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MINUTES
Winter Maintenance Policy Coordinating Committee
 October 2-3, 1997
 AASHTO Headquarters, Washington, D.C.

Attendees

Committee Members:

Patrick Hughes, Minnesota DOT (chairman)
 Larry Frevert, Kansas City, MO, Department of
 Public Works
 Clayton Sullivan, Idaho DOT
 Lee Smithson, Iowa DOT
 Bill Mobbs, National Association of County
 Engineers
 Gary Hoffman, Pennsylvania DOT

AASHTO Staff:

Frank Francois
 Ken Kobetsky
 Steven Lenker
 Haleem Tahir

Consultants:

Doug Jonas, Matrix Management Group
 Don Harriott, Consulting Engineer
 Kathryn Harrington-Hughes, Harrington-Hughes &
 Associates

Guests:

Amir Hanna, TRB
 Salim Nassif, FHWA
 Don Steinke, FHWA
 Jim Sorenson, FHWA
 Byron Lord, FHWA

Patrick Hughes, WMPCC chairman, called the meeting to order and welcomed the participants. He reminded the committee that the purpose of SICOP (Snow and Ice Control Pooled Fund Project), which was the focus of this meeting, was to look at all current or planned snow and ice control projects and determine if any gaps exist, and then to recommend ways to fill those gaps and avoid duplication of effort.

Review of the April 1997 SICOP Workshop Draft Report

A SICOP workshop was held in Minneapolis, MN, in April 1997 to review ongoing snow and ice control research projects and to develop project problem statements for additional research projects. A draft report summarizing the discussions and recommendations from the SICOP workshop had been sent to WMPCC members prior to the meeting. Don Harriott, consultant to the committee, reviewed the key recommendations from the workshop.

Review of Comments on Workshop Report Received from SICOP Agencies

Ken Kobetsky briefly summarized the comments received to date from the committee members (Attachment A).

Update on Current Non-SICOP Snow and Ice Projects

Salim Nassif provided an update on FHWA's snow and ice control projects (Attachment B). He noted that approximately 10,000 manuals of practice (Test and Evaluation Project 28) have been distributed, and the manual is also available on the Web. The test and evaluation projects continue to get products into the hands of users. An Australian scientist recently contacted him about a means of more inexpensively producing CMA. The "Ice Warriors" outreach program has been very successful. Byron Lord added that FHWA is about to award a contract on informational needs for ITS, which will help to fold RWIS into the ITS program.

Haleem Tahir reviewed the mission, goals, and activities of the anti-icing/RWIS Lead States team. He stated that the Lead States team is focusing on benefits versus costs analysis. He distributed a list of the team's accomplishments in 1997 (Attachment A) and a printout of a slide presentation (Attachment B). Larry Frevert pointed out that the Lead States activities do not address local highway agencies and governments.

Amir Hanna provided an update on NCHRP Project 20-7 Task 83, "Guide for Snow and Ice Control," and NCHRP Project -13, "Snow and Ice Control Materials and Methods." (Attachment B). The "Guide for Snow and Ice Control" is due January 31, 1998. The "Guidelines for Snow and Ice Control Materials and Methods" project has not yet been awarded; work is expected to get under way in March 1998. The NCHRP snowplow visibility project is scheduled to be completed in 1999; an interim report is now available. He encouraged the WMPCC to submit projects for NCHRP consideration for FY99; submittals are due at the end of October.

Review of Specific Recommendations in Each of the Project Areas

Don Harriott, Doug Jonas, and Kathryn Harrington-Hughes, who served as consultants to the SICOP workshop, summarized the action items and goals developed for the 14 projects discussed at the SICOP workshop (see appendix):

1. Anti-icing/deicing materials and operations
2. RWIS meteorology and operations
3. Foils
4. Plow hitches
5. GPS/GIS instrumentation
6. Roadway temperatures
7. Surface friction
8. Computerized controls
9. Interactive displays
10. Avalanches.
11. Rear dumping/loading
12. Customer services
13. Urban issues
14. Snow fences

Specific Projects To Be Considered in Each Project Area

The committee thoroughly discussed the recommendations in each of the 14 areas. Although the committee members believed that all recommendations had merit, they also realized that there was a limit on what could realistically be accomplished by SICOP.

