

# GEORGIA MILEPOST

Summer - Fall 2008

## *Introducing Georgia's New Wildflower Tag*



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**Big Shift...A Big Success**  
**Ramp Meters**

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SUMMER - FALL 2008



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## Commissioner's Column

It's been a busy and exciting time for Georgia DOT these past few months! And in this issue of Georgia Milepost, you will read about some of the successes our projects and programs have achieved. From our "Big Shift" over Labor Day Weekend to ramp meter installation to our participation in the Towing and Recovery Incentive Program, Georgia DOT continues to reduce highway congestion in metro Atlanta. In our efforts to improve departmental efficiency, we've completed our move to One Georgia Center, revamped our State Aid program, and reorganized our management structure. As part of our commitment to the traveling public and the citizens of Georgia, we continue to explore better ways of doing business. All of these approaches are detailed in this issue of Milepost.



While gas prices and traffic volumes remain high, Georgia DOT continues to pursue alternative modes of transportation. Find out the latest in our commuter rail update. But Georgia DOT is not just about "big picture" issues. Read about our employees' outstanding customer service, as they helped Wrightsville residents clean up after devastating storms swept across Georgia. We've also reached out to citizens through our map photo contest and our wildflower tag program. See the latest results in this issue.

Georgia DOT faces many challenges in the year ahead, but as you read through each article, you'll see that we continue to strive for excellence in every program, project and initiative. Enjoy this issue of Milepost, and share in our success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gena L. Evans". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Gena L. Evans

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# "Big Shift"

## ....A Big Success

By Paul Marshall

With more than 500,000 motorists converging on downtown Atlanta for Labor Day weekend events, Georgia DOT launched an ambitious traffic plan – called the Big Shift – a plan that kept drivers moving on all major interstates during major construction on the Downtown Connector.

In what was a complex, labor-intensive event, workers tore out and rebuilt sections of Interstate 85 and the Downtown Connector as part of the 14th Street Bridge Project.

"The work was a huge success mainly because of excellent planning," said District Construction Engineer Mickey McGee. "C.W. Matthews did a superior job with preparation and execution." The team realigned Interstate 75 southbound two weeks ahead of time to ensure the work went smoothly during the holiday weekend. Beginning at 9 p.m. that Friday, I-85 southbound was reduced to two lanes and I-75 southbound to only one lane at the Brookwood Interchange.

In the weeks leading up to the lane shifts, the project managers worked closely with the Division of Communications to develop an ambitious and comprehensive plan to inform event-goers, the motoring public, city and county governments, local business owners, and special event organizers. A large grass-roots effort helped spread the word, along with

radio, television and Web ads.

Throughout the weekend, 511 alerted travelers with special messages, NaviGator's changeable message signs (CMS) warned motorists to expect long delays, and additional HERO patrols were out in force to handle any incidents in the work zone. C.W. Matthews' engineers watched the work progress via NaviGator cameras minutes away at the Transportation Management Center (TMC). The weekend passed with almost no significant delays due to a 35 percent reduction of traffic on the Downtown Connector on I-75 southbound and an organized Georgia DOT campaign. Crews completed the work and had all lanes reopened by 6:15 p.m. Monday. A traffic count analysis the following Tuesday revealed that Atlanta motorists heeded the warnings and stayed off the interstate.

"A number of employees deserve special recognition," said McGee. "The TMC console operators added support and did an excellent job monitoring the traffic, displaying CMS messages, and dispatching HERO Units. The Office of Materials and Research scheduled employees to perform the necessary testing of materials. And a big thanks goes to the Area Four Construction Office for providing extra staffing and traffic control."



# Georgia DOT Finalizes Move

By Paul Marshall

The Georgia DOT's move from 2 Capitol Square to One Georgia Center is complete! The new building is a 28-floor, 400,000 square-foot office tower in Midtown. Formerly home to SunTrust Bank, the new building now houses 1,100 Georgia DOT employees with offices and facilities spanning 22 floors.

"Having been in the same location for over 50 years, moving an office this size has been quite an undertaking," said Gordon Jett, State Facilities Manager. "Overall, it's gone very well."

