



The Federal Highway Administration's

2017 Excellence in Right-of-Way Awards



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Cover Photos

From top to bottom: The top three photos are of Missouri DOT Southwest District's Rogersville Design-Build Project. The first photo shows six executives with shovels breaking ground on the project. The second picture is of a computer rendering of the project once completed, while the third from top photo shows an overpass that is part of the project under construction. The bottom photo is a group photo of the team that developed Kansas DOT's online right-of-way training for local public agencies. Front row from left to right: Ed Thornton, Mike Stringer, Tod Salfrank. Back row from left to right: Eric Deitcher, Kristin Kelly, Lisa Harris, and Judy Tyner.

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Congratulations to the Winners of the 2017 Excellence in Right-of-Way Awards



Congratulations to the winners of the 2017 Excellence in Right-of-Way Awards. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) developed this biennial awards program to offer distinction to those who excel in meeting the challenges associated with acquiring real property for Federal aid projects. The awards honor exceptional innovations that improve the real property acquisition process while ensuring that property owner and tenant rights are protected.

The competition for this year's awards was robust. The FHWA received numerous commendable entries nominating right-of-way programs, projects, and leaders nationwide. Judges carefully reviewed the entries to award worthy nominees in the following categories: Innovation, Leadership, Stewardship, Streamlining and Integration, and Peer of the Year. The 2017 award recipients were honored during the 2017 American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Subcommittee on Right-of-Way, Utilities and Outdoor Advertising Control Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The 2017 award winners represent excellence among their peers. Their innovative work is indicative of the cutting-edge work State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) are performing across the country. Their work embodies FHWA's desire to improve, process efficiency, and address the challenges facing the U.S. transportation systems. I am happy and proud to share these important ideas to benefit the right-of-way community and the public.

Again, I congratulate the winners of the 2017 Excellence in Right-of-Way Awards! Thank you for implementing unique approaches in meeting the challenges of acquiring real property and serving the public.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gloria M. Shepherd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Gloria M. Shepherd
Associate Administrator for
Planning, Environment and Realty

PEER OF THE YEAR

Chatham County Department of Engineering Mr. William (Billy) Gordon

This award recognizes Mr. William Gordon of the Chatham County, Georgia, Department of Engineering for his expertise and a life-time commitment to the right-of-way acquisition field. Mr. Gordon has served as the day-to-day manager of all right-of-way acquisitions for the Chatham County Road and Drainage Improvement Program for 23 years. He is responsible for the acquisition of over 3,000 parcels from 200 different projects, having value over \$100 million. Many of these projects involved the use of Federal funding, were complex and included the relocation of displacees and condemnations cases.

Mr. Gordon's experience is varied and wide-ranging. He has provided Chatham County with comprehensive project management which entailed being responsibility for many aspects of the right-of-way program area. He comes from a family of former Georgia Department of Transportation right-of-way professionals who provided him with a solid background in the fundamentals of right-of-way acquisition early in his career.

Mr. Gordon has been the go-to person in Chatham County for all things right-of-way related. His colleagues point out that he can remember people and details of projects back to the beginning of his career. One colleague notes that "Billy has repeatedly exhibited the patience and persistence necessary to achieve successful results, while treating each owner as a real person, not a file number." Mr. Gordon will retire in Spring 2017 and his colleagues state that he will be greatly missed.

Congratulations to Mr. Gordon!



*Billy Gordon, Property Acquisition
Manager, Chatham County
Department of Engineering*

INNOVATION AWARD

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Real Estate Automated Data System Bureau and Regional Team

This award recognizes Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Real Estate Automated Data System (READS) Bureau and Regional Team for its persistent and detailed work involving creative problem solving in developing the READS system. This system was developed to harness and implement technology which improves the efficiency of the agency's right-of-way program. READS is a collaboration effort between the WisDOT's real estate business experts, the information technology staff and BEM Systems, Inc.