The chairman asked each committee member to choose his "top-five" recommendations; when the votes were tallied, the following 10 topics were deemed to be the of the highest priority (listed here in order of highest to lowest):

1. Anti-icing training
2. RWIS training
3. Anti-icing materials/testing
4. Best practices for urban areas
5. Investigate GPS in winter maintenance
6. Friction measurement
7. Winter maintenance public information/public relations
8. Driver education/training
9. Anti-icing training for local governments
10. High-tech applications in winter maintenance

The projects all fell into one of four categories: training, materials applications and specifications, technological advancements, and public relations/communications. The committee members suggested that an expert task group (ETG) be formed in each of these areas, to provide guidance and oversight to the projects.

Pat Hughes stressed the need to develop a matrix for the four categories, showing who is doing what, with what resources, and at what cost. At the committee's request, the matrices will be prepared by the following individuals:

- Anti-icing—Don Harriott
- RWIS—Doug Jonas

- GPS and Friction—Don Harriott, with the assistance of Lee Smithson and other committee members
- Public relations/communications—Kathryn Harrington-Hughes

Ken Kobetsky suggested that more information be provided to NACE and to the States, to generate additional support for SICOP. He suggested that a progress report be sent to the Standing Committee on Highways *before* their November meeting. He also added that the volume of work being recommended by the WMPCC would require additional staff support at AASHTO.

Haleem Tahir asked whether there was time to prepare and submit a second-stage problem submission statement to the Standing Committee on Research. While the committee felt there was time, they expressed concern about SCOR's long review and start-up process, which would mean that a project, if accepted, would not get under way before 2000.

Discussion of How SICOP, FHWA Snow and Ice Projects, and NCHRP Projects Relate and Fit Together in a Total Program

In general, the committee members stated that the WMPCC should act as an umbrella organization, playing a coordinating role for the activities of the many players in this area (including Lead States team, NCHRP, TRB, AASHTO, APWA, FHWA, NACE, NHI). As far as its relationship with the anti-icing/RWIS Lead States team, the committee felt that the WMPCC should focus on the policy level and should work with the Lead States to ensure that they work within that policy. Gary Hoffman called the WMPCC a "change driver," with responsibility for reaching out to other organizations to partner in effecting change. Bill Mobbs added that since most travel occurs on local highways, the projects and products should be relevant to local agencies; states lead the effort, but the committee needs to ensure that the benefits extend to local agencies as well. Salim Nassif suggested that the WMPCC be a sounding post for the highway community, charged with identifying where we are, where we want to go, and how we can get there. Jim Sorenson added that SCOH has charged the WMPCC with taking a lead in snow and ice control activities. Clayton Sullivan pointed out that the committee needs to ensure that the goals are achieved; that it is not enough to turn the projects over to NCHRP etc.; the committee must provide oversight and monitor the projects and adjust them as necessary. He added that Resolution AR-3-94 does a good job of defining the WMPCC's role.

Byron Lord proposed the following mission, goals, and strategies for SICOP:

Mission: To provide leadership, innovation, and results to improve safety, service, environmental quality, reliability, and cost-effectiveness of winter highway operations.

Goals: Change culture, build capacity, close the gap between knowledge and practice, and advance technology.

Strategy: Identify needs, opportunities, and priorities; develop resources, build partnerships; coordinate programs; communicate; promote and inform, educate, plan and conduct projects; ensure deployment.

Frank Francois pointed out that most of the research originally envisioned by SICOP has already been done. The WMPCC now has two key roles: to serve as a coordinating mechanism and to serve as a mechanism to assist implementation. Carrying out those responsibilities will require additional AASHTO staff support. Ken Kobetsky said that the SICOP budget is about exhausted; additional funding will be required.

Jim Sorenson stressed the need to prioritize the needs and then challenge the resources to come forward: if the committee identifies, guides, and endorses the concepts, others will fund. Byron Lord added that the WMPCC was the driving force behind most of the existing FHWA projects.