The moving machinery ran like clockwork. Employees of each office received their moving crates on a Thursday, one week before relocation, giving them time to pack. IT then arrived and packed up all the computers. Saturday

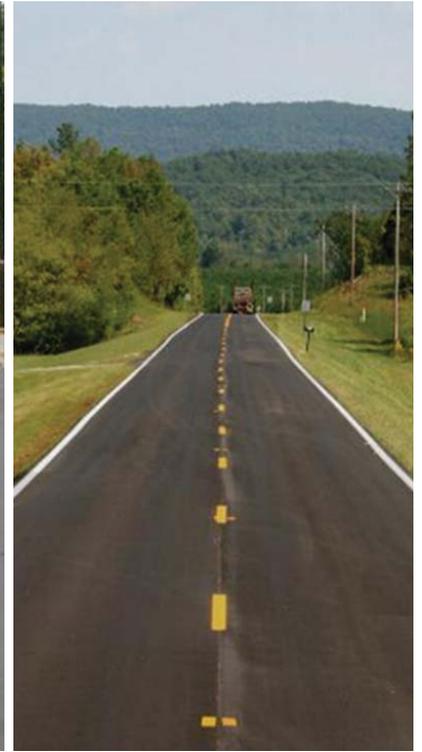
morning, the movers arrived on site and began unloading the hundreds of stacks of crates. Each office had a team of volunteers who work with the facilities staff to ensure everything was moved and sent to the right location. Saturday afternoon, IT swarmed into the new office space, unpacking and reconnecting computers. By Monday morning, the new office was ready for business, and employees had full Internet and phone support. Each office was given two weeks to unpack and return the crates, but most were settled in within a few days.

"It's taken a lot of teamwork so far," said Jett. "Everyone involved has strived to make the move as painless as possible, and with minimal impact to the workplace."

## Below is a breakdown of offices by floor.

- |    |   |    |   |
|----|---|----|---|
| 1  | Print Shop, Mailroom, IT Shipping and Receiving               | 14 | Right of Way                                    |
| 2  | Intermodal Programs (Lobby/North Avenue floor)                | 16 | State Aid                                       |
| 4  | Board Conference Room, Joint Conference Space                 | 17 | State Aid                                       |
| 5  | Engineering Services, Planning and Policy Analysis            | 18 | Communications                                  |
| 7  | General Support, Equal Employment Opportunity                 | 19 | Procurement                                     |
| 8  | Audits and General Accounting                                 | 20 | IT, Server Group                                |
| 9  | Financial Management, Budget Services                         | 22 | Executive Offices, Board Suite                  |
| 10 | Operations, Maintenance, Utilities                            | 23 | Personnel, Legal Services, Construction Claims  |
| 11 | Strategic Development, Construction, Contracts Administration | 24 | Personnel, Bridge Design                        |
|    |   | 25 | Road Design, Consultant Design, Preconstruction |
|    |   | 26 | Road Design                                     |
|    |   | 27 | Urban Design                                    |
|    |   | 28 | Break Room                                      |





## State Aid Program Undergoes Changes

*By Rick Parham*

**T**he Georgia Department of Transportation's revamped State Aid program kicked off in October as city and county governments began applying for Georgia DOT grants to improve their local transportation infrastructure.

Georgia has 116,002 miles of public roadway. County governments maintain and operate 83,549 of those miles, while municipalities account for 14,369 miles of city streets.

"With assistance from local governments, we are prepared to review projects that meet the intent of the program and that are still priority projects to the local governments," said Terry Gable, Georgia DOT State Aid Administrator.

The new State Aid Grant Program "is based on sound engineering principles and cost benefit ratio," Mr. Gable explains, with local governments represented on an Advisory Committee composed of officials of the Department, the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia, the state Department of Community Affairs, and the Georgia Municipal Association.

Applications for State Aid will be accepted through December 31 for the 2010 program. Cities and counties are

encouraged to develop joint priority project lists and project justification must accompany each application package.

The State Transportation Board in October voted to reduce funding for State Aid, with a commitment to replace those dollars over time as other funds become available. The State Aid budget for 2010 has yet to be determined, but Mr. Gable noted that the eventual allocation will be divided among the 13 Congressional districts, less 20 percent held in a contingency fund (to account for unanticipated needs such as a sudden economic development opportunity or weather-related disaster).

