# DOT News

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# System, Speed, Teamwork Keeps OST Mail Moving

Not all that paperwork in government originates in Washington.

A whole lot of it is put into the mill by people all across the country, some of whom hate paperwork enough to write to Washington to complain about it.

An average of 400 to 500 documents a day, including letters, telegrams and courier-delivered correspondence, arrives at the Department of Transportation addressed to Secretary Adams.

"It can be roughly divided into three categories," says Linda L. Smith, director of the Office of the Executive Secretariat, who handles all the mail and memoranda sent to the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary. "Some writers want information, others offer suggestions and, then, there are the complaints. We even get inventions, and of course, letters from school kids," she said.

This torrent of inbound mail is matched by a tide of outgoing letters, since it is Department policy to answer all queries.

The mail flow, says Smith, poses two problems—"keeping track of the letters and memos and getting out replies as fast as possible."

Linda Smith came to DOT with Secretary Adams, having worked for him for two years in the House, when he chaired the House Budget Committee.

"When Secretary Adams was in Congress he made it a rule that mail would be answered within seven days," she said.

To improve DOT's record, Smith has deployed her staff of 21 with a finesse that reflects her own abundant energy and administrative skills. When she came to DOT, Smith recalls, the average time to cycle a document through the Department and get a reply on its way was 57 days.

The first year she cut that to 39 days, despite a 15 percent increase in volume.

With the exception of the President, who gets immediate action, and cabinet officers and congressmen, who get "24-hour turnaround service at best, and replies within five days at the worst," Smith says, responses are usually on their way in 22 days.

Some letters and memos can be and are handled by a phone call, cutting the time in the paper mill as well as the amount of paper in circulation. Interim replies are usually sent when letters require extensive research or coordination with other offices and agencies.

While the majority of mail sent to DOT is addressed to the Secretary, most of it—by necessity—never reaches his desk. Since no person could read, let alone compose and dictate responses to 400–500 letters a day, the mail is presorted and routed to the offices most qualified to deal with the writer's needs.

One writer, dissatisfied that replies to his previous letters to Secretary Adams were signed by lesser DOT officials, enclosed a $10 check with his latest communication. He said, in effect, that if it took money to get a personal reply from the Secretary, he was putting his up front.

He got a prompt response to the matters discussed in his letter, signed by Secretary Adams, and his $10 check—with a reminder that this was the 5th exchange with him on the same subject.

"Usually, when money is enclosed it is an innocent gesture, people wanting to pay postage, for example. The money is returned with a kind note from me

See **SMITH**, p. 3

**Linda Smith, second from left, confers with Betty Williams (secretary), Constance Ragsdale (information analysis staff chief, and Sara Eghtedari (secretary).**

# Palmer to Head New DOT Agency

When James D. Palmer is sworn in by Secretary Brock Adams on August 29, he will become the first director of DOT's newly formed Research and Special Programs Administration.

Before accepting his new position, Palmer, 48, was president of Metropolitan State College in Denver, Colorado and professor of computer and management science. At DOT, Palmer will head an agency of 900 employees. The agency is concerned with hazardous materials shipments, pipeline safety, transportation security, emergency transportation and university research.

John J. Fearnsides has been acting administrator since the new administration was formed last year following a reorganization. Besides its Washington activities, the administration also includes the Transportation Systems Center in Cambridge, Mass., and the Transportation Safety Institute in Oklahoma City.

James Palmer

Palmer, a native of Washington, D.C., received a B.S. degree in 1955 and an M.S. degree in 1957 in electrical engineering from the University of Cali-

See **PALMER**, p. 4

# *High School Girl Takes DOT Helm*

Laura Julianna Salinard, a senior at Toms River High School North, in Toms River, N.J., slipped into Transportation Secretary Brock Adams chair in mid-July and said she liked it.

Laura, one of 100 girls participating in the 1978 Girl's Nation citizen training course sponsored by the American Legion National Auxiliary, had been elected "Secretary of Transportation" by her peers as part of the program.

During their week in Washington, Girl's Nation also convened as a Senate, with two Senators from each of the 50 girl's state sessions which were held earlier this year.

In addition to studying the legislative process, the girls received appointments to a list of administrative offices that parallel actual offices in the federal government.