Larry Frevert reminded the committee that the SICOP participants need to be brought up to date on what is happening with the goals they identified at the workshop.

The committee asked the consultants (Harriott, Jonas, Harrington-Hughes) to prepare a report summarizing the SICOP activities to date and to develop a strawman statement of work for each recommendation of the committee. The SOWs should be prepared to match first-stage proposal format for NCHRP (Title, Description of Need, Objective of Project, Scope, Estimated Cost, Time to Completion). The consultants will send the draft report and statements of work to the WMPCC members as soon as possible, so that they can review and comment on them before they are submitted to SCOH in November.

Pat Hughes said that in his cover letter to SCOH, he will include that the committee is thinking of establishing ETGs, which would be limited to six or seven people each.

The committee members also asked that an update be mailed as soon as possible to all the participants at the SICOP workshop in April 1997. The mailing should include the summary of the workshop (pulled from the draft report prepared by the consultants), the minutes of this meeting, and a copy of the report to SCOH. This information should also be sent to the Lead States team and the SICOP agencies.

Adjournment

Pat Hughes thanked the committee members, consultants, and guests for their participation, saying that he was pleased with the WMPCC efforts to date.



American Association of
State Highway and
Transportation Officials

Darrel Rensink, President
Director
Iowa Department
of Transportation

Francis B. Francois
Executive Director

November 3, 1997

To: Members of the Standing Committee on Highways

From: Frank Francois *DF*

Subject: AASHTO-AGC-ARTBA Joint Committee

The following story appeared in the AASHTO Journal of October 31, 1997, and constitutes a report on the activity of this Joint Committee during 1997:

Joint Statements and a Resolution Approved

Joint statements dealing with the reauthorization of the surface transportation program, implementing SHRP and Superpave technology, and innovative contracting were approved by AASHTO, AGC and ARTBA this week, along with a resolution requesting an NCHRP study on issues behind delays in completing federal-aid construction projects.

The three joint statements and the resolution were developed during the annual meeting of the Executive Committee of the AASHTO-AGC-ARTBA Joint Committee held in Spring Green, Wisconsin in August. For such statements and resolutions to become official, they must be approved by the governing bodies of the three sponsoring organizations. This week AASHTO, along with the Associated General Contractors (AGC) and the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), announced that approval has been obtained, in AASHTO's instance by a ballot of the Board of Directors.

The three joint statements and the joint resolution are as follows, and copies are attached:

- JCS-1-97 - Federal-Aid Surface Transportation Program Reauthorization: Calls for the timely passage of legislation to authorize and appropriate the maximum program funding supportable by the Highway Trust Fund;

- JCS-2-97 - SHRP and Superpave Implementation - Recommends that state transportation agencies and industry jointly implement the application of the Superpave system, as developed under the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP);
- JCS-3-97 - Innovative Contracting: Supports the open competitive bid system as the primary method to be used for construction contractor selection, and states that any alternative method be designed to provide the best value to the public; and
- JCR-1-97 - Issues Involving Delays in Completing Federal-Aid Highway and Bridge Projects: Requests the Transportation Research Board to initiate a study under AASHTO's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) that identifies the leading causes of delays in the completion of federally-assisted projects, and attempt to quantify the costs of such delays.

During their August meeting the members of the Joint Committee received briefings on the status of ISTEA reauthorization, and the impact of proposed clean air regulation and U.S. DOT's proposals for the DBE/WBE program on transportation programs. They also approved two proposed Joint Committee publications for balloting by the three organizations, a "Guide to Small Sign Support Hardware" and a publication on "Cold Recycling of Asphalt Pavements." If the two publications are approved, they will then be published and made available through AASHTO, AGC and ARTBA.

The three organizations have also identified three topics for discussion during the coming year at meetings held in conjunction with the four regional meetings of the AASHTO member departments. They are as follows:

- Environmental processes and transportation project development (AASHTO);
- Issues related to privatization as the response to reduced transportation agency staff (AGC); and
- Preserving the highway funding base as the nation converts to alternative motor fuels (ARTBA).