Project applications will be grouped by type of work to compete against similar projects within each Congressional district, Mr. Gable said. Applicants can request up to 100 percent of construction costs with a maximum of \$750,000 per year per local government. He added that local governments will be responsible for all preliminary engineering, environmental and right-of-way activities.

Grant selections are scheduled for the Spring of 2009 with input from the Advisory Committee.

# Georgia DOT Hosts Successful 2008 HEEP Conference

By Laurie Scott

The Georgia Department of Transportation was honored to host the 2008 Highway Engineering Exchange Program (HEEP) Area 2 Conference this summer. The conference was held at the Doubletree Hotel in Atlanta-Buckhead. The Vendor Reception kicked off the activities for delegates and guests. Attendees also toured a construction site and enjoyed an outing to Atlanta Cyclorama. A total of 133 participants attended the conference, including vendor representatives, general delegates, Georgia DOT

delegates, and other DOT and government delegates.

The meeting brought together highway engineering and IT professionals with an interest in the latest technology and services. "Tons of good information were provided and shared by all of the southeastern DOT representatives and vendors in attendance. This will surely help the surveys, photogrammetry, aerial photography, and engineering efforts here at GDOT," said Ken Thompson, Assistant State Environmental/Location Engineer.



Among the many topics discussed were *Georgia DOT's Transportation Explorer (TREX)*, *Color Printing Technology*, *3D Models for Machine Guidance Systems*, and *Consultant Management Information System*.

HEEP is an international organization which promotes the exchange of information relating to highway and bridge engineering, among its members. For more information regarding HEEP, visit the Web site at [www.heepweb.org](http://www.heepweb.org).

## GPTQ Workshop to Begin in December

By Lillian Jackson

Each winter, the 15 member agencies and partner associations of the Georgia Partnership for Transportation Quality (GPTQ) host the GPTQ Workshop on the campus of the University of Georgia. With the goal of ensuring a quality transportation infrastructure for the traveling public, the annual Workshop is developed to meet the common challenges of Georgia DOT's consultants, contractors and other partners.

Guided by the theme "GPTQ Partners: Weathering the Perfect Storm," this year's Workshop (December 17-19, 2008) will provide approximately 700 attendees two days of learning and networking opportunities, including 30 sessions that present current and future construction and

design tools and technologies; case studies of innovative out-of-the-box solutions; summaries of new and updated federal and state guidelines and specifications; and cost and time-saving techniques and strategies.

Examples of the 30 topics that will be presented at GPTQ 2008 include: *Accelerated Bridge Construction*; *Managing Construction Issues in a Challenging Economy*; *What We've Learned from Utility Mediation*; and more. The keynote presentation will focus on Investing in Tomorrow's Transportation Today (IT3).

The awards ceremony will recognize several outstanding design and construction projects, exemplary work zone safety practices and procedures, and outstanding Georgia DOT district projects.

Although the Workshop and awards ceremony are highlights, GPTQ is a year-round initiative guided by several teams that constantly explore ways to streamline and improve the way the Department and its partners work cooperatively to achieve on-time, on-budget quality project delivery. The teams present their respective reports on the past year's achievements and goals for the coming year.



Georgia Partnership for Transportation Quality (GPTQ) Workshop

*GPTQ Partners:*

*Weathering the Perfect Storm*

**December 17-19, 2008**

**Continuing Education Center at UGA  
Athens, GA**



# Commuter Rail Update

By Laurie Scott

With increasing public support, renewed commitment from the State Transportation Board, and public support from the Governor, the commuter rail pilot project will be coming soon. In April, the State Transportation Board voted to develop the Lovejoy Commuter Rail line and multi-modal station in Georgia.

“We only have to look at population growth, congestion and increasing gas prices to know that we have to stop talking about it and take steps to implement and operate a viable commuter rail system,” said Board member Emory McClinton. “The Lovejoy line is the beginning of this journey.”