During her brief tenure as "acting" Secretary, Ms. Salinard conferred with some of the senior members of the Secretary's staff and also recorded the department's daily radio news release.

Laura Salinard

# *DOT Rides the Mid-night Air Waves*

The "Harry and Hank Show" went on the air for a one night stand at 12:30 a.m. on July 11 and for the next three hours gear jammers as far west as Denver heard all about the "Double Nickel Challenge."

Harry is William H. Close, manager of DOT's truck and bus fuel economy program, and Hank is Henry E. Seiff, his assistant. They are the guiding hands behind the department's "Double Nickel Challenge," a competition to determine if it is more fuel efficient to drive an 18-wheeler faster than 55 mph.

The basic message was simple: DOT would select up to 33 truck drivers to wheel their big rigs 50 miles each at 55 mph and at any higher speed they believe to be more fuel efficient. The tests were to be conducted at the Transportation Research Center, East Liberty, Ohio.

Costarring with Harry and Hank were Bob Marx, director of OST's office of publications and audiovisual services, and Bob Beasley, OST office of public affairs regional coordinator.

Their idea was to telephone some of the all-night disc jockeys and make the 55 mph challenge on the air. Audiences for many of these stations are predominantly long-distance truckers, who prefer the early morning hours because the highways are virtually deserted.

The idea came up one afternoon last month, and after completing the normal work day, the foursome went home for dinner and returned to DOT headquarters to go on the air at midnight.

Stations were selected that would yield the largest audiences and provide coverage across the south, midwest and some of the mountain states.

Each of the men took a portion of the stations and by the time 3:30 a.m. rolled around 17 disc jockeys, three of whom were women, had been called. Of these, 10 were "live," with some of the conversations running as long as 10 minutes, and one went on for 20 minutes. Two stations taped the talks for broadcast later that night, and the others asked for materials they could use to develop their own presentation.

The result of the night's work?

A total of 160 truckers accepted the challenge, and 33 were selected to participate in the Ohio tests.

# R. R. Stephenson Is New NHTSA Research Chief

R. Rhodes Stephenson has been appointed associate administrator for Research and Development in the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration.

An authority on automotive engine technology, Stephenson will be responsible for all NHTSA research in highway traffic safety.

He comes to his new job from the Caltech/Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif., where he was manager of the systems analysis section.

He supervised research in advanced automotive engine technology, electric and hybrid vehicles, urban transit systems, solar, geothermal and other energy sources, and environmental analyses.

While at JPL, Stephenson was a key participant in the evaluation, for Ford Motor Co., of advanced automotive engines which could be considered as alternatives to conventional engines.

Stephenson, 42, received his doctorate in mechanical engineering from Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, in 1961.

Rhodes Stephenson

## UMTA Celebrates 10th Year with Patio Party

"John Kohl started with a borrowed office, a borrowed desk, a borrowed phone, and just one staff member," said Richard S. Page, Urban Mass Transportation Administrator.

Kohl didn't know it at the time, but he was the first UMTA administrator. The year Page referred to was 1965 and the office, desk and phone were located in the Public National Bank in northwest Washington where Kohl was director of transportation in the Housing and Home Finance Agency.

Page recalled Kohl's name when some 200 people gathered in mid-June at DOT headquarters to celebrate UMTA's 10th anniversary as an independent administration.

Secretary Adams, leading a list of speakers, invited his listeners to look toward a bright future in mass transportation.

Sharing the platform with Secretary Adams were four former UMTA administrators: Robert Patricelli (1975–77); Carlos Villarreal (1969–73); Paul Sitton (1968–69) and Leo Cusick (1966–67).

Robert H. McManus, UMTA associate administrator for transportation planning, management and demonstrations, goes back to the old days.

"Kohl hired me in 1965 as director of product development to manage the newly authorized capital grant program," McManus said. "Later that year we came under HUD and in 1968 we became UMTA and part of DOT."

The agency now has more than 600 employees in Washington headquarters and in field offices in the 10 federal regions, plus the Transportation Test Center at Pueblo, Colorado.

