

Successes **in** Stewardship

<http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/strmlng/es4newsltrs.asp>

November 2009

Celebrating the 100th Issue of *Successes in Stewardship*

In 1998, Congress passed the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which contained a provision for Environmental Streamlining. Section 1309 of TEA-21 called upon the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to coordinate Federal resource and permitting agency involvement in major highway projects under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process in order to address concerns related to delays in implementation, unnecessary duplication of effort, and added costs often associated with the conventional process for

reviewing and approving surface transportation projects. This action called for unprecedented interagency coordination among FHWA and the Federal resource agency personnel at the national level and in field offices to help promote the visibility of environmental streamlining and stewardship.

Lucy Garliauskas, then a Team Leader in FHWA's Office of Project Development and Environmental Review, was responsible for heading FHWA's streamlining efforts. She launched the newsletter idea and oversaw its development from 2001 until 2003, when she became the FHWA Division Administrator in Rhode Island. She is currently the Division Administrator in Massachusetts.



The inaugural issue of *Successes in Stewardship* showcased the [Pennsylvania State Route \(SR\) 119 South Improvement Project](#), focusing on the streamlined environmental impact statement (EIS) process, public involvement, and interagency coordination.

The goal of the monthly newsletter was to highlight the innovative environmental streamlining practices that State transportation agencies were implementing across the country. The inaugural issue was published in August 2001. Taking into consideration the steep challenges of high Congressional expectations and the length of time necessary to achieve change, Lucy sought an effective way to share incremental steps toward progress and innovations, not only with the FHWA community but with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and numerous resource-agency stakeholders. This newsletter was among FHWA's first widely distributed electronic publications.

Originally titled *Successes in Streamlining*, the newsletter was designed as a one-page briefing. Each issue featured a transportation project or interagency initiative that demonstrated how streamlined environmental processes had helped to expedite project delivery. In recognition of FHWA's growing focus on environmental stewardship and some of the innovations beneficial to the environment that were achieved under streamlining, the newsletter's name was changed to *Successes in Stewardship* in 2005. While the style of the newsletter has remained the same over the past nine years, the focus of each article has expanded to include additional types of projects, policies, and guidance that demonstrate sound environmental stewardship.

Although it continues to feature project-based practices, *Successes in Stewardship* has evolved into an outreach tool that highlights a broad array of issues of interest beyond the transportation community, including FHWA environmental program areas and guidance on new legislation and policy. This 100th issue traces the progress of environmental stewardship and streamlining as seen in the newsletter over its nine year history.

Successes in Stewardship Highlights

FHWA Programs

FHWA implements many environmental programs and initiatives to assist States in improving project delivery without compromising environmental protection. *Successes in Stewardship* provides FHWA with a venue that keeps its field staff and partners apprised of the products and activities generated by these important programs. Issues that the newsletter has covered include:

- o [Context Sensitive Solutions \(CSS\): Integrating New Principles and Practices to Address a Range of Community Needs](#) (January 2006): CSS is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders and

considers the total context of a proposed transportation improvement project. Since its inception, *Successes in Stewardship* has featured three articles on CSS-related topics.

- o [Eco-Logical: An Ecosystem Approach to Developing Infrastructure Projects](#) (March 2006): FHWA led a steering committee comprising nine Federal regulatory agencies to produce *Eco-Logical*, a publication aimed at helping transportation professionals improve their understanding of how infrastructure impacts habitat and ecosystems. This multiagency initiative described a method for ecosystem-scale infrastructure planning and implementation with use of existing regulatory framework. [FHWA Awards Grants for Ecosystem-Based Infrastructure Projects](#) (January 2008) introduced FHWA's new *Eco-Logical* grant program, created to support State efforts in implementing an *Eco-Logical* approach to infrastructure development.
- o [Planning and Environment Linkages \(PEL\): Streamlining Transportation Decisionmaking](#) (April 2007): FHWA's PEL initiative seeks to enrich the planning process and streamline decisionmaking by incorporating environmental considerations early and throughout planning and project development. *Successes in Stewardship* recognized the significance of PEL with six PEL-related issues featuring both FHWA events and State activities.