The 1998 meeting of the Executive Committee of the AASHTO-AGC-ARTBA Joint Committee will be held August 23-25, in Park City, Utah.

Copies of the three joint statements and the joint resolution are attached.

The Joint Resolution

If the joint resolution, seeking an NCHRP project, is to be pursued, SCOH or one of the Subcommittees might want to take it up. I would suggest the Subcommittee on Construction. A problem statement would need to be drafted, and submitted to the NCHRP.

If SCOH regard the subject matter of this joint resolution to be of a high priority, it might be possible to obtain at least some funding for an early start from either NCHRP Project 20-7, which is administered by the Standing Committee on Highways, or another existing NCHRP project where some underutilized funds may exist. The AASHTO staff will be pleased to explore sources of funding, if SCOH or a subcommittee elects to pursue the joint resolution.

JOINT COMMITTEE STATEMENT JCS-1-97

TITLE: FEDERAL-AID SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION

To continue to meet America's highway safety and mobility needs, and provide for economic growth, the nation must expand its transportation investments to a level that is sufficient to ensure system preservation, modernization and continued developments.

Authorization for the Federal surface transportation program expires on September 30, 1997. AASHTO, AGC, and ARTBA urge Congress to expeditiously approve a multi-year reauthorization bill that provides the funding necessary to meet the identified highway investment needs. The revenue in the Highway Trust Fund is collected from the users of the highway system as the method for ensuring that adequate investment will be made to improve and maintain our vital highway network and it should be spent for that purpose. The revenue stream to the Highway Trust Fund can support a \$32 billion annual investment.

The U.S. highway network is the largest, most complex in the world. It has contributed significantly to making the U.S. a world economic leader. Economic growth and highway travel are directly linked. The U.S., however, is now facing a transportation infrastructure investment deficit that threatens that economic standing. Real dollar highway capital investment per vehicle miles of travel decreased by 1 percent from 1985-95 at the same time that U.S. travel increased by 37 percent.

According the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) most recent highway conditions and investment requirements report, approximately 60 percent of U.S. roads are in poor to fair condition, and one third of our bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. The U.S., at all levels of government, annually invests approximately \$42 billion in highways. To simply maintain current highway and bridge conditions, the U.S. DOT estimates that an investment of \$55 billion annually is needed. Improving our road and bridge conditions to reduce congestion and meet current needs would require an annual investment of \$75 billion.

By investing in our nation's roads and bridges we are truly investing in America. A U.S. DOT study found that every \$1 billion investment in highways and bridges creates more than 42,000 jobs. Furthermore, for every \$1 invested in the Interstate Highway System, \$6 is returned in economic benefit. Similarly, the U.S. DOT estimates that investments in highway safety improvements alone have saved over 32,000 lives and prevented more than 750,000 nonfatal injuries since 1974.

Reauthorization of the Federal-aid Highway Program with adequate resources will ensure that these benefits to the Nation continue. Again, AASHTO, AGC, and ARTBA urge timely passage of legislation to authorize and appropriate the maximum program funding supportable by the Highway Trust Fund.

Approved by the governing body of each of the three sponsoring organizations, i.e., AASHTO, the Associated General Contractors (AGC) and the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) on October 30, 1997.

JOINT COMMITTEE STATEMENT JCS-2-97

TITLE: SHRP AND SUPERPAVE IMPLEMENTATION

The \$150 million, five-year Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP) produced over 100 products intended to improve the quality of America's highways. Many of the SHRP research products are now being implemented under the leadership of AASHTO's Task Force on SHRP Implementation and the Federal Highway Administration, an activity that requires cooperation between highway agencies, engineers, and the construction industry. A brochure produced by AASHTO titled "Bringing New Technology to Today's Highways" describes the SHRP implementation program of the Task Force.