### Breaking the Ice

# *Engineers Seek Ways to Keep Seaway Open Year 'Round*

St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation engineers are spending the summer working in 100-degree temperatures in a shed in a Baltimore suburb learning how to control ice in the St. Lawrence River this winter.

They've reduced a 13-mile section of the St. Lawrence Seaway near Ogdensburg, N.Y., to a scale model 422 feet long and 80 feet wide in their search for ways to keep the seaway open all year long.

The model is located in a 500-foot-long shed on the Howard County Fairground, near W. Friendship, Md., south of Baltimore and about 50 miles north of Washington.

"The model lets us create a wide variety of ice and river conditions at will and at very little expense," says David C. N. Robb, director of SLDC's office of comprehensive planning and chief engineer on the project.

Ice now closes the waterway from mid-December to April, an expensive hibernation for ship owners, farmers, manufacturers, merchants, and communities along the seaway.

A typical Lake Erie port city, for example, loses an estimated $1 million in revenue for every two days the seaway is closed.

A Commerce Department study of 11 states which use the Great Lakes says that a 12-month shipping season would add $382 million in salaries for shipping-related labor by 1980. This would increase to almost $1 billion by 2020.

It would also mean an increase of some 42,000 jobs annually in these 11 states alone, the Commerce report said.

Ever since the winter of 1959–60 icebooms have been used used to stabilize the river ice between Ogdensburg, N.Y. and Cardinal, Ontario. The booms, one of which is 5,100 feet long, are made by linking together 30-foot timbers which are secured to a steel cable. The cable is fastened to a shore point and held in the river by anchors.

**This scale model of a freighter is sailing through a make-believe sea covered with a wax-like chemical compound that simulates actual ice. The model is used by the St. Lawrence Seaway Corporation engineers studying the feasibility of keeping the seaway open 12 months of the year.**

#### Ice Islands

Strategically placed, the booms isolate large "islands" of ice, preventing the current from breaking them up and allowing them to slide, one under the other, to form towering icebergs.

"The unrestricted ice masses not only make ship movement impossible, they restrict the flow of water. This starves the turbines in the electrical generating plants downstream," Robb said.

While the booms make the ice behave, they themselves are a barrier to shipping.

In the study now underway, Robb and his colleagues hope to develop an optimum method of placing the booms so as not to interfere with vessel traffic, while at the same time controlling the thickness of the ice so that ships can act as their own icebreakers. For this the model is indispensable.

"It is ingenious," says Robb. "Each foot of the model represents 150 feet of the river. On a vertical scale, each foot equals 60 feet of river."

The model contains approximately 130,000 gallons of water which can be made to flow at the rate of 1,300 to 2,500 gallons per minute. This enables the engineers to accurately study the river's behavior at various points.

The ice cover is simulated by a wax-like substance which approximates the properties of actual ice. An estimated 15,000 pounds of the chemical preparation is used for each ice cover simulation.

### Alive and Well in Virginia

# Coast Guard Rescues DOT's Turtle

Our Chelydra serpentina (aka: snapping turtle) which disappeared mysteriously after a brief swim last month around the Nassif plaza fountain pool is alive and well.

The 20-inch, 25-pound turtle, whose ancestors frolicked with dinosaurs, is now paddling around a stream near Lorton, Va., having been transported there by Kenneth A. Chunn and Karen Thompson, both Coast Guard petty officers.

"We got to the fountain in time to see this guy menacing the turtle with a hammer," said Chunn. In the process of extracting the turtle, Chunn and Thompson encountered the man who put the animal in the water in the first place.

"He said he brought it down as a lark from a vacation in New York," Chunn said. Chunn and Thompson, who both have a strong interest in animals of all kinds, took the turtle home, scrubbed it up a bit, and brought it to the stream in Virginia where they had hiked recently.

# *System, Speed, Teamwork Moves OST Mail Rapidly*

**SMITH,** from p. 1

saying we can't accept their money, but will answer their letter," says Smith.

Letters are delivered four times a day to the incoming mail unit. Memos, telegrams, subpoenas, and other special documents arrive continuously. Everything is opened, "clocked in," and read by Patricia Endel and Roberta Fede.

