

**MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (SE)
and ACEC/MO 2023-24 LIAISON COMMITTEE**

**October 5, 2023
10:00 AM - SE SK District Conf Room**

MEETING MINUTES

- Welcome and Introductions
 - see attached list of invited attendees – *See attached attendee list. Mark C. started off introducing Jason W. as the new Assistant District Engineer over Program Delivery in the SE District. Andrew Meyer retired.*
 - icebreaker activity – *Jeff S. - Why did you become a civil engineer?*
 - MoDOT SE District Updates
 - Funding – *Mark C. – MoDOT has had recent statewide legislative success, but inflation has eaten into that & hurt the program. In SE District we are holding our own with enough to maintain, but no expansion work. Bridge funding from Governor was good for the District. Bootheel Bridge Bundle almost complete. We built 7% into our forecasts and hope by years 4-5 there will be some wiggle room if inflation holds to 5% or lower. Asphalt prices continue to be high, especially on west side of the District. Also, less competition still driving up bids, getting 1-2 bidders on asphalt jobs and 1-2 bidders on west side of District for bridge jobs, a little better on east side of District.*
 - Staffing Mark C. – *6 months ago there 10-15 job openings, now it's 35-50, the bulk of which are in operations. Traffic stretched thin looking for traffic operations engineer, using retirees to bridge gap. Turnover in construction with some retirements, 3 positions open for a while. Anticipate help from consultants with inspection work, especially plant inspections. Hired a permit specialist to free up engineering staff. A couple openings in design and utilities. Lost some TPD experience from recent TPD promotions to PM. Overall, 80-90% of the District management leadership team is within 3 years of retirement eligibility and there is lack of experience behind them.*
 - Delivery of current projects Mark C. – *There have been some consultants missing deliverable dates recently for plans, environmental studies, reports. This hurts because the District sometimes struggles to get core teams (multiple disciplines) pulled together to get internal reviews completed quickly. It's important for consultants to hit deadlines and not wait until the week plans need to be sent to CO.*
- Tim P. – Consultants should let MoDOT know as early as possible if there is going to be a schedule issue. We will work collaboratively with consultants to put a plan in place to deliver, some ideas include increased sub participation.*

Mark C. – Right-of-way staff has been stretched thin in the last year. MoDOT wants to have R/W plans turned in earlier to give more time to their R/W staff. CO is looking at comparing engineering as a % of construction on Design Build v. Design-Bid-Build to see what efficiencies are there. In SE District it's important to find efficiencies in bridge design since many of their projects have nearly identical project sites (drainage ditches and subsurface).

- *Construction costs vs. engineer's estimates – Mark C. – Still a bit “all over the board” but getting more reasonable lately. Bridge and asphalt jobs are still fluctuating. One thing that has helped pricing is giving Contractors longer to complete the project, for example 2 years on a bridge replacement instead of 4 months.*

Benji P. – Asphalt has gone from \$65/T to \$125/T. End of year bids tend to go up as the Contractors get full. Consider combining smaller asphalt jobs and bring in plant, but still run into the issue of buying materials from Pace/Delta/Apex.

- **ACEC Missouri Updates**

- *Missouri legislative update Jeff S. – The policy priorities for next legislative session are to defend the gas tax bill which has come under attack (although a serious challenge is not expected), defend the annual appropriation for funding of I-70 expansion and promote MoDOT's SAFER initiative.*

There is legislative push to put road fund within legislative control. briefly discussed the ongoing lawsuit with MoDOT and the state regarding MoDOT flexibility in using the road fund. MODOT is awaiting a decision from Cole County Circuit Court

Mark C. – The SAFER initiative is a response to the NHTSA scorecard where MODOT was deficient in 13 categories. The push for primary hands-free law was part of this initiative. There is a document on MoDOT's website explaining the SAFER initiative.

Mark noted that 4/6 Commissioners are slated to be appointed this fall and discussed potential confirmation challenges with an outgoing governor and increasingly partisan legislature. Mark requested that ACEC stay engaged on this issue.

Jeff S. – Policy retreat upcoming for Missourians for Transportation Investment

- **Project Work**

- *Major project updates*
- *Upcoming solicitations*
 - *status of 6-month outlook – Jason W. – 6-month outlook posted in June; next update will be in November. The current outlook is light on construction inspection solicitations, but this will change in the November update. Things can change quickly on District's needs based on Contractor schedules. Continue to use on-call list for asphalt plant inspection (testing) by MOU and full solicitations for RE/administrative work plus inspection.*

Since they are providing so much flexibility in construction schedules for the contractors, it becomes hard to plan ahead for inspection needs.

Jason W. – CO has said for Districts to stop adding in inspection services to design project solicitations as feedback from consultants wasn't positive and there were a lot fewer LOI's submitted when inspection was added on.

Jason noted that construction only solicitations also often get few, if any LOI's.

Benji P., Jason W., Greg K., and others further discussed pros/cons of the different approaches to solicit for construction inspection work, and all agreed that it's best to have as many tools on the tool belt as possible to deploy.

Tim P. – FY '25 Bridges out, estimate January for FY '26 bridges. Looking to do 3 bridge bundles. No interchange work.

Benji P. – With Tim P., also putting out bridge bundles. Some bundles could have both Benji and Tim managing bridge projects within a single bundle.. Benji also mentioned that District will be putting out bundles for Preliminary Geotechnical Reports.

Curt W. – 2 FY '26 projects will be coming out in December-January timeframe. One is a signal job with 10-12 replacements and 50-60 upgrades, the other is Rte. 53 two miles of adding center turn lane and improve access.

Pete B. – Close to selection on 2 bridges over RR. 2 FY '25 ADA jobs coming in January +/- Rte. 19 Shannon County arch bridge replacement expected to come out in March or April, EA work is going on now with FONSI anticipated for July.

- LPA program updates – Elquin A. – 7 BRO grants have been awarded along with 15 TAP applications. Chris C. – Will solicit again for LPA on-call, trying to increase maximum to \$200k from \$100k
- Consultant Deliverables
 - Performance Feedback / Areas for Improvement – See *Delivery of Current Projects*
- Set date for next meeting ``

**Missouri Department Of Transportation (SE) / ACEC MO
Liaison Committee**

List of Tentative Attendees

Name	Y/N	Organization	Email Address
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