

# MILEPOST



GEORGIA

Winter 2012

**Development Agreement Signed for Atlanta's MMPT**

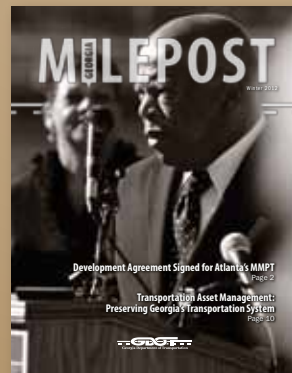
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**Transportation Asset Management:  
Preserving Georgia's Transportation System**

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**On the cover:** U.S. Representative John Lewis and other dignitaries mark the signing of the master development agreement for the MMPT in downtown Atlanta.

**Cover photo:** CEDRIC MOHR cmohr@dot.ga.gov

## Commissioner's Column

Georgia DOT is on the right track.



based approach to managing assets.

A new year is a time to look back—at hurdles faced, lessons learned and successes realized.

■ In October, the agreement was signed for initial master development plans for the Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal (MMPT), a major transit hub to be located in downtown Atlanta and funded through public-private partnerships (P3).

■ The I-85 Express HOT Lanes opened in Gwinnett and DeKalb counties, offering reliable travel times to motorists during peak travel periods. Usage for the lanes has consistently increased and morning peak capacity was reached two months after opening.

■ Following an extreme ice storm that hit the state in January 2011, the Department has made significant efforts to improve and better coordinate our response. Georgia DOT's new severe weather plan includes updated equipment and procedures, and new tracking and communication methods.

Looking ahead, 2012 will be significant for the state of Georgia. In July, Georgians will decide the state's transportation future with a vote on the Transportation Referendum, a one cent sales tax to fund transportation projects in their local regions. The referendum has the potential to provide funding for infrastructure needs that will impact the quality of life for Georgia residents and spur economic development opportunities throughout the state. GDOT is in the process of planning a project management program to ensure efficient project delivery in regions that approve the tax.

I could not agree more with AASHTO's comment about GDOT's self-confidence and desire for improvement. In my 25 years at the Department, I have seen this first-hand time and again. It is part of our culture. We are justifiably proud of our transportation professionals whose contributions day in and day out enable GDOT to keep moving forward to accomplish our mission: to provide a safe, seamless, and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia's economy and is sensitive to its citizens and environment.

Keith Golden, P.E.

That is what the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO) said in their review of Georgia DOT's efficiency efforts to balance increasing demands with limited resources. The report also said, that in asking for the review, GDOT shows a "self-confidence and a desire for continuous improvement." This issue of MILEPOST looks at these ongoing efforts, as well as implementation of Transportation Asset Management (TAM)—GDOT's new knowledge-



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# ACROSS THE BOARD

## Development Agreement Signed for Atlanta's MMPT

By **David Spear**

**A**fter nearly two decades of study and planning, a **Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal (MMPT)** in downtown Atlanta marked a major milestone on its road to reality in October as local, state and federal officials celebrated the signing of a master development agreement for the facility.

The Georgia Department of Transportation and other public sector partners selected a private consortium known as Forest City/Integral/Cousins (FIC) to develop preliminary conceptual plans and financing options for the MMPT, which will be located in the under-utilized "Gulch" area near Philips Arena, the Georgia Dome and World Congress Center. It is intended to serve as the hub for existing and proposed transportation networks serving metro Atlanta and beyond, including MARTA rail and bus, regional express busses and the state's passenger rail network. It may also

accommodate future transportation, including high-speed rail, light rail and streetcar services. In addition, it will serve as a catalyst for one of the largest Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) projects in the U.S., with expected commercial, recreational and residential mixed development.

U.S. Representative John Lewis and Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed joined State Transportation Board Intermodal Committee Chair Dana Lemon and other dignitaries on a crisp Halloween morning for the celebration. "This is a moment I've worked towards since I joined the Transportation Board in 2003," Ms. Lemon said. "The MMPT underscores the Board's commitment to practical transit solutions for Atlanta. This is our beginning and it will resonate and bear fruit throughout the metro area for years to come."

"This multi-modal passenger terminal will help transform how we move around our city and region," Mayor Reed added. "It will serve as a focal point for many existing and future transit networks... it will help our region maintain its competitive advantage."

Georgia DOT's contract with FIC is for \$12.2 million over a two-year period. A thorough, corresponding environmental assessment of the property also will be

conducted. At the conclusion of those processes, the consortium expects to provide Georgia DOT a concise roadmap to final MMPT development. "We envision a project that combines centralized transit services access with residential, office, retail and recreational components," Forest City's Emerick J. Corsi Jr., noted, "a project that will energize and connect downtown Atlanta."

While helping build Atlanta's transportation future, the MMPT will be borrowing a page from the city's past as well. Before Atlanta was even called Atlanta, the area served as a transportation hub built around rail service. In the 1830s, Georgia legislators sought to link coastal and western territories with northern cities such as Nashville, Louisville and Cincinnati. In 1837, surveyors determined that a location approximately seven miles southeast of the Chattahoochee River would serve as the zero milepost, the place where the Georgia Railroad with service from Augusta would meet the Western and Atlantic. The area came to be known as Terminus, and Atlanta's role as a center of transportation was born.

For more information about the MMPT, visit [www.GeorgiaP3.com/MMPT](http://www.GeorgiaP3.com/MMPT).

PATH Foundation 20th Anniversary

## Off-Road Trails Improve Quality of Life in Georgia

By **Michael Darbouze** and **Liz Rothman**

**There's no doubt that driving through Georgia offers outstanding vistas. But seeing that beauty up close—without the worry of cars and trucks—is even more compelling.**

Thanks to the vision and efforts of the **PATH Foundation**, thousands of walkers, runners, bikers and skaters enjoy the benefits of these opportunities every day. In 1991, the founders of the PATH Foundation had a vision for a network of off-road scenic greenway trails in and around metro Atlanta. These trails would preserve the region's forested character. They would connect neighborhoods, get people out of their cars, offer opportunities for families to enjoy nature, encourage healthier lifestyles and generally improve quality of life.

**Twenty years, 170 miles and 32 projects later**—that vision is a reality. The PATH Foundation has become a nationally recognized model for trail-building success. PATH's trails and linear parks are a part of the landscape. They bring Georgians together in urban and rural communities, and from all races, ages, incomes and backgrounds.

**Partnering to improve the lives of Georgians.** PATH forms partnerships with local governments to build greenway trails and transportation enhancement projects throughout the state. PATH manages the project development process and in some cases, they provide matching funds to finance development.



State Transportation Board members Emory McClinton and Robert Brown expressed their admiration for PATH. "The PATH Foundation has been able to connect our districts," McClinton said. "This is really a true public-private partnership," Brown concurred. "It has been a delight to work with them."

**PATH is not done yet.** The PATH Foundation is a lean and efficiently-run non-profit organization, where over 90 percent of the donated funds are spent constructing and maintaining trails. The foundation has raised more than \$25 million from the private sector and combined those donations with public funds. PATH's 32-trail network includes the Silver Comet, Stone Mountain, South Decatur Trolley, Northwest Atlanta, and Freedom Park trails. Current and future projects include Atlanta Beltline, South River and GA 400 trails.

