollars allocated to LPAs. However, for a number of reasons, many Federally-funded projects that might be performed by LPAs or those that are obligated to LPAs, have challenges associated with project delivery. Some potential reasons include: a LPA funding match may not be available, projects may not be construction-ready, and Federal requirements and State-level policies and processes may create challenges for the LPA. In States with



Figure 4: A new road being constructed in Radnor Township, Pennsylvania. Photo Credit: Leslie McCarthy, PhD, PE

LPA certification programs underway, the goal is to reduce project delivery time and administrative burden.

The NCHRP Synthesis Topic 43-04 (NCHRP Synthesis 442) builds on NCHRP Synthesis 414, which focused on identifying the challenges, practices, and tools for effective delivery of small-scale Federal-aid projects in a few select States. Synthesis 442 includes information on the current practices and performance measures used for developing and delivering Federally-funded LPA projects. It also documents the experiences of DOTs that have implemented an LPA Certification program for Federal-aid applicants. This synthesis will help State DOTs, LPAs, and other stakeholders to explore current practices and develop performance measures to monitor effectiveness in the delivery of Federal-aid programs.

## LPA Realty Toolkit

The Office of Real Estate Services (HEPR) has recently begun development of an “LPA Realty Oversight and Stewardship Toolkit” (LPA Toolkit). The Toolkit, which will contain information on effective LPA oversight practices and techniques in the realty program area, is intended to assist State DOT and LPA practitioners in meeting their ROW responsibilities and addressing the challenges they face within the Federal-Aid program. In early 2014, HEPR will distribute to Division Offices a survey focused on gathering information relative to successful practices employed in the oversight and stewardship of LPA realty activities. The results from the survey will help FHWA determine how to best support LPA oversight implementation, provide best practices and case studies for State DOTs and LPAs as well as determine where to most effectively utilize future funding available in this program area. Please stay tuned. For more information, contact [Carolyn.James@dot.gov](mailto:Carolyn.James@dot.gov).

The information used in this synthesis was gathered in four phases through a literature search, a review of Agency resources, a survey of State DOT and LPA representatives, and follow-up interviews with multiple States and LPAs. Major observations are as follows:

- Ongoing training programs for LPAs, regardless of the presence or absence of State-sponsored certification programs, are important to ensure that LPAs understand the Federal-aid Program and learn the skills needed to improve the planning, programming, designing, and procurement of ROW for Federally-funded projects.
- Many States do not have formal performance measures in determining eligibility for Federal-aid funding or for evaluating the planning, programming, design, and construction of projects.
- Some examples of performance measures defined by State DOTs included: (1) instances of LPA non-compliance with program requirements; (2) number of eligible reimbursement requests for work associated



Figure 5: Blair Covered Bridge, Campton NH, funded through the Federal-aid LPA program.  
Photo Credit: Leslie McCarthy, PhD, PE

with each project phase; (3) tracking and reporting of the condition of local bridges and city arterial pavement conditions as part of the LPA project delivery; and, (4) percentage of LPA projects successfully advertised within 30 days of scheduled milestone dates.

- The majority of the State DOTs reported that the certification process has helped both the DOTs and LPAs better comply with Federal-aid requirements.
- Agencies have benefitted from programmatic agreements by providing an established, consistent process for consultation, review, and compliance with one or more Federal laws. The use of programmatic agreements was reported to reduce the time required for completion of LPA projects and to result in overall project cost savings.
- The 23 LPAs that are certified by their respective State DOTs reported that they have improved their ability to deliver Federally-funded projects. LPAs indicated that certification provides them the opportunity to take responsibility for Federally-funded projects.

It is beyond the scope of this article to include all the findings of the survey and phone interviews. Based on the observations, there appears to be no one template for successfully executing Federal-aid projects. Each State DOT has employed a variety of approaches or strategies to aid LPAs in traversing the process of planning, programming, funding, designing, procuring ROW, and constructing projects. One value of this synthesis will be to give all State DOTs and LPAs the opportunity to consider new approaches and adapt them to their existing programs. The entire report can be viewed and downloaded at: [www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/168858.aspx](http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/168858.aspx).