In June, Governor Sonny Perdue supported the commuter rail line between Atlanta and Griffin, pitching it as a “pilot” program for other routes in other parts of the state. The *Lovejoy line* is now referred to as the *Atlanta-to-Griffin line*. “I am fully prepared to

support Georgia DOT’s efforts on commuter rail and making the pilot a reality,” said Governor Perdue at a June press conference. “After looking at the operational costs that I’ve seen, it makes sense to go all the way to Griffin using this pilot program.”

The pilot commuter rail line will link four counties and seven cities. It will be the first leg of a train system that is mapped out from Athens to Macon. Georgia DOT and many of its transportation partners will work to make this plan a reality. Providing reliable service that saves commuters time and money will be one of the main criteria for success.

One of the main obstacles to building a commuter rail system has been an expected operating budget shortfall, with operating costs that may exceed state and federal funding.

Supporters say the commuter rail is feasible and will relieve Atlanta’s congestion and create economic

development. According to a previous study, extending service to Griffin will increase ridership by 45 percent, adding 360,000 annual trips. This will result in a reduction of approximately 11 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the region. By 2030, it is projected that by car, it will take 101 minutes to drive from Griffin to Atlanta. However, it would take 67 minutes by train.

A survey by the Transit Planning Board indicated that most metro Atlanta voters favor transit. The survey showed 85 percent believed that increased investment in public transportation would strengthen metro Atlanta’s economy, create jobs, and reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. The survey also stated that 74 percent agreed that more transportation options such as commuter rail service, light rail, buses, and trolleys were needed in their community.

# Residents Praise Georgia DOT for Cleanup Efforts

By Cissy McNure

As families celebrated Mother's Day this spring, tornadoes ripped through central Georgia, heavily damaging the home of Hoyt and Sara Martin. The couple lives off State Route 15 near Wrightsville, a community of more than 2,200 residents.

In the storm's aftermath, the community and media regularly praised utility companies for restoring power to the small Middle Georgia town. However, the efforts of Georgia Department of Transportation workers were largely unsung.

"They were there every day and got to work quickly and diligently," Mrs. Martin said. "It was such a relief mentally, physically, and financially to have the Georgia DOT cleanup crews working, removing those huge trees from the right-of-way."

Observing that many Georgia DOT workers travel by her home every day, Mrs. Martin placed a large sign in her yard acknowledging crews' work. The sign read, "Thank U D.O.T."

Speaking from her recently repaired home, Mrs. Martin says she always thought well of the Georgia DOT, but this experience has shown how the Department and its employees perform a service to the community that goes far beyond paving roads and repairing bridges. She recounted how workers responded to her family's urgent needs following the storm, providing critical services and equipment to remove debris from their property.

## How did the storm affect you and your property?

We had a lot of damage to the house and yard. Three trees fell on the house leaving a big hole in the roof and lots of damage to the front of our house. We lost more than 70 trees, some 40 years old. The tornado tore down the fence, the outbuildings, our roof, and caused the trees to knock out storm windows on the front of the house. We had so much glass in one of the bedrooms that the bedspread had to be thrown away. As soon as the storm was over, my family and I gathered in the hall and prayed. I never dreamed that Georgia DOT would come along and be such a big part of what we had to deal with.

## How did workers assist you in the cleanup?

They removed all the huge trees from the right-of-way. We had two crews working in our yard removing trees from our property. There were so many trees; and we did not know what to do with all of them. The DOT crews were there every day cleaning the right-of-way all up and down the highway.

## Were you aware prior to this experience that you could rely on the Georgia DOT to assist you with your cleanup efforts?

No, we were not. We had no idea. We wondered how we would get it all moved. We had no idea how much it would cost, but knew the cost would be enormous. It was such a relief mentally, physically, and financially to have the Georgia DOT cleanup crews working.



## Does any one thing stand out in your memories about those who assisted you during the aftermath of the storm?

I recall how regularly the DOT staff was there. They were there every day and got to their work quickly and diligently.

## What prompted you to make the sign and put it in your yard?

I intended to write letters to the Sandersville DOT Office and to Atlanta expressing our thanks, but time passed and I knew that lots of DOT workers passed by our house. I thought that the sign would be a good way to recognize the DOT's help and to let others passing know what had happened. I realize this was not the norm for the DOT but neither was the damage to property the norm. We just wanted to say a heartfelt thanks to the DOT. I wanted to leave the sign up longer, but the wind kept knocking it down.

