



Central Region

Director's Quarterly

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Fall Edition - Matanuska-Susitna Borough

September 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.

As fall encroaches on our busy construction season, it is time to take stock of our accomplishments. Having “shovel ready” projects enabled Central Region to secure an impressive \$275 million, 157% of the funding that was originally programmed in the beginning of federal fiscal year 2014 (ending on September 30, 2014). This represents an additional \$100 million in project funding, much of which went towards paving projects. The extra funding is a particularly helpful boost to sustain our infrastructure, since the previously reliable federal transportation funding may have some “potholes” in the future.

Starting in 2005, federal gas tax receipts coming into the Federal Highway Trust Fund have been less than project commitments and state apportionments. Congress recently extended the highway bill and approved a \$10.8 billion bailout for the Highway Trust Fund, carrying the program through May 2015. Our ability to deliver projects for construction next summer will depend on additional Congressional action. This is occurring at a time when some maintenance related issues such as paving and erosion are also impacting our capital program.

For comments or questions about the newsletter:

DOT.CR.Director@alaska.gov

We discussed paving in a prior newsletter, so we are highlighting erosion in this issue. Numerous flooding events and changing weather patterns characterized by heavy runoff threaten critical highway links throughout Central Region.

Lastly, we introduce to you a new member of Central Region's communication staff. Shannon McCarthy has joined us to assist in our outreach efforts. Read more about Shannon below.

As always, we hope you find this newsletter useful and, if you have any suggestions about future editions, please let us know your thoughts.

EROSION: SLOWLY EATING INTO CAPITAL FUNDING

Alaskan topography consists largely of mountains or waterbodies (including wetlands). Hence, much of the state's highway system follows either along the edges of these waterbodies, or along sloping mountain sides, both prone to erosion. In addition, soils in these areas consist of loosely consolidated gravel, dirt, or fractured rock, which adds to the susceptibility of erosion. Recent extreme weather events have exacerbated the problem to the point where erosion issues overextend the capacity of preventative maintenance efforts and need significant capital funding. Unfortunately, erosion projects are carving out an even larger portion of federal funds from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Some of the erosion projects currently in the STIP include:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Sterling Highway MP 57 | \$10,000,000 |
| • Chiniak Highway | \$4,000,000 |
| • Glenn Highway (various locations) | \$4,000,000 (partially funded) |
| • Glenn Highway MP 49 | \$5,000,000 |
| • Portage Glacier Road | \$2,000,000 |
| • Sterling Highway MP 153-154 | \$4,000,000 |



The Department is currently requesting bids to address the erosion at MP 153 of the Sterling Highway.

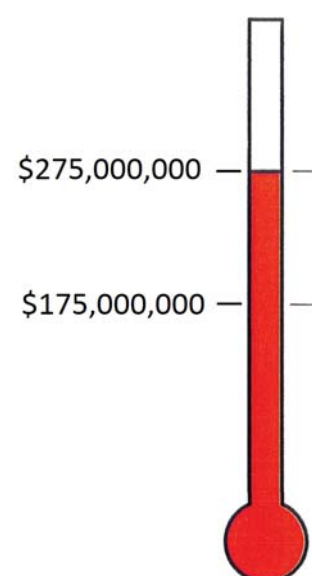
NEW PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER



Transferring to Central Region ADOT&PF from the Knik Arm Crossing project, Shannon McCarthy is joining Jill Reese on our communications team as a public information officer and will be leading the region's proactive communication efforts. Previously, Shannon served as the public information officer for the Department's Northern Region from 2002 through 2007. In this role, she served as the region's media liaison and developed and implemented communication plans to inform the public

on regional and statewide transportation issues. She is excited to be joining Central Region and is looking forward to working on a wide variety of issues. She holds a B.A. in political science from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and is a lifelong Alaskan. You can reach Shannon at shannon.mccarthy@alaska.gov or (907) 269-0448.

ADDITIONAL \$100 MILLION



Central Region design staff and project managers had another stellar year and delivered not only the originally programmed \$175 million in project funding for design, right-of-way and (mostly) construction but ramped up midway through the year to utilize an additional \$100 million that could have otherwise been lost. The majority of the additional funding was directed to needed paving projects. This dynamic response was critical for the Department to efficiently utilize the “use it or lose it” statewide funding received annually from FHWA.

IMPORTANT LINKS

Where can I go to...

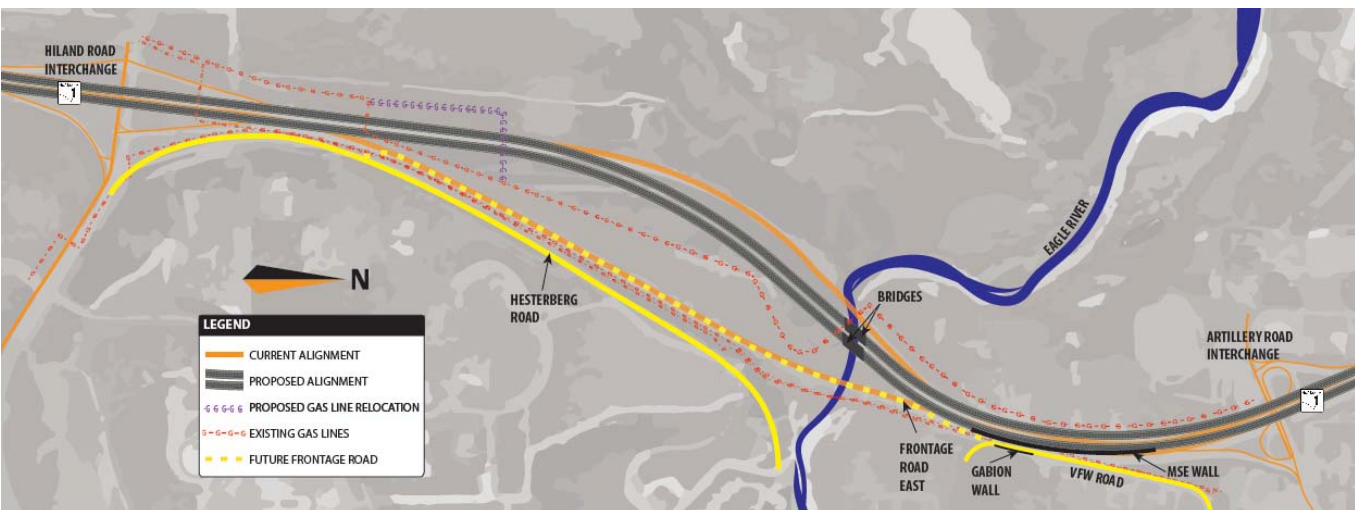
- Find information about road construction projects and road closures?
- Find information about road conditions?
- Locate the Central Region Public Involvement Calendar?
- Get summary information about expenditures on active projects?
- Find websites for Central Region Projects?

