

NDOT NEWS

Tri-Yearly News of the Nevada Department of Transportation

Nevada Kicks Off Largest Highway Construction Program in its History



The Director's Corner

**Jeff Fontaine, P.E.,
Director**



Highway Projects Created Through Efforts of NDOT and its Partners

In the past six months, a record number of major highway construction projects have broken ground. Each ceremonial turning of a shovel or signing of a contract holds the promise of creating transportation solutions for a growing state, as well as significant employment and economic activity.

Every groundbreaking is both the culmination of years of work in planning and the commencement of construction. The planning and design for new transportation projects involve locating the project, obtaining right-of-way, financing, design and engineering work, traffic studies, drainage concerns, environmental reviews and mitigation efforts. Each project is guided by local entities which not only help NDOT set priorities, but also shape the final outcome. We are looking forward to even stronger ties with county governments, regional transportation commissions and metropolitan planning organizations.

When a groundbreaking takes place, there are hundreds of people who have made their contributions over the years, including those who participated in the beginning of the project and have since retired. All of those who have contributed over the years deserve to be thanked for their efforts.

Our “super projects,” such as the U.S. 95 widening in Las Vegas, construction of the Hoover Bridge, the I-580 extension from Reno to Washoe Valley and the Carson Freeway require even more cooperation among NDOT staff, engineering consultants, contractors and the Federal Highway Administration.

Of course, we must also acknowledge the guidance of the State Transportation Board. Their work in setting policies and deciding issues has been a big part of our success. In this edition of NDOT News we report on Nevada’s top showing for highways, bridges and overpasses. It is obvious that our new projects have not been detrimental to our ongoing maintenance efforts.

In planning for the future, NDOT is looking ahead to how our major transportation routes will evolve in the next 25 years. Already completed are two corridor studies: I-80 and U.S. Highway 395/Interstate 580, and the Northeast region of Las Vegas served by the I-15 freeway. The analyses were undertaken in cooperation with local governments by examining existing conditions, and by projecting future conditions and their impacts on the transportation system. Authors of the study identified improvements and evaluated the effect of alternative investment strategies. While the studies are undertaken to fully define investment needs and options for major freeways and interchanges, they also investigate potential improvements to other elements of the transportation system to relieve congestion.

Current studies include I-515 from the Las Vegas Spaghetti Bowl to Foothill Road in Henderson, U.S. 95 from Craig Road to Kyle Canyon, and U.S. 395 from the Carson/Douglas county line to California.

It is clear that our collaborative efforts have worked well for local governments and, more importantly, the public at large. I pledge to maintain those ties as we work to provide the best transportation system possible for Nevada.

On The Cover:

Groundbreakings throughout the state have marked construction projects including the Henderson I-515/215 Interchange, the Carson City Freeway, the I-580 extension from Reno to Carson City, and widening of US-95 in Las Vegas. Gov. Kenny Guinn is shown in the top photo at the groundbreaking for the I-515/215 Interchange. In the lower photo, Gov. Guinn signs the contract for the first phase of the I-580 extension. From left are State Sen. Bill Raggio, NDOT Director Jeff Fontaine, State Transportation Board member Jim Thornton, and Edward Kraemer & Sons, Vice President Tim Muller.

Changes Announced for Director's Office

Jeff Fontaine's promotion from deputy to director of the Nevada Department of Transportation has created several changes in the agency's top management, with Susan Martinovich becoming the new deputy director and Ruedy Edgington, operations, moving into her job as assistant director for engineering. Edgington's vacancy was filled by Rick Nelson, who moved up from District II

22 years of experience, including operations deputy, chief construction engineer, assistant materials engineer and a bridge designer.

Nelson is an innovator in winter maintenance who developed the Road Weather Information System in Nevada. He began his career with NDOT in 1984 as a rotational engineer and worked in operations analysis and then District II as assistant engineer for maintenance. He became district engineer in 1990.

A new deputy director position was created in Las Vegas, and that position has been filled by Rudy Malfabon. Malfabon is a 15-year veteran of NDOT who



CONNECTING THE BELTWAY—Gov. Kenny Guinn and NDOT Deputy Director for Southern Nevada Rudy Malfabon help mark the beginning of construction for the I-515 and I-215 interchange on Sept. 26. The project will complete the final section of the Southern Beltway. Malfabon was appointed to the newly created position of NDOT deputy director for southern Nevada.

engineer in Reno.

Martinovich began working for NDOT after high school and earned an engineering degree from the University of Nevada, Reno. Her experience includes working in the NDOT Bridge Division for six years, Roadway Design for six years and assistant director for seven years.

Edgington is also an NDOT veteran with more than



NEW ASSIGNMENTS—From left are Rick Nelson, assistant director for operations, Susan Martinovich, deputy director; and Ruedy Edgington, assistant director for engineering. The three are all professional engineers with years of experience at NDOT.

left for five years to serve as construction engineer for the Washington State Department of Transportation. In his new position, Malfabon will work as a liaison with local public works agencies and the regional transportation commission.