## Introducing Realty Colleagues

### Alan Blair

Alan Blair is a ROW Manager for Central Federal Lands (CFL) in Lakewood, Colorado. His team works with State DOTs and LPAs to acquire private real property interests to accommodate construction and maintenance for CFL projects. The team's primary function is to analyze boundary information and prepare maps and documents for fee ROW and easements. The team is also charged with oversight of State DOTs and LPAs to ensure compliance with Federal laws and regulations as they determine



Figure 6: Alan Blair, ROW Manager for Central Federal Lands.

fair market value and negotiate acquisitions.

Alan's work requires a broad range of technical knowledge encompassing topics such as laws/regulations, legal-description writing, and computer-aided design (CAD) drafting. He and his team also must be effective communicators. For example, they must be able to explain to landowners the effects a project will have on their properties. The projects are usually in rural, mountainous areas, where many people have chosen to live for peace and quiet. With that in mind, the residents are often protective of their properties and rightfully skeptical of the effects of a road project. Alan relates that careful, honest explanations are important to help people understand how they will be affected.

Alan first became interested in realty while hitchhiking from Michigan, where he was born and raised, to San Francisco, California. While on that journey he contemplated what he wanted to do with the rest of his life and he found the answer when he met a land surveyor in transit to Alaska. Alan subsequently decided to attend Ferris State University in Michigan and earned a Bachelor's degree in Surveying. It turned out to be a good career choice, as Alan enjoys many aspects of surveying, such as spending time outdoors and using mathematical formulas.

Alan's hobbies of bicycling, hiking, photography, and gardening seem fitting given his love of the outdoors. He and his wife frequently spend their leisure time exploring public lands on their bicycles. Alan enjoys photographing landscapes and scenery, and, more often than not, his wife and their dog feature prominently in the images. Alan and his wife have two grown daughters who both live in Lakewood as well. Alan is glad that his daughter, who used to live 500 miles away in Cody, Wyoming, decided to move back home.

The family garden has proved very successful, and in November of this year, Alan was still proudly harvesting home-grown broccoli for the dinner table. Alan is also a fan of the Denver Broncos football team. He moved to Denver in 1983 around the same time that John Elway joined the Broncos, so the Denver teams of the 1980s quickly won him over, after enduring many years as a long-suffering Detroit Lions fan.

If he weren't in his current position, Alan would probably still be teaching at a local associate degree program in Lakewood. He enjoyed the six years that he spent teaching students about all aspects of surveying and fieldwork, but he jokes that eventually he tired of hearing himself say the same things year after year. He enjoys the variety that comes with his position with FHWA. As many others in the field of realty have commented, no two days are ever alike! He also enjoys meeting interesting acquaintances in the course of his work; sometimes he has to talk over the sounds of cattle mooing in the background.

## **Elizabeth Hoffman**

Elizabeth Hoffman is a Civil Rights and ROW Program Specialist with the Alaska Division Office. She reports that there is a significant overlap between civil rights and ROW issues, mainly in relation to the Uniform Act. She is the only one in her office that is responsible for each of these program areas. Elizabeth notes that networking has been key for her success at FHWA. She is grateful to many realty colleagues around the country that have shared their knowledge, including Janis Gramatins and Dave Leighow.

## Office of Real Estate Services Newsletter

Elizabeth studied records management and she began her career with FHWA as an administrative assistant for the Division Office. She was offered an opportunity for professional development and the chance to move into her current position. Although she did not have any knowledge of ROW or civil rights prior to accepting this new position, the leadership of the Division Office had faith in her ability to learn quickly. She feels very fortunate to have been given this opportunity, because it provided her with a career ladder and the chance for advancement while remaining in Juneau, Alaska, which is where she wants to be.

Elizabeth moved to Juneau in 1990. Her former husband was offered a job, and they moved from Montana so that he could accept the opportunity. She has found her place, and Elizabeth reports that she has no intention of ever leaving. She loves the small town feel (without it being too small), and the grandeur of mountains, glaciers, and the ocean as her backyard. She and her husband enjoy hiking and kayaking, and she has experienced the thrill of kayaking on open ocean while a humpback whale surfaced 40 yards away.

