



Central Region

Director's Quarterly

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Summer Edition - Kenai Peninsula Borough

June 2014

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Rob Campbell, P.E.

Central Region Director, is a lifelong Alaskan. He has a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Oregon State University, and a Master's degree in Engineering Management from the University of Alaska, Anchorage. He has worked at DOT&PF for more than 30 years.

For comments or questions about the newsletter:

DOT.CR.Director@alaska.gov

In this issue, we primarily focus on construction projects for our 2014 busy summer season, but I have included information on two other subjects as well: street sweeping and traffic counting. Nothing heralds the arrival of spring more than the sight of street sweepers in our urban areas. Beginning with the highways, the sweepers make their way to the less traveled roads and then on to the bike trails. While the sweepers are slightly bothersome to traffic, pulling up the winter sand helps both air & water quality. Then, secondly, our summer brings us the opportunity to collect yearly traffic data that aids our planning, design, and safety efforts. We have a small article below about our seasonal traffic counts program, another facet of our "intelligent highways" system.

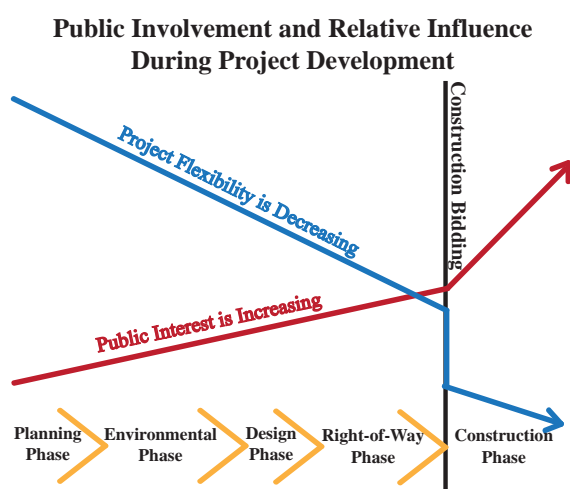
The main topic of summer, of course, is always construction activity. Many people have varying opinions about road construction, and often those opinions don't come out until the project is being built. While we always listen to comments, the volume and divergence of opinions make it impossible to satisfy everyone, and our construction documents reflect the culmination of years of efforts. After the inconvenience of construction is over, however, most comments on the final product are positive – which is always a good feeling.

I look forward to a busy, productive summer, and as always, if you are in the area, stop by, and we can look at projects together.

DOT&PF CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

The 2014 construction season is gearing up to be very busy for Central Region. A record amount of funding approved for transportation projects in fiscal year 2013 includes over \$200 million for road and highway construction in Central Region, most of which is underway this season. Additionally, approximately \$160 million in fiscal year 2014 road projects and approximately \$150 million for airport projects will be under construction this season.

The Department's on-site Project Engineers are working in close coordination with the project contractors' staffs to ensure that issues pertaining to dust, noise and traffic delays are handled in a timely and responsive manner. How the contractors and the Department's Project Engineers address these concerns is very project specific. In busy urban areas such as Anchorage, some of the repaving projects are scheduled for night-time construction, allowing the contractor to more efficiently mobilize equipment and construction materials while minimizing traffic impacts. Due to the nature of Alaska's road systems there are often no alternative highway routes. Hence, construction must occur while keeping the highway corridor open to the traveling public.



The construction phase of the project is also the time when the public takes a heightened interest in the specific details of a project; yet, the designs and plan sets have been finalized and contracts for work have been awarded. It is one of the dichotomies of any public works project: once construction starts, there is the most interest in project details, but the least flexibility in making changes to the design of the project. We strive to involve interested parties in the early stages of planning and project design when there is more opportunity for input and encourage all to stay abreast of project planning and design via the project website or links at the bottom of this page.



Keeping traffic moving during construction of the West Dowling Road Extension project is more challenging due to the need to accommodate rail traffic. Also, note the extensive utilities that needed to be accommodated and addressed in the design.