*At the State Transportation Board meeting, (L-R) Elaine Armster, Georgia DOT Special Projects Chief; Rudy Bowen, State Transportation Board Chairman; Ed McBrayer, PATH Foundation Executive Director; Bill Fowler, PATH Foundation Board Chairman; and Emory McClinton, State Transportation Board Member.*

**Let it be resolved.** At their December meeting, the State Transportation Board adopted a resolution—on the occasion of the PATH Foundation's 20th anniversary—to recognize the contributions of the Foundation to the State and to acknowledge past and future collaborations for delivering an improved transportation system to the citizens of Georgia. Ed McBrayer, executive director of the PATH Foundation expressed his appreciation to the Board. "We are here to be a partner with GDOT as long as you'll have us."

For downloadable trail maps and a look at PATH's new video, visit: [www.pathfoundation.org](http://www.pathfoundation.org).



Photo: CEDRIC MOHR [cmohr@dot.ga.gov](mailto:cmohr@dot.ga.gov)



*The 60-mile off-road Silver Comet Trail runs from Smyrna to the Alabama border. It is located on the abandoned Seaboard Coastline Railroad right-of-way, originally purchased by Georgia DOT for future commuter rail.*

Photo source: PATH Foundation



Photo: CEDRIC MOHR cmohr@dot.ga.gov

## Fort Benning Gateway a Stunning Tribute

By **Michael Darbouze**

**A**s the sun rises over the hills of Columbus, an unmistakable shadow is cast on vehicles traversing the intersection of I-185 and US Highway 27. This overcast is not from an ensuing rainstorm, but rather four

towering monuments standing 50 feet above an overpass.

The bridge, which crosses over I-185, was converted into a monument to honor the soldiers who protect and defend America.

State Transportation Board (STB) members, the mayor of Columbus, the commander general of Fort Benning and more than 150 other dignitaries and guests gathered in the U.S. Army National Infantry Museum to celebrate

the official opening of the Fort Benning Gateway in October.

"This is an unforgettable overpass," said Teresa Tomlinson, mayor of Columbus. "It is now the symbol of the city."

The massive gateway required 56-acres of land to display its various components. The highlight of the view is the individual monuments sitting on top of four 50-foot columns flanking the corners of the unique overpass. There

are also 20 fountains that can shoot water 20-feet high and 20 flag poles that stand 50 feet tall.

"It's the greatest military gateway in the world," the well-traveled Maj. Gen. Robert Brown enthusiastically expressed. "No other community in the world would show their appreciation to soldiers and families as much as Columbus and the Chattahoochee Valley."


John Flournoy, chairman of Gateways Foundation Inc. and planner of the

project, said the venture would not have been successful without the joint effort between the public and private communities—individuals, companies, and state and federal agencies that came together to raise the revenue to complete the \$6.8 million project. Georgia DOT's District 3 Office managed the project.

Sam Wellborn, STB member and chairman of the Gateways Subcommittee, expressed a great deal

of satisfaction in working with the private community to help beautify the state and honor the true heroes of this country. "What a wonderful tribute," Wellborn said. "The whole purpose is to honor our soldiers and their families."

To view a brief video featuring the Fort Benning Gateway, visit: [www.dot.ga.gov/video](http://www.dot.ga.gov/video).



Facing the new reality.

## Efficiency Efforts at Georgia DOT

By **Liz Rothman**

The economic downturn has forced us all to face a new reality. In our personal lives and at Georgia DOT, as well as in departments of transportation throughout the country.

There have certainly been changes at GDOT. Restructuring. Staff departures with no replacements. Consolidation of positions. Movement of personnel. More use of contractors. New policies and procedures. A push in program delivery. And a new approach to decision-making and prioritization called Transportation Asset Management (TAM)—be sure to read the article on page 10 about this program.

**It's a balancing act. Balancing increasing demands with limited resources. Balancing the staff required to do the job with the dollars we have. And balancing priorities—what needs to be done now and what can be done later?** Limited resources require new approaches. And an open-mindedness to explore creative ways of doing things. “GDOT leadership has been addressing the new economic reality for some time,” explains Chief Engineer Gerald Ross about a presentation he and then-commissioner Vance C. Smith, Jr. made to the State Transportation Board in August about the Department’s efficiency planning efforts. “In 2007 we began development of plans to evaluate outsourcing possibilities and overall maintenance consolidation. In 2010 an internal taskforce was formed to identify core functions that must be performed

immediately; jobs that could be done in the long term; and jobs that could be contracted.”

Critical core functions were identified as maintenance and safety. The maintenance focus is pavement preservation—increasing the life cycle of pavements—and includes edge clipping, spall repair, patching, crack filling, strip sealing and slab replacement. Safety functions reduce fatalities and include guardrail maintenance, repair and installation, mowing, and edge rut maintenance.

**Balancing citizens’ expectations and needs.** The public rightly expects Georgia DOT to maintain and keep roadways safe and to improve congestion. The Department must balance these expectations with the reality of decreasing resources, personnel and funding—while continuing to fulfill our mission: *to provide a safe, seamless, and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia's economy and is sensitive to its citizens and environment.*

As GDOT sought to improve operations, efficiency efforts took on various forms. “The decrease in overall numbers of employees throughout the Department over the last 10 years was due to attrition—retirements, promotions and resignations,” notes Georgia DOT Commissioner Keith Golden. “There were no layoffs and employees were shifted to fill crucial vacant positions.”

**The balancing act takes shape.** WORKFORCE PLANNING yielded the combination of upper and mid-level management positions. Upcoming retirements were addressed through knowledge preservation and knowledge transfer initiatives

including classroom training and cross-training; job rotation; job shadowing; process documentation; succession planning; informal mentoring; and strategic recruitment. Realigning our staff addressed our need to maintain our roadways. Highway lane miles increased 11 percent while maintenance employees decreased 44 percent. To compensate, teams were realigned with new target staffing levels. Thirteen maintenance headquarters were closed with many of the minimal crews in some areas combined to make complete crews in other areas. Custodial contracts for welcome centers were reinstated. Outsourcing was established with a pilot contract for the 113-mile stretch of Interstate Highway 95. The ongoing litter pickup program—through the Georgia Department of Corrections—was implemented to help keep our interstate and state routes clean and welcoming for Georgia residents and visitors alike, while enabling GDOT staff to perform other crucial functions. In OPERATIONS, Navigator operator functions, traffic count data collection and ITS maintenance were outsourced; Crash Reporting Unit was converted to electronic operations; and sign installation crews were combined. In ENGINEERING, road, urban and traffic design offices were consolidated. Program Delivery was established to enhance on-time and on-budget project delivery. Bridge design and maintenance offices were consolidated. Environmental services increased use of consultants. ROW and survey crews saw increased centralization.

“We continue to challenge staff to find resourceful ways to perform their jobs. We ask managers to consider their staff’s ideas for efficiency improvements and to act on them,”

The basic question was: Are we headed in the right direction? AASHTO’s short answer: “Yes...GDOT is implementing management policies and procedures that will move the organization forward to accomplish its mission.” AASHTO also said that in asking for the review, GDOT shows a “self confidence and a desire for continuous improvement.”

Golden said. “The adage ‘work smarter, not harder’ certainly applies here.”