Cutting-Edge Topics

Although producing a fresh issue each month can be challenging, it ensures that every newsletter covers topics that are timely and relevant. Monthly publication also allows *Successes in Stewardship* to address pressing environmental and transportation issues, which is central to the newsletter's purpose. Two recent articles have explored opportunities to reduce transportation's contribution to climate change. [Carbon Sequestration Along Highway Rights of Way: Piloting a Concept](#) (September 2008) highlighted an FHWA pilot program aimed at quantifying the amount of carbon that can be sequestered with use of native vegetation management on U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) lands. A February 2009 article, [New Climate Change Initiatives for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Growth in Vehicle Miles](#)

[Traveled](#), drew attention to a number of new agency activities designed to meet the goal of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, including FHWA's participation in an interagency working group and research assessing climate change impacts on transportation systems in the Gulf Coast.

The economic and environmental impacts of congestion are another issue of national importance that has been addressed in the newsletter. [Congestion Initiative: Working for Relief](#) (October 2007) introduced the major DOT initiative designed to test innovative strategies for decreasing congestion and to implement successful methods more widely in the future. The November 2008 issue, [Congestion Pricing and NEPA: Environmental Benefits and Considerations](#), discussed methods for evaluating congestion pricing, which is one of the innovative strategies addressed in the U.S. DOT's Congestion Initiative.

Regulatory Guidance

Enactment of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), in August 2005, necessitated regulatory changes to a number of environmental procedures. Because of its large subscriber base and its frequent presence as a feature in other industry publications, the newsletter served as an effective means to inform stakeholders of these critical changes. Some of the regulatory changes that followed SAFETEA-LU were highlighted in the newsletter and include the [Design-Build Final Rule](#), [the Section 4\(f\) Final Rule](#), and the [FHWA/FTA Final Rule Update to Environmental Impact And Related Procedures](#).

Future Outlook

FHWA is dedicated to building upon the success of the first 100 issues of *Successes in Stewardship*. The newsletter will continue to share the latest advances in transportation and the environment with its broad-based audience.

As anticipated legislative efforts unfold, such as the next reauthorization of the Federal transportation program and possible climate change legislation, the newsletter will be a source of information on the effects that these activities will have on FHWA's environmental programs.

To ensure that the newsletter continues to serve the needs of its readers, individuals are strongly encouraged to submit suggestions for future issues, such as new projects, topics, or processes that they would like to see highlighted. Comments are always welcome via e-mail to esnewsletter@dot.gov. New readers can subscribe through the [Subscription Form](#). FHWA would like to thank subscribers for their support and continued interest over the past nine years and looks forward to providing readers with the next 100 issues.

Newsletter Highlights

- o There are over 2,100 newsletter subscribers from Federal, State, and local transportation and resource agencies; private consulting firms; and academia.
- o The newsletter has showcased effective practices and projects from over 35 States.
- o The newsletter has been published every month since making its debut in August 2001.
- o The newsletter is regularly featured in industry publications, including AASHTO's *Center for Environmental Excellence*, the Bureau of National Affairs' *Transportation/ Environment Alert*, and the Transportation Research Board's *Transportation Research E-Newsletter*.

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Look What's New!

The "Strategic Conservation Planning Using Green Infrastructure Approach" conference will be held in Chicago from December 1 to 3, 2009. The conference is hosted by the Conservation Fund and Chicago Wilderness and will focus on design, implementation, and management of green infrastructure. For more information, contact Dennis Durbin at dennis.durbin@dot.gov.

Successes in Stewardship is a Federal Highway Administration newsletter highlighting current environmental streamlining and stewardship practices from around the country. To subscribe, visit http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/sis_registration/Register.aspx or call 617-494-3137.