

In this Edition

Message from the Director	2
Delivering Today while Transitioning to Tomorrow	2
News from FHWA Headquarters	2
Uniform Act Discussion Group	2
Southern Corner News	5
News from the Regional POCs	6
Northern Corner News	6
Western Corner News	7
Mid-American Corner News	7
News from the Resource Center	9
On the Move with the Resource Center Realty Team	9
Articles of Interest	9
“If It’s Beautifying They Want:” The 50th Anniversary of The Highway Beautification Act of 1965	9
Introducing Realty Colleagues	14
David Blakeney, SR/WA, R/W-NAC	14
Carolyn Winborne James	15
Megan Jensen	16
Yolonda Jordan	17
Colleen Smith	17
Calendar of Events	18

Message from the Director

Delivering Today while Transitioning to Tomorrow

Virgil Pridemore, Director, Office of Real Estate Services

Earlier this year, I was happy to be able to participate in two annual conferences: the AASHTO Subcommittee on Right-of-Way, Utilities and Outdoor Advertising Control Conference, which was in Minneapolis, MN, and the IRWA Annual Conference, which was in San Diego, CA. It was interesting to see similar themes emerge from both conferences—delivering today while transitioning to tomorrow. The realty profession is changing in content and workforce, a notion reflected by conference discussions emphasizing the significance of succession planning and the status of MAP-21 implementation.

Regarding the latter, HEPR has been hard at work on two rulemakings that MAP-21 required, and that hard work paid off earlier this year with the publication of an NPRM for 23 CFR part 710 and hopefully will soon pay off with the publishing of an NPRM for 49 CFR part 24. I always remind myself that although the process to make rule changes can be complex and lengthy, the process is designed to ensure the best results so that our decisions can stand the test of time. The checks and balances help us avoid unintended consequences, which could end up taking an even longer time to fix.

Finally, I mentioned in the last newsletter a strategic workforce plan that FHWA completed toward the end of last year. The office is continuing the discussion on how to implement the plan most effectively in light of recent and upcoming retirements. I anticipate some changes in *who* will be filling certain roles today, while making some minor restructuring adjustments to fine-tune *how* HEPR delivers tomorrow. Stay tuned.

News from FHWA Headquarters

Uniform Act Discussion Group

FHWA has enjoyed a long and productive relationship with the International Right of Way Association (IRWA). The relationship between FHWA and IRWA was codified approximately 15 years ago through the execution of a strategic partnering agreement. The objectives of that agreement as summarized are:

- To encourage training and education at the Federal, state and local levels
- To share knowledge and spread information about the Uniform Act within the field and to the public in general

- To use technology to reduce costs of and barriers to collaboration
- To promote the right-of-way profession

In view of the goals of the IRWA partnering agreement, and in FHWA's role as Lead Agency for Uniform Act (UA) implementation, we developed the concept of a "virtual" IRWA chapter reflecting the values of the agreement. After several collaborative conference calls with IRWA leadership, it was decided that the most effective way of advancing our shared goals would be the creation of a "Uniform Act Public Discussion Group" which would be based on the IRWA website. IRWA has been a very enthusiastic partner in advancing this initiative and in setting up the discussion group.

The discussion group is open to all...at no cost. There is not an IRWA membership requirement for participation. The intent of standing up the group was to provide a way to easily share information about the UA among interested participants. The site is flexible and easy to use. We hope that it will evolve over time to support online discussion, collaborative work, and provide a library of reference materials.

The site is much more than a "chat room." It can support group notifications, provide a shared group calendar, and host participation in group discussions of interest. Participants may post announcements, download various reference resources and survey site members.

You can join the group by:

- Going to <http://irwa.ep.memberfuse.com>
- Registering for an account (requires user email address and password)
- Clicking on "**Groups**" on the right-hand side, click on "**Discussion Group**"
- Selecting "**Uniform Act Discussion - Public Group**" from the center of the screen

We hope that the site will be an effective way to centralize and share information related to the UA. The site is open and transparent for all users. The site can be used as a platform for collaborative work among professional, on a range of topics.

Please visit the site ...the more participation, the more robust and stimulating the discussions will be! Any comments, suggestions or questions about the site may be directed to Mike Jones at john.m.jones@dot.gov.

"Who's on 1st?"

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

"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

- John F. Kennedy

A number of our FHWA Realty family are making career changes – It’s getting so that “You can’t tell the players without a program!”