**Bridging the gap.** Earlier this year, leadership asked the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) for an external, comprehensive review of our on-going efforts. The basic question was: **Are we headed in the right direction?** AASHTO’s short answer: **“Yes...GDOT is implementing management policies and procedures that will move the organization forward to accomplish its mission.” AASHTO also said that in asking for the review, GDOT shows a “self confidence and a desire for continuous improvement.”**

Among other things, AASHTO recommended that GDOT continue to implement our asset management program; establish specific levels of service (LOS) for important operations; increase and improve communications and coordination between headquarters and the districts; and clearly communicate the new approach to project delivery.

AASHTO also noted that as revenues decrease and demands increase, GDOT cannot continue to satisfy the historically high standards the Department has met over the decades. Some performance measures and targets must be set at a level that may be below “perfect,” but considered acceptable and within budget realities. “We must continue to find ways to bridge the gap between needs and resources” noted Ross. “Bridging the gap means increasing the use of contractors or reducing performance LOS in non-critical functions. This balancing requires continued vigilance and evaluation.”

## Wellborn, Cole Re-Elected to State Transportation Board



Sam Wellborn



Jim Cole

**Jim Cole**, of Forsyth (Eighth Congressional District) were unanimously re-elected to a full Board term by a caucus of state legislators from their respective congressional districts.

Wellborn, former Synovus Foundation Chairman and President of Columbus Bank and Trust Company, begins his 21st year of service to the board and his fifth term. He has served in numerous key STB posts, including Chairman.

State Transportation Board (STB) members **Sam Wellborn**, of Columbus (Third Congressional District) and

Wellborn chairs the board's Equal Access Committee, is a member of the Finance Committee and is champion of the new STB "Gateways" program.

Cole, Athletics Director at Mercer University, was first elected to the Board in 2010 to fill the remaining term of a member who had retired. Once a three-term member of the Georgia House of Representatives, Cole is chairman of the board's Legislative Committee.

## Georgia DOT Receives Two National Value Engineering Awards

Georgia DOT was the only recipient of two 2011 **American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Value Engineering (VE) awards** at AASHTO's September conference. The **Office of Engineering**

placed first in National VE in Pre-Construction Engineering [less than \$25 million category] for the State Route 36 passing lanes project in Talbot and Upson counties. They also received honorable mention in National VE

in Pre-Construction Engineering [\$75 million or greater category] for the Northwest Corridor project in Cobb and Cherokee counties.

## Comer Named Division Director of Intermodal



develops policies for non-highway modes

**Carol Comer** was selected division director of Intermodal, where she manages program operations and

of transportation including aviation, rail, waterways and public transportation.

Most recently, Comer was acting division director of Intermodal and was previously manager of the Aviation Program. She began her 14-year GDOT career as an aviation planner and airport development engineer. Prior to joining the Department, she was with the

Aviation Division of the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Comer represents GDOT in various capacities including the Georgia Transit Association and Georgia Airports Association.

The Concord, NC native attended North Carolina State University. She has been a licensed FAA pilot and flight instructor for more than 25 years.

## Ivery Selected D5 District Engineer



**Karon L. Ivery** has been named district engineer for District Five/Jesup, where he oversees all planning,

construction, maintenance and operations for the state highway system in the district. Ivery began his 27-year Georgia DOT career in construction at the Jesup district lab, and served 13 years in the right-of-way department, including eight as a district R/W team leader. Prior to his recent promotion, Ivery was

district utilities engineer for 12 years. The Alapaha, GA native is a graduate of Georgia Southern University and holds a bachelor's degree in business management and a master's degree in public administration.

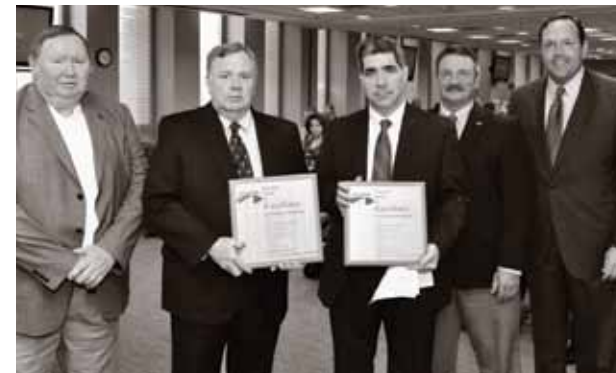
## HERO/State Farm Receive FHWA Award



Chief Engineer Gerald Ross; Board Member Brandon Beach; HERO Unit Coordinator Emanuel Jackson; Commissioner Keith Golden

At the November State Transportation Board meeting, Board Member Brandon Beach presented the Department's **Highway Emergency Response Operators (H.E.R.O.)** program with the 2011-2012 **National Roadway Safety Award** from the **U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration** and the **Roadway Safety Foundation**. The award, in the Operational Improvements Category, recognizes Safety Patrol Sponsorship and Outstanding Contribution to Roadway Safety. "This program deserves to be acknowledged for the outstanding job its operators do day in and day out to help motorists," Beach commented. "The Department's partnership with State Farm Insurance has been an important part of improving this program."

## I-95 Widening Project Judged Best in U.S.



At the December 2011 State Transportation Board Meeting: Allan Childers, consultant for Georgia Concrete Paving Association (GCPA); Jay Shaw, State Transportation Board Member; Keith Golden, Georgia DOT Commissioner; Ronald Ashmore, Division President, APAC-Tennessee, Inc. Ballenger Paving Division; Gene Drake, GCPA Executive Director.

Georgia DOT's widening of **Interstate Highway 95** in Glynn and McIntosh counties has been judged 2010's best rural interstate or divided highway concrete project in the nation by American Concrete Pavement Association (ACPA).

The \$119 million project received the prestigious **"National Gold Award for Excellence in Concrete Paving."** (The ACPA awards are given annually for projects completed in the previous calendar year.)

The project, begun in 2007 and completed in 2010, added a third lane to nine miles of I-95, both north and southbound, and reconstructed two large bridges and ten roadway ramps. The work was designed by GDOT engineers and carried out by contractor APAC Tennessee, Inc., Ballenger Paving Division, under the supervision of Georgia DOT's I-95 project manager, Larry Barnes. It was one of the final segments of the Department's widening to six lanes of all 113 miles of I-95 along Georgia's coast.

"We are very proud to receive this recognition from the industry and even more proud of Interstate 95," DOT Commissioner Keith Golden commented. "Larry Barnes, his field staff and the contractor did an excellent job and I-95 along Georgia's Gold Coast is now one of the most attractive and smoothest-riding interstates in the entire country."

Transportation Asset Management

# Preserving Georgia's Transportation System

By **Liz Rothman**

**T**raffic, weather, age and limited funds all play a role in deterioration of roads, bridges and other physical transportation assets. Truck weights present an increasing challenge on pavements and bridges. And then there's the freeze-thaw cycle—moisture seeps into cracks, freezes, and then expands. These factors inevitably cause deterioration of pavements and other assets. Add limited funding which can defer maintenance, and the problem worsens (and costs more to fix later).