### Look for Key Words

They make the first cut, deciding quickly and accurately which DOT office or agency is best qualified to handle the item. Key words trigger their decisions: Is the letter discussing railroads, highways, aviation, water transportation? Or is it more properly a concern of some other government agency?

Each day Secretary Adams receives copies of letters and memos sent to him from the President, the White House staff, cabinet officers, congressmen, and other key officials accompanied by a cover sheet summarizing in one tight sentence each item enclosed.

Urgent communications are brought to the Secretary's and Deputy Secretary's attention immediately.

Endel and Fede assign the Secretary's letters to "action" offices and give them control numbers which are the strings that keep track of where they are while in the system. They also decide which materials will be microfilmed. Copies can later be had by inserting the appropriate reel into the microfilm viewer, dialing the control number and pressing a button.

Seven correspondence analysts, and assistants supervised by Edna Brown and Constance Ragsdale, now come into action, refining the original correspondence cut made by Fede and Endel. With marksmanship developed through long practice, plus a thorough knowledge of the Department, the letters almost always end up on target.

Marian Palmore deals with communications concerning the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, their special assistants, and the Federal Railroad Administration.

Velma Thomas handles documents related to maritime matters. She decides whether the letter should go to the Coast Guard, Office of Deepwater Ports, the St. Lawrence Seaway Corporation, or the Office of Policy and International Affairs—to name some possible choices.

Congressional inquiries and those having to do with the Federal Highway Administration go through Jean Haskell. Candy Blair handles aviation matters; Antoinette Fargo, mass transit; and Eunice Gray, highway safety and research and special programs. Louise Butler assists each of the analysts, as workloads demand, to keep the mail and memoranda moving.

Letters asking the Secretary to speak or appear at public functions go to the Office of Public and Consumer Affairs, as do copies of letters and other communications which might involve press interest.

"If Secretary Adams had the time and inclination, he could be the principal speaker at five functions a day, most days of the week," says Linda Smith. In an average month Secretary Adams will get 100 invitations to speak, cut a ribbon, test drive a car, inspect a highway, or greet a delegation.

Keeping track of the letters is made easy by a computer terminal at the desk of each correspondence analyst. A 14-inch, TV-like screen can display a wealth of information about every letter in the system merely by "punching-in" the control number.

### Computer Coding

Encoded in cryptic abbreviations which look like those on stock market ticker tape, the computer display gives the date of the incoming letter, subject, sender's name and affiliation (congress, business, other government, etc.), classification (none, secret, etc.), cross references, previous letters on the same subject, addressee (Secretary, Deputy Secretary, etc.), where sent for "action," whether reply is for the Secretary's or Deputy Secretary's signature and other data as circumstances require.

The computer is maintained by Jimmy Nichols and his information management staff who ensure that all equipment is running smoothly for the 12 hours it is in operation each day.

"The machinery is a great help in keeping track of our correspondence and speeding it through, but the system is only as good as the numerous people throughout DOT who draft, type, write, clear, review, and sign off on every piece of paper prepared for the Secretary's signature. Without their cooperation and conscientiousness we could never get the work done," says Smith.

The job does have its light moments. A local transportation executive hastened to apologize and correct a letter his secretary had sent to Secretary *Adams Brock*. She was new on the job, he said. His letter of correction began: Dear Secretary Brock.

**Velma Thomas, above, handles documents related to maritime matters. Marion Palmore, background, handles communications concerning the Secretary and Deputy Secretary and their special assistants and documents related to the Federal Railroad Administration.**

**Jimmy Nichols, top, is responsible for maintenance of the executive secretariat's computer and supervises the information management staff.**

**Eunice Gray, center, handles documents related to highway safety and to research and special programs.**

**Jean Haskell, left, handles congressional inquiries and documents related to the Federal Highway Administration.**

## *Let The Good Times Roll*

If you have a ball bowling, the Maryland Men's Coast Guard Tenpin League and the DOT Mixed Tenpin League want to hear from you.

The DOT team league starts their season September 7, and will bowl every Thursday evening between 6:30 and 9:00 at the Bowl America Lanes, Falls Church, Va.

Larry Euler, league secretary (75224), says there are openings for individuals and teams up to five persons.

The Coast Guard league gets underway September 14 at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center Annex, Forest Glen, Silver Spring, Md.