## What feeling were you left with following the experience of the storm and the cleanup efforts?

I have a much better feeling about DOT. I always had a good perception, but I did not know they did this service. I still do not know everything they do, but I have nothing but good things to say about the DOT.

# Map Photo Contest

by Ron Battle

The Division of Communications and Office of Transportation Data recently conducted the second annual State Map Photo Contest. Spearheaded by the State Transportation Board, this contest gives Georgia residents an opportunity to submit photos for consideration on the 2009 Official State Highway and Transportation Map. The goal is to encourage the public to participate in the state highway map development process by sending a photo that best captures the essence of their communities.

The Department reaches out to local governments, organizations, and schools across our state to collect photos that exemplify Georgia's southern charm. This year, the Georgia DOT received over 300 photos from all across the state, including nine entries from employees. The State Transportation Board reviews these entries and selects a total of 13 photos, representing each of Georgia's congressional districts.

Photographers are notified in writing that their photo has been selected for the 2009 map. In August, the Board votes on which two photos will be placed on the front and back cover of the State Highway map. The remaining 11 photos are placed on the inside panel.

The Official State Highway and Transportation map serves as a visual gateway that connects our transportation system with Georgia's picturesque regions, history and culture. Each year, photos representing Georgia's scenic beauty and communities are prominently displayed on the map. This year, with the help of the public, the Board will continue that tradition by selecting photos that showcase our state. You can learn more about the State Map Photo contest by visiting the web site at <http://statemapphoto.dot.state.ga.us/photoContest/index.cfm>

## WINNERS OF THE 2008 STATE MAP PHOTO CONTEST



# Introducing Georgia's New Wildflower Tag

by Melany Reynolds

This spring, Georgia's roadside wildflowers caught a glimpse of a fellow native traveling at about 55 miles per hour. In addition to the "Blackeyed Susan" Wildflower tag that has graced thousands of vehicles for the last seven years, the Georgia Department of Transportation now boasts a new native Wildflower tag.

The gorgeous "Purple Coneflower"

is the latest Wildflower tag offering from the Georgia DOT Wildflower Program. The new design features a lifelike image of the flower, a burnt orange cone with surrounding petals in shades of purple.

Commissioner Gena Evans said, "The Wildflower Program reflects a tremendous effort made toward roadside beautification and enhance-

ment. Citizens can do their part to support the program and see their investment whenever they travel on interstates and state routes."

Joint efforts from the Maintenance office and Division of Communications made the idea of creating the new tag a tangible reality. After months of research and several designs, the team assembled a focus group, made up of garden enthusiasts, Georgia DOT employees and representatives of the general public, to collect objective feedback about the design for the new tag. Georgia DOT Landscape Architect Davie Biagi said, "We took careful consideration with the design to make sure that the tag was not only aesthetically pleasing, but to ensure people would relate the tag to the Georgia DOT." She added, "The selected design

received rave reviews from our focus group. I hope Georgians will feel the same."

Although the Department has a new tag to offer,

the "Blackeyed Susan" tag is still available.

Georgians may purchase both Wildflower tags at County Tax Commissioner's Office locations throughout the state. The one-time \$25 purchase fee is the only guaranteed source of funding for the Wildflower Program.

The Wildflower Program has been in existence for more than three decades and is the result of a movement to plant and protect wildflowers on the roadsides. This movement involved former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, Virginia Hand Callaway of Callaway Gardens, the Garden Club of Georgia, and former First Lady Lady Bird Johnson.

This year, the Maintenance Office planted over 200 acres all over Georgia. Additionally, in 2006 the Wildflower Program broadened its catalog and planted almost 400,000 daffodil bulbs to extend the bloom season.

"The Georgia DOT does more than build and maintain roads and bridges," said Commissioner Evans. "In the midst of all our other projects, the Wildflower Program is a pleasant presence and positive influence we can all appreciate."