**While our assets won't last forever, regular monitoring, systematic preventive maintenance, and preservation treatments can help extend life, enhance safety and save money in the long run. This is the heart of Transportation Asset Management (TAM).**

"Have you noticed that over time leaves and debris can build up in the gutters on your house? Without regular maintenance or cleaning the

gutters, water can gather and overflow, potentially causing costly damage to your home. Suddenly, instead of cleaning out the gutters you are replacing woodwork or repairing extensive damage at a much higher cost," explains Angela Alexander, director of Organizational Performance Management (OPM), and administrator of the TAM program at Georgia DOT. "The same is true with transportation assets. To keep them safe and serviceable, they require systematic monitoring, preventive maintenance and preservation. By monitoring and prioritizing maintenance and preservation needs, we can anticipate and act on problems before they occur rather than trying to solve them after they happen."

### Most-at-risk.

TAM impacts how decisions are made for allocating resources to manage assets. By considering historical and current data as well as evaluating the risk to the traveling public if failure of an asset should occur, we can make

sound decisions regarding maintenance activities. This knowledge-based approach adds data and risk to the decision-making process. It ensures that decisions are guided by quality information and well-defined objectives as well as engineering judgment and experience. TAM's risk-based method replaces the "worst-first" approach (taking care of the worst or lowest scoring asset first, which can delay maintenance and result in greater costs later). Our new "most-at-risk" approach focuses on issues posing the greatest risk to mobility and the traveling public, whether it's safety, capacity or preservation.



### The Dashboard (it only counts if you keep score).

The TAM method looks across different asset classes and divisions, to



reveal the big picture. Agency level performance is relayed through use of an internet Dashboard that shows how we measure up to our goals.

Alexander notes that performance measurement is not enough—it must go hand-in-hand with performance management. "In addition to our engineering experience and knowledge, we must also use performance measurements to inform our decisions. The dashboard is an easy tool to access information and to help identify where changes are needed to move us in the right direction—it helps in performance management. The Dashboard also informs the public and staff of priorities, sets expectations, identifies challenges and celebrates successes."

"The Dashboard promotes transparency by showing 'the good, the bad and the ugly.'"

To view the online Dashboard, visit [www.dot.ga.gov/dashboard](http://www.dot.ga.gov/dashboard).

### The bottom line.

GDOT's pavement and bridge offices are currently utilizing TAM principles to guide decisions. Transportation asset management is an ongoing process that will evolve over time throughout the Department. TAM strategies will help reduce lifecycle costs; maintain and preserve physical assets; improve the performance of our existing system; improve safety, reliability and travel conditions; get the best return on taxpayer dollars spent for improvements; and enable us to provide the service levels our customers expect.

TAM methods will validate the credibility of our decisions and set the stage to help create legislative support for increased funding. The end result... a better managed system and longer useful life of our transportation assets.

For more information, visit [www.dot.ga.gov/tam](http://www.dot.ga.gov/tam). Contact: Angela Alexander, 404.631.1987 or [aalexander@dot.ga.gov](mailto:aalexander@dot.ga.gov).

## Georgia DOT Strategic Goals & Objectives

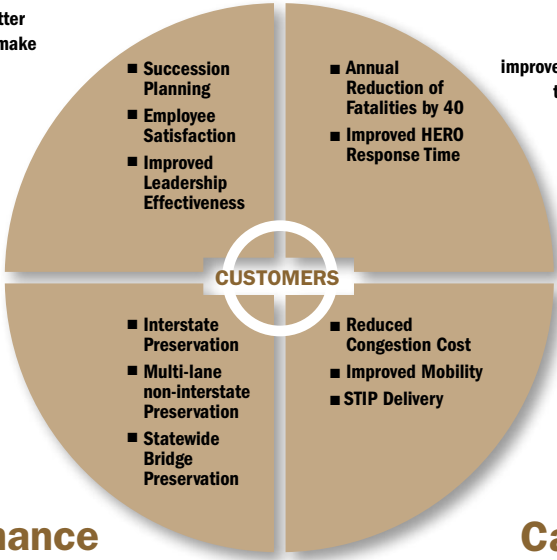
**Vision**  
Keep Georgia Moving with Quality Transportation

**Mission**  
The Georgia Department of Transportation provides a safe, seamless and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia's economy and is sensitive to its citizens and environment

**Core Values**  
Committed  
Accountable  
Responsible  
Ethical

### People

Making GDOT a better place to work will make GDOT a place that works better



### Maintenance

Taking care of what we have, in the most efficient way possible

### Safety

Making safety investments and improvements where the traveling public is most at risk

### Capacity

Planning & constructing the best set of mobility-focused projects we can, on schedule

TAM helps ensure efficient use of our resources to support one or more of our goals and objectives.

**S**ustaining infrastructure through asset preservation is at the core of TAM, which focuses on Life Cycle Management—looking at an asset over its life span and applying preservation treatments to prolong its remaining useful life. **Transportation Asset Management (TAM)** is Georgia DOT's new systematic approach to preserving Georgia's transportation assets and sustaining our infrastructure.

Governor's Road Improvement Program (GRIP)

# Third Major Fall Line Freeway Section Authorized

By *Jill Goldberg*

Georgia DOT authorized \$29 million for widening of a 7.5 mile section of the vital east/west **Governor's Road Improvement Program (GRIP) Fall Line Freeway** corridor across Middle Georgia in Washington and Baldwin counties. This is the third active Fall Line Freeway project—totaling \$92.7 million and providing for widening to four lanes of more than 23 miles of roadway in Baldwin, Washington, Wilkinson and Twiggs counties, as well as construction of 12 new freeway bridges on the route. The other two active projects are 7.2 miles in Twiggs and Wilkinson counties (scheduled for completion in 2012) and 8.5 miles in Washington County (scheduled for completion in 2014). The third segment will be completed in 2014.

An eight-mile section of the freeway in Baldwin and Wilkinson counties was recently completed. One segment—nine miles and a bridge across the Oconee River—remains before the entire 215-mile route from Columbus to Augusta is complete. That project is ready for construction when funding becomes available.

"I couldn't be happier. It seems I've been working on this project for most of my career in office," said State Transportation Board Member Bobby Parham, who served 34 years in the Georgia General Assembly before his election to the Transportation Board in 2009. "It will be a great help in the economic development and growth of Middle Georgia."

"The Fall Line Freeway also will be a critical mid-state, east/west corridor," added State Transportation Board Member Jim Cole of Forsyth. "As Georgia's population and logistics industry continue to grow and expand, this connectivity will be priceless."

The GRIP program, begun in 1989, is a system of economic development highways that, when complete, will connect 95 percent of Georgia cities with populations of 2,500 or more to the Interstate Highway System. It will also place 98 percent of Georgia's population within 20 miles of a four-lane road. GRIP includes 18 other corridors like the Fall Line Freeway and three truck access routes for a total of 3,273 miles of roadway.

# Quick Incident Clearance Goal of Open Roads Program

By *Mark McKinnon*

Georgia DOT and the Georgia State Patrol (GSP) have launched a new initiative aimed at expediting removal of damaged or stalled vehicles from travel lanes of metro Atlanta interstate highways and freeways. The goal of the **Open Roads** program is to clear any incident—no matter how severe or complicated—from roadways within 90 minutes of occurrence.