Wisconsin DOT READS team

The user-friendly system in place today, which WisDOT and consultant staff members use on all WisDOT real estate projects, has a variety of features that improve WisDOT's right-of-way program, including:

- Being linked to WisDOT's financial system, right-of-way plat document management system, legal description system, and geographic information system, which provides record storage and record retrieval for projects;
- Using sophisticated barcode scanning that automatically saves copies of every document the system generates in its own self-contained document management system;
- Supporting two levels of electronic signatures and utilizes a powerful custom reporting tool which allows user to build their own unique reports and save them in their own report library; and
- Supporting staff assignments to specific projects and parcels, while integrating the functions of residential and business relocation, property management, lease management, and local public agency coordination.

Congratulations to the READS Bureau and Regional Team!

Contributors: Norman Pawelczyk, Tanace Matthiesen, Shirley Bradley, Drew Kottke, Mark Krause, Rebecca Sorensen, Cassandra Walbrun, Camille Wilcox, Darla Doescher, Francesca Weihert, Alice Meurer, Rolanda Barnes, Debra Sinkula, Kayci Van Rite, Teresa Klein, Sara Schmitz, Aaron Greim.

LEADERSHIP AWARD

Delaware Department of Transportation

Right-of-Way Section

Embracing Change in the Delaware DOT Right-of-Way Section



DelDOT ROW Section

The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) encountered difficult operating challenges for several years. The DelDOT Right-of-Way (ROW) section addressed the situation and strived to reinvent itself into a proactive and vibrant organization. The entire team of management and staff have joined together to develop and deploy a new organizational structure with major personnel changes. They utilized innovative training and new streamlined processes that have led to a dramatic increase in efficiency.

The DelDOT ROW team's effort to embrace change has recently helped it to achieve several significant milestones including:

- Acquisition of the right-of-way needed for DelDOT to achieve its highest Capital Road Project delivery in the past 15 years;
- A 10-fold increase in the disposal of excess land;
- A complete rewrite of the ROW Manual;
- The awarding of the state's first Diverging Diamond interchange; and
- The successful completion of the second largest ROW project in DelDOT history.

Without the commitment and dedication to embrace change from all ROW staff, these successes would not have been possible.

Congratulations to the DelDOT Right-of-Way Section!

Contributors: Entire DelDOT ROW Section

STEWARDSHIP AWARD

Kansas Department of Transportation Kansas DOT Bureau of Local Projects Local Public Agencies Right-of-Way Online Training

In Kansas, Local Public Agencies (LPAs) self-certify that they have complied with the Uniform Act in the acquisition of properties for their projects. To insure compliance, the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has annually traveled the state to provide training to LPAs and their consultants, and review project right-of-way files. Training attendance has been voluntary, and in the past, attendance has sometimes been low due to the travel and time required to participate.

In order to provide training to LPAs more efficiently, KDOT partnered with the Kansas Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) center to develop a certification process and web-based training for LPAs. The new training will replace KDOT and FHWA as partners traveling the state to provide in-person training—a practice that was proving to be expensive and time consuming for all involved.

This new training and certification process will be mandatory for LPAs and their consultants. At the end, participants will be required to take and pass a test with questions that KDOT created. KDOT believes this program will not only be a more cost and time effective method of providing this important training, but also result in better participation rates given the certification component.

Congratulations to the KDOT Bureau of Local Projects!

Contributors: Michael Stringer, Tod Salfrank, Ed Thornton, Judy Tyner, Lisa Harris, Kristin Kelly, Eric Deitcher



KDOT and Kansas LTAP team that worked to create online right of way training for LPAs.

Front Row L-R: Ed Thornton, KDOT Bureau of Local Projects Road Team Leader; Mike Stringer, KDOT Bureau of Local Projects Bureau Chief; Tod Salfrank, KDOT Bureau of Local Projects Assistant Bureau Chief. Back Row L-R: Eric Deitcher, FHWA Kansas Division Transportation Specialist; Kristin Kelly, Kansas LTAP Education Program Coordinator; Lisa Harris, Kansas LTAP Director; Judy Tyner, KDOT Bureau of Local Projects Plan File Technician.

STREAMLINING AND INTEGRATION AWARD

Missouri Department of Transportation

Missouri DOT Southwest District Rogersville Design Build/Right-of-Way Team

Farm Road 253 in Rogersville, Missouri had been experiencing an increase in accidents, and traffic was predicted to double over the next 20 years. These circumstances created a need to convert a portion of the expressway into a freeway and improve safety by replacing signalized intersections with controlled access. Work on the Rogersville Design-Build Project, which began September 15, 2014, greatly improved traffic flow and safety.