At the district level, Thor Dyson was chosen to succeed Nelson in District II, and Kevin Lee was named to head District III in Elko. Both are veteran employees of the department and moved up from the assistant district engineer position.

Highway Construction Projects Move From Drawings to Reality

Construction projects have leaped from drawings to construction this fall as contracts are awarded and work begins in the metropolitan areas of Las Vegas, Reno and Carson City. The projects are needed to add vehicle capacity as Nevada continues its role as the fastest-growing state in the nation. Several projects have been awarded and construction is now under way.

Southern Beltway

Construction began in October on the state's third major freeway interchange, and the last link in the Southern Beltway: the Henderson I-515/215 Interchange. Traffic has increased substantially in the area in the past several years. The freeway will ease transitions between I-515 and I-215. Washington Group International of Las Vegas submitted the low bid of \$82 million. It is the second largest Southern Nevada contract in NDOT history, surpassed only by the Las Vegas Spaghetti Bowl at \$92 million.

Some of the I-515 Beltway Interchange components include:

- A new interchange at the intersection of I-515 and the Beltway including flyover ramps
- A new diamond interchange at the intersection of I-215 and Gibson Road
- Two new miles of the Beltway from just west of Gibson Road to the new interchange at I-515
- Updated drainage crossings for the Beltway from Gibson Road to Reserve Drive
- Sound walls along the Beltway and I-515
- Bicycle paths and lanes
- Freeway lighting

In addition to NDOT, the City of Henderson and Clark County Public Works are partners in the project. Construction began on the I-515/Beltway interchange in October, 2003. The entire project will take approximately 2-1/2 years to complete.

Widening US-95 from Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to Rainbow Boulevard is another ongoing



THE KICKOFF—Dignitaries mark the groundbreaking of the I-215/I515 Henderson Interchange on Sept. 26, 2003. Washington Group International of Las Vegas was the low bidder at \$82.2 million.

project in southern Nevada. Work has begun on the \$42 million Rainbow Boulevard/US 95 Interchange, which was recently awarded to Frehner Construction. US-95 widening also includes installation of water lines, storm drains and sound walls prior to the major widening project itself from Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to Rainbow Boulevard in 2004.

The state's most constricted bottleneck is the roadway atop Hoover Dam. The Hoover Dam Bypass Bridge is expected to be completed in 2007. Construction of the bridge approaches have begun in Nevada and Arizona. The low bid on the Nevada approach was \$30.1 million.

Because truck traffic must be routed away from Hoover Dam through Laughlin, an improvement is under way on the detour truckers take on US-95. This fall, a four-lane highway replaced a two-lane road from Searchlight to 18 miles north. The new, divided highway will make the route safer and provide more opportunities for passing.



SAFER ROUTE—US-95 south of Las Vegas became much busier when trucks were banned from using the roadway atop Hoover Dam. That route is now much safer because of 18 miles of new divided highway that allows more opportunities for passing.

Construction began this winter on the next section of the project, from 18 miles north of Searchlight to US 93 near Railroad Pass. Plans are to widen US 95 from Railroad Pass south to the California border.

Construction has begun on St. Rose Parkway (SR 146), the primary state highway connecting I-15 and I-515/US 95, providing a direct connection between downtown Henderson to I-15. The project will cost \$20 million.

Upgrading I-15 at Lamb Boulevard to a full interchange will cost an estimated \$20 million.

Northern Nevada: Ambitious Highway Projects Ahead

While most of the southern Nevada projects are to add lanes and increase capacity, northern Nevada will see the creation of two new freeway sections.

Gov. Kenny Guinn called awarding the bid for the Carson City freeway “great news.”

“The freeway will not only help motorists who drive through Carson City, but drivers throughout Nevada who live in the nation’s fastest growing state.” Guinn is also chairman of the State Transportation Board. “This project will help alleviate the traffic that is bottlenecked in the capital between Douglas County, South Lake Tahoe and Reno. Finishing this project is a top priority in Northern Nevada.”

The project involves constructing a 4.6-mile freeway from Lakeview Hill on the north end of Carson City to US 50 east. An earlier phase, completed in 2001, involved constructing bridges over Arrowhead Drive, Northgate Lane, College Parkway and Emerson Drive at a cost of \$14 million. Construction is expected to take about three years. AMES Construction of Salt Lake City submitted the low bid of \$68.9 million.

“The Carson Freeway is an important project in northern Nevada, but one of only several major capacity projects that the Nevada Department of Transportation plans to have under construction within the next six months,” said Jeff Fontaine, NDOT director.

Another large part of the plan to alleviate traffic concerns between Reno and Carson City will be the extension of I-580, a six-lane freeway. The project will include



SHOVEL TURNS—Gov. Kenny Guinn and Carson City Mayor Ray Masayko share an historic moment on Oct. 15, 2003. The long-discussed Carson City Freeway had its ceremonial start that day, and a large amount of earthwork has already been done.