<http://alaskanavigator.org/>
<http://511.alaska.gov/>
<http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/calendar.shtml>
<http://dot.alaska.gov/projects-status/index.cfm>
http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/project_info/

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Glenn Highway: Hiland to Artillery Road Capacity Improvement Project Underway

Mat-Su commuters will be happy to know that a project to add capacity to the Glenn Highway at “Brake Light Hill” northbound over the Eagle River is under construction. This project is utilizing \$42.5 million from a voter approved bond package to construct a new and expanded northbound portion of the Glenn Highway from Hiland Road to just past Artillery Road. Due to the use of non-federal funds and reliance on a design-build process, the Department is able to expedite the delivery of this first phase of the project.



Glenn Highway: Hiland to Artillery Capacity Improvement Project concept diagram.

No significant traffic delays are anticipated during this winter’s work. The project completion is anticipated for December 2015. For updates please go to: <http://eagleriverbridgenb.com/> or contact Brian Schumacher at brian.schumacher@alaska.gov or (907) 269-0432.

CONSTRUCTION OF SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS



Parks Highway MP 43.5-44.5 at Church Street.

Parks Highway MP43.5–44.5 (Lucas to Church)

Work continues on reconstructing the Parks Highway to a five-lane configuration from Lucas Road through the Church Road intersection. Curb, gutter, and storm drains are completed. New traffic signals and lighting will be operational in October, prior to winter shutdown. For updates, visit the project website at <http://dot.alaska.gov/parks2014/>. For more information, contact Laura Paul at laura.paul@alaska.gov or (907) 269-0450.

Parks Highway Safety Improvements

The project to replace guardrails with crash cushions at the railroad crossings near MP 55 and MP 66 was completed in September.

ASSET MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

Parks Highway: MP 123.5 – MP 146 Rehabilitation

The federally funded project is rehabilitating the existing roadway with a 6” foamed asphalt base topped with 4” of hot mix asphalt. Included in the work will be signing, striping, guard-rail, and other miscellaneous items of work. Work is scheduled for winter shutdown in October 2014.

Six miles of paving will be completed with final top lift of asphalt before the season ends. An additional five miles has received the initial bottom lift of asphalt. Remainder of the work will be completed in 2015. For more information, contact Laura Paul, at laura.paul@alaska.gov or (907) 269-0450.



Paving on Parks Highway MP 123.5-146.

Palmer-Wasilla Highway Extension – Pavement Preservation

Project to mill and resurface the travel lanes for the 1.3 mile segment from the Parks Highway to Knik-Goose Bay Road was completed and included guardrail, dig outs, drainage, signs and striping.

Petersville Road - Pavement Preservation

Resurfacing the pavement from the Parks Highway to MP 9.2 was completed in late September.

COORDINATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT



The LRTP Update project team held a recent workshop on the current and future needs of the Mat-Su transportation system and the challenges of how to pay for improvements in a time of fiscal constraint.

Long Range Transportation Plan - 2014 Update

ADOT&PF is a partner with the Borough on a fiscally-constrained LRTP which includes a 6-year fiscally constrained Capital Improvement Program. Public involvement efforts to date include three Open House events and one Transportation Workshop event. <http://www.matsugov.us/plans/lrtp>

Transportation Fair - October 22nd

Reserve October 22, 2014 on your calendar for the seventh annual Mat-Su Transportation Fair. This is a great way to learn about all the transportation projects underway in the Mat-Su. The event is at Raven Hall on the Alaska State Fairgrounds and will run from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. <http://matsutranspofair.blogspot.com/>

Parks Highway Alternative Corridor

The Project Team presented the draft Break-Even Analysis and draft Corridor Report to the Steering Committee for review. For the latest information contact Allen Kemplen, AICP-CTP at allen.kemplen@alaska.gov or (907) 269-0513 or visit the project website at <http://www.parkshwyalternative.com/>

ADOT&PF Assumes Knik Arm Crossing Project

In the spring of 2014, the Alaska State Legislature approved the Knik Arm Crossing’s financial plan and transferred the project’s design and construction to ADOT&PF. Commissioner Pat Kemp said “ADOT&PF is now taking this transition time to work methodically and carefully. We do not want to lose the substantial work efforts and momentum accomplished to date. Reaching the important milestone of the financial plan approval opens the door to bring this large complex project to fruition.” Project information is available at: www.knikarmbridge.com/ and look for further updates in coming newsletters.