"Most traffic incidents are routinely cleared by our HEROs (Highway Emergency Response Operators) within 90 minutes, but there often are those that involve fires, fuel and cargo spills, and tragically, fatalities that have extended clearance times for hours," State Transportation Board Chairman Rudy Bowen said. "These delays effectively shut down our

transportation system and we have to speed up re-opening our roads. Studies show that for every minute a lane is closed, from 4-7 minutes in delayed traffic accumulates; that can quickly disable an entire roadway."

Under the program, Georgia DOT is committing to establish incident traffic control within 30 minutes during work hours, and 60 minutes after hours and on weekends. GSP, in turn, will give priority to roadway clearance in its investigations of incidents and will work with private sector wrecker and towing services to remove vehicles and debris from the roadway as fast as possible.

The agencies also are working with local government jurisdictions throughout the metro area to better coordinate and expedite local agencies and their towing contractors' incident response.

RoadWorks

# Crucial Savannah Port Connector Project Moves Forward

By *David Spear*

The Port of Savannah's long-anticipated "last mile" project—the **Jimmy Deloach (Parkway) Connector**—moved closer to reality in November as Georgia DOT awarded a \$73 million contract for its construction.

The Deloach Connector will serve truck traffic movements between the Port's main gate and Interstate Highway 95 and will reduce current truck congestion on State Route 21. As many as 10,000 trucks access the Port daily and that number is expected to increase substantially in years to come.

Ports Authority and State Transportation Board officials have said the new roadway is critical to improving Port access and growing the state's logistics industry. "This is as important as any project the Department has begun since I've been on the Transportation Board," Chairman Rudy Bowen commented. "The economic impact of this project will be huge for Savannah and huge for all of Georgia."

"When complete, the Jimmy Deloach Connector will provide direct access from the Port of Savannah to I-95 and I-16; helping to create a transportation and logistics hub for the entire Southeast U.S.," added Curtis Foltz, Ports Authority Executive Director. "This project could never have been awarded without the strong leadership of Governor Nathan Deal, the General Assembly and the DOT and GPA boards. This is another fine example of how Georgia's leadership works together to make economic development possible."

The project calls for the design and construction of a new limited access, median barrier-separated, four-lane highway between S.R. 307/Bourne Avenue and the Jimmy Deloach Parkway. The 3.1-mile roadway will be built east of and roughly parallel to S.R. 21. It is scheduled to be completed in December 2015.



# RoadWorks 2011 Recap

Georgia DOT concluded its 2011 calendar year construction program with a total of 262 projects begun—valued in excess of \$925 million. The Department also funded more than \$61 million in local work for Georgia cities and counties. Recent lettings include:

- \$52 million to replace 11.5 miles of the concrete surface of I-75 in Dooly County from the Crisp County line to Pinehurst/Hawkinsville Road.
- \$29.9 million to add one lane in each direction on Highway 520 (Bobby Jones Expressway) for the approximate five miles between U.S. Highway 1 and Gordon Highway in Augusta, including constructing a new I-520 bridge over Deans Bridge Road.

- \$19.7 million for widening a five-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 1/State Route 4 in Emanuel County from two to four lanes and replacement of six outdated bridges.
- \$7.5 million for a 1.2 mile northbound auxiliary lane on I-75 between Eagles Landing Parkway/Hudson Bridge Road and I-675 in Henry County, and reconstructing the Walt Stephens Road overpass above I-75.

For details on these and other awarded projects, visit: <http://tomcat2.dot.state.ga.us/ContractsAdministration> (click on **Bid Notices/Reports**).

Atlanta's 17th Street Bridge

# Fence Canopy Failure Investigation Report Released

By **David Spear**

**T**he failure last summer of a portion of a decorative fence canopy on the **17th Street Bridge** above Interstate Highways 75 and 85 was an inevitable result of circumstances unknown at the time it was built, according to a report commissioned by the Georgia Department of Transportation and released January 20.

The study, by the highly regarded national forensic engineering firm, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates., Inc., (WJE) of Northbrook, IL, was done for Georgia DOT after part of the fence canopy on the south side of the bridge failed and fell onto the northbound lanes of I-75/85 (the Downtown Connector) on the night of August 13.

WJE determined that the epoxy used to secure the canopy's anchor bolts

to the bridge wall lost adhesion under sustained tension – a phenomenon known as “creep.” That creep allowed the anchor bolts to slowly, virtually imperceptibly pull away from the wall until the structure fell. As it can be almost impossible to detect creep during an inspection process, WJE concluded it simply was a matter of time before the canopy failed. The firm also found that the failure was accelerated by “poor mixing...poor proportioning (and) ... incomplete filling” of the epoxy by the project contractor.

“We are so very fortunate that there were no injuries or worse and just minor property damage that night,” DOT Commissioner Keith Golden said, “so very, very fortunate. We learned from this and we already have begun to implement changes.”

Among those changes are an ongoing prioritized inspection of structures that utilize epoxy to secure appurtenances such as fence and utility conduit to bridge structures and an immediate prohibition on future epoxy use for such anchors.

“This was a disturbing incident, obviously,” DOT Chief Engineer Gerald Ross said. “But it was an anomaly in so many respects. Georgia’s roads and bridges are safe and it is important that our citizens know that.”

For details, visit: [www.dot.ga.gov](http://www.dot.ga.gov).

*At press briefing: GDOT Commissioner Keith Golden; WJE representative Mark Moore; GDOT Chief Engineer Gerald Ross*



Photo: CEDRIC MOHR [cmohr@dot.ga.gov](mailto:cmohr@dot.ga.gov)

Nykita Hurt

# Above & Beyond: Customer Service Award

By **Julette Carter**

**T**he calls that come to Georgia DOT are many and varied, and how they're handled makes all the difference in the world!

In July 2011, the District 7 Office received a call asking for help with an unusual situation for the Department. Not knowing how to respond, but wanting to take care of the matter, the receptionist asked **Nykita Hurt of the District 7 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) office** to speak with the caller. Hurt listened as a frustrated young woman explained her plight—she was the new mother of a premature baby that was being released from the hospital the next day. She needed a special car seat to transport the baby home, but could not afford one. The mother had called several state agencies trying to get assistance and someone had suggested that she call Georgia DOT.

Time was of the essence—the nurse at the hospital had told the mother about her baby's release and the needed seat only a day in advance. Hurt set about finding the young woman help to get that special car seat. She took the caller's information and promised to call her back.

Her first call was to the hospital to find out about their car seat program; she was told that the hospital no longer provided car seats. “The customer service I received from that call helped me realize why this mother was so upset,” Hurt said. She then called other state agencies and received similar responses - they were all giving her phone numbers to other organizations and state agencies. “I did not need phone numbers,” Hurt emphasized. “I needed someone to act as if they cared.”

Determined, she did not give up! Finally, a friend at the Governor's Office of Highway Safety referred her to an agency that works with premature infants. She called that agency and “left a message on everyone's voice mail that would accept it.” Eventually, Hurt received a response assuring her that they would assist.



Commissioner Keith Golden congratulates Nykita Hurt.

Due to Hurt's perseverance, the mother received what she needed as well as other services.

Hurt kept her word and contacted the mother to follow up. She gave her additional resources to assist in getting her back to school and for various employment programs. The mother was so grateful for how Hurt had gone above and beyond that she sent a letter of appreciation to the Commissioner. Hurt received the **Commissioner's Commendation for Excellence in Customer Service** for going beyond her normal duties to assist a citizen of Georgia.

