WHO WE ARE

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is a major agency of the U. S. Department of Transportation. FHWA administers more than half of the budget authority of the Department with only 3 percent of the Department's total employees. FHWA is charged with the broad responsibility of ensuring that America's roads and highways continue to be the safest and most technologically up-to-date. Although the states and local governments own most of the nation's highways, we provide financial and technical resources for them to improve and maintain America's highway system.

The U.S. Department of Transportation Building in Washington, D.C.

As with all cabinet-level organizations of the Executive Branch of the government, the Department of Transportation is led by the Secretary of Transportation. Our top official is the Administrator, who reports to the Secretary. We are headquartered in Washington, D.C. and have offices in every state. Our greater than $30 billion budget is funded by the fuel and motor vehicle excise taxes levied on highway users and is primarily divided between two programs: the **Federal- aid** Program and the **Federal Lands Highway** Program

Very simply, the Federal-aid Program assists the states in the construction, preservation and operation of the National Highway System, a 160,000-mile network that carries 40 percent of the nation's highway traffic. It also includes almost 1 million additional miles of urban and rural roads not on the System that are eligible for Federal aid. The Federal Lands Highway Program is concerned with the roads and highways that are located within federally-owned lands and Indian land. While the states generally manage their own construction programs, Federal Lands programs assist the agencies that are responsible for maintaining and operating the roads on their properties (like the National Park Service) by providing plans, letting contracts and supervising construction.

The United States National Highway System

You've no doubt driven by a highway construction site and perhaps seen a sign that shows the overall dollar cost of that project, expressed as two separate dollar amounts; the federal amount provided by FHWA and the amount contributed by the state or local government. Other evidence of our presence is the offices we maintain in every state (they're our Divisions) and the four regional resource centers. These centers provide technical and other types of assistance to the Divisions and the states and other federal agencies, as well as organizations such as Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), cities, environmental organizations, and other interested parties.

Federal Lands Highway Programs are administered through the three regional Federal Lands Highway offices. We also operate a world-class highway research, development and technology facility in McLean, VA where we conduct research on a wide variety of techniques and materials. We often partner with colleges and universities in this research.

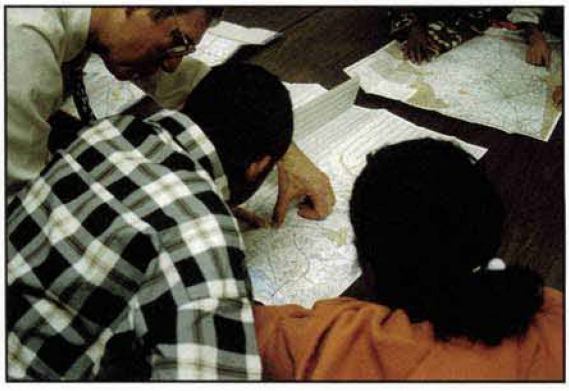
One of the techniques FHWA refined was a process popularly called "Bridge Straightening," which allows the use of high temperatures to straighten out deformed steel bridge members. Using the process allows highway departments to repair a bridge without taking it out of service or ordering replacement members. FHWA offers training in this technique, which formerly had been known only to a few craftsman.

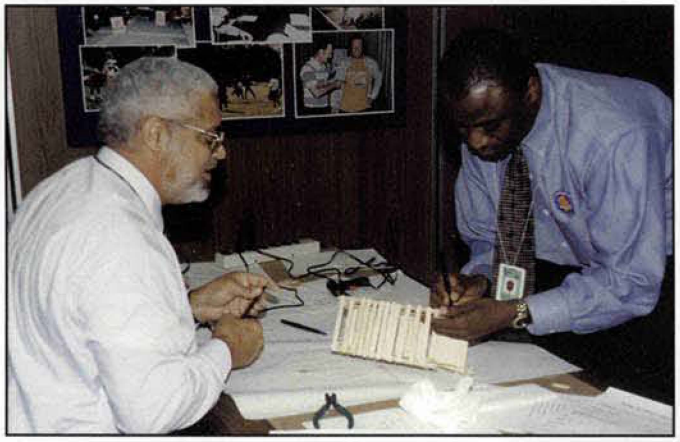
FHWA engineers come in a number of different varieties. These are bridge engineers, discussing the merits of bridge design during National Engineer's Week, held in February.

So much for the "bricks and mortar" of the organization. Former FHWA Administrator Rodney Slater often said, "FHWA is more than concrete, asphalt and steel. It's the FHWA family of people that make up the organization." And it's a very diversified family.

To start, since we have a great deal to do with highway design and construction, a good proportion of our people are **engineers** of all kinds; civil engineers, computer applications engineers, environmental engineers, electrical engineers, metallurgical engineers and mechanical engineers, to name a few.

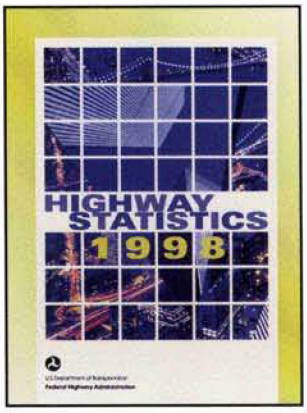
Just like most major private corporations, FHWA activities and programs are supported by other groups of people. We have a group of **lawyers**, who make up our chief counsel's office; an organization staffed by **civil rights experts**; a corporate management office staffed by **quality experts**, which, essentially, reviews the effectiveness of FHWA processes and programs; a group of **policy experts,** whose job it is to oversee FHWA policy as well as **public affairs experts** who provide information about the agency's operation and programs to the media and general public. Our **administrative experts** handle such diverse duties as managing our information systems, overseeing publishing and communications, handling contract matters, including acquisitions, and managing our human resources function.