Here’s the latest:

- Our much esteemed HEPR colleague Dave Leighow has retired from FHWA . . . but Dave has not “retired-retired”. He has accepted the position of Acquisition Program Manager for the Washington State DOT, and is already hard at work in his new position.

Congrats Dave!

- Hugh Haddock has left his position with FHWA where he served as the Realty Officer for both the Utah and Nevada Divisions, to accept the position of ROW Field Administrator for the South Carolina DOT.

Congrats Hugh!

- Marsha Bayer has retired from her position with FHWA as the Texas Division Realty Officer.

Way to go Marsha!

- James Hall has retired from his position with FHWA as the Louisiana Division Realty Officer.

Way to go James!

- Our HEPR-20 Team Leader, Charlie O’Neill has retired retirement from FHWA.

Way to go, Charlie!

- Another HEPR colleague, MaryJane Daluge has retired from FHWA

Way to go, MaryJane!

- John Turpin, another HEPR co-worker has retired from FHWA.

Way to go John!

- Bruce Bradley of HEPR has left FHWA to - accept a position with the Federal Transit Administration.

Congrats Bruce!

That makes the score so far:

Retirees: 5



Career Movers: 2



***Dave Leighow: 1**



*Dave.....as usual, in a class by himself – both “retired” and made a “career move.”

“None of us knows what the next change is going to be, what unexpected opportunity is just around the corner, waiting a few months or a few years to change all the tenor of our lives.”

- Kathleen Norris, author/writer

Southern Corner News

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

With change comes opportunity . . .

As a result of the numerous personnel changes listed above, many of us in HEPR will be shifting our roles. With John Turpin’s retirement, I will be assuming his role as the office lead for valuation issues. For now at least, I will also continue in my role as the POC for our DFS-South Divisions. We will be pushing out information on other changes as they occur in the coming weeks and months.

For any of our Divisions (as well as your State DOT, LPA staff and ROW consultant partners) who are interested in getting access to training in the Federal requirements for appraisal, appraisal review and valuation waivers..... please give me a call and I’ll be happy to discuss how we might possibly meet your needs in the appraisal area. Marshall Wainright and I have co-presented a number of 1- and 2-day valuation workshops over the last couple years. We can tailor the content to emphasize specific valuation problems or issues in your State. Typically, we are able to get the host State’s Appraisal Board to approve the class hours for appraisal licensing re-certification credit, which has been a great marketing tool in attracting licensed and certified appraisers to attend the workshops.

One last thing . . . I’m also very much looking forward to visiting the South Carolina and Georgia Division Offices in the next few months. Prior to those visits, I’ll be coordinating with Realty Officers Jessica Hekter (SC) and Neosha Price (GA), (along with their STA Partners) to plan our PY2016 SIP National ROW Stewardship and Oversight Review activities in those two Divisions.

That's it for now. (It's enough, don't you think?) I hope everyone has had an enjoyable and safe summer! As always, feel free to pick up the phone and call me – anytime: (202) 493-0350.
Mike

News from the Regional POCs

Northern Corner News

(Article by Maggie Duncan-Augustt, POC-North)

Delaware: The Division welcomed Yolonda Jordan earlier this year as Supervisor for the Division's Project Delivery Team. Yolonda is responsible for the Realty, Environment, Planning and Civil Rights programs for the Division. Be sure to check out Yolonda's profile in the Introducing Realty Colleagues section.

District of Columbia: The Division is actively working with DDOT to finalize the revision of the OAC Federal/State Agreement.

Maryland: The Division and Maryland State Highway Administration (MDSHA) participated in the 2015 National Realty SIP Review. The review was conducted to highlight successful realty stewardship and oversight practices.

The MD Division will continue to partner with MDSHA in providing Realty training workshops to LPAs.

MDSHA conducted a 2-day Outdoor Advertising Control course in August.

New Jersey: The Division and New Jersey DOT are looking forward to sharing successful stewardship and oversight practices during their upcoming SIP Realty National Review.

New York: The Division will partner with NYDOT on joint regional Quality Assurance Reviews.

Ohio: The Division and Ohio DOT shared their successful practices with the HEPR during the 2015 SIP National Realty Review. The Division is currently completing two Federal Land Transfers with the National Resources Conservation Service.

Pennsylvania: The Division welcomed Melissa Corder as its new Realty Specialist. Melissa's prior position was the Realty Specialist for the Delaware Division. We wish Melissa well with her new position.

