



Director's Quarterly

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Spring Edition - Kenai Peninsula Borough

March 2013



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 of Science degree in Engineering Management from the University of Alaska Anchorage. He has worked at DOT&PF for more than 30 years.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Our newsletter this quarter focuses on two areas: our highway safety efforts, and our Maintenance & Operations team for your area.

As the days get longer, travel becomes more inviting and traffic volumes on our roads increase until we reach the summer peaks. Highway safety is on everyone's mind, and this Spring Edition of our newsletter highlights highway safety; the statistics and our strategies. In 2005, there was renewed nation-wide focus and increased federal funding to target the reduction of fatal and major injury crashes. Alaska followed this lead with an emphasis on our safety-specific programs. With the highest highway traffic volumes in the state, Central Region has taken the lead in this area, and while far from declaring victory, we are proud of the improvements we have achieved. We've included some of the key measurements and accomplishments for your review.

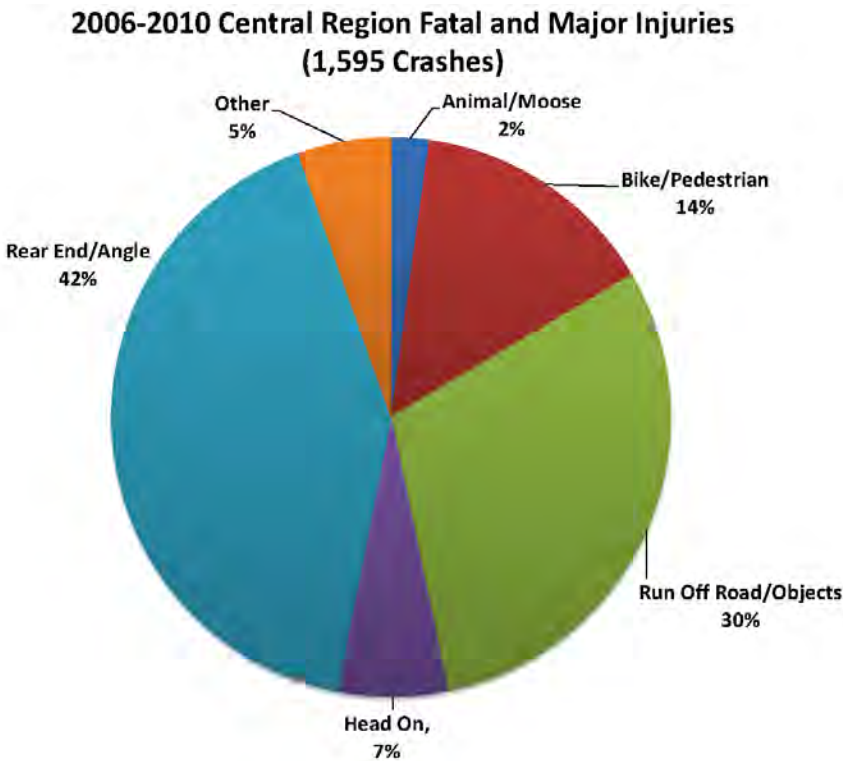
Steadily warming temperatures and increasing sunshine also usher in a transition from our "winter" to "summer" maintenance practices. This requires adaptability from those members of our team who are often the first point of contact for Alaskans – our Maintenance and Operations (M&O) personnel. These men and women are doing a great job keeping our roads and airports safe for travel and open for business. We've identified a few of the key M&O people in your area so you can put a face with the name in case you have not already met them personally.

Finally, this newsletter is the fourth one published and, like most new initiatives, it's appropriate to seek feedback on its usefulness. We will be contacting your offices shortly to conduct a brief survey and will share the results with you in our Summer Newsletter.

Comments on the Newsletter
DOT.CR.Director@alaska.gov

DOT Safety Focus Pays off with a 22% Reduction in Fatalities & Major Accidents

SEVERE CRASHES	2000-2004	2006-2010	PERCENT CHANGE	SAMPLE STRATEGIES
Animal/Moose	45	35	-22%	Continuous lighting, fencing, brush cutting and wider clearing
Bike/Pedestrian	260	228	-12%	Pedestrian signal countdown timers, pedestrian refuges/medians
Run Off Road/Objects	606	482	-20%	Rumble strips, improved signage and curve delineation, low angle side slopes, guard rail and end treatments, and paving gravel roads
Head On	152	102	-33%	Center line rumble strips, raised medians, increased passing lane opportunities on long rural 2 lane highways, safety corridors, and headlight mandates
Rear End/Angle	919	662	-28%	Roundabouts, new/expanded roads to reduce congestion, raised medians, intersection improvements
Other	69	86	25%	
TOTAL	2,051	1,595	-22%	22% reduction in Central Region



While Head On accidents garner much attention, they represent only 7% of fatal and major injury crashes.