To find out more about the Georgia DOT Wildflower Program, visit [www.dot.ga.gov/wildflower](http://www.dot.ga.gov/wildflower). Please visit <http://motor.etax.dor.ga.gov/tagoffices/selecttagoffice.aspx> to locate your local tag office. Purchase a Wildflower auto tag and Color Your Roads!



**COLOR YOUR ROADS**

GEORGIA.gov  
**WC 000**

**Purchase a license plate for a one-time \$25 fee to support GDOT's Wildflower Program, and keep Georgia's roads Bloomin' Beautiful!**

**GDOT**  
Georgia Department of Transportation

[www.dot.ga.gov](http://www.dot.ga.gov)



# Georgia DOT Activates Ramp Meters

By Paul Marshall

This summer, Georgia DOT began to unveil its latest weapon in the war on traffic: new meters on metro Atlanta's freeway entrance ramps. These new ramp meters are part of the Department's ongoing effort to relieve congestion and enhance motorist safety. Currently, 44 of the planned 160 ramp meters are operational, and the remainder will gradually come online over the next several months. The entire deployment should be completed by mid-2009.

Ramp meters work similarly to traffic signals. They are designed to delay the onset of rush hour by regulating the flow of vehicles merging onto freeways. Every 3-5 seconds, a cycle from red to green allows one vehicle at a time to merge onto the freeway. On two-lane ramps, the left and right lanes have alternating lights, so the left lane goes while the right is stopped, and vice versa.

"Although motorists will spend a little extra time on the ramp, they should see a decrease in overall travel time," Operations Director Steve Henry said. "We'll monitor the ramp meters very carefully. If traffic starts to



back up on the ramp, sensors will speed up the meters to allow more vehicles to move through. If our cameras show traffic spilling out onto the surface streets, we can turn them off completely."

Without metering, vehicles push their way all at once onto the interstate in a disorderly and potentially dangerous manner. Once these vehicles reach the merge point, they force their way into the travel lanes, causing additional congestion due to stop-and-go merging activity on the freeway. When this happens on already traffic-heavy freeways, there is a total breakdown of free-flow near the on-ramps, which has a ripple effect on traffic for many miles. Even with no stalls or accidents, heavy on-ramp traffic causes congestion that both extends, and continues throughout, the rush-hour.

Ramp meters have been used for over 20 years in more than 20 cities

across the country. They first appeared in Atlanta during the 1996 Summer Olympics, on I-75 northbound between Midtown and Cumberland Mall. In 2005, four more began operating on I-75/85 southbound. They have reduced average rush-hour commute times in these corridors by 10 to 22 percent. Other benefits include reductions in fuel consumption, merging accidents, and vehicle emissions.

On the top end of I-285, early results are promising. "Since activating fourteen new ramp meters on I-285 in June, we've seen some of the greatest benefits to date from ramp metering," said Mark Demidovich, Assistant State Traffic Operations Engineer. "On the westbound side, afternoon congestion between GA 400 and I-75 has decreased 30 percent, and average speeds have increased from just below 30 miles per hour to nearly 50 mph during peak travel periods."

## The meters help to:

- Split up the continuous flow of traffic from entrance ramps.
- Allow vehicles to merge with free way traffic more smoothly.
- Make travel safer.
- Enable the freeway to accommodate more vehicles during peak hour travel.
- Reduce overall commute times.

# Quick Clearance of Major Accidents is a TRIP

By Monica Luck

**H**ave you noticed? There are fewer “all-day” accidents on metro Atlanta interstates. Part of the reason is an initiative launched in January that is already paying off in reduced accident clearance times and more open roadways.

The Towing and Recovery Incentive Program, or TRIP, is a quick-clearance incentive program to pay heavy-duty towing and recovery companies a bonus for clearing commercial-vehicle accidents within a specified time limit.

While the program is still in its first year, TRIP has been a success! When comparing similar incidents from January through June 2007 to the same period in 2008, the response time has decreased by over 21 minutes. More importantly, the roadway clearance time has been reduced by over 2 hours! With the launch of TRIP, the time saved via quick clearance of 15 major tractor-trailer incidents in 2008 (compared to the same number in 2007) totaled 67 hours and 32 minutes!