Western Corner News

(Article by Dave Leighow, POC-West)

Bob Dylan said it best: *The times, they are a-changin'*. How true that is here in the Western DFS area! In addition to the earlier announcements about Hugh and I here are some additional updates:

- Rosemary Jones has assumed Dave's role as POC for DFS-West.
- Rachyl Smith moved from the Hawaii Division to the Ohio Division in August to become the Civil Rights Program Manager in that office. While Rachyl will no longer be directly involved in Realty, she brings a solid background in both programs with her.
- Megan Jensen will take on the Realty responsibilities from Chris Horn in the CO Division Office. This will free up Chris to take on some major project activities.

Meanwhile, our Division Realty folks in the west have been busy with a number of projects, such as the South Mountain Freeway in Arizona, the SR-520 Bridge project in Washington, and the Federal Railroad Administration's High Speed Rail Corridor in California for which FHWA has provided technical assistance.

Mid-American Corner News

(Article by Bruce Bradley, POC-Mid-America)

HEPR offers its appreciation and special thanks to the Kansas, Missouri, and Indiana Divisions for their participation in the PY2015 SIP National Right-of-Way Review. The PY 2016 SIP reviews will be held in the Illinois, North Dakota, and Wisconsin Divisions.

Illinois: The Illinois Division has worked hard on the Illiana Corridor, a new 50-mile access controlled highway developed in partnership with the Illinois and Indiana Departments of Transportation. With the successful ROW activities on the Illiana project, an OAC process review and other ROW activities including the planning of the upcoming PY2016 SIP Review, it looks like James Kyte has had another outstanding year.

Indiana: Hats off to the Indiana Division and INDOT for participating in the Realty "LPA Toolkit" Research Project. Colleen Smith is currently working on an OAC process review using INDOT's state-of-the-art electronic data base that uses visualization tools to track the permitting process. INDOT has rolled out and made available the LPA module of the electronic records management and data base system to all local agencies. Colleen can now review LPA project files from her desk. Be on the lookout for the Indiana Division they are doing great things with their LPA program.

Iowa: The Iowa Division sponsored two LPA training workshops for their District realty professionals and participated in a District sponsored Right-of-Way Conference. The Division &

SDOT recently revised their property disposal process to include “open” public auctions and a more transparent process.

Kansas: The Kansas Division sponsored its annual ROW webinar series for local public agencies. The Division and SDOT are in the early stages of implementing a mandatory LPA right-of-way training certification program.

Minnesota: Special thanks to the Minnesota Division, Kris Riesenbergh and Mary Walker for hosting, being helpful and being hospitable to our FHWA colleagues during the 2015 AASHTO and NHBA Meetings. Mary is working smart when it comes to improving her relationship with the State DOT, updating the ROW manual and stewardship agreement, addressing OAC issues and working with the City of Minneapolis on a high profile surplus property disposal.

Missouri: The Missouri Division has a CAP review in its sights this year on over 60 LPA projects. During the review they are planning to spend additional time looking at the SDOT appraisal process. The Division recently completed an Outdoor Advertising Control process review and compiled over 100 billboard inspections into the report.

North Dakota: The North Dakota Division is working with NDDOT on projects that address the traffic generated by oil development. Stephanie Hickman has focused on how sub-surface property rights affect highway projects in North Dakota.

South Dakota: The South Dakota DOT is currently updating its property inventory, developing a data base and making policy revisions to address control of access on the Interstate system. The Division will be conducting CAP reviews this year and working with the SDOT on updating the ROW manual.

Texas: Chrisy Currier has picked up the mantle now that Marsha Bayer has retired. She is participating in eight major project/program reviews and two LPA reviews. She has been working with Texas MPOs to help them identify and address Uniform Act issues early in the project development process.

Wisconsin: Special thanks to the Wisconsin Division and SDOT for participating in the Realty “LPA Toolkit” Research Project. The Division and SDOT updated the billboard acquisition & relocation section of the WISDOT Real Estate Procedural manual to address the valuation process for determining just compensation. With the amount of work and collaboration that went into completing this effort, this is definitely an award winning activity.

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) Carrier on the birth of their twins! Clint, Chrisy and their daughter Ali, welcomed Logan Garrett and Mason Augustus Carrier on April 15th, 2015. We want to thank Chrisy for her service to the Resource Center Realty Team.