Highway Safety Improvement Program

The Highway Safety Improvement Program was established by the Federal Highway Administration to focus specific funding on safety improvement projects. Federal guidelines are very specific: "The purpose of the highway safety improvement program shall be to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roads." (US Public Law 109-59, August 2005)

During the 2012 nomination cycle, Central Region DOT&PF nominated and successfully received approval for 18 projects totaling \$55,145,900. These projects include: safety corridor traffic enforcement, railroad crossing upgrades, roadside curve delineators, intersection upgrades, and continuous lighting improvements. All projects conformed to the Strategic Traffic Safety Plan (available at <http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdplng/stsp>) by addressing one or more emphasis areas in the plan's improvement goals, such as reducing head-on and single vehicle run-off-the-road collisions.

IMPORTANT LINKS

How do I...

- Get more information about active Central Region projects?
- Locate the Central Region Public Involvement Calendar?
- Report a motor vehicle crash?

- <http://dot.alaska.gov/projects-status/index.cfm>
- <http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/calendar.shtml>
- <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/accreptapp/index.shtml>

Where can I go to...

- Find a previous Central Region newsletter?
- Find websites for Central Region projects?
- Learn about Alaska's Highway Safety Corridors

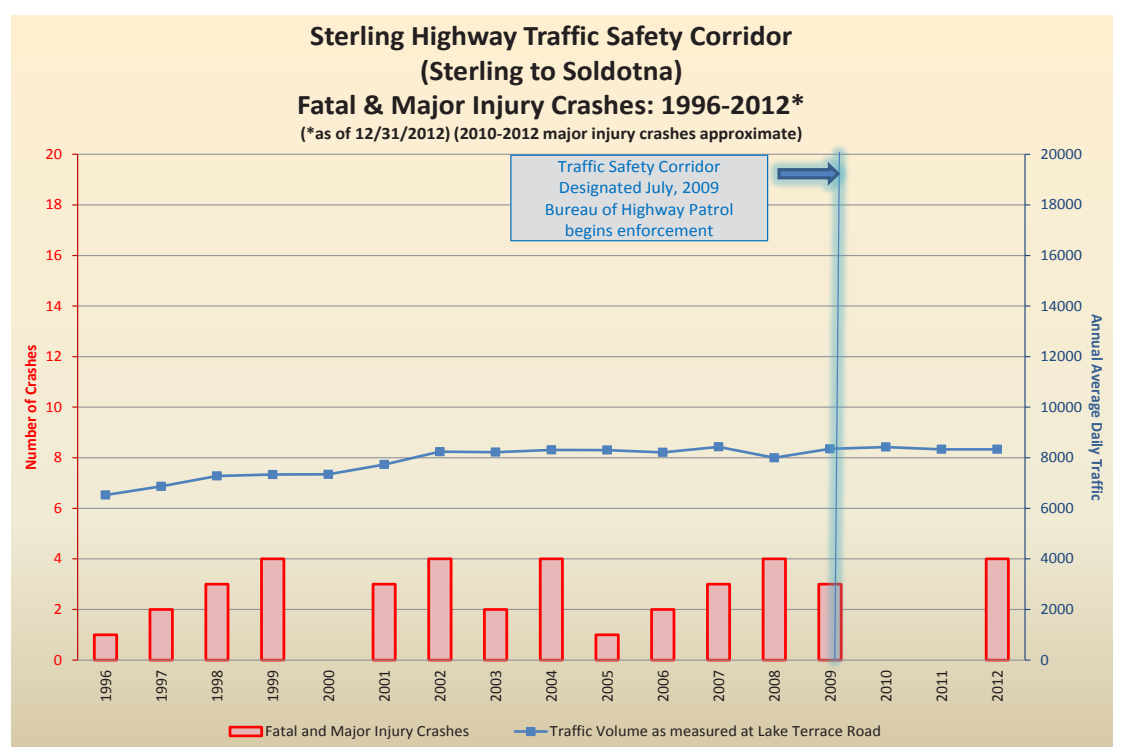
- <http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/newsletter.shtml>
- http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/project_info/
- http://www.dot.alaska.gov/comm/safety_corridors.shtml

Severe crashes reduced by 53% (Average) in Alaska's Traffic Safety Corridors

A safety corridor is a designated “safety zone” similar to a school zone or a work zone. The purpose of designating a safety zone is to reduce the high rate or concentration of fatal and major injury crashes.