Elizabeth is an adjunct instructor at the University of Alaska Southeast, where she teaches records management and business English. She has taught for over 10 years, and she worked as a records manager before coming to FHWA, so she enjoys keeping involved in the field on some level. She also enjoys meeting an interesting mix of students, both in traditional classrooms as well as online formats. Her students hail from various parts of the State, and they are all in different phases of their lives.

Although her day job doesn't relate to records management, Elizabeth's background means that she is a stickler for good documentation. Organization is her passion, and this is a useful asset for the effective management of project files and administrative records. Elizabeth's career at FHWA has shifted her way of thinking and expanded her horizons. She has been in the Division Office for almost 12 years, and she reports that FHWA has been incredible in the opportunities that it has provided for her.

### John Turpin

John Turpin works as Chief Appraiser for the FHWA Headquarters Office of Real Estate Services. He provides technical assistance on valuation to State DOTs, Division Offices, and other agencies that fall under the purview of the Uniform Act. He also serves as FHWA liaison to various appraisal oversight organizations that guide the profession. He primarily deals with subsidiary organizations of the Appraisal Foundation (TAF), which is empowered by Congress. For instance, he deals with the Appraisal Standards Board (ASB) and other TAF subsidiaries, to ensure that the Uniform Standards of Appraisal Practice (USPAP) remain consistent with Federal laws, such as the Uniform Act, and Federal regulations, such as 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 24. Since MAP-21 went into effect, he has taken on the added responsibility of negotiating MOUs with other Federal agencies subject to the

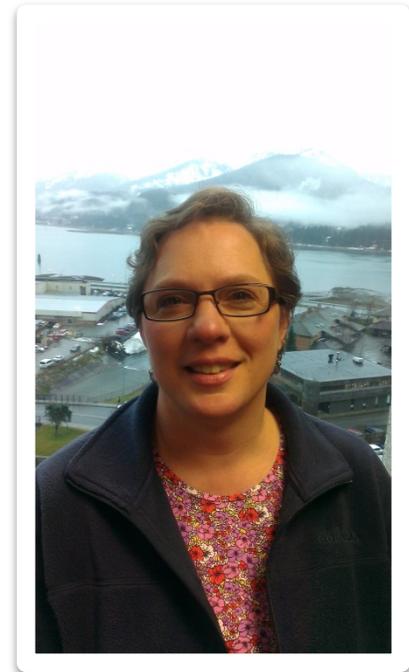


Figure 7: Elizabeth Hoffman, Civil Rights and ROW Program Specialist for the Alaska Division Office.

Uniform Act because FHWA is the lead Agency for the Act. According to John, this new task has been a full-time job in and of itself, requiring him to conduct outreach, develop relationships, and enter into dialogue on how FHWA can assist other agencies through training, technical assistance, or other means. John prides himself on being timely and responsive to requests for assistance, and he works hard to maintain consistency with oversight organizations on appraisal requirements.

John has had a diverse career spanning over 40 years in the ROW field. He began his career in 1973 with the Maryland State Highway Administration, after graduating from college in 1972 with a Bachelor's degree in English. He enjoyed his introduction to the field in those first five years with the ROW District 3 in Greenbelt, and he reports that it was a great opportunity to learn something new. He has also worked for the Montgomery County (MD) Department of Public Works, Amtrak, the U.S. Postal Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and in private consulting, before arriving at FHWA. Over the years he has stayed in the realty field because he has found it continually challenging and interesting. Throughout that time, his core interest and focus has been on appraisal and valuation.

John and his wife have been married for 37 years and they enjoy traveling together as much as they can. Recently for their 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, they went on a two-week cruise that included a transit of the Panama Canal. John enjoys photography and their traveling adventures provide many opportunities to practice his craft. Closer to home, John enjoys cooking. He finds that it provides a platform for creativity and brings friends and family together. Although time-consuming, he likes Cajun cooking the best because it provides a never-ending kaleidoscope of possibilities. He likes to prepare tried-and-true favorites, but he also is not afraid to experiment and improve upon those old recipes.