The award recognizes actions that demonstrate the State and the Department's commitment to customer service—Helpful, Courteous, Accessible, Responsive & Knowledgeable. Hurt's actions reflect all five of the customer service competencies.

While this situation was clearly not a Georgia DOT issue, Hurt seized the opportunity to provide outstanding customer service; she cared enough to help an unlikely GDOT customer, but a citizen of Georgia. The former

Commissioner Smith thanked Hurt for her “personal touch and persistence in helping a lady in need.”

**Recognize someone doing something exceptional!** The Commissioner's Commendation for Excellence in Customer Service recognizes Georgia DOT employees or teams who consistently perform at a high level or go “above and beyond” in providing customer service to internal or external customers. **To submit a nomination, contact Customer Service Manager Julie Carter at 404.631.1835 or [jucarter@dot.ga.gov](mailto:jucarter@dot.ga.gov).**

**Commissioner's Commendation Winners:**

- (September - December 2011)
- Bertha Bryant, State Highway System Coordinator
  - Kelly Gwin, Planner III
  - Nykita Hurt, EEO Review Officer
  - Helene K. Nickey, Secretary III
  - Wallace Wright, District 3 Assistant Foreman
  - Cash Disbursement Unit
  - Contracts Payable Team
  - Open Market Procurement Team

## 2012 Transportation Referendum Georgia DOT's Role: Program Delivery

By **Jill Goldberg**

**N**ow that Georgia's 12 regional roundtables unanimously approved their final lists of transportation projects to put before voters in July, Georgia DOT must efficiently deliver those projects in regions that pass the tax.

**GDOT Prepares** This means that between now and the vote, projects must move along in the preparation stages to ensure that they are ready to be constructed. This requires a vast scope of parallel processes including preliminary design, construction estimates, environmental documents, and right-of-way acquisitions. Georgia DOT is also developing a project management system, unique to the needs of the TIA concept, to handle program controls, technical details, resource allocations, administrative support and reporting.

**GDOT Delivers** Despite having a low per capita transportation budget, Georgia DOT delivers. Georgia's highways and bridges are among the best in the country. And GDOT is known for on-time and on-budget project delivery.



In the July 31 statewide election, residents will have the opportunity to approve a 10-year penny sales tax to fund transportation projects within their regions. It is anticipated that statewide passage would generate \$18.6 billion during the 10-year period, which would fund over 1,600 projects including road-widening, bridge, safety, maintenance and transit. The Transportation Investment Act of 2010 specifies that the Department of Revenue will collect the sales tax and remit to the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC), which will serve as trustee for each

Since 2006, we've consistently improved our cost overruns on construction projects. In fact, according to an independent study\* measuring performance by state DOTs from 2001 to 2010, Georgia DOT ranks first nationally in construction projects delivered on budget (85%) and second in projects delivered on schedule (85%).

For more information, visit [www.dot.ga.gov/transportationreferendum](http://www.dot.ga.gov/transportationreferendum).

Several bi-partisan, nonprofit coalitions have developed outreach efforts to provide voters with information so they can evaluate the options to address their regional transportation needs.

In the 11 regions outside metro Atlanta, **Georgia Transportation Alliance** (an affiliate of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce) oversees **Connect Georgia 2012**. Visit: [www.connectgeorgia2012.com](http://www.connectgeorgia2012.com).

In the metro Atlanta region, **Metro Atlanta Voter Education Network (MAVEN)** oversees **Transform Metro Atlanta**. Visit: [www.transformmetroatlanta.com](http://www.transformmetroatlanta.com).

district's funds. GDOT is responsible for project delivery, excluding transit in metro Atlanta, which is the responsibility of Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA). A Citizens Review Panel—appointed by the Speaker and Lt. Governor—is charged with monitoring the progress of the projects and programs in each region. Beginning January 1, 2013, the panels must annually report to the General Assembly on project progress and expenditures.

*\*National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 20-24 (37) A (01)*

## I-85 HOT Lanes It's about Mobility, Options and Reliability.

By **Liz Rothman**

**C**ommuters in Gwinnett and DeKalb counties have made their concerns clear about the new **I-85 HOT Lanes** pilot program that opened October 1. Georgia DOT and State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) are working to respond with equitable solutions.

To address the **variable tolls** for vehicles that do not meet minimum requirements for free usage, shortly after the lane opened Gov. Nathan Deal requested that the toll

rates be reduced. SRTA responded with a reduction of about 40 percent.

Commuters have the option of a reliable and comfortable ride in the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) Xpress transit buses that utilize the HOT lanes. For information on routes and rates, visit [www.xpressga.com](http://www.xpressga.com).

To address the **minimum three-occupant requirement for free HOT lane usage**, Georgia DOT and SRTA officially asked for a waiver that would allow two-person carpools to use the

express lanes for free. The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) denied the claim, saying it is too early to evaluate the request. This has been appealed.

For vehicles with less than three-occupants, the governor requested and received approval from USDOT to lower **fees during non-peak periods**. Subsequently, SRTA lowered the minimum toll rates to a penny a mile during non-peak times.

The Clean Air Campaign (CAC) provides incentives for commuters who shift from driving alone to alternative modes like three-person carpools or public transit, as well as for those who utilize alternative work arrangements like telecommuting and flextime. Visit [www.cleanaircampaign.org](http://www.cleanaircampaign.org). CAC also provides a free ridematching service for starting or joining a three-person carpool for the I-85 corridor. Call 678.244.7705 or email [expresslane@cleanaircampaign.com](mailto:expresslane@cleanaircampaign.com). For more information about the Guaranteed Ride Home program offered by Ride Smart for carpools and transit riders, visit [www.myridesmart.com](http://www.myridesmart.com).



To address the **number of entry and exit points**, Georgia DOT is working to place an additional access point along I-85 to allow access for people entering southbound from Old Peachtree and Sugarloaf just north of SR 316. A temporary southbound entry point near the Boggs Road overpass opened in January.

**Additional matters are being addressed.** GDOT adjusted the merge points at the SR 316 HOT lane and I-85 southbound. Results are being monitored to determine if additional modifications are required. GDOT is also looking at alternate pavement markings within the corridor. SRTA is performing drive thru observations and evaluating data to identify sources of congestion in the general lanes, as well as assessing how traffic flow on alternate routes is affected.

According to SRTA statistics, I-85 Express Lanes usage has steadily increased, reaching morning peak capacity in early December with an average volume of 1,200 to 1,400 vehicles per hour and sometimes as much as 2,000 vehicles per hour. Weekday usage has peaked at nearly 12,000 registered vehicles.

Georgia is not alone in converting existing HOV lanes to HOT lanes. The express lanes in Miami, Minneapolis, San Diego and Seattle all require three-or-more person carpools. While these regions experienced start-up issues, over time the HOT lanes became popular as drivers came to appreciate the benefits of the lanes. Georgia DOT and our partners continue to fine-tune the I-85 Express Lanes so that Atlanta's commuters will continue to recognize the value of always having a congestion-free alternative on I-85.