TRIP is activated for interstate highway crashes involving tractor-trailers, large motor homes, buses, or aircraft. Local police and the HERO supervisor responding to a crash confer when they arrive onscene, then decide if the accident meets the criteria for activating the program. Once they agree “it’s a TRIP,” the police officer or HERO supervisor calls a specified number at the Georgia DOT’s Transportation

Management Center (TMC) in downtown Atlanta.

The TMC Supervisor on duty contacts the TRIP company assigned to the zone of the accident. The TRIP company has 30-45 minutes to respond to the scene with the required equipment and personnel. Once instructed to proceed with clearance, the company has 90 minutes to remove everything from the travel lanes and reopen the road.

TRIP was developed in 2007 by the Traffic Incident Management Enhancement (TIME) Task Force as part of their “Strategic Vision for Metro Atlanta.” The program is designed to clear major accidents quickly and to improve on-scene safety for first responders and reduce traffic congestion.

Representatives of the Georgia DOT’s Office of Traffic Operations, the Georgia Regional



Transportation Authority (GRTA), the Towing & Recovery Association of Georgia (TRAG), and consultant firm Delcan Corporation met to establish the criteria for TRIP companies and for activating a TRIP event. Towing companies that want to be certified for the program must have the right equipment and extensive training in heavy-wrecker operations as well as traffic control and hazardous material awareness.

Supervisors must be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for prompt response to a TRIP activation. Once a towing company is certified for the program, it is assigned to a zone near its base of operations.

For more information about the TIME Task Force and TRIP, see <http://www.timetaskforce.com/trip.htm> or contact Monica Luck at [mluck@dot.ga.gov](mailto:mluck@dot.ga.gov).



## Chris Tomlinson Named General Counsel



**Chris Tomlinson** was been named General Counsel for Georgia DOT. He advises and supports the State Transportation Board, Commissioner and senior staff on all legal matters that may impact the Department at both the federal and state level.

Prior to this appointment, Tomlinson worked as the Deputy Director of the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC). He also served as the Director of Legal Services for GSFIC Construction, the Georgia Building Authority and the State Properties Commission.

Prior to working for the State Property Office, Chris served as General Counsel for the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA). Tomlinson joined the GTA in 2000 as Director of Legal Services. He led the in-house legal staff which handles all legal matters affecting the State Property Office agencies and served as a liaison to the Office of the Attorney General.

Tomlinson began his state government career with the Georgia Merit System in 1998.

Chris graduated cum laude from Morehouse College, with a major in political science. He received his law degree from the Georgia State University College of Law.

## Richard Sawyer Appointed as Chief Acquisition Officer



**Richard Sawyer** has been named Chief Acquisition Officer for the Georgia Department of Transportation. In this capacity, he is responsible for direction of the supportive service divisions of Procurement and Information Technology (IT), and overseeing the

development of strategic goals and operational objectives for the divisions. He is currently directing a major reorganization of Georgia DOT purchasing and contracting activities and staff into the new Procurement Division, and also initiating a renewed focus and effort on IT efficiency.

Mr. Sawyer has served the State of Georgia for over 28 years in the field of purchasing and contracting management,

serving much of his career with the Georgia World Congress Center Authority as a member of the management team of the GWCC, Georgia Dome, and Centennial Olympic Park. He went on to serve with the State Property Officer in directing all procurement for the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission where he managed competitive selection and negotiation processes for major building construction projects on behalf of the Board of Regents and many other agencies, and directed all procurement activities for the Georgia Building Authority and State Properties Commission.

Originally from Thomasville, Georgia, Mr. Sawyer is a cum laude graduate of Coles College of Business, Kennesaw State University.

## Jones Named Director of Financial and Policy Compliance Division



**Chris Jones** has been chosen to lead the newly-created Financial and Policy Compliance Division.

Jones will direct the development of the Department's annual budget request; maintain Georgia DOT's operating budget; and direct the Department's

Audit Program. Additionally, he will oversee the Department's compliance with regulatory requirements; ensure employees' compliance with internal policies and procedures; and manage the human resources and employee relations functions within

the Department.