CENTRAL REGION'S ANNUAL TRAFFIC VOLUME REPORT



Highway data crews collecting traffic counts

The Highway Data Section provides statistical information regarding the volume and character of traffic on the state highway system for use by engineers, planners, and other decision makers to aid them in their assessment of the State's transportation needs. The data they collect is compiled into the Annual Traffic Volume Report, including:

- Permanent Counts: Traffic volumes (by direction of travel) are collected year-round with Permanent Traffic Recorders (PTRs) at a number of permanent locations. These counts are expressed in yearly averages and are used to provide information concerning seasonal traffic.
- Coverage Counts: Also known as the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), these traffic volumes (sometimes by direction of travel) are typically collected for seven consecutive days in varying locations. Due to weather conditions, these counts are only taken between May and September and those counts are adjusted for seasonal increases using the PTR data.

For more information about traffic counts or to read Central Region's Annual Traffic Volume Report visit <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/mapping/adt.shtml>.

IMPORTANT LINKS

Where can I go to...

- Find information about road construction projects and road closures?
- Find information about road conditions?
- Locate the Central Region Public Involvement Calendar?
- Sign up for weekly updates on Parks Highway construction?
- Get more information about active Central Region projects?
- Find websites for Central Region Projects?

<http://alaskanavigator.org/>

<http://511.alaska.gov/>

<http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/calendar.shtml>

<http://dot.alaska.gov/parks2014/>

<http://dot.alaska.gov/projects-status/index.cfm>

http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/project_info/

HIGHWAY RESURFACING PROJECTS

Sterling Hwy MP 79-82

Will begin paving mid June with work continuing during daylight hours. There will be periodic limited traffic restrictions and the project will be completed by the end of August. For more information contact the Project Manager, Alan Drake, at 269-0665 or alan.drake@alaska.gov.

Sterling Highway MP 173-179

Will begin this summer with paving of roadway completed by September. Next year, the project work continues with striping, building shoulders and erosion treatment. For more information contact the Project Manager, Laura Paul, at 269-0463 or laura.paul@alaska.gov.

Seward Highway Pavement Preservation MP 54.5-67.5 & MP 69-75

This project will mill, fill and restripe the pavement. Project is expected to begin in late summer. Efforts will be made to minimize travel disruption. Paving is likely to carry over to 2015. For more information contact the Project Manager, Alan Drake, at 269-0665 or alan.drake@alaska.gov.

Sterling Highway MP 45- MP 58

This project has already completed mainline paving. Guardrails, striping and paving approaches have yet to be finished, but there will be no construction or traffic interruption during July, out of consideration for the fishing season. For more information contact the Project Manager, Alan Drake, at 269-0665 or alan.drake@alaska.gov.