We want to CONGRATULATE our Resource Center Environment and Realty Technical Service Team Manager, Lamar S. Smith, on his retirement. We wish him the very best.

CONGRATULATIONS also to Michele Palicka on becoming a certified National Highway Institute Instructor.

The Resource Center Realty Team has really been on the move. To date this year we have co-instructed three NHI courses – one environmental course and two realty courses with total of 81 participants. We have assisted a couple of our Division colleagues with major project reviews and we have assisted HEPR with the SIP Reviews. In addition, we have delivered customized workshops with over 500 participants and we have a full schedule of activities for the remainder of calendar year.

If we can be of assistance please contact Marshall at Marshall.Wainright@dot.gov or by phone at (404) 562-3692. Michele is also available at Michele.Palicka@dot.gov or by phone at (404) 562-3918. We are willing and ready to assist you.

Articles of Interest

“If It’s Beautifying They Want:” The 50th Anniversary of The Highway Beautification Act of 1965

Richard F. Weingroff, FHWA Office of Infrastructure

This article is not about whether outdoor advertising is good or bad, useful or ugly. And it’s not about whether controlling outdoor advertising is a good or bad idea. Anyone who has been involved in outdoor advertising programs knows there’s no “right” answer to these questions. Or, as befuddled significant others sometimes ask their partner in movies and TV shows: is that a trick question? So forget them.

This article is about the fact that 50 years ago, on October 22, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Highway Beautification Act of 1965 (HBA). Love the HBA or hate it, this year is the HBA’s Golden Anniversary.

Congress had tried before 1965. In Section 12 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1958, Congress launched the outdoor advertising Bonus Program. Any State highway department that entered into an agreement to control outdoor advertising in accordance with the law was to receive an increase of one-half of one percent in the Federal share of the cost of Interstate projects. The bonus payments did not come from the Highway Trust Fund; they were appropriated from the general Treasury.

At its peak, the Bonus Program covered 25 States, two of which dropped out before receiving a bonus. A total of about \$44.65 million was paid to the 23 remaining States. Congress has not appropriated funds for the program since the early 1970s, although the Bonus agreements remain in effect.

What Drives Lady Bird Crazy

As President Johnson and his wife Lady Bird crisscrossed the States during the 1964 presidential campaign, she informed her husband of her feelings about the roadside junkyards they saw along the way. During remarks on conservation in Portland, Oregon, on September 17, 1964, the President told his audience that the auto junkyards they had seen during the campaign “are driving my wife mad.” She had told him that “one of the advantages of getting defeated is to give her some time to get out and do something about cleaning up the countryside and these old junkyards along our beautiful driveways.” Despite the advantage of losing, he preferred to win the election and then “develop a national policy for the control and disposal of technological and industrial waste.”

As the campaign continued, his Administration began searching for solutions. As *U.S. News and World Report* explained, the President’s references to the subject during the campaign prompted applause, so “the President observed: ‘If it’s beautifying they want, it’s beautifying they’ll get.’” He won the election (although the beautification initiative had little, if any, effect on the landslide outcome).

On February 9, 1965, President Johnson submitted his America the Beautiful plan to Congress. The plan covered many aspects of the issue, but he identified the modern highway as one of the culprits because each one “may wipe out the equivalent of a 50-acre park with every mile.” He recognized that “ours is an automobile society,” but he thought roads should be the “highways to the enjoyment of nature and beauty.”

In a lengthy interview in *U.S. News and World Report* later that month, Mrs. Johnson discussed the wide range of ways to beautify America. She thought a national law was needed to control billboards. The industry involved private enterprises, but she said, “I do think, though, that public feeling is going to bring about regulation, so that you don’t have a solid diet of billboards on all the roads.

Landscape-Landmark Tour

Because the First Lady was closely identified with the America the Beautiful initiative, she decided to promote it on a “Landscape-Landmark Tour” into Virginia on May 11, 1965, before the White House Conference on Natural Beauty, May 24 and 25.

The tour began at the White House, where President and Mrs. Johnson greeted Mary Connor, wife of Secretary of Commerce John T. Connor (whose Department housed the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads (BPR)), and the wives of all other members of the President's Cabinet except Secretary of State Dean Rusk's wife Virginia. The tour included Federal Highway Administrator Rex M. Whitton and his wife, Callie Maud; Laurance Rockefeller, chairman of the White House Conference, and his wife, as well as Assistant Director Nash Castro of the National Park Service (NPS). California State Senator Fred S. Farr, another participant, had served on President Johnson's Special Task Force on Natural Beauty in 1964, attended the National Conference in 1965, and would be appointed BPR's first Highway Beautification Coordinator in 1967. Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey's wife Muriel had been delayed by traffic in Rock Creek Park, but caught up with the group later in the day.