Engineers frequently visit job sites to monitor construction progress. Here a group is inspecting some of the girders that will make up part of a bridge on the I-15 project in Salt Lake City, UT.

And since we're responsible for compiling, publishing and interpreting a whole range of statistics and financial information on our roadways, we also have a number of **statisticians** and **economists** on our payroll. While the states gather most of the information, it's up to the FHWA to compile and make available the data in a number of different formats. This is done annually in the publication *Highway Statistics.* We provide support to states, MPOs, cities and other organizations, helping them plan for and determine the best uses for transportation monies. The U. S. Congress frequently requests help in interpreting the data.

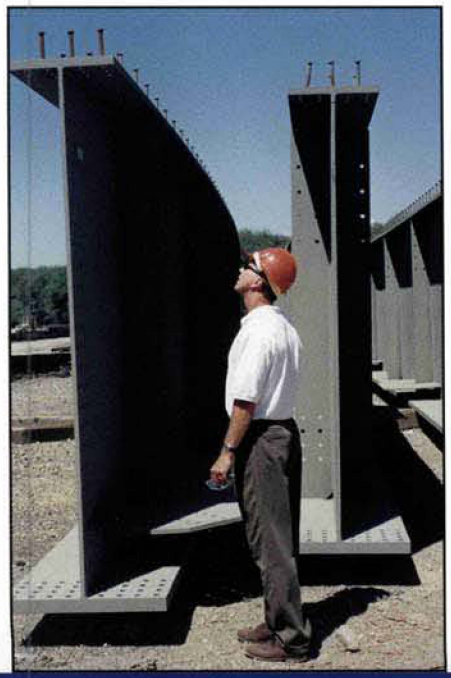


The Highway Statistics Manual is also available in electronic form.

And speaking of planning, FHWA has a group dedicated to planning and environment. They're involved with everything from preparing border crossings to handling increased traffic resulting from treaties like NAFTA to helping large metropolitan areas formulate transportation plans to also accommodate increased growth. Our **environmentalists'** jobs range from reviewing the Environmental Impact Statements that now form a part of every significant highway project evaluation, to people who are experts on just what wildflowers should be planted in highway median strips to reduce mowing costs and increase highway beautification.

It is in the best interest of all concerned to complete highway construction as rapidly as possible. In the last few years, FHWA, working with its many partners in the states and construction industry, has devised several different innovative financing plans for financing the project and for rewarding contractors for finishing construction in a shorter time frame. Much of this has been worked out by our **finance experts**, who work with their state counterparts in expanding the limited federal and state funding to include bonds, private investment and money from other sources. This way, states get their roads built when they're needed, without having to wait the more traditional way of accumulating funds until the amount required is available.

Highway construction often infringes on sensitive wetland areas, disturbing delicate ecological balances. FHWA and the States are required to subject each major construction project to an environmental review, called an Environmental Impact Statement, to eliminate such infringement and possible destruction. Our goal is to replace each acre of wetlands impacted by construction with 2.3 acres of new wetlands. Here a group of Connecticut Division employees are on a tour of a nearby wetlands.

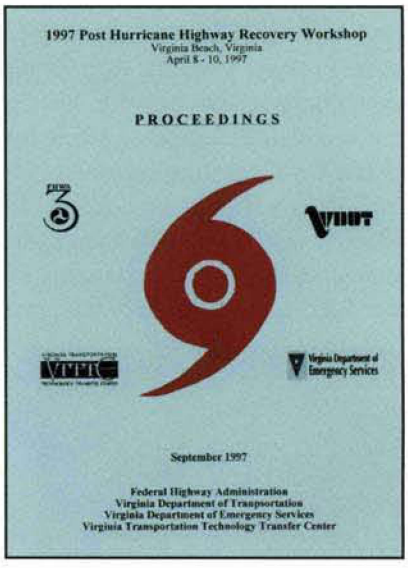


The I-15 reconstruction project in Salt Lake City included incentive clauses to the contractor to speed construction so the project would be completed in time for the Olympics. Here a worker inspects a girder to be used in bridge construction on the project.

Classes are often taught at our new National Highway Institutes facility in Arlington, VA.

Education and training are a big part of FHWA's activities. Our National Highway Institute **instructors** train thousands of folks every year, not only from the states but also from many other countries as well. Courses cover technical subjects and procedures. They can range from teaching the latest techniques in managing snow and ice, to seismic bridge design, which gives engineers information on how to help bridges better withstand earthquakes.

We often take training to the field. After the 1999 hurricane season, FHWA joined a number of state highway departments to explore more effective ways to conduct orderly evacuations, as well as ways to make highway infrastructure less vulnerable to destruction. And highway and law enforcement officials in the earthquake zone near St. Louis, MO, recently received training from our Missouri Division employees on the most effective methods of managing post-earthquake damage to the highway infrastructure.



The 1997 Post Hurricane Highway Recovery Workshop Manual contained over 250 pages of information shared with the many state and federal officials who attended the September 1997 meeting in Virginia Beach, VA.

But no matter what our duties or responsibilities within FHWA, we all share one common feeling—our pride in making America's highway system among the best in the world.