## A New Approach to Winter Roads

By **Rick Parham** and **Liz Rothman**

**L**essons learned from last winter's prolonged ice storm, have resulted in significant adjustments in GDOT's approach to managing severe weather road conditions.

**This winter, our snow and ice removal efforts focus on achieving and maintaining two passable (reduced speed) lanes on interstates first; then on state routes.** We'll target bridges and overpasses with preventive pre-treating and consistent monitoring. We'll utilize robust de-icing methods during and after the storm. We've upgraded and added winter weather vehicles and equipment, and initiated procedures to track road conditions and improve coordination efforts with other entities. We've centrally placed storage locations for salt/gravel and de-icers, and will share materials with localities that have crews on the roads. If warranted, contractors and additional GDOT crews are ready to assist. When possible, Georgia DOT will help local governments clear the city and county roads, which are under their jurisdiction.

**Your safety is our top concern.** Even with optimum treatments, equipment and monitoring, occasionally roads—even interstates—must be closed due to pavement conditions. This is evidenced in other regions that regularly deal with snow and ice. “While we will do everything we can, an extended weather event with subfreezing temperatures can be an overwhelming challenge,” says Georgia DOT State Maintenance Engineer Eric Pitts. “Despite our best efforts to keep roads open, sometimes Mother Nature is going to win.”

**D**uring inclement winter weather, we urge you to stay off the roads. But if you must drive, be informed. **Call 5-1-1** or visit [dot.ga.gov](http://dot.ga.gov) for current interstate and state road conditions. Follow Georgia DOT on **Facebook** and **Twitter**, where we'll post the latest updates to help you stay safe.

**Electronic Interactive Map: Tracking road conditions and identifying priorities** GDOT's Maintenance and IT Applications offices have developed an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) map application that enables statewide EOC personnel to enter, update, view and respond to roadway conditions.

“We worked closely with IT to develop this application to track the priorities and status of our snow and ice removal routes,” explains Pitts. “We have presented this map application to local governments and the Atlanta Regional Commission and have invited local officials to post their plans and to view ours.”

The EOC map allows for tracking of conditions and progress in treating roadways, and ensures rapid response; allows sharing of information and plans for assigning crews and equipment to problem areas within local governments; and is suitable for tracking storms, hurricanes and tornadoes, as well as snow and ice events.

Georgia DOT is committed to communicating with local jurisdictions to efficiently manage a coordinated storm response to keep Georgia moving.

# Businesses Wanted

## for New Sponsor-A-Highway Program

By **Liz Rothman**

**S**ponsors are sought for the new Georgia DOT **Sponsor-A-Highway Program** that kicked-off in December. The program provides businesses the opportunity to financially sponsor litter removal on state highways. For each mile sponsored, a recognition **Clean Georgia** sign with the sponsor's logo is placed on the shoulder of the roadway at the beginning of the designated litter pickup route. Sponsorship builds brand awareness, and demonstrates environmental responsibility and community commitment.

While the initial focus is metro Atlanta, the program will expand statewide as sponsorships grow. Sponsors are sought for one to two mile segments on interstates 20, 75, 85, 285, 575, 675, 985 and routes 54, 400/19 and Stone Mountain Highway/78.

To bring the Sponsor-A-Highway Program to Georgia, the Department has partnered with Adopt-A-Highway

Maintenance Corporation, a national company with experience facilitating the sponsorship of thousands of miles of highway cleanup in 20 other states.

"We are very proud to be the first southeastern state to institute the Sponsor-A-Highway concept," DOT Commissioner Keith Golden commented. "We already have outstanding participation statewide through our Adopt-A-Highway volunteer groups and the effort led by (State Transportation Board Member) Jay Shaw to utilize state prison inmates for litter pickup has made a huge difference in the appearance of our roads. This new 'Sponsor-A-Highway' program provides an opportunity for us to complement those efforts with the use of professional crews on a consistent schedule."

Each year, approximately \$11 million is spent on efforts to remove litter and maintain the roadways in Georgia. Additionally, more than 4,000 citizens volunteer with 173 active Adopt-A-Highway groups to maintain about 200 miles of roadway. Despite these efforts and the funds invested, litter control

continues to be an issue. The Sponsor-A-Highway program offers a chance to make our roads cleaner at no cost to the Department or to taxpayers; a vital concern in these economic times with shrinking budgets for transportation programs.

For sponsorship opportunities with Georgia DOT's Sponsor-A-Highway Program, visit: [www.adoptahighway.com](http://www.adoptahighway.com). Call 800.200.0003 or email [info@adoptahighway.com](mailto:info@adoptahighway.com).

*Editor's Note: GDOT's new Sponsor-A-Highway Program is different than Georgia's Adopt-A-Highway Program, which is a partnership between Georgia DOT and Keep Georgia Beautiful that enlists volunteer groups to physically remove litter from roadsides.*

*At the December Sponsor-A-Highway Program event: Patricia Nelson, Adopt-A-Highway (Clean Georgia Consultant); Scott Shinedling, Adopt-A-Highway; Adam Bunyard, Snappy Plumbing and Electric; Marcus Margerum, Zoo Atlanta; Natalie Brannon, Adopt-A-Highway; and Keith Golden, Georgia DOT commissioner.*



**Sponsors as of 12/31/11**  
America's Best Franchising  
Comfort Suites Alpharetta  
Dupree Plumbing

Emory Healthcare  
Hennessy Lexus Atlanta  
Holiday Inn Express Clairmont  
Snappy Services

Superior Essex  
Tanger Outlets  
Zoo Atlanta



## Safe Routes to School Program Invests Almost \$3 Million in Projects

By **Carla Murphy**

**T**he Georgia DOT continues to make significant progress on five **Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)** projects across the state, paving the way for safer walking and biking conditions on busy neighborhood streets and intersections.

Through the federally-funded program, the Department this summer let projects totaling \$2.9 million in Atkinson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, and Fulton counties, underscoring its commitment to relieving congestion and improving connectivity and air quality near schools.

"SRTS has made a significant financial commitment to neighborhood schools through these projects, so we look forward to opening all of them for use to students and their respective communities," said SRTS Coordinator Emmanuella Myrthil.

One of the key goals for SRTS is to increase the number of children in grades K-8 who bike or walk to school by funding projects that remove barriers—such as a lack of infrastructure—that prevent them from doing so. Additionally, the program has facilitated the planning, development and implementation of projects that would reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools. It is funded through

the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users Act (SAFETEA-LU).

Projects include sidewalk, signal and other improvements at:

■ **Willacoochee Elementary (Atkinson)** includes extending sidewalks (with American with Disability ramps) and installing multiple crosswalks, signals and signage. Completion expected March 2012.

■ **Livesey Elementary (DeKalb)** includes installation of "bulb-outs" (traffic calming sidewalk extensions) at the intersection of Livesey Road and Livesey Woods Drive (in front of the school); upgrading a traffic signal and installing a pass-through for bicycles, two speed radar signs, sidewalks and a raised crosswalk. Completed December 2011.

■ **Chapel Hill Elementary (Douglas)** includes installation of sidewalks with curb cut ramps to connect residential communities with the school; guardrails and handrails for safety; crosswalks; pavement markings; signage and school zone flashers. Completed November 2011.

