

MEMORANDUM

To: RRC Members
Debbie Alke, Administrator/Aeronautics Division
D. John Blacker, Administrator/Maintenance Division
Monte N. Brown, Administrator/Administration Division
Robert E. Burkhardt/Federal Highway Administration
Dick Clark, Administrator/Information Services Division
Jim Currie, Deputy Director/Department of Transportation
Loran Frazier, P.E., Acting Administrator/Highway and Engineering Division
Drew F. Livesay, Administrator/Motor Carrier Services Division
Jim Lynch, Director/Department of Transportation
Sandra S. Straehl, Administrator/Transportation Planning Division

From: Susan C. Sillick, Manager
Research Programs

Date: April 11, 2005

Subject: Summary of Minutes from March 29, 2005 RRC Meeting

The following RRC members were present: Debbie Alke, John Blacker, Bob Burkhardt, Jim Currie, Loran Frazier, Drew Livesay, Sue Sillick, and Bill Cloud (for Sandy Straehl).

1. **Budget Report** – No discussion
2. **Research Project – current listing** – Sue asked for names of technical panel members for new projects.
3. **Reports:** Available Upon Request
 - 3a. *Determine the Current Rates of Motor Fuel Tax Evasion in Montana* – (03.012) - Progress Report – January 2005
 - 3b. *Ride Specification Review* (03.002) – Progress Report – February 2005
 - 3c. *Evaluation of Methods for Estimation of Bridge-Pier Scour for Streams With Coarse Bed Materials Based on Observed Pier Scour in Montana* – Progress Report – January 2005
 - 3d. *Before-After Crash Analysis: A Primer for Using the Empirical Bayes Method Tutorial* – Final Report – FHWA/MT-04-002-8117-21 – Sue mentioned that the Safety Management Section is using this primer to apply the empirical bayes method.

3e. *Performance of Steel Pipe Pile-to-Concrete Bent Cap Connections Subject to Seismic or High Transverse Loading: Phase II* – FHWA/MT-05-001/8144 – See item 6a.

3f. *Fish Passage at Road Crossings in a Montana Watershed* – FHWA/MT-05-002/8160 – Sue mentioned that the Hydraulics Section is using this report as a design tool.

4. **Contract Extensions:** None

5. **Proposals:**

5a. *Implementing the Products of MDT Ride Specification Review Project*

Matt Strizich/Materials Bureau attended the meeting to discuss this proposal.

The Ride Specification Review project is essentially complete. The Consultant did an excellent job by delivering more than was asked for on time and on budget.

Matt feels that the Consultant can more efficiently implement the results of this research at this time. Implementation will include the development of a profiler operating manual, QC/QA and maintenance plans, training program, revised MT-422 and ride specification, as well as providing training to MDT staff.

Loran Frazier made a motion to fund this project at \$87,646.00. Drew Livesay seconded the motion. All present voted in favor of the motion.

6. **Implementation/Technology Transfer:**

6a. *Performance of Steel Pipe Pile to Concrete Bent Cap Connection Subjected to Seismic Loading or High Transverse Loading – Phase II*

Michael Krausert/Bridge Bureau attended the meeting to discuss the implementation of research results.

The initial implementation will be through bridge design crew chiefs. Crew chiefs will review their projects to determine which MDT bridges would benefit from this new design procedure. Any training that the Engineering staff will need can be accomplished informally on an as needed basis.

Bridges currently in design also will be reviewed to determine if they would benefit from this new procedure; however, any bridges currently under construction will be constructed as designed.

Michael stated that it is estimated this design procedure will be applied to 10% of Montana's bridges, with an estimated increase in the cost of construction being 1%.

MDT's new Bridge Design Manual will include information on the theory and practices of the new procedure.

6b. *The Effects of Highways on Fragmentation of Small Mammal Populations and Modifications of Crossing Structures to Mitigate Such Impacts*

Pat Basting/Environmental, Missoula District attended the meeting to discuss the implementation of the research results.

Guidelines have been developed to guide biologists in determining when these small mammals ramps should be placed in culverts. Typically, ramps will only be placed where:

- ▶ Groundwater primarily drives the wetland hydrology, as opposed to active streams.
- ▶ Small mammal use is a known function of the corridor area.
- ▶ ADT present traveled way (PTW) is at or projected to be 4000.
- ▶ Pipe replacement is part of the proposed project.

7. *RRC Initiatives*

7a. **Quorum.** The RRC has been operating without requiring a quorum. Sue asked if the current RRC wanted to continue operating in this manner. Jim Currie suggested for now we should continue as is.

7b. **Substitutes.** The RRC has been operating under the rules that members can send a substitute to attend in their place; however, only RRC members are allowed to vote. Sue asked if the current RRC wanted to continue operating in this manner. Jim Currie suggested this conversation be postponed until the April RRC meeting so that Jim Lynch would have the opportunity to participate in the decision.

7c. **Project Solicitation, Prioritization, and Selection.** At an October meeting, the RRC indicated they would "look at the solicitation process to see if there is a better way to approach/handle this process". Sue suggested a synthesis project to see how other states solicit, prioritize, and select new research projects, especially in relationship to strategic planning. Jim Currie said this was a good idea. Sue will obtain a proposal for further RRC consideration.

7d. **Eligibility Process.** At an October meeting, the RRC indicted they wanted to "review the eligibility process" and felt "the Department should find a way to fund projects even if they are not eligible for federal dollars". Sue indicated she doesn't have funding for state funded research projects. If projects are not eligible for federal

funds, Sue refers these projects to others, as appropriate, where funding might be available.

7e. **Research Funding.** Sue had been asked to give a presentation on research funding. Sue distributed a handout on the topic and discussed potential pots of research funds.

cc: Craig L. Abernathy/Research Programs
Suzy Althof/Contract Plans Bureau
Kent M. Barnes, P.E./Bridge Bureau
Bruce H. Barrett/District Administrator-Billings
Lisa Durbin/Construction Administration Bureau
Jeffery M. Ebert, P.E./District Administrator-Butte
Paul R. Ferry, P.E./Highways Bureau
John Horton/Right-of-Way Bureau
Paul Jagoda, P.E./Construction Engineering Bureau
Michael P. Johnson/District Administrator-Great Falls
Dwane Kailey, P.E./Acting District Administrator-Missoula
Ray Mengel/District Administrator-Glendive
Victoria A. Murphy, CPA, CFE/Highway and Engineering Division
Jeanne Nydegger/Research Programs
Timothy W. Reardon/Legal Services
Jean A. Riley, P.E./Environmental Services Bureau
Paula Stoll/Human Resource Division
Matt Strizich, P.E./Materials Bureau
James A. Walther, P.E./Highways and Engineering Division
Duane E. Williams, P.E./Traffic & Safety Bureau
Mark A. Wissinger, P.E./Highways and Engineering Division
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