Bowling starts at 8:30 p.m., with a practice period starting at 8:15 p.m.

The league is open to Coast Guard military and civilian personnel and retirees, plus other DOT employees. For details call Mike Canavan, 61301.

This hefty check, for $724,000, is one payment in the financing of a new $50 million technical complex at FAA's National Aviation Facilities Experimental Center (NAFEC), Atlantic City, N. J. The Irving Trust Co. and the Prudential Insurance Co. are loaning the money to the Atlantic County Improvement Authority (ACIA) to finance the project which NAFEC will lease. From left: Congressman William Hughes; John Simons and Joseph Tockarshewsky of Irving Trust; ACIA chairman Albert Marks; NAFEC director Robert Faith; and FAA associate administrator J. W. Cochran.

# Major Construction at NAFEC

Construction is scheduled to begin in mid-September on a 500,000 square foot technical and administrative complex at the FAA's National Aviation Facilities Experimental Center (NAFEC), Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Expected to cost $50 million, the project is privately financed by the Atlantic County Improvement Authority (ACIA) which includes the area occupied by the center.

Scheduled for completion in 1980, ACIA will lease the complex to the Federal Aviation Administration for 20 years at an annual rate of $5.2 million. At that time the complex becomes federal property.

"This is an exciting and important development for the experimental center, one that all of us have been looking forward to for many years," said NAFEC Director Robert L. Faith. "It heralds a new era for NAFEC—an era where our contribution both to FAA research and development efforts to further aviation safety and to local economic growth will be substantially improved and increased."

The new complex will replace 36 obsolete World War II buildings currently is use at NAFEC. It will house a variety of engineering, testing and simulation labs, more than $100 million worth of computer equipment, and administrative offices.

This project is the second phase of major improvements to NAFEC since the FAA took over the facility from the U.S. Navy in 1958.

During the first phase of modernization, which took place in 1960, the NAFEC built a hangar for major aircraft maintenance and a power plant.

Each year NAFEC has under way some 250 research and experimental projects to further aviation safety, covering such areas as improved air traffic control systems, navigational and communications aids, landing systems, runway lighting, wake turbulence and post-crash rescue techniques.

# Creswell Opens 20-yr Time Capsule

According to the newspapers, June 21, 1958, was a glorious day in Oklahoma City, with clear skies, mild breezes and temperatures in the low 80s.

The weather was a bit more robust 20 years later, to the day, when 200 people dashed through a torrential summer storm to assemble in the headquarters building lobby of FAA's newly-named Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center on the outskirts of Oklahoma City.

They were there to witness the opening of a time capsule sealed behind a dedicatory plaque during the 20th anniversary celebration of the Civil Aeronautics Administration.

The box was opened by Thomas J. Creswell, center director, who removed and read a letter written in 1958 by Clayton Anderson, head of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce. The letter said:

"By 1978, 20 years from now, the CAA Center facilities will have doubled, its staff tripled and the number of students going through the center each year will be five times what it is today. As you read this in 1978, you will know how accurate this prediction has been."

Clayton Anderson's crystal ball was a bit murky as far as facilities were concerned, but he came close in his estimates of employees and students.

In 1958 the center had three buildings, 1,500 permanent employees and about 400 students per day. Now there are more than 50 buildings, approximately 4,000 employees and between 1,600 and 1,700 students per day.

Among items sealed in the 1958 capsule were a trust indenture book entitled "Trustees of Oklahoma City Airport Trust," and a specimen $1,000 airport trust bond, copies of the May 29 issue of Oklahoma magazine, a good luck coin, several brochures and newspaper clippings and a historical background and fact sheet of the center.

A new capsule, with a letter from Creswell addressed to the center's director in the year 2000, was sealed in the wall. Included were photos of the opening of the first capsule, ceremony dignitaries, new clippings, projections, organizational charts and a current center phone book.

# Palmer to Head New DOT Agency

**PALMER,** from p. 1

fornia in Berkeley. While pursuing his graduate studies, he also served as chief engineer of the university's Motor Vehicle and Illumination Laboratory. He also assisted in the dynamic testing of automotive seatbelts for the state of California and published articles on the subject in various journals.