CONSTRUCTION TEAM—State Sen. Bill Raggio and Gov. Kenny Guinn pose with the construction crew that will be in charge of the I-580 freeway extension. The new roadway from the Mt. Rose Highway south to Washoe Valley includes four bridges, including the Galena Creek Bridge, shown in the photo simulation below. The four bridges are the first phase of construction, costing \$79.5 million.



four bridges and access roads. Construction of the bridges and temporary access will limit the construction impacts from heavy equipment on local roads and US-395. Edward Kraemer & Sons, Inc. submitted the low bid of \$79.5 million.

The three-year, \$53 million project to reconstruct the Reno Spaghetti Bowl continues.

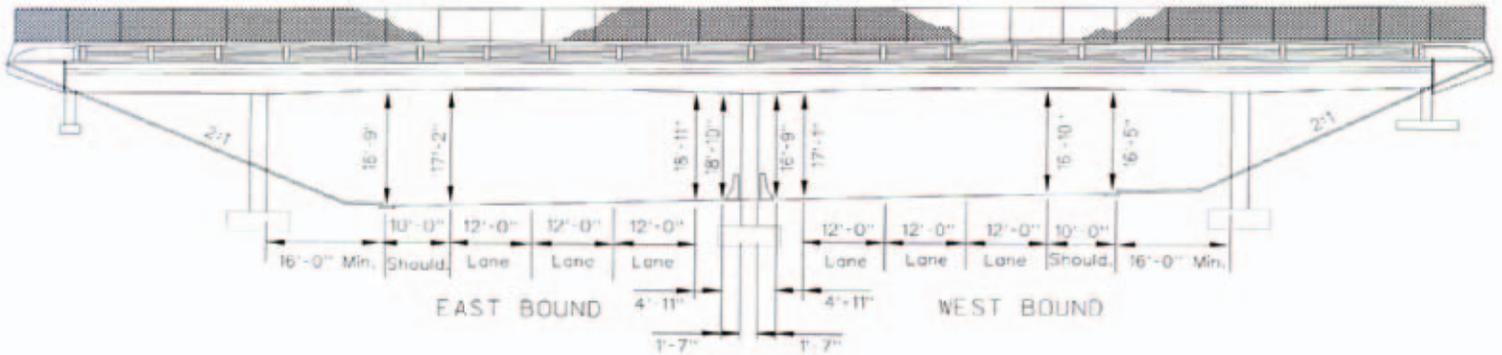
Another important project to improve traffic flow will be the interchange and bridge project at US 395 at Clear Acre Lane and North McCarran Bridge. Construction is expected to cost \$35 million. It is a joint project of NDOT and the Washoe Regional Transportation Commission.



PROGRESS—Paralleling US-395 the new Carson Freeway takes shape. Bridges for the first phase of the freeway have already been built, facilitating construction of the roadway.

Surprising Spans

Who would think Nevada has more than 1,500 bridges?

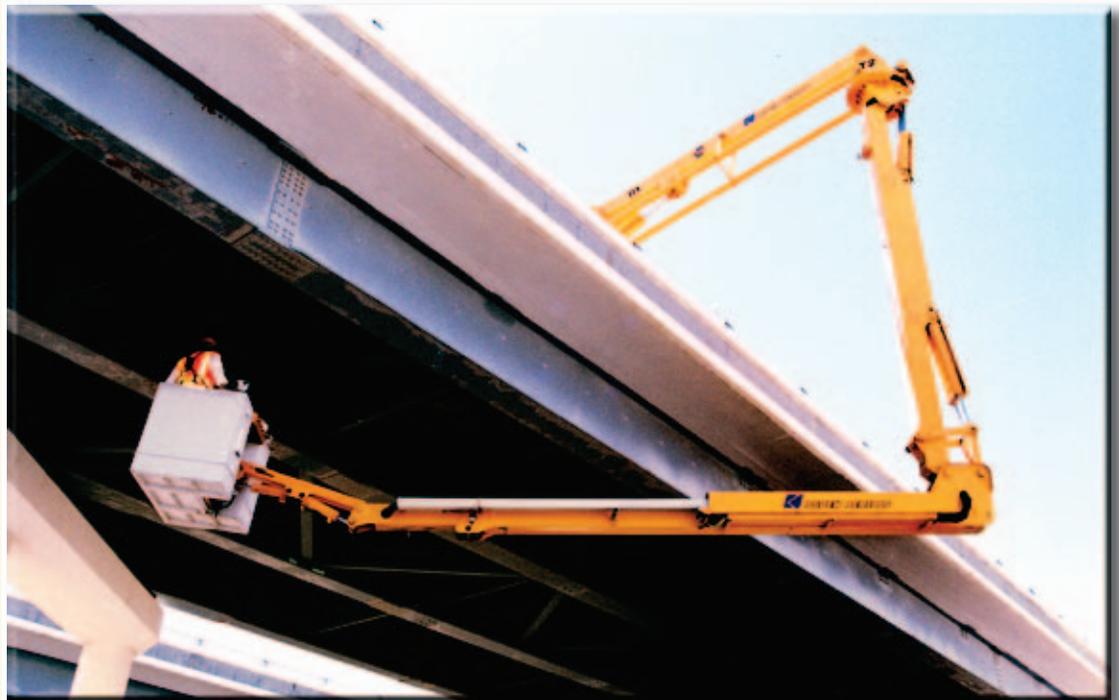


To go along with its number one ranking for smoothest roads, figures compiled by the Federal Highway Administration for 2003 show Nevada at the top of the list for sound bridges. Nevada is tied with Arizona with only five percent of all bridges within state borders having problems structurally or in design. The national average is 26 percent of each state's bridges below standard in some way.