Prior to becoming Director, Jones served as executive assistant to the treasurer, providing leadership to executive level management on transportation funding laws, standards and regulations. He also researched and recommended innovative funding mechanisms to leverage the Department's financial resources and analyzed proposed legislation to identify potential impact on Georgia DOT programs and projects.

Jones is a graduate of Southern College of Technology, where he received a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering and a master's in Finance.

# BOARD NEWS

## Kuhlke Elected Chairman of State Transportation Board

By Jeff Armstrong

The State Transportation Board elected Bill Kuhlke, Jr. of Augusta as Chairman and Larry Walker of Perry as Vice Chairman of the State Transportation Board in June. Kuhlke represents the 10th Congressional District and Walker represents the 8th Congressional District.

Prior to joining the Board in 2004, Kuhlke served on the Richmond County Commission from 1996 to 2003 and is a former member of the Richmond County Coliseum Authority, a former member and Chairman of the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism (now the Georgia Department of Economic Development) and former member of the World Congress Center Authority. His civic activities include serving as past president of the Exchange Club of Augusta and the Metro Augusta Chamber of Commerce.

Kuhlke has also been involved with the Augusta State University Trustees as a past chairman and as the past president of the Augusta YMCA. He is the owner of a commercial construction business, Kuhlke Properties. He also is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps.

"I appreciate the confidence you all have shown in me to lead this Board," Kuhlke said. "Mr. Walker and I will work hard to make this Board and Department great for Georgia."

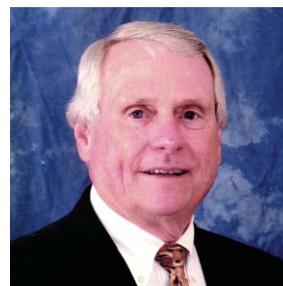
Prior to joining the Board in 2007, Larry Walker practiced law in Perry after graduation from the University of Georgia School of Law, serving six years as Municipal Court Judge and eight years as City Attorney. He was elected to the Georgia General Assembly

in 1972, taking the seat formerly occupied by Sam Nunn, a fellow Perryan, and served continuously until January 10, 2005. In 1983, Walker assumed the duties of Administration Floor Leader for Governor Joe Frank Harris, and in 1986 he was elected Majority Leader of the Georgia House of Representatives, serving in this capacity through 2002. He also served on the Judiciary, Rules, and Appropriations committees.

In addition, Walker also served as Chairman of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation, a nationwide organization of state legislative leaders, for four years (1999-2002). In the January 2003 edition of *Georgia Trend* magazine, Walker was named as one of "The 100 Most Powerful and Influential People in Georgia" for the 12th consecutive year.

"I feel great about our Board; their dedication is top notch," Walker said. "I'm flattered they would consider me to be their vice chairman."

Kuhlke and Walker will serve one-year terms as board chair and vice chair. They both can be re-elected next year. The State Transportation Board is comprised of 13 members representing each of Georgia's 13 congressional districts. Board members are elected by a legislative caucus that is made up of members of the Georgia House of Representatives and Senate representing the districts. Elected to five-year terms, board members serve as a policy making body with general control and supervision of the Department of Transportation, including authority to name the Department of Transportation Commissioner.



Bill Kuhlke, Jr.



Larry Walker

### 2008-2009 Committees

#### **Statewide Transportation Plan/Strategic Planning**

*Raybon Anderson, Chair*

#### **Administrative**

*Rudy Bowen, Chair*

#### **Equal Access**

*Johnny Floyd, Chair*

#### **Finance**

*Sam Wellborn, Chair*

#### **Intermodal**

*Larry Walker, Chair*

#### **Legislative**

*Dana Lemon, Chair*

#### **Alternative Financing/ Funding**

*David Doss, Chair*

#### **Program Delivery/Consultant Services/Contractors**

*Robert Brown, Chair*

#### **Transportation Agency Partners**

*Emory McClinton, Chair*

## Scene from the Connector on Labor Day

During the three-day Labor Day weekend, crews tore out and rebuilt sections of I-85 and I-75. The 72 hours of continuous work eliminated six weekends of major lane closures that could have affected more than three million motorists.