A principal product of the asphalt pavement research conducted under SHRP is the new Superpave process, a performance-based materials selection and mixture design system for use in constructing superior hot mix asphalt pavements. The Superpave System yields mixture designs that are expected to perform more reliably than mixtures designed with current methods, because materials are selected and mixtures designed to meet the anticipated climatic and traffic conditions of the pavement.

The Superpave system provides the highway agency and the construction contractor the information needed to knowledgeably select materials and control construction to help ensure a durable, reliable finished product. While application of individual components will probably yield performance gains, only uniform application of the entire system will guarantee reliable performance. This revolutionary shift in the way most agencies and contractors construct asphalt pavements requires cooperation in the adoption and implementation of the Superpave system.

The AASHTO-AGC-ARTBA Joint Committee recommends that state transportation agencies and the industry join as full partners in implementing the application of the Superpave system wherever deemed appropriate to provide the American public with the finest, most cost effective pavements in the world.

Approved by the governing body of each of the three sponsoring organizations, i.e., AASHTO, the Associated General Contractors (AGC) and the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) on October 30, 1997.

JOINT COMMITTEE STATEMENT JCS-3-97

TITLE: INNOVATIVE CONTRACTING

State Highway Agencies have been experimenting with a variety of innovative contracting methods for the delivery of construction projects. Traditionally the competitive bidding system, with award to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder, has been the primary contracting method for the delivery of public projects, especially for highway and bridge construction. The innovative contracting practices being used are, in some cases, variations within the competitive bidding process, while in other cases they significantly depart from the competitive bidding process.

The reasons for consideration of new contracting practices vary from state to state. Some of the innovative methods being used include: cost plus time bidding, lane rental, warranty, design-build, bid averaging, indefinite quantity/indefinite delivery, life cycle cost bidding, and a number of other variations.

The decision to use an innovative contracting method should be based on demonstrated value that is added by use of the new method. Prior to selection of innovative contracting methods, the following criteria should be considered, as a minimum:

Is project delivery faster and therefore the public less inconvenienced?

Is quality in the finished product enhanced, and how will it be measured?

Is the cost of the project increased or decreased?

Is the public trust in the contracting process compromised?

Is there a negative or positive impact on competition?

Is small business participation negatively or positively impacted?

Will disputes and claims be reduced or increased?

The AASHTO-AGC-ARTBA Joint Committee believes that the open competitive bid system should be the primary method used for construction contractor selection in the delivery of public transportation projects. Any alternative method considered should be designed to deliver the best value to the public and maintain the highest level of integrity and public trust in the contracting process.

Approved by the governing body of each of the three sponsoring organizations, i.e., AASHTO, the Associated General Contractors (AGC) and the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) on October 30, 1997.

JOINT COMMITTEE RESOLUTION JCR-1-97

TITLE: ISSUES INVOLVING DELAYS IN COMPLETING FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

WHEREAS, transportation departments and highway contractors share the desire to complete quality constructed highway and bridge projects in the most cost efficient and timely manner; and

WHEREAS, transportation departments and highway contractors realize that delays in completion of highway and bridge projects can result in higher costs and inconvenience for our customer -- the American public; and

WHEREAS, project delays can lengthen the exposure of highway users to construction work zones, potentially increasing safety risks; and

WHEREAS, transportation departments and highway contractors have a mutual desire to avoid litigation to resolve claims that can arise due to delays in project completion not caused by the contractor; and

WHEREAS, transportation departments realize delays in project schedules not caused by the contractor can have a negative economic impact on the contractor, including unplanned overhead costs; and

WHEREAS, highway contractors realize that transportation departments can have difficulty in controlling some circumstances that cause project delays; and

WHEREAS, such delays often occur on federally-assisted projects that serve high demand corridors important to the economy;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the AASHTO-AGC-ARTBA Joint Committee request that the Transportation Research Board (TRB) initiate a study under NCHRP 20-24 that:

- (a) identifies the leading causes of delays in the completion of federally-assisted highway and bridge projects; and
- (b) attempts to quantify the annual cost of such delays; and
- (c) describes how the individual states handle compensation to contractors for delays that are beyond the contractor's control for the purposes of providing a body of knowledge that can be used to develop solutions that will help minimize project delays on federally-assisted projects in the future as well as solutions that will help minimize litigation in the handling of compensation to contractors for delays beyond their control.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AASHTO-AGC-ARTBA Joint Committee submit the proposal to TRB for consideration.