When the large span adjacent to Hoover Dam is built in a few years, it will no doubt become one of the most recognized and photographed bridges in the country. But right now, even without the Silver State's future signature bridge, facts and figures on the state's spans are pretty amazing.

Nevada, not exactly awash in navigable rivers, has 1,657 bridge structures, although many of them are not even noticeable to the traveling public. Large box culverts that provide drainage through usually dry washes qualify as bridges.

It's NDOT's job to inspect all of the bridges in the state, not just the ones it owns. Whether they are state, county or city, Nevada's spans are among the best in the country.



NDOT employees do more than inspect bridges, they also make repairs. KC Eben and Charles Ceccarelli move under a bridge in Winnemucca with a "snooper" truck and bucket to stabilize a crack in a steel support.

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FHWA categorizes deficient bridges as structurally or functionally obsolete. Structurally obsolete means the span has an inadequate load carrying capacity for current truck traffic. Functionally obsolete means the bridge restricts traffic flow or poses a hazard. Examples are bridges that are narrow by today's roadway standards or have an abrupt curve.

The FHWA figures show the national average to be 26 percent of bridges structurally deficient with 15 states having at least 30 percent of their spans in that category.

Keeping track of the condition of Nevada's bridges is a big task. "Every two years bridges get a routine inspection," senior bridge engineer for bridge inventory Hossein Hatefi said. "That's usually a visual inspection for any obvious problems.

"Every four years each bridge receives an in-depth inspection where hundreds of inspections and measurements are taken," Hatefi said. "Larger structures are inspected from a boom truck that allows access to the sides and even underneath bridges."

While several small structures can be visually inspected in a day, it can take inspectors an entire day to

inspect a large bridge in depth.

The examinations and measurements for rating the suitability of bridges are exhaustive. The roadway, including the condition of the asphalt, curbs, median, sidewalks, railing, drains and utilities, are examined. The weight bearing structure, the beams, girders, trusses, rivets and welds are examined and any rust, timber decay or concrete cracking noted.

Inspection also includes bridge abutments, footings and piles. The condition of the channel the bridge spans is also important, because water can erode the land around the bridge structure.

Comparisons with surrounding states:

State	No. of deficient Bridges	Total No. of Bridges	Percent Deficient
Arizona	339	6,729	5
California	4,097	24,446	17
Idaho	632	3,506	18
Nevada	91	1,657	5
Oregon	1,672	6,586	25
Utah	484	2,756	18



Truckers get a warning with a sign like this anytime clearance is less than 16 feet.

The Bridge Division at NDOT has completed an inventory of all the clearances for underpasses on the interstate highways in Nevada. Laser measuring devices make the job much easier. Instead of setting up telescoping measuring rods, lasers provide an accurate reading at the push of a button.

LASER



MEASURING THE CRITICAL DISTANCE

Truckers who are about to travel underneath an interstate overpass count on NDOT to maintain the proper amount of clearance. An oversize load of 15' 6" should easily pass under a bridge 16' high, especially when it was constructed at 16' 6" to allow for a buildup of asphalt over the years.

Like most things in life, however, the subject is more complex. A bridge with plenty of clearance when constructed may have less clearance because several layers of asphalt have been built up on the roadway below.

That's the situation in Nevada where engineers in the bridge division have found eight bridges with less than the interstate standard of 16'. NDOT uses the information on bridge height to plan safe routes for truckers who have loads that are higher, wider or longer than normal. Before they can travel on Nevada roads, truckers must get a permit from NDOT for over-dimensional loads.

The permits allow NDOT staffers to chart a safe course for the truckers through the state, and restrict the times they can travel so their impact on traffic is minimized.