The two tour buses began with a roundabout scenic journey on the George Washington Memorial Parkway along the Potomac River and then on I-495/Capital Beltway to the Henry G. Shirley Memorial Highway (I-95). Administrator Whitton provided a running commentary as the bus rolled along. Two uniformed bus hostesses passed out homemade cookies provided by Mrs. Whitton along with coffee and soft drinks.

After stops along I-95, including dedication of the Dumfries Rest Area, and an excursion onto parallel U.S. 1, the Landscape-Landmark Tour traveled to Charlottesville to visit former President Thomas Jefferson's home at Monticello as well as the Botanical Gardens at the University of Virginia.

On May 12, the Landscape-Landmark Tour visited the Blue Ridge Parkway before Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, who had joined the tour in Charlottesville, took reporters on a climb up the last 1,500 feet of Sharp Top. The tour also visited the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild exhibit before traveling by bus to Roanoke for a flight back to Washington.

All in all, it was a well-publicized and successful tour, but did not change the prospects for the President's outdoor advertising proposal in Congress. Prospects were good, but the plan had sharp critics in Congress.

Launching the HBA

In announcing the America the Beautiful initiative in January, President Johnson had said, "I want to make sure that the America we see from these major highways is a beautiful America." As a result, the HBA would be the cornerstone of the initiative. It called for control of outdoor advertising, including removal of certain types of signs, along the Nation's growing Interstate System and the existing Federal-aid primary system. It authorized funds from the general Treasury to help State highway agencies pay just compensation for acquisition of the billboards. It also required certain junkyards along Interstate or primary highways to be removed or screened and encouraged scenic enhancement and roadside development, again with funds from the general Treasury.

With his wife Lady Bird Johnson leading the effort, President Johnson made passage of the HBA a priority. But it would not be easy. The Senate passed a version of the legislation on September 16, but the key action would be in the House.

When the House considered its version of the bill on October 7, the debate lasted into the early morning hours of October 8. The pressure to pass this important but controversial legislation was intensified because Members of Congress and their wives had been invited to a Salute to Congress event at the State Department auditorium and a White House reception. Buses arrived at 7 p.m. to take the Members and their wives to the State Department. The bus drivers, and especially the wives, would have a long wait.

As *The Washington Post* explained, House Democrats hoped to secure approval “as a gift to Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson Republican opponents suggested that the Democrats had been told not to come without it.” The long debate featured several notable attacks on the bill. Kansas Representative Robert Dole introduced a pointed but tongue-in-cheek amendment to strike out the term “Secretary of Commerce” wherever it appeared in the bill and insert the words “Lady Bird.” The amendment lost by a voice vote. Representative Harold R. Gross (R-Iowa) suggested that when the bill passed, as he knew it would, the President should have his signing ceremony in front of a Texas billboard advertising the Johnson family’s television station.

Meanwhile, “Fifty or more congressional wives decked out in their party clothes watched from the gallery and must have wondered what kind of business their husbands had got into.” Representative T. Hale Boggs of Louisiana, the Democratic Whip, suggested that Republican performance during the debate explained why they had controlled Congress for only 4 out of the last 35 years.

About the only moment of unity came when Speaker of the House John W. McCormack of Massachusetts asked his colleagues to pray for President Johnson’s prompt recovery from surgery to remove his gall bladder and a kidney stone on October 7 at Bethesda Naval Hospital. The Members stood and applauded before returning to sniping and arguing about the HBA.

In the end, the *Post* reported, “The House passed the highway beauty bill with only minor changes just before 1 a.m. today after another of its wild and woolly midnight sessions.”

After the House vote, the bill went back to the Senate for reconciliation of minor differences. Congress completed work on the bill on October 14.

The President signed the HBA on October 22, 1965. Although he had returned to the White House following the surgery only the day before, President Johnson seemed to be in an expansive mood as he recalled the drive from the hospital to the White House along the George Washington Memorial Parkway:

I saw Nature at its purest. The dogwoods had turned red. The maple leaves were scarlet and gold And not one foot of it was marred by a single unsightly man-made obstruction—no advertising signs, no junkyards. Well, doctors could prescribe no better medicine for me.