■ **Peeples Elementary and Rising Starr Middle (Fayette)** includes installation of a multi-use path along Redwine Road and a timber bridge over Camp Creek; new curb ramps, crosswalks and improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to Starr's Mill High School; and new curb ramps and crosswalks on the south and east portions of the intersection of Peachtree Parkway and Redwine Road. Completion expected March 2012.

■ **Crabapple Crossing Elementary, Summit Hill Elementary, and Northwestern Middle (Fulton)** includes installation of multi-use gravel path and sidewalks with storm drainage improvements; design of six solar powered improvements; and installation of radar speed signs, crosswalk striping and signage. Completion expected March 2012.

For more information on SRTS, visit [www.dot.ga.gov/srts](http://www.dot.ga.gov/srts).

## March starts Georgia's three-month active tornado "season."

Tornadoes are some of nature's most violent storms. They can generate wind speeds of more than 250 mph. And they can appear out of nowhere at any time of year and with little warning—in fact, Georgia had its first 2012 tornado in January! Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) encourages Georgians to prepare, plan and stay informed. For information, visit [www.ready.ga.gov](http://www.ready.ga.gov).

## Work Zone Safety Awareness Week is April 23-27

Work zones are dangerous places. Not just for workers, but also for motorists. In fact, nationally motorists account for more than four out of every five victims in work zone crashes. That's why GDOT annually joins Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), American Traffic Safety Solutions Association (ATSSA) and other state DOTs, in observing **National Work Zone Awareness Week** (NWZAW), which brings national attention to motorist and worker safety and mobility issues in work zones. These efforts are paying off. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System, the number of national work zone fatalities decreased 39 percent from 2002 to 2008. On April 24, Georgia DOT will mark the annual observance with ceremonies at its General Office in Atlanta, as well as with activities in the districts.

## GDOT Acronyms. Not alphabet soup.

Use of acronyms has become universal. After all, who doesn't know the meaning of LOL (Laughing Out Loud) and TMI (Too Much Information)? Well before texting became a modern phenomenon, the transportation industry was known for its widespread use of acronyms and abbreviations. Acronyms can be confusing for readers—especially when a story juggles three or four of them. That's why on first occurrence our articles include the spelled-out meaning of each acronym. That way, you can keep track of the **GRIPs** (Governor's Road Improvement Program), the **TAMs** (Transportation Asset Management) and the **MMPTs** (Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal). **FYI from Georgia DOT.**

## Tooting our horn.

Georgia DOT **Office of Communications** won the **"Best Use of Social Media"** award at the 2011 National Transportation Public Affairs Workshop (NTPAW) for the successful launch its Facebook page, which provides relevant, easily-accessible and timely news and traffic-related information, images and video. Visit: [www.facebook.com/georgiaDOT](http://www.facebook.com/georgiaDOT).



## Winter driving.

### It's no wonderland.

At Georgia DOT, your safety is our top concern. During severe winter weather, we urge you to stay off the roads. But if you must drive, be informed. Call 5-1-1 or visit [dot.ga.gov](http://dot.ga.gov)

for current interstate and state road conditions. Before, during and after the storm, follow Georgia DOT on Facebook and Twitter, where we'll post the latest updates to help you stay safe. [www.dot.ga.gov](http://www.dot.ga.gov)



## Georgia, Metro Atlanta on Business Short Lists

**Georgia** has the second-best business climate in the nation, according to Site Selection magazine's 2011 rankings. Results are based on an annual survey of corporate real estate executives as well as factors including tax climate and business activity. Georgia has consistently moved up the list from 10th place in 2008 to eighth place in 2009 to sixth place in 2010. The top-ranked state was Texas, with North Carolina, Virginia and South Carolina rounding out the top five.

**Metro Atlanta** ranks No. 8 in the number of private-sector businesses it hosts. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2009 the area had 130,408 private-sector businesses that employed 2,073,320 people. Rounding out the top 10 are (1) New York, (2) Los Angeles, (3) Chicago, (4) Miami, (5) Philadelphia, (6) Washington, D.C, (7) Dallas, (9) Boston, and (10) Houston.

## Georgia DOT wants your best photos of our state!



The State Transportation Board of Georgia invites Georgia residents to enter the State Highway Map Photo Contest. Submit your best pictures depicting Georgia's transportation system, scenic beauty, attractions or historical sites. Each board member will select a photo to represent their respective congressional district on the Official Highway and Transportation Map. Winners will receive photo credit.

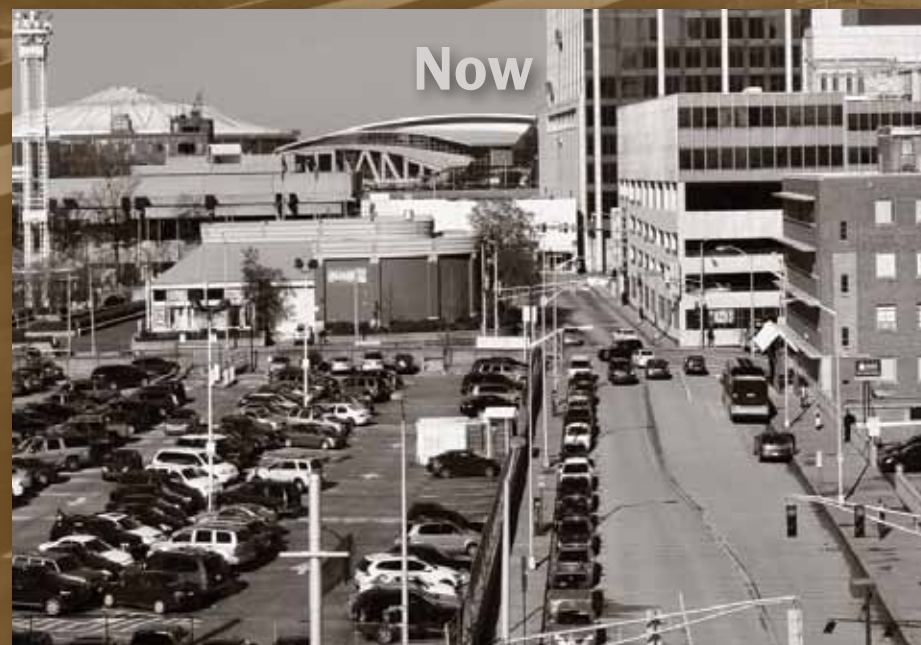
**Entry deadline is April 30.** For rules and other information, visit [www.dot.ga.gov/photocontest](http://www.dot.ga.gov/photocontest).

# Then & Now in Georgia Transportation

Above Underground Atlanta



This photo from the 1930s looks west along Upper Wall Street from Central Avenue.  
Photo source: [www.atlantatimemachine.com](http://www.atlantatimemachine.com)

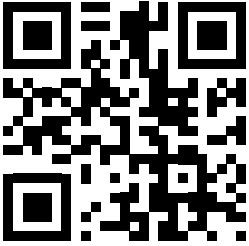


This photo was taken January 2012 from the same perspective.  
The entrance to Underground Atlanta is at the far left.  
Photo: CEDRIC MOHR [cmohr@dot.ga.gov](mailto:cmohr@dot.ga.gov)

Please share your Georgia transportation-related THEN & NOW photos with MILEPOST. Email: [erothman@dot.ga.gov](mailto:erothman@dot.ga.gov).

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