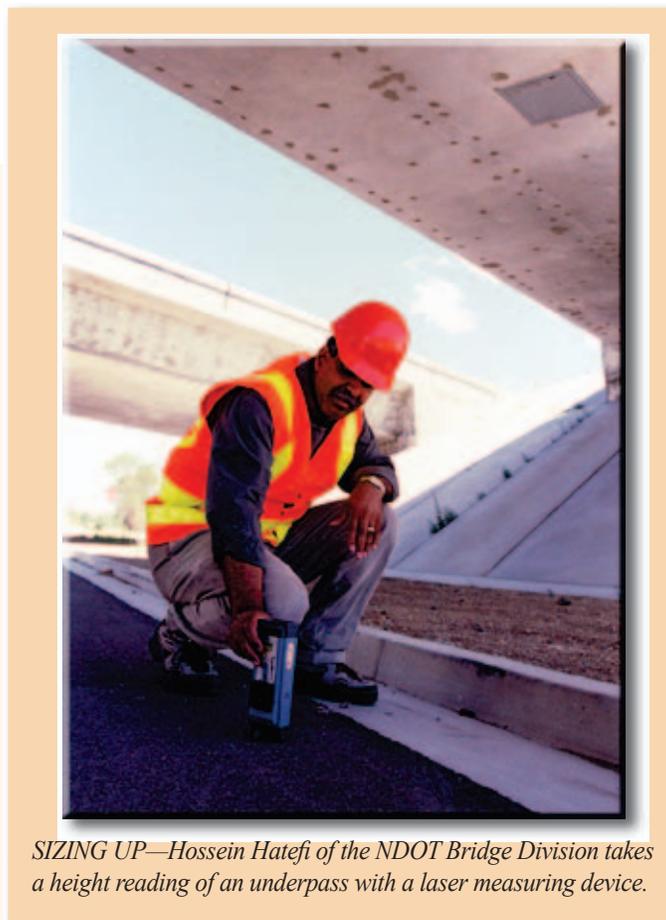
When the bridge division finds an underpass that is less than 16', the most important thing to do is mark the bridge with the actual height. If necessary, truckers can take an exit ramp and avoid the underpass.

"It can be an expensive fix to get a bridge back to 16 feet," Chief Bridge Engineer Bill Crawford said. "You may have to reset the guardrail if it's above the travel way. If you remove asphalt you may have drainage problems. If you have to remove too much asphalt, you may have to work on the foundation.

"Unless you already have a scheduled overlay or a scheduled reconstruction of the roadway, you don't want to redo the underpass to make 16 feet," Crawford said.

Now that the interstate highways throughout Nevada have been checked, the next step is to measure all of the state routes, where the minimum clearance is 14'.

Checking the height of bridges is much easier now that laser devices can instantly display the distance between pavement and overpass. Gone are the days when NDOT employees would have to spend time in the travel lanes with telescoping rods to measure distance. Although NDOT employees must still go into travel lanes to get dimensions, measuring the height of bridges or the width of a roadway takes only a second with the laser device.



SIZING UP—Hossein Hatefi of the NDOT Bridge Division takes a height reading of an underpass with a laser measuring device.

Nevada Leads Country in “Very Smooth” Roads



Just as changing oil in a car on a regular basis can prevent the need for a new engine, putting an overlay on a stretch of pavement can delay an expensive road rebuilding project. That simple approach, applied in a judicious manner, has paid off surprisingly well. Results from the Federal Highway Administration show Nevada leads the country in having “very smooth” interstates.

The national ranking, from data collected in 2001, shows the Silver State having 75 percent of its interstates in “very smooth” condition compared with Georgia’s 68 percent. Most states are well under 50 percent in the “very smooth” category.

NDOT Director Jeff Fontaine said the ranking reflects well on the agency’s employees and contractors as well as the soundness of its maintenance schedule.

“Any state would be proud to earn this ranking, and I feel it is more impressive to achieve the smoothest road status when we are taking on a number of construction and expansion projects.”

Fontaine said NDOT is responsible for maintaining more than 5,000 highway miles.

“The key to success is not letting roads deteriorate,” Fontaine said. “We try to do overlays before cracks or other stresses develop.”

The idea of devoting resources to roadways that were in relatively good shape took a change in thinking, but everyone from top administration at NDOT to those doing day-to-day maintenance has embraced the idea.

Sohila Bemanian, assistant chief materials

engineer for NDOT, said putting down an overlay on a stretch of road might cost \$4 million. A year later, repaving may not be an option and the cost has jumped to \$10 million in reconstruction.

“Past experience told us that we had to reconstruct interstate highways every 12 to 15 years, at a cost of \$1 million per center lane mile,” the engineer said. “We asked, ‘What if we maintained those roads earlier, while the pavement was still in reasonably good shape?’”