He added:

We have placed a wall of civilization between us and the beauty of our countryside. In our eagerness to expand and improve, we have relegated nature to a weekend role, banishing it

from our daily lives. I think we are a poorer nation as a result. I do not choose to preside over the destiny of this country and to hide from view what God has gladly given.

After saying, "Beauty belongs to all the people," he signed the bill and gave the first pen to Lady Bird, along with a kiss on the cheek.

Implementing the HBA

The billboard portion of the HBA (later codified as Section 131 of Title 23, United States Code) required the States to provide effective control of outdoor advertising along the Interstate System and Federal-aid primary system highways (within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way and visible from the main traveled way). Federal-aid apportionments could be reduced by 10 percent for States that did not do so. Some signs would be permitted, namely directional and other official signs, signs and other devices advertising activities conducted on the property on which they were located, and signs advertising the sale or lease of the property on which they were located. The Secretary was to enter into an agreement with each State regarding the size, lighting, and spacing, consistent with customary use, on control of outdoor advertising.

Signs that did not comply with the HBA were to be removed, but not before July 1, 1970, with just compensation for those signs that had been erected legally before enactment of the law. The Act authorized \$20 million a year for Fiscal Years (FY) 1966 and 1967 for this purpose, with the funds coming from the general Treasury, not the Highway Trust Fund, and a Federal share of 75 percent.

To promote the safety and recreational value of travel and preserve natural beauty, the 1965 Act also required effective control of the establishment of junkyards along the Interstate System and the Federal-aid primary system (Section 136 of Title 23, United States Code). Effective control meant screening by natural objects, plants, fences, or other means, with a 10-percent penalty on apportionments for States that did not comply. The Federal share of junkyard screening projects was 75 percent, again with \$20 million a year (FYs 1966 and 1967) from the general Treasury.

The first billboard did not come down until April 27, 1971, 2 years after President and Mrs. Johnson had returned to Texas. The 15- x 45-foot billboard, 30 feet high, was in a pine grove off the northbound lanes of I-95 near Freeport, Maine. It was a double-faced billboard that had most recently advertised a Brunswick restaurant and a Falmouth music store. The State paid the Donnelly Advertising Company about \$1,000 for the billboard's removal.

An article in *The Boston Globe* explained how this billboard came to be first:

Since Maine pioneered in enacting its own billboard control legislation, it got the first Federal allotment, of \$510,000. Hence a billboard in Maine, a few miles beyond Portland, got national priority in the removal program.

With 100 or so people on hand for the occasion, Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe explained that removal of billboards "represents the realization that the majestic vistas along our rural highways belong to the people, and it returns those vistas to the people legally through the due process of laws." He added:

This program also represents a triumph for constitutional fair play and our free enterprise system. We realize that while the beauty of our landscape is more important than billboards, the billboard itself is not intrinsically evil. Therefore, this legislation provides just compensation for those whose signs are taken to benefit the commonwealth.

Volpe climbed a stepladder as if to take the sign down himself, but instead said, "Take her down, boys," as a crane pulled the facing off the billboard. Completion of the task would take about 2 days.

Honoring Mrs. Johnson

Regarding implementation of the HBA as amended over the years, perhaps the best way to put it, or perhaps the least controversial way, is to say that the Federal Highway Administration has been accused of (1) trying to destroy the billboard industry and (2) trying to preserve it. Take your pick.

On April 28, 1988, the House of Representatives held a ceremony honoring Mrs. Johnson. She was praised for many accomplishments, but especially for her focus on making the United States a more beautiful country. Speaker of the House Jim Wright of Texas recalled that night, on October 7-8, 1965, when the House completed work on the HBA:

And, yes, some of us remember that night at the White House, all of the congressional wives long since having gathered for the annual gala celebration, waiting, waiting, waiting; and 10 o'clock came, and 10:30 came, and the House was still in session—because he who was the manager of that bill, and the Speaker both had received a call from the White House, "Do not bring those Members here until you've passed the Highway Beautification Act!" And pass it that night we did, finally to be welcomed graciously when we arrived belatedly at the White House.