Innovative methods were employed by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) while designing, acquiring right-of-way, and constructing the roadway simultaneously. The Rogersville Design Build Project developed and met several goals in order to create an innovative way to work on this project while satisfying the needs of the customers. An aggressive acquisition schedule was established and a new acquisition model was created. In the end, MoDOT was able to limit right-of-way acquisition and thus add over \$3 million in additional improvements to the project to address a “wish list” of items in coordination with the City and County Commissions.



MoDOT leadership break ground on the Rogersville Design-Build Project in the MoDOT Southwest District.

Congratulations to MoDOT's Southwest District!

Contributors: Sean Matlock and the Southwest District.

HONORABLE MENTION - INNOVATION AWARD

Mississippi Department of Transportation Mississippi DOT Right-of-Way Division and Information Systems Division Parcel Tracking System

Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) Parcel Tracking System (PTS) is an innovative project management software program built in-house through coordinated efforts of the MDOT Right-of-Way Division and the Information Systems Division. The PTS is a one-stop-shop system which allows tracking, updating, and managing all facets of the right-of-way process including personnel assignments from the inception of a project to the issuance of the right-of-way certificate. The PTS includes other modern capabilities such as document storage and retrieval, electronic signature and mobile uploading.

The user-friendly PTS helps the Right-of-Way Division better track its processes to ensure accurate and timely project delivery while providing accountability in reporting historical data and serving as a centralized file storage and document retrieval system. Among numerous other features, the PTS provides for:

- The automatic creation of right-of-way projects and population of project information from another internal system;
- An automatic parcel numbering system to create parcels and link associated parcels; and
- The recording of right-of-way project cost estimates and tracking of actual expenditures against estimated expenditures.

Congratulations to the MDOT Right-of-Way Division and Information Systems Division!



Staff from MDOT's Right-of-Way and Information System Divisions. Left to Right: Trudi Loflin, Cheryl McCracken, Don Drake, Christopher Todd, Doug Downing, Cheryl Gordon

Contributors: Trudi Loflin, Cheryl McCracken, Don Drake, Christopher Todd, Doug Downing, and Cheryl Gordon

JUDGES



Ms. Gina M. Anthony, SR/WA, worked for Maryland DOT as Director for the Maryland State Highway Administration's Office of Real Estate. Ms. Anthony began her career at Maryland State Highway Administration as a Relocation Assistance Specialist. In 1992, Ms. Anthony became an Assistant Chief of Right-of-Way for the Office of Real Estate's District 3 office, and in 1997 was promoted to the District Chief of Right-of-Way position for Baltimore and Harford counties. She is a former licensed real

estate appraiser in the State of Maryland and she attained a senior right-of-way designation from the International Right of Way Association (IRWA).

Rosalyn M. Zeigler joined Associated Right of Way Services (AR/WS) in 2011 with 35 years of extensive public real estate and right of way experience. During her career she has had the opportunity to become thoroughly experienced in appraisal, acquisition, relocation, property disposal and management. Prior to joining the AR/WS team, Ms. Zeigler was a Principal Right-of-Way Agent with the Orange County (California) Transportation Authority and a consultant with the City of Elk Grove, California as Senior Real Property Agent.



Mary Jane Daluge enjoyed a 25-year career at FHWA and retired in 2016. During her time at FHWA, Mary Jane worked in the right-of-way and civil rights disciplines in several states, including California, Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and at U.S. DOT Headquarters in Washington, D.C. She retired to Boise, Idaho to be near her grandchildren with whom she is taking annual trips abroad—beginning last year to China.

Wayne Goss retired from a 30-year career in the right-of-way profession in 2016. Wayne served as the Senior Property Management Specialist for the City of Shreveport, Louisiana where he was responsible for the acquisition of various property rights, Uniform Act relocation assistance, and property management for the City's administrative capital projects. Prior to that Wayne worked as a Real Estate Agent at the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. In 2015, Wayne was elected President of the International Right of Way Association, a position he held until June 2016.

2017 AASHTO
Subcommittee on
Right-of-Way, Utilities and Outdoor
Advertising Control
Conference
Excellence in Right-of-Way
Awards

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