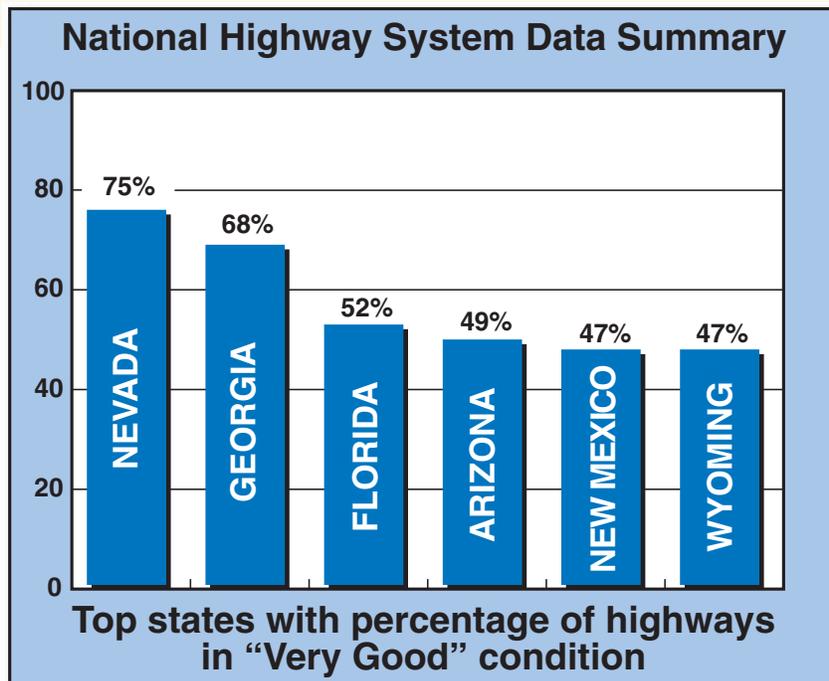
The department found that while a 12-to-15-year old interstate needed to be reconstructed, an eight-year-old highway generally continued to perform well. In

1997, NDOT began to place two-inch asphalt overlays on eight-year-old sections of interstate at a cost of \$400,000 per mile.

Bemanian said the approach saves about \$40 million a year in reconstruction costs. That figure is only a fraction of what the public saves in direct costs with fewer potholes meaning fewer wheel alignments and punctured tires. The plan reduces the duration of

construction and traffic delay, a major concern, especially in the Las Vegas metropolitan area.

The department identified a \$528 million backlog for pavement rehabilitation work in 1999, but by setting



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the correct priorities for projects, the backlog was reduced to \$263 million this year without spending more money than historically was spent on pavement rehabilitation: an average of \$116 million per year in contract maintenance projects.

Based on past performance of road surfaces, NDOT has found that the optimum maintenance schedule for interstates and the highest traffic routes is to have one inch

of their surface milled and two inches of overlay put down every eight years. Category 2 roads (an example would be Carson Street) have two inches of their surface milled and two inches of overlay every 10 years. Category 3 roads, such as US 50 in Austin, receive an overlay every 12 years.

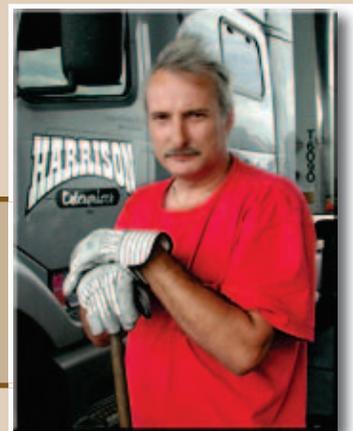
The state's least-used roads receive an overlay every 15 to 20 years.

Truckers and Smoothest Roads

We say Nevada has the smoothest roads in the country. What do you think? (Asked at Sierra Sid's Truck Stop in Sparks.)



"Ain't no doubt. I see you working on the roads and I wonder, 'Why are you tearing that up? It's fine.' But there's no doubt they're as smooth as they can be."—Dave Harrison, Tallmadge OH



"I like the roads here. I like being able to keep my speed up. There's a lot of bugs (Mormon crickets) on the road, though."—Thomas Gailys, Chicago IL



"Smoothest roads? I'll give you that. Nevada also has the least hassles by cops, no scales, nice people."—Robert W. Vermilya, Louisville KY



"Yeah, I like the roads of Nevada, they're really smooth. I-80 is really nice."—Jorge Chacon, Chicago IL



"Well, the smoothest roads except for Las Vegas. Las Vegas has some big bumps on the bridge approaches, but I know where they are and when to slow down. Other than that, you've got good roads. I like Nevada. I just set my cruise control at 65 mph. Nevada has the same speed limit for cars and trucks. Some other states have lower limits for trucks, and that's a pain."—Eldon Richards, McMinnville OR

Specialized Van Proves #1 Ranking

Having the smoothest roads in the country may seem like a bold statement, but it is a claim Nevada can make with confidence, thanks to the meticulous way the state goes about taking stock of 15,000 miles of interstates, U.S. highways, state routes and even paved frontage roads. Every two years two staff members from NDOT's Roadbed Testing make a 12-week swing that covers every NDOT highway and state route.

The big trip is made during odd years, supervisor Patty Polish said. In even years, the staff makes a five-week trip of all the National Highway System roadways.

Nevada's number one designation of road smoothness is based on data collected in 2001.

Technician Cap Parshley drives a van with three lasers in a modified bumper. The lasers scan the pavement and report back a continuous stream of data as to the condition of the surface, from smooth to potholed.