Approved by the governing body of each of the three sponsoring organizations, i.e., AASHTO, the Associated General Contractors (AGC) and the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) on October 30, 1997.

Report to the Standing Committee on Highways from the National Transportation Product Evaluation Program Oversight Committee

INTRODUCTION

Spurred on by the full support of the fifty-two AASHTO member departments, the National Transportation Product Evaluation Program (NTPEP) moves into the end of 1997 with the expectation that it will double the number of ongoing evaluations in 1998 provided to the AASHTO membership and continue to increase both the quality and utility of its services. Currently, the program oversees ongoing evaluations of pavement marking materials, raised pavement markers & adhesives, sign sheeting materials, temporary traffic control devices and geotextiles. The geotextile evaluation was the first wholly developed by the NTPEP process and also is NTPEP's first evaluation of non-traffic material. During calendar year 1998, NTPEP expects to add new evaluations of arrow boards, portable changeable message signs, roll-up signs, rapid-setting concrete patching material, snow-plowable pavement markers, joint sealers and possibly structural steel coating systems.

The program has active project panels covering the following products, devices and materials:

Arrow Boards	Raised Pavement Markers And Adhesives
Concrete Admixtures	Rapid Setting Concrete Patching Materials
Erosion Control Products	Sign Sheeting Materials
Joint Sealer	Structural Steel Coatings
Pavement Marking Materials	Temporary Traffic Control Devices
Portable Changeable Message Signs	

AASHTO member departments added concrete admixtures, traffic loop sealants and pothole repair materials to the NTPEP scope in response to survey of the states last winter. A new project panel was established for concrete admixtures, while traffic loop sealants were added to the scope of the joint sealer project panel. Pothole repair materials may become an established project panel upon further consideration by the Oversight Committee.

PROJECT PANEL ACTIVITIES

Geotextiles

The first NTPEP evaluations of geotextiles were performed by member departments in New York, Arizona and Maryland beginning in April, and the first report of results will be published in early November. Currently the second cycle of tests is under way. The April cycle of tests included 49 products submitted for evaluation by six different manufacturers. The September cycle of tests included two additional manufacturers who submitted a total of 20 products. Next year, NTPEP will invite manufacturers to submit products for cycles beginning in January, April, June and September.

Pavement Marking Materials

Evaluations have begun on the new NTPEP test decks located in Alabama and Minnesota. Last June, 20 different manufacturers installed a total of 190 products on the Alabama deck and last July 18 manufacturers installed 160 products on the Minnesota deck. Louisiana, South Carolina and New York are performing laboratory evaluations of the materials that go onto the Alabama test deck. Louisiana is testing thermoplastics and preformed tapes, South Carolina is testing paints and New York is testing epoxies. Minnesota, Kansas and New York are performing laboratory tests on the materials that are applied to the Minnesota test deck. Kansas is testing thermoplastics, New York is testing epoxies and Minnesota is performing all other laboratory tests. Next year, decks will be installed in Pennsylvania and Texas.

Sign Sheeting Material

The Sign Sheeting Project Panel recently developed a new work plan for the evaluation of rollup signs, which is

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currently under ballot by the NTPEP Oversight Committee. The panel anticipates that these evaluations will be offered to manufacturers as part of the 1998 evaluations.

The 1997 evaluations of sign sheeting materials included 66 panels (combinations of sheeting and colored inks) submitted to NTPEP from four different manufacturers.

The 1998 sign sheeting evaluations will follow the same format as used in 1997 when Virginia fabricated test panels for outdoor exposure testing and send them to the test sites in Arizona (Phoenix and Flagstaff), Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina and Virginia. Missouri also provides assistance by providing light tunnel evaluations of the Arizona panels.