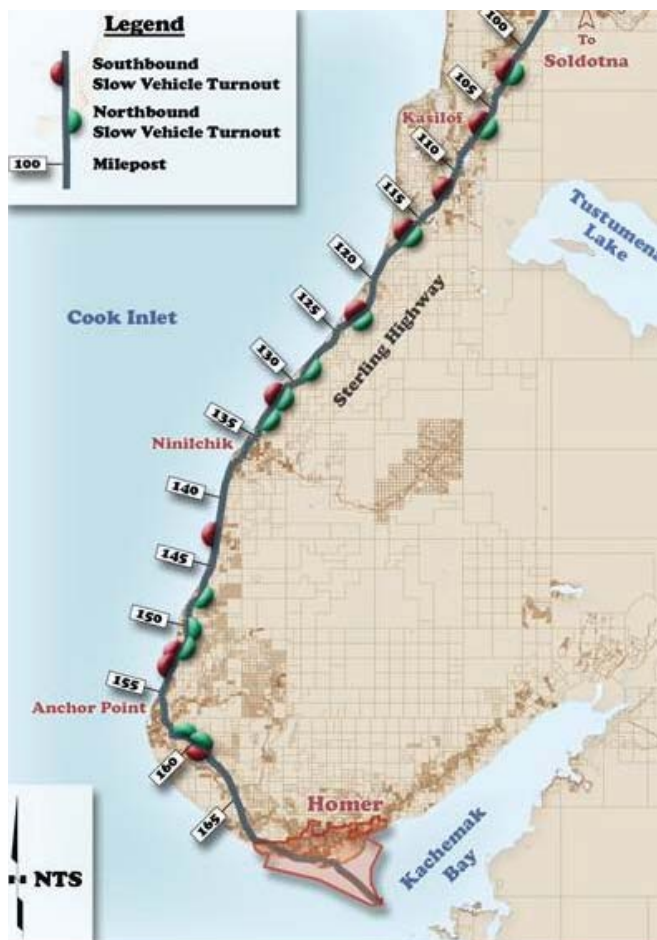


Sterling MP 79-82 Pavement Represervation Project

HIGHWAY SAFETY PROJECTS

Open House for Safety Corridor: Sterling to Soldotna

DOT&PF is holding an open house to share the Preliminary Decision Document for the Sterling Highway Safety Corridor Study (Sterling to Soldotna) project. The document provides recommendations for how to develop the Sterling Highway for long-term safety and mobility for highway users. The document identifies the alternatives to be carried forward for preliminary engineering analysis. Documents related to the open house are available for review and comment at <http://www.sterlinghwy.com/documents.htm>. Please come by the open houses on June 24 in Soldotna at the Borough Assembly Chambers 4-7 p.m. and June 25 at the Sterling Community Club 6:30-8:30 p.m..



Sterling Highway- Soldotna to Homer Hill Slow Vehicle Turnouts

Project began with clearing in May and includes 22 slow vehicle turnouts built between MP 102.5 and MP 160. The purpose of this project is to lessen the number of head-on and rear-end crashes that occur on or near selected turnout sites. Work will continue from 5am-5pm weekdays with flaggers stationed on the highway. This project will be completed by end of October. For more information access the project website at <http://sterlinghwysvt.com/> or contact the Project Manager, Alan Drake, at 269-0665 or alan.drake@alaska.gov.

Seward Highway Safety Corridor Intelligent Speed Limit Signs

This project installed Driver Feedback Speed Limit signs on all four State Highway Safety Corridors. Ten signs were placed along the Seward Highway from Potter Marsh to Girdwood and four signs were placed on the Sterling Highway between Soldotna and Sterling. These signs provide immediate flashing speed feedback to drivers allowing an increase in awareness and safety on the roadway. These portions of the Seward Highway and Sterling Highway were designated as a highway safety corridor due to their high rate of severe and major injury accidents. Intelligent speed limits signs are a way to warn drivers, through visual information, that they are exceeding the speed limit.



Intelligent Speed Limit Sign indicating speed of approaching vehicles is 62 MPH



Diagram of how feedback signs work courtesy of <http://www.wsbeng.com/services/driver-feedback-signs>

OTHER PROJECTS

Homer East End Road Reconstruction and Paving Projects

Utility relocations and widening of the embankment for the new pathway and widened shoulders are on-going along East End Road from MP 3.75-5.5 on the reconstruction portion of the project. Pavement preservation work on MP 12.5-19.6 of East End Road and MP 0-1.9 of Old East End Road has also started with major digouts occurring in select locations where frost heaving has occurred. Anticipate that traffic will be limited to one lane with pilot cars. Contractor will be attempting to have majority of the work completed for both portions of the project this construction season, but there may be some elements that are carried over to 2015. For more information contact the Project Manager, Laura Paul, at 269-0463 or laura.paul@alaska.gov.

Ninilchik Village Bridge Replacement

A one lane temporary bridge is in place and the old bridge has been removed. Piles will be driven for the new bridge starting mid-June. Work is continuing 6 days a week, with temporary bridge closures of less than one hour. For more information contact the Project Manager, Alan Drake, at 269-0665 or alan.drake@alaska.gov.

Kalifornsky Beach Road Pedestrian Pathway

Work resumed at the end of April to extend the pedestrian pathway 1.9 miles from Mallard Road to Cannery Road. For more information contact Project Manager, Ericka Moore at 269-4550 or ericka.moore@alaska.gov.

DOT&PF SUPPORTING KENAI AREA FIREFIGHTING EFFORTS

ADOT&PF employee, William Chase, was able to assist in this spring's firefighting efforts by delivering 6,000 gallons of concentrated fire retardant from the DOT&PF maintenance station in Tok to the Kenai Airport. Other DOT&PF staff continued assisting the firefighting effort by providing additional support to fire vehicles and heavy equipment.

It is worth noting that ADOT&PF highways and airports, when adequately cleared of trees and shrubs, function as effective fire breaks and the Funny River fire was ultimately stopped at Funny River Road and the adjacent 200' swath of forest land cleared of brush and low hanging branches.



Fire lighting up the sky behind the Kasilof Airport