When he started college, John wanted to major in music and become a professional musician. His mentor, a professional musician, recommended that he learn something else and warned that a professional musician does not have a normal lifestyle, often working nights and weekends and missing time with family and friends. John decided to heed his advice and did not pursue music as a full-time career, although for many years he played the piano and the trumpet and even performed professionally with a local band. He has not played recently, due to the demands of a long commute and a regular job, but he does miss it and envisions playing more music in retirement.

John feels strongly that the work of the FHWA realty staff is important to maintain the integrity and status of the ROW practice in general. He notes that the ROW process is generally invasive by nature. Most members of the general public do not expect to be approached by a transportation agency about a real estate acquisition, so it is important that practitioners approach them in a very professional, sensitive, and appropriate way. John says that it is important for realty staff to continually reflect on how the ROW process impacts people's lives.



Figure 8: John Turpin, Chief Appraiser for HEPR.

## Lindsey Svendsen

Lindsey Svendsen works as a Realty Officer in the Massachusetts Division Office. Her favorite program area is Outdoor Advertising Control, but she reports that the Massachusetts State Program is exceptionally competent, so they do not often contact her with questions. According to her, flexibility and multi-tasking are essential for her position, as is a personable nature and the ability to get along with many different kinds of people.

FHWA realty staff have been incredibly welcoming to Lindsey over the years as she is a relatively new staff member; many may be surprised to learn that she is actually not so new anymore, having worked for FHWA for almost four years now. Prior to coming to FHWA, she was employed for a number of years with the Pennsylvania State legislature, where she worked for two different State representatives. In 2006, Lindsey decided to pursue other opportunities. Although she began law school, she ultimately decided to pursue a Master's degree in public policy and economics at Pepperdine University, where she completed a thesis on human trafficking. While enrolled in her Master's program, Lindsey did an internship with FHWA HEPR and after graduating she accepted a position with FHWA in the Real Estate discipline, through the Professional Development Program (PDP). Through the PDP and in subsequent assignments she has had the opportunity to travel to many places, work in different offices, and participate in several process reviews. Her favorite locations were Rhode Island and North Carolina. While in North Carolina she found that the weather was beautiful year-round and beaches, mountains, and her family were all within easy reach. She joined the Massachusetts Division Office in 2013.

Lindsey's fiancé works for the FHWA New York Division Office as an Area Engineer. Their wedding is planned for June 2014, and Lindsey has received a great deal of advice from FHWA colleagues on the wedding (and on life in general). Many colleagues have shared stories about the challenges of moving frequently, as so many FHWA employees do. Lindsey loves to travel, and she and her fiancé are planning to visit Greece for their honeymoon. She has already visited Spain, the Caribbean, Japan, and multiple locations across the U.S. Lindsey also enjoys running and yoga, but she has not had much time to pursue these activities recently, as her current commute is very long.

If she were not in her current position, Lindsey would probably still be living in California or she might work for the Department of State focusing on human trafficking issues.



Figure 9: Lindsey Svendsen, Realty Officer for the Massachusetts Division Office.

## Mike Dawson

Mike Dawson is the Realty Officer at the North Carolina Division Office, where he oversees the ROW and Outdoor Advertising Control Programs for the State. He also often helps on issues that relate to the environment and historic resources, and he has served as an equal employment opportunity counselor since 2001. You may be surprised to learn that Mike has performed at public events as “Vince the Crash Test Dummy” as part of an award-winning Division Office Public Awareness Team for Safety. He never would have guessed that his job at FHWA would one day lead him to wear a costume at the State fair alongside Miss America.

Mike is a planner by education. After graduating from Frostburg State University he began his career in the Prince George’s County Zoning Department. Mike then landed what he thought was his “dream job” as an associate planner in his hometown of Laurel, Maryland. He was disappointed to learn that life as a planner did not entirely match the idealized view of planning that he learned about in school, and he found himself buried in mundane tasks rather than designing fabulous cities.