Temporary Traffic Control Devices

Three manufacturers submitted seven different flexible delineators for the evaluations completed in Tennessee in July 1997. The new cycle of testing begins with the recently-completed warm weather tests and ends with cold weather tests next Winter. Tennessee also completed impact tests ending the test cycle that began last winter on four plastic barrels and two flexible delineator posts. A report of the completed tests was published in October.

Portable Changeable Message Signs (PCMS) and Arrow Boards

The Temporary Traffic Control Devices Project Panel working together with industry developed a work plan at their May meeting that was later approved by the NTPEP Oversight Committee. North Carolina agreed to serve as the lead state for these evaluations which are targeted for next spring. The NTPEP Coordinator and North Carolina DOT are currently working out the final logistical details needed prior to inviting manufacturers to submit products for this new evaluation.

Raised Pavement Markers and Adhesives

Three manufacturers submitted nine products for evaluation at the Georgia test site. The project panel plans to continue evaluating these products at field sites in Georgia and Texas in 1998.

NTPEP will offer evaluations of snow-plowable markers for the first time in 1998, with Ohio performing the evaluations.

Erosion Control Products

This new project panel had a productive May meeting in which they targeted rolled erosion control products and mulches/tackifiers. The evaluations of these products will include index and performance based tests. The panel is working closely with industry and the Texas Transportation Institute to develop work plans in these areas.

Rapid Setting Concrete Patch Material

With recent approval of their work plan, the panel hopes to begin evaluations of products later this year. The state of Kansas will perform the evaluations of these products.

Structural Steel Coatings

The panel is developing a work plan based on AASHTO's proposed "Standard Recommended Practice for Evaluation of Coating Systems with Zinc Primers." The panel Chairman is working closely with the Subcommittee on Materials to ensure that this practice, once it gains approval, can be referenced in the work plan. At their most recent meeting, the panel benefitted from increased industry involvement thanks to support from the Steel Structures Painting Council.

Joint Sealer

The project panel plans to ballot a new draft of the work plan based on the comments received from the NTPEP Oversight Committee. Evaluations should begin before the end of 1998.

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Graffiti Protection and Removal Products

By action of the Oversight Committee at the request of the panel chair, the Graffiti Protection and Removal Products Project Panel was disbanded at the May meeting with the intention of using the Highway Innovation Technology Evaluation Center (HITEC) process to develop evaluations. The NTPEP Coordinator has worked with HITEC to ensure that the HITEC project will benefit from the past work of the NTPEP panel.

NTPEP Reports

NTPEP published and distributed reports in 1997 on the following subjects:

Pavement Marking Material Field Exposure and Laboratory Evaluations
Sign Sheeting Material Field Exposure and Laboratory Evaluations
Impact Testing of Flexible Delineator Posts and Plastic Barrels
Raised Pavement Markers
Laboratory Evaluations of Geotextiles (expected publication mid-November)

The data tables included in NTPEP reports and other information about NTPEP evaluations are available on the NTPEP web site, accessible through "<http://www.aashto.org>". The web site also includes relevant information on project panels, upcoming evaluations, product submittal documents, project work plans and downloadable evaluation data.

Conclusion

Last year the program received the support of all 52 member departments. All departments have been sent invoices for \$4500 to provide support for NTPEP for fiscal year 1998. This funding is still critical as it provides the budget for the program's administrative costs, which continue to increase as NTPEP grows. Industry pays the entire cost of the actual evaluations through the fees they pay when they submit products.

The member departments can provide the greatest help to NTPEP by using the evaluation results. Industry questions the states' commitment to NTPEP whenever they see states performing evaluations that duplicate those performed by NTPEP. I would encourage you to investigate whether your state takes full advantage of existing NTPEP evaluations. Further, I would urge you to send at least one representative from your state to the Annual NTPEP Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee next May. By providing this travel support you can ensure that the evaluations will provide the information your state needs and thereby reduce the need to spend money on duplicative evaluations.

The strong performance of this program is partly due to the willingness of the member departments to perform the evaluations. As program growth continues, more states can take advantage of the opportunity to evaluate products. By participating, a member department can undertake a program in which they have an interest and be reimbursed for their work.