



Director's Quarterly

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Summer Edition - Matanuska-Susitna 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.

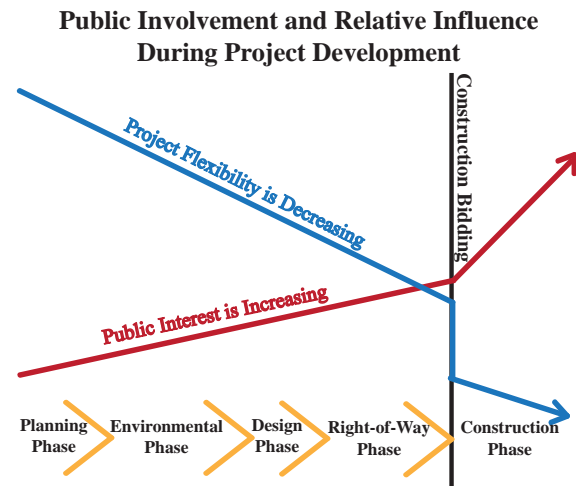
The main topic of summer, of course, is always construction activity. Many people have varying opinions about road construction, and often those opinions don't come out until the project is being built. While we always listen to comments, the volume and divergence of opinions make it impossible to satisfy 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/stwdp/plng/mapping/adt.shtml>.

IMPORTANT LINKS

Where can I go to...

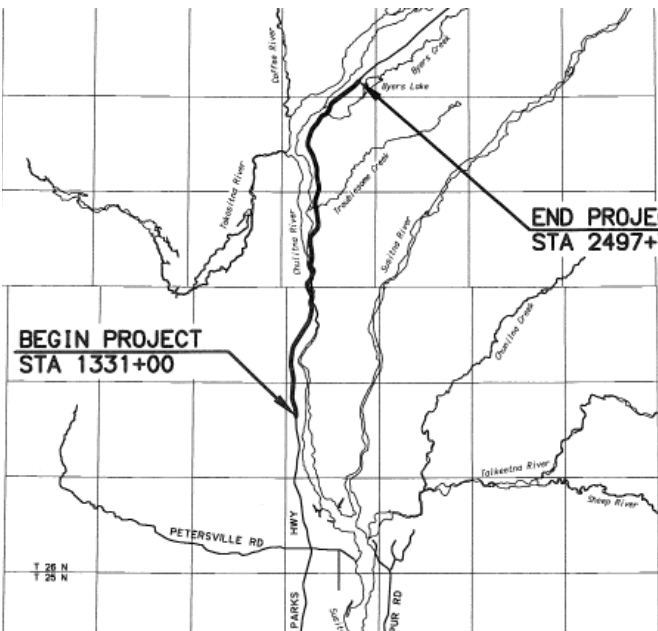
- Find information about road construction projects and road closures?
- Find information about road conditions?
- Locate the Central Region Public Involvement Calendar?
- Sign up for weekly updates on Parks Highway construction?
- Get more information about active Central Region projects?
- Find websites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

PARKS HIGHWAY PROJECTS

Parks Highway MP43.5 – MP 44.5 (Lucus to Church)

Upon completion, the Parks Highway will be extended to a five-lane configuration from Lucas Road through the Church Road intersection. A new traffic signal at the Parks Highway and Deskas Street Intersection will be installed. Currently, work is underway on the highway embankment for the extended highway and utility relocation. Starting in mid-June, crews will be working in the traveled way.



Expect delays of up to 20 minutes due to nightly construction work from 8:00 pm to 5:00 am. Pilot cars and flaggers will direct traffic. Five lanes will be open to travel this fall. For more information contact Laura Paul at (907) 269-0463 or laura.paul@alaska.gov.

Parks Highway: MP 123.5 – MP 146 Rehabilitation

This portion of the highway is subject to seasonal weight restrictions during the spring thaw, affecting the roadway’s usability for hauling freight to the Interior and the North Slope. This project will rehabilitate the existing roadway with a 6” foamed asphalt base topped with 4” of hot mix asphalt. Included in the work will be signing, striping, guardrail and other miscellaneous items of work and is scheduled for July through October 2014.

During bridge work, expect delays and restrictions for overweight vehicles. Pilot cars and flaggers will direct traffic. There will be five-mile stretches of gravel surfaces with reduced speed limits of 45 MPH. For more information contact Laura Paul at (907) 269-0463 or laura.paul@alaska.gov.

For more information about Parks Highway projects, travel disruptions, or to sign up for email notices visit <http://dot.alaska.gov/parks2014/>



Utility relocation work in Wasilla being done in advance of 5-lane construction

STATE HIGHWAY SAFETY CORRIDOR PROJECTS

KGB – Fern Street Intersection Improvements

Project is complete and the signal is active. The Mat-Su Borough’s project to connect Fern Street to Edlund Road should be completed later this construction season. For more information about the intersection project, contact Steve Jochens at (907) 269-0659 or steven.jochens@alaska.gov.



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

Highway Safety Corridor Intelligent Speed Limit Signs

This project installed ten new Driver Feedback Speed Limit signs along the portion of the Parks Highway and Knik-Goose Bay Road that are designated Highway Safety Corridor. These signs provide immediate flashing speed feedback to drivers allowing an increase in awareness and safety on the roadway. Knik-Goose Bay Road and the Parks Highway (between Church Road and Big Lake Road) are designated highway safety corridors due to their high rate of fatal and major injury accidents. Intelligent speed limits signs are a way to warn drivers, through visual information, that they are exceeding the speed limit.



Knik-Goose Bay Road and Fern Street intersection



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

PAVEMENT PRESERVATION PROJECTS

Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension – Pavement Preservation

Project will mill and resurface the travel lanes for the 1.3 mile segment and includes guardrail, dig outs, drainage, signs and striping as necessary. Paving will be done at night-time starting in July with completion in September 2014.

Petersville Road - Pavement Preservation

Project will resurface the paved portion of Petersville Road from the Parks Highway to existing end of the pavement at approximately Mile 9.2. Work will begin in late summer with a completion in the fall of 2014.

For more information about these pavement preservation projects, contact Matt Morrow at (907) 269-0466 or matthew.morrow@alaska.gov

COORDINATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Knik River Road

The MSB is managing a project to improve sections of the State owned road. Work is funded by a Legislative grant. Construction is underway with completion scheduled this summer.

Old Glenn Highway Pathway

This is a MSB Bond/GF Match project within the State right-of-way to construct a separated pathway from Plumley to near Knik River. Construction contract expected to be bid August 2014.