As luck would have it, one of his classmates had found employment with a commercial real estate appraisal firm, and he told Mike that the company was looking for additional employees with planning backgrounds because it gave them an edge in understanding how appraisals fit into land-use zoning. Mike took a position with the firm in the early 1980s, and he was trained as a commercial appraiser. Subsequently, he worked in commercial real estate appraisal for a number of different employers including a major commercial lender, a nationally known mini-storage developer, and Prince George’s County in Maryland, where he served as the assistant Chief Appraiser.

Immediately prior to joining FHWA in 1994 Mike was a Realty Specialist with the United States Coast Guard. He spent two years with FHWA HEPR before moving to the Ohio Division Office. While at the Ohio Division Office, he had the good fortune to work for Dick Henry, who served as an influential mentor. When a lateral transfer opened up in the North Carolina Division Office, Mike took the opportunity and began work as Environmental Program Coordinator until a colleague retired and he was promoted into his current position. Mike has now been in his current position for 12 years. He has learned that there are many important connections between the Environmental Program and the Real Estate Program.



Figure 10: Mike Dawson, Realty Officer for the North Carolina Division Office.

Mike comes from a family of musicians, and both of his brothers have been in bands their whole lives. Although he loves music, he has no interest in joining a band because it is “like being married to five people.” Mike plays guitar and enjoys playing with Dave Leighow and Charlie O’Neill in HEPR whenever they get together. He has a great appreciation for old-school jazz and alternative country, and the only radio station he listens to is the local college jazz station. Mike is also a big fan of cooking and long-distance running, and he runs with a group of co-workers every day at lunch. Mike also likes vintage cars and all things mid-century. He is always looking for unique mobile homes, such as split-level, expandable, and two-story models, and he posts photographs on a Facebook page every Monday for an audience of 400 followers.



Figure 11: Mike Dawson poses as Vince the Crash Test Dummy and his partner Ken poses as Larry the Crash Test Dummy along with Jennifer Berry, Miss America 2006.

Mike and his partner Ken celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary and their twenty-fifth anniversary of being a couple in September 2013. They have a lot in common, which they realized from the very beginning when they both arrived for their first date driving vintage sports cars. They were surprised that they had never met before the first date given that they grew up in the same town and worked in the same department store, and Mike’s former roommate had married one of Ken’s best friends. They are both fans of mid-century modern styles, and they live in a 1960s split-level house with original interior, exterior, and furnishings. They are the proud caretakers of a slightly crazy but lovable Chihuahua/Jack Russell Terrier rescue mutt named Edna and two rescue cats, Addie and Artemisia.

Mike feels very fortunate for the many opportunities that he has had over the years to learn the Realty Program, from sources such as the National Highway Institute training courses and his mentorship from Dick Henry. He feels that people now entering the realty profession with FHWA may not have as many opportunities because it seems like there are fewer training opportunities and the Realty Program may be a collateral duty for someone who is primarily responsible for another discipline. He notes that every Division Office used to have several realty professionals, but now it has been pared down to one, at most. He is concerned that FHWA will continue to lose institutional knowledge, and in the future he would like to focus his energy on helping to train and educate new staff (whether mid-career hires or PDP staff). He has already worked with HEPR and the Resource Center on a “boot camp” training to immerse staff in the realty program and then assign them mentors. Mike feels very grateful for the support, the many opportunities, and most importantly, the camaraderie he has experienced in his career with FHWA.

## Calendar of Events

For a listing of Planning, Environment, and Realty program meetings, events, and National Highway Institute training opportunities, please visit: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/hepr/calendar.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hepr/calendar.cfm). On the lighter side, some of you may not have known about a recent concert with Dave Leighow (HEPR POC-West) and his band; view the flyer below to see what you missed! Dave is the second musician from the left, playing the electric mandolin. If you would like to submit a similarly lighthearted contribution to a future newsletter, please contact Dave ([david.leighow@dot.gov](mailto:david.leighow@dot.gov)) or Mike ([john.m.jones@dot.gov](mailto:john.m.jones@dot.gov)).

### **Off The Hook**

Playing Stones Covers from the 60s for over three years

#### **Angry Beaver**

8412 Greenwood Ave N Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 782-6044

**Saturday, November 2  
10 pm to midnight**



**No cover**

Figure 12: Flyer from a concert with Dave Leighow (HEPR POC-West) and his band.