



Director's Quarterly

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Spring Edition - Greater Southwest Area

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.

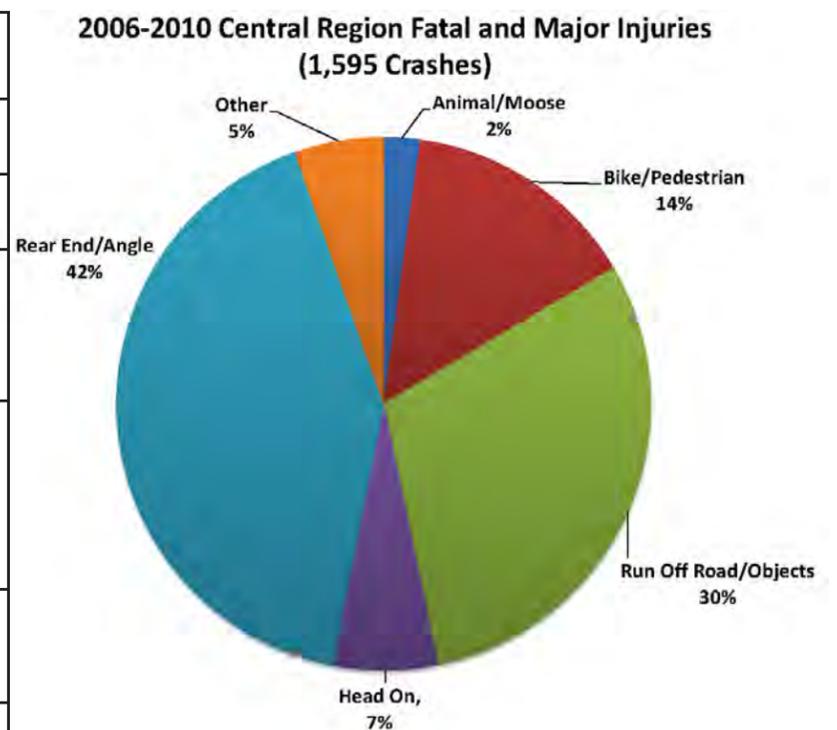
Steadily warming temperatures and increasing sunshine also usher in a transition from our "winter" to "summer" maintenance practices. This requires adaptability from those members of our team who are often the first point of contact for Alaskans – our Maintenance and Operations (M&O) personnel. These 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.

The 2012 Alaska Strategic Traffic Safety Plan

The Department partnered with law enforcement agencies, emergency responders, various user groups, local governments and numerous agencies to develop the Alaska Strategic Highway Safety Plan, which was recently updated as the 2012 Alaska Strategic Traffic Safety Plan. It used a data driven, multidisciplinary approach involving the 4 E's of safety – engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency medical services, to identify the plan's statewide goals, objectives. Three task forces investigated trends and contributing factors, data issues, funding, and legislative issues relating to the key emphasis areas: driver behavior, with specific focus on impaired driving and young drivers; roadways, including lane departures, intersections and animal-vehicle collisions and looking at special users, crashes involving pedestrians, motorcyclists or bicyclists.

4 "E's of Safety:

- Engineering (road improvements)
- Education
- Enforcement
- Emergency Response

The entire Plan, a summary of safety strategies and related info is available at <http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdplng/stsp>

IMPORTANT LINKS

How do I...

- Get more information about active Central Region Projects? <http://dot.alaska.gov/projects-status/index.cfm>
- Locate the Central Region Public Involvement Calendar? <http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/calendar.shtml>
- Find an Airport Layout Plan (ALP)? http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdav/airports_public_central.shtml
- Find websites for Central Region Projects? http://dot.alaska.gov/creg/project_info/
- Find information on the Alaska Aviation System Plan? <http://www.alaskaasp.com/>
- Find project advertising dates, contract status/award information, or Capital projects out for bid <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/procurement/index.shtml>

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 269-0760.

Carl High - Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak District Superintendent

Carl 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.



Troy Larue - Southwest Alaska District Superintendent



Troy became the Southwest Alaska District Superintendent in 2003 and is responsible for overseeing maintenance of Central Region's facilities in the vast region encompassing the Kuskokwim Delta, Aleutian chains, Bristol Bay, and Lake Iliamna area including 72 airports with 54 employees and 63 local contractors.

The many challenges his staff face in remote Alaska require them to have skills and knowledge that take years to attain in diverse topics such as Crash/Fire/Rescue techniques, preventative maintenance, road plowing and grading, painting, conditions reporting, airfield communications and lighting and operating large specialized equipment.

His biggest concern in the spring time is keeping the DOT&PF assets safe, primarily from ice jams and flooding along the Kuskokwim River. Once the ice is gone, gravel and other supplies can be delivered, and staff is busy repairing airports and roads throughout the district.

Troy can be reached at troy.larue@alaska.gov, or at (907) 269-0751.

Steve Banse - Mat-Su District Superintendent

Steve joined DOT&PF in 1989 and in 2012 he was promoted to the position of Mat-Su District Superintendent, which includes the villages of McGrath, Takotna, Lime Village, Nikolai, and Flat. Steve oversees 32 equipment operators, two administrative assistants and several contractors. His district encompasses five highway stations and 12 airports.

Putting his employees first and giving them the tools necessary to achieve their goals brings Steve a great deal of enjoyment. He feels that keeping our transportation system moving in a safe and productive direction can best be achieved when team members take ownership of what they are doing.

Steve can be reached at steven.banse@alaska.gov or (907) 745-2102.



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/mscve/main.cfm?go=weightrestrictions>

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For road condition information:



For More Information Contact:

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