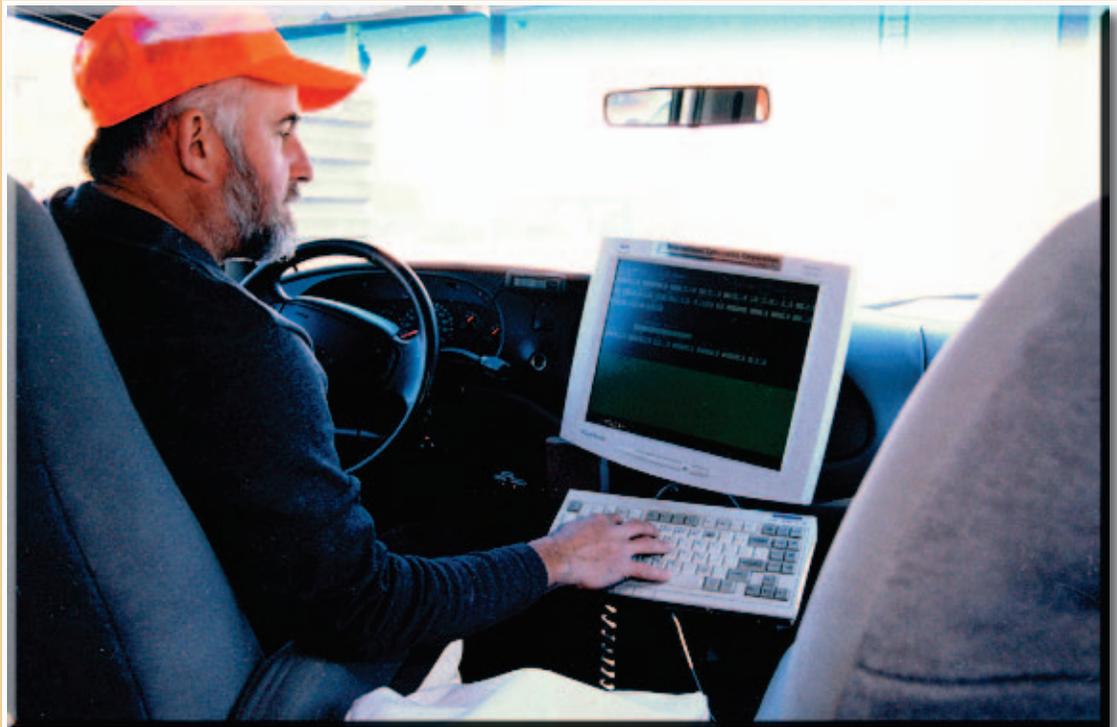
The information is stored on a computer, and the engineering tech riding in the passenger seat monitors the testing.

No stretch of pavement is too short—including one tenth of a mile of Prater Way in Sparks that NDOT owns—or too remote. Parshley and his van take on SR 140 in the extreme northwest corner of the state, an area traversing the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge.

Each day he is checking roads, his van

preparation resembles that of a pilot inspecting an aircraft. "I check the tire pressure every morning, the fluid levels and the belts," Parshley said. "I make sure everything is operational, including lights, gauges and battery connections." Parshley also calibrates the most important piece of equipment: the lasers that measure the evenness of the road.

Polish's staff produces an accurate report that



LASER DRIVEN—Every mile of Nevada highways is surveyed every two years by a van that uses a laser to measure variations of pavement down to millimeters. Cap Parshley is one of those who maintains the van

can be relied on, because of adherence to protocols, appropriate equipment, and experienced staff. As an example, Parshley drives no faster than the speed limit, and stays in the travel, not passing lane. He drives in the wheel paths to get the best gauge of the amount of rutting. The data collected is reviewed for accuracy before it is submitted for reports.

NDOT's professional approach gives an unblinking look at Nevada's roads, and the state's highway system stands the test.

Hundreds turned out to honor Nevada Department of Transportation employees who died while serving the people of the state. It is a memorial that will stand for decades, and one that moved relatives who were able to gaze at individual bronze stars honoring their loved ones.

The memorial is shaped like a traffic barrier rail with a brick and concrete base topped by hand-carved sandstone blocks. Each worker's star has a number to indicate the place on the accompanying Nevada map where he died. NDOT employee donations and contributions from unions helped build the memorial.



Nevada Department of Transportation

Workers Memorial

Dedicated on May 16, 2003, in Carson City



In Memory

Frank H. Buckner - 1948	Thomas West - 1977
Frank S. Boegle - 1961	Lloyd Hansen - 1977
Buddy M. Vidovich - 1965	Robert G. Dixon - 1978
Robert J. Hamm - 1965	Clyde A. Hyde - 1978
Jack Mello - 1965	Patrick J. Daily - 1978
Kenneth G. Harris - 1966	Leonard L. Vest - 1980
Wesley J. Gritton - 1967	Ronald E. Waite - 1986
Sigurd Folwick - 1967	Gerald D. Phillips - 1989
Michael S. Timko - 1971	Frank E. Fuentes Sr. - 1995
Michael L. Rush - 1972	Carroll M. Holt - 1995
Steven B. Milich - 1972	Robert Roach - 1995
Walter F. Hayman - 1973	Anthony R. Thompson - 1999

THIS MEMORIAL IS DEDICATED TO
NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION WORKERS
WHO LOST THEIR LIVES
WHILE SERVING THE PEOPLE OF NEVADA

Counties Work With NDOT to Set Priorities for State Road Programs

From modifying 15 traffic signals in Washoe County at a cost of \$24,000, resurfacing 11 miles of road in Elko County for \$1.7 million, or creating the Hoover Bridge, estimated at more than \$100 million, all transportation projects great and small have their place in Nevada, and a procedure in place that guarantees what is important to local entities is important to NDOT.