Introducing Realty Colleagues



David Blakeney, SR/WA, R/W-NAC

Planning and right-of-way have characteristics in common. That's one principle that David Blakeney, Realty Officer in the Arkansas Division Office, believes realty colleagues should keep in mind. Serving as the Realty Officer, David provides technical assistance to the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) on multiple ROW topics. For example, AHTD's ROW manual will be updated in the near future, and David anticipates being involved with that effort. David also coordinates with the US Forest Service and other Federal agencies in Arkansas for Federal Land Transfers necessary for highway construction projects.

If he weren't at FHWA, David Blakeney might be a mountain guide leading people on multi-day hikes or treks.

Office of Real Estate Services (HEPR) Newsletter

Given Field Office staffing constraints, David spends a large portion of his time working on planning efforts across the state, particularly with Arkansas' MPOs and their urban area planning responsibilities and freight transportation planning including commercial vehicle size and weight, and he is one of the office's three FEMA Emergency Support Function-1 staff members who assists in on-site efforts related to transportation after disasters.

David got his start in the realty discipline on January 2, 1985. Having just graduated from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor's of Business Administration degree, for which he took economics, finance, and real estate courses, David found a job listing for an appraiser with the Mississippi State Highway Department. He applied, interviewed, and landed the job. At the time, resources for training and workshops were readily available, and David took advantage of the opportunities, including attending courses from the International Right of Way Association and the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers (Appraisal Institute) and subscribing to its monthly newsletter. When David noticed an FHWA job advertisement for a realty specialist in the Appraisal Institute's newsletter one month he prepared an application package including an SF-171 and applied for the job. A few weeks later after an interview in the FHWA-Mississippi Division Office, he received a telephone call: "Do you want to move to Albany, New York?" And so began David's career at FHWA, which has led him to Division Office assignments in New York, California, Maryland, Florida, and now Arkansas. Besides these assignments, David mentions the phrase "Carpe diem" and discusses his rotational duty assignment to the Washington State DOT's Civil Rights Division-External Civil Rights Team and his temporary assignments to FHWA's Office of Infrastructure-Stewardship and Oversight Team and the Department of Veterans Affairs' Loan Guarantee Office while he was completing the USDA's Executive Leadership Program.

David appreciates the mobility aspect of working for FHWA. It has helped him continue to learn and enhance his capacities. Although Federal regulations are the same, states' differing regulations and procedures have allowed David to tailor and adapt successful lessons and practices to meet the needs for his different assignments. His broad experiences in realty and transportation enabled David to serve as Chair of the International Right of Way Association's Transportation Committee and he continues to offer and provide informed technical advice and assistance to his peers.

David's leisure and hobbies include do it yourself home and landscaping improvements. He thinks he might win a neighborhood award for lawns, if there were such a thing. He also enjoys hiking. The Grand Canyon has always been a favorite spot. If he weren't at FHWA, David might be a mountain guide leading people on multi-day hikes or treks.



Carolyn Winborne James

Carolyn has worked in transportation and the realty profession for 45 years. Before her time at FHWA, Carolyn worked with the Virginia DOT as an Assistant Right-of-Way Manager, Senior. During her career as an assistant manager, Carolyn had program responsibility for the areas of Acquisition, Relocation, Legal, Utilities, Property Management, and Training Development.

Since coming to FHWA in 2007, Carolyn has worked on HEPR's Program Implementation Team, working on a wide range of projects—from assisting in the implementation of the Surface Transportation Environment and Planning Cooperative Research Program (STEP) to leading the

Since coming to FHWA in 2007, Carolyn has been involved with HEPR's Program Implementation Team, working on a wide range of projects.

development of the course "Introduction to Federal-Aid Right-of-Way Requirements for Local Public Agencies." She even was a previous editor of the Realty newsletter for a five-year period focusing on the technical side of the ROW program area.

In the last three years, Carolyn successfully provided on-site training to Local Public Agency staff that are responsible for acquiring ROW for federally-funded projects, as well as to consultants, Federal and State staff, among others. She also developed webinars relevant to the Realty-LPA program area. Both the training and webinar presentations have been well received by HEPR's stakeholders. Carolyn is currently serving as a lead in a research project called "Local Public Agency Programs: State of the Practice Research in the Development of LPA Program Stewardship and Oversight Strategies." The final product of the research will be an online LPA Oversight and Stewardship Toolkit intended to help improve the quality of LPA oversight. The toolkit, which is expected to be finalized by the end of the year, will highlight emerging effective practices, perceived barriers, and impacts resulting from the implementation of LPA oversight programs. In the interim, Carolyn is working to post online final reports detailing the results of a literature review on LPA activities, a survey of LPA oversight and stewardship practices nationwide, and a LPA peer exchange convened in late 2014 to vet content for the Toolkit and highlight best practices in this program area. For additional information, contact Carolyn.James@dot.gov.