Currently the State of Alaska has four Traffic Safety Corridors along lengths of high speed two-lane highways including the Seward Highway, Sterling Highway, Parks Highway and Knik-Goose Bay Road. Highway Safety Corridors are highly correlated to very congested roads. Short term strategies depend heavily on public support to change driver behavior until long term major projects can address congestion/traffic growth. The life cycle of safety corridors typically include:

- Identifying and focusing on a few problematic highways
- Instituting double fines and/or double points legislation
- Sustaining funding for highway patrol
- Expediting incident response
- Reporting Every Dangerous Drivers Immediately (REDDI)
- Building quick, affordable road safety devices – special signs, centerline rumble strips
- Repeating media campaigns to educate drivers
- Investing in longer term major road improvements
- Decommissioning safety corridor designation once major road improvements are completed to make efforts available elsewhere



Recent review of the State's four Traffic Safety Corridors show that serious crashes (fatal and major injury crashes) are half of their pre-designation levels, but much work still needs to be accomplished. Ultimately, a long term solution in the form of major road improvements would reduce accident rates permanently.

Maintenance and Operations



Randy Vanderwood - M&O Chief, Central Region

Randy became M&O Chief for Central Region in August 2009, after working in both highway construction and highway design for 14 years. He is the Chief Contracting Officer for Central Region's Highways and Aviation Division, which has over 240 employees reporting through four district superintendents.

Randy notes that M&O staff across the region are committed to their work and to the public. He says, “Their dedication is the catalyst for my work ethic. This is especially true in Alaska's smaller communities where M&O personnel are important members of the community and want to ensure users in the community that our facilities are as safe and well maintained as possible. The pride that I see in my employees of the work they perform is my favorite part of the job.”

When asked what he thought was least understood about M&O, Randy responded, “M&O is funded for responding to average maintenance conditions. Whether responding to snow storms, potholes, drainage problems or knocked down signs, the amount of staffing, equipment and funding to respond are not at a level for worst case scenarios. That being said, M&O people, equipment, and materials are always the Department's first responders. We are proud of the services we provide Alaskans.”

Randy can be reached at randy.vanderwood@alaska.gov, or at (907) 269-0760.

Carl High - Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak District Superintendent

Carl High has been the Kenai and Kodiak Regions District Maintenance Supervisor for the past 11 years and has worked for DOT&PF for almost 20 years. Previously, he worked on infrastructure projects throughout Alaska such as the Homer Harbor Expansion, Bradley Lake Hydro-Electric Project, on and offshore projects in Prudhoe Bay and the Over the Horizon Backscatter Project on Amchitka Island. Carl supervises 41 employees and numerous contractors.

Right now the Maintenance teams are gearing up for Spring where they will begin pot hole patching, paving, crack sealing, ditching, gravel resurfacing, illumination, storm drain maintenance, dust palliative application, vegetation control and pavement marking projects.

Carl says, “Few people fully understand that on the front lines we do whatever it takes on any given day to ensure that our facilities are safe and open regardless of the conditions. Collectively in the region, our ability to respond to natural disasters and take on just about any type of project is something I am proud of.”

Carl can be reached at carl.high@alaska.gov or (907) 262-2199.



Tire Changeover

Studded tires are **NOT allowed** on paved highways and roads north of 60 degrees North Latitude (just north of Ninilchik) and on the entire Sterling Highway both north and south of Ninilchik beginning **May 1st**. For all other paved roads south of 60 degrees North Latitude, studded tires are **NOT allowed** beginning **April 15th**. Additional information can be found at the Alaska Department of Motor Vehicles website: <http://doa.alaska.gov/dmv/faq/faq.htm>

Why Seasonal Weight Restrictions?

Spring thawing conditions make roadways vulnerable to damage by heavy vehicles. The Regional M&O Manager monitors subsurface temperature data and sets weight restrictions for commercial vehicles to help preserve the roads. Restrictions typically begin in late February and end in late May.

Go to <http://dot.alaska.gov/mseve/main.cfm?go=weightrestrictions>

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For road condition information:



For More Information Contact:

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