The process involves meeting with every county commission or regional transportation commission, assisting them in setting priorities, and gaining county approval for transportation projects.

Each year, NDOT's Program Development Division produces the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the Annual Work Program (AWP), and the Short and Long Range Elements document. All are produced in cooperation with federal and regional agencies, local governments and planning boards. NDOT representatives meet with county commissions or regional transportation commissions annually to seek approval for their county plan.

Employees from NDOT's three districts are also a big part of the equation, as they are in constant contact with representatives of local governments and are aware of local needs.

The STIP is a three-year document, listing all capital and non-capital transportation projects. The AWP lists transportation projects NDOT intends to work on during the upcoming fiscal year, the Short and Long Range Element show proposed projects for the succeeding nine years. The AWP includes projects to be completed by NDOT, operating and capital grants the department plans to award, as well as transit projects.

The "Short and Long Range Element" identifies projects that the state or local governments would like to have, but priorities have not been established.

As part of the process, the department holds an

annual fall workshop in each of its three districts to assist various groups in completing project requests. NDOT's Program Development Division evaluates resulting requests. This process identifies if the project will be placed in the plan and where: Long Range, Short Range, or Annual Plan.

In April, NDOT begins conducting "county consultations." Each county is presented a draft of the three documents, including maps of proposed projects. This is an opportunity for comments and questions about the transportation work proposed. Questions may come from the public, county and other local officials and interested affected parties.

During the consultation, county commissioners approve the plans in their entirety or with exceptions. After each consultation, NDOT prepares a summary on the disposition of all significant comments obtained during the public meeting.

A "Final Draft" document is distributed Aug. 1 to city and county officials, regional transportation officials and other interested parties. Comments on the "Final Draft" document are requested by the end of August and are incorporated into a "Final" document. These documents are prepared and submitted to the governor and the state transportation board for approval in September.

The STIP is then submitted to the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and Environmental Protection Agency for approval.

The STIP and the Short and Long Range Elements are available at libraries throughout the state and on the Internet under the department's web site: www.nevadadot.com.

Face-to-Face Meetings Improve Process

Meeting with county officials face-to-face is important not only for obtaining approval for the county work program, but also to directly respond to questions on other topics.

At the Pershing County meeting in Lovelock, for example, commissioners heard Kent Cooper, NDOT assistant director for planning, outline the Pershing County work program for the upcoming fiscal year. Cooper stated that of the \$5.5 million to be spent on maintenance, almost all of it, \$5.4 million, will be spent on a repaving project on 11 miles of I-80 west of the Dun Glenn Interchange. Proposed projects for future years include chip sealing portions of SR-396 and SR-397, and upgrading the ramp at the I-80 Dun Glenn Interchange.

Commissioners approved the work program, and also expressed their desire to revive discussions on

swapping ownership of a few county and state roads. As Commissioner Roger Mancebo put it, “We definitely want to get these talks back on the front burner.”

They also expressed concern regarding a railroad crossing near the Lovelock Airport. A high crown in the road made it a safety issue for emergency vehicles transferring patients to an air ambulance. Cooper promised he would look into a solution for the grade crossing problem.

He also relayed the good news that an enhancement project—beautification of downtown Lovelock—was high on the list for rural projects and would likely be funded. Cooper also updated the commissioners on continuing projects in Lander County and upcoming work on I-80 in adjacent Churchill County.



DISCUSSION—NDOT's Kent Cooper (right) turns to get information from NDOT staff at the July 21 Pershing County Commission meeting. From left are Chairman Dave Ayoob, Commissioner Roger Mancebo, and Clerk/Treasurer Donna Giles.

Fallon Widening Project Completed

US-50 across Nevada is a major utility corridor, which means electric lines, natural gas pipes, television cables and fiber optic lines all had to be relocated in the \$9 million project to widen the roadway from two to five lanes from Leeteville Junction to the Sheckler Cutoff near Fallon. Utility work was completed, the grading and paving moved along quickly, and the new lanes were opened in late October.

That section of highway, along with others between Fernley and Fallon, has been the scene of several accidents over the past few years, and widening the roadway to two lanes in each direction, plus a center turning lane, is expected to dramatically improve safety.

To improve the entire Fernley to Fallon route, NDOT will widen US-50A from Fernley to Leeteville Junction from two to four lanes. The environmental impacts are being evaluated at this time. With more than 200 parcels of land to be acquired, right-of-way will be a major task, and NDOT will hire consultants to assist in this work.



Vol. 44

No. 3

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