Megan Jensen

In June 2015, Megan Jensen became the program manager for ROW and civil rights for the Wyoming and Colorado Division Offices. Previously working primarily in civil rights, Megan now provides realty discipline oversight to the DOTs in both states. Based out of the Colorado office, Megan works from the Wyoming office approximately one day a week. The arrangement has been enjoyable for Megan as she has been able to learn about different ways that the two states implement various realty processes. Some FHWA colleagues might not know that Megan worked in the Hawaii Division Office for three years before moving to the Colorado and Wyoming Divisions. After receiving her undergraduate degree in Hawaii, Megan participated in the STEP and Pathways programs, joining the FHWA family.

Megan grew up in Alaska, Oregon, Nevada, and Washington.

Megan's familiarity with the realty discipline goes back further than just her tenure with FHWA. She has been aware of the field since her childhood—an upbringing that included time in Alaska, Oregon, Nevada, and Washington. Her mother was a realty specialist for the Bureau of Land Management, and her father was a private realtor.

Office of Real Estate Services (HEPR) Newsletter

If she weren't at FHWA, Megan might be working in the Peace Corps. She was about to be placed in a host country when she got the job offer from FHWA. Nevertheless, the appeal of learning about new cultures endures. Megan loves to travel, trying new foods, and exploring new places. Ask her sometime about a recent highlight: visiting Rio de Janeiro in 2012!



Yolonda Jordan

Yolonda is the Program Development Supervisor/Realty Program Manager in the Delaware Division Office. In her position, she serves as the Realty Specialist and is responsible for the Planning, Environment, and the Civil Rights programs. Yolonda joined the FHWA in 2006 as part of the Professional Development Program as a Realty/Environmental Specialist in the Ohio Division. Since joining FHWA, Yolonda has worked in the Virginia

Yolonda is the Program Development Supervisor/Realty Program Manager in the Delaware Division Office.

Division as a Realty/Data Management Analyst and at Headquarters-Human Resources as a Professional Development Program Coordinator.

Yolonda's awareness of the realty discipline began at an early age. Her parents owned a real estate company, which helped spark an interest in the field. By chance, she met someone who worked at the North Carolina DOT who mentioned that the DOT was hiring, and before she knew it, she was working there in the right-of-way field. Yolonda believes she's thrived in the realty discipline due to being organized, managing her time wisely, and trying to learn as much as possible in each job she has had.

When not working, Yolonda enjoys spending time with family and friends, especially her niece. She also enjoys skiing and being a co-Girl Scout Leader with a good friend.



Colleen Smith

Colleen Smith is a Realty Specialist in the FHWA Indiana Division Office, a position she has held since 2009. In her role Colleen performs a wide range of functions, including assisting the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) with updating its Outdoor Advertising manual to explain the program in more useful ways for permit investigators and DOT attorneys, ensuring project compliance with the Uniform Act, assisting local public agencies with realty issues, and conducting various process and compliance reviews of INDOT's property management and realty activities.

Outside of work Colleen loves spending time outdoors and tending to her vegetable and flower gardens that cover her two acres of lawn. She is also an avid baker.

Colleen's path to the realty profession was not a direct one. After serving in the United States Marine Corps, Colleen worked in the information technology field. She then left IT to work in management analysis. After her husband retired from the Marine Corps, the two moved to Indiana and Colleen joined FHWA, where she worked as both a Civil Rights Specialist and Realty Specialist. Her past work experiences helped her develop the skillsets

needed to succeed in the realty field – namely a keen attention to detail, a strong sense of caring about people, and a commitment to follow the law.

Outside of work Colleen loves spending time outdoors and tending to her vegetable and flower gardens that cover her two acres of lawn. She is also an avid baker (staff in her office are often treated to her family’s favorite treats), and enjoys looking through cookbooks to spark new ideas.

Though she is eligible to retire, Colleen has no plans on leaving FHWA yet. One of the greatest parts about working for FHWA in Colleen’s view is that everyone is treated as a member of the family. FHWA is not only a great place to work, but it’s also a great family of which to be a member!

Calendar of Events

For a listing of Planning, Environment, and Realty program meetings, events, and NHI training opportunities, please visit: www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/calendar