It was considered a landmark piece of work at that time. Palmer later went to UCLA and worked there on car crash tests. Elsewhere in the transportation field, he has done consulting work for McDonnel Aircraft Corporation and worked on aircraft design. His consultant experience also includes the Street-Amet Division of Goodman Industries and Systems Management Corporation of Boston, Mass.

For Palmer, this will be the first time around in the federal government. "However," he commented, "I have worked at various levels of state government where there is a rather enormous bureaucracy." He conceded, though, that perhaps the level of sophistication is not equal to the federal establishment.

## DOT Carpool Campaign Cuts Car Congestion

"Four goes into one" is what the wall posters in the Department of Transportation corridors said, but any school kid knows mixed up arithmetic like that just won't work.

It will, though—if you are talking about putting four people into one car to form a carpool.

Carpooling is an effective way to save fuel and to cut urban traffic congestion and air pollution. The Department of Transportation is sponsoring a national campaign to promote carpooling, using the "four into one" slogan, so it was appropriate for the department to show how it can be done.

They didn't quite make the four-in-one ratio, but Assistant Secretary for Administration Edward W. Scott's staff of planners took a giant step in the right direction. As a result, there are now 500 fewer cars, but 1,000 more people, using the department's three garages.

Scott put out the word in March that parking permits would be reissued in June, with preference going to carpools.

With this as a guideline, Richard J. Alfultis, deputy assistant secretary, along with Francis E. Unti, director of the Office of Administrative Operations, and Support Services chief Gerald W. Shirey, developed the administrative machinery to carry out the plan.

Some 3,500 applications for parking permits were sifted by staff personnel. More than 5,000 phone calls were made to verify carpool members listed by applicants.

The reissuance process reduced the number of single occupant permits and increased carpool membership from 2.87 persons per car to 3.68.

Scott said that the carpool percentage will continue to increase even further, because DOT is still receiving carpool permit applications.

The college he headed has an enrollment of 13,000 students studying in 60 different programs. Its several hundred faculty members and employees include a number of civil service personnel, he said.

Prior to becoming president, he was dean of science and engineering and professor of electrical engineering at Union College in Schenectady, N.Y.

While living in Denver, he has served as president and board member of the Catholic Community Services and has been a member of numerous other organizations, including the Hispanic Institute of North America, the Institute for International Education and the Red Cross. He is listed in Who's Who in America, American Men of Science and Who's Who in Engineering.

Palmer is also a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Advisory Committee and the Colorado Governor's Council of Science and Technology.

The career switch calls for a few adjustments. Right now, for example, Palmer's job provides him with a state car for transportation. Relocating also means that he and his family will have to look for a new home from which they can continue their active participation in sports.

In Colorado, the family enjoys hiking and camping. Says Palmer, who has also taken up skiing, "Just how much of that I'll be able to do in Washington, I'm not sure." The 6'1", 165-pound educator stays in condition by jogging and attending fitness classes three times a week.

He and his wife, the former Margaret Krupa, have three sons. The oldest is employed as a geologist and specializes in hydrology. The middle son is a junior, majoring in engineering, at the University of Colorado, and the youngest is a freshman at the University of California at Berkley. He is considering entering pre-med.

Palmer said he is enthusiastic over his upcoming assignment. "I am looking forward to working with all the people I have met who are associated with RSPA and others at DOT. I am impressed by the breadth of the programs and have a great interest in becoming involved in the advanced technology processes."

## DOT Fall Golf Tourney at Andrews

The DOT Fall Golf Tournament will be played on Tuesday, September 26, at Andrews Air Force Base.

Tee-off begins at 7:30 a.m. with foursomes following every 8 minutes. Players may use pull carts or carry their own clubs.

Tournament registration fee is $3.50; green fee—$6.50; electric cart—$8.80 for single, $4.40 for double. All fees must be paid by September 12.

For additional information: UMTA—Gil Butler, 60090; Israel Valdez, 62285; Jim O'Connor, 64004; Armando Rodriguez, 64018. NHTSA—Jim Gilkey, 62834; Al Rockwell, 62947. FHWA—Henry Newport, 60570; Charles Kolsky, 60466. FAA—Len Bosin, 63076.

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