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## Environmental Leadership

### A View from the Top



A Perspective from John Njord  
President of the American Association of State Highway  
and Transportation Officials and Executive Director of the  
Utah Department of Transportation

**A**N especially far-reaching facet of “quality” in the transportation industry is environmental leadership, since its results affect customers we know and customers we don’t: the generations to come. The public expects solutions that meet transportation needs while respecting community values and protecting the natural and built environment for communities now and for those who follow. For this reason, environmental leadership is one of AASHTO’s three areas of emphasis for the next year, along with TEA-21 reauthorization and optimizing the transportation system.

Environmental stewardship is a dynamic field, and transportation professionals are deeply involved in it. AASHTO and its leaders are pleased to have the opportunity to show how our departments and our colleagues are achieving success in this area. We’re doing a great deal – indeed, much more than most citizens are aware of.

Do your neighbors know that each year the highway community recycles more asphalt, by volume, than the total combined recycling of aluminum, paper, plastic and glass? Does your community know that wetland creation, replacement, and banking have led to a net gain in

wetlands as a direct result of road construction? Were you yourself aware that transportation is the largest investor in historic preservation in the nation? All these things are true. And, in the past 10 years, \$5 billion has been spent in 15,000 communities for transportation enhancements, such as bike paths and historic-preservation projects.

Growing awareness of community aesthetics is increasing interest in Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). This year, the AASHTO 2003 Best Practices in Environmental Stewardship competition drew 75 entries from 32 states and the District of Columbia. The breadth and scope of these projects were remarkable. The project winner was the Florida Key Deer Project, the program winner was the Colorado Short-Grass Prairie Program, and the institutional winner was North Carolina Environmental Leadership. This third category, “institutional,” is noteworthy. The term captures the practice of what we preach – institutionalizing environmental stewardship and context-sensitive approaches.

The National Partnership for Highway Quality again, this year, put a national spotlight on the environmental and societal benefits derived from roadway projects through its National Achievement

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Awards Program. Arizona's U.S. 93 Boulders Project won an NPHQ Gold Level Winner Award in the 2003 NPHQ NAA Awards Program. The team realized its customer base included more than two-legged creatures – it also included animals, vegetation, and minerals. The desert tortoise had its own protection and mobility plan during construction, and tortoise-preservation training was mandated for crews. About 20,000 cactus and flora affected by reconstruction were preserved in nurseries and replanted, with survival exceeding 90 percent. To maintain the original look of the area, nearly 3,000 boulders strewn by ancient glacial activity were salvaged and put back.

Kentucky's Paris Pike Project Team received an NPHQ State Winner Award. Paris Pike runs through the heart of Kentucky's Bluegrass Region, and stakeholders joined forces to decide how two additional lanes could fit naturally into the landscape. The design team used three-dimensional computer models to show the community what the reconstruction would look like before each stage in order to gain feedback. Among other extraordinary measures, the state brought in a master craftsman from Scotland to teach masons how to dry-lay rock fences so areas affected by the project would offer that feature and appear untouched.

## "Environmental leadership is a quality journey, not a destination."

These and other undertakings across the nation prove that improving capacity and protecting the environment are not mutually exclusive. CSS can satisfy the needs of a full range of stakeholders and balance scenic, historic, natural-resource, mobility, and safety priorities of each community. It starts with commitment,

## "Improving capacity and protecting the environment are not mutually exclusive."

from local leaders to top agency officials.

We're seeing an ever-deepening commitment from governors, state legislatures, the Federal Highway Administration, and the U.S. Department of Transportation. In fact, just two months ago, U.S. DOT released its Strategic Plan for 2003–2008, and environmental stewardship figures prominently. The cabinet agency expressed determination to balance the need for a safe, efficient transportation network with preserving environmental quality. In addition to system performance improvements, U.S. DOT intends to speed up the review, approval, and completion of all vital transportation projects, consistent with the requirements of environmental law and stewardship responsibilities.

There's a long road ahead, of course, since environmental leadership is a quality journey, not a destination. It's less about new regulations than it is about sustaining a vigorous commitment to environmental protection and enhancement as part of the missions of all highway agencies. With the support of the Federal Highway Administration, AASHTO launched the Center for Environmental Excellence last

year to assist state DOTs with environmental-leadership goals. It's a one-stop shop for transportation professionals in search of technical assistance, training, information exchange, partnership-building opportunities, and quick access to environmental tools.

Just last month, a new AASHTO web site

made its debut: <http://www.environment.transportation.org>. It makes the AASHTO Center's rich resources more readily available. If you haven't visited yet, I hope you'll log on and tap into this wellspring. Both the Center and the web site will expand in the months ahead.

We'll continue to promote the concept of Environmental Management Systems with state DOTs and find innovative approaches for stewardship and streamlining. Stronger partnerships with our resource agency counterparts are a priority. A new training course for CSS is in development – but not the kind where an agency sends one or two people to a one-time course. Rather, it is a "how-to" for developing good CSS courses within a state

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### The NPHQ Newsletter

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FALL 2003

# Conference Roundup: Advancing the Agenda

## 2003 NPHQ Conferees Meet in Minnesota

**H**IGHWAY quality leaders tackled a packed agenda at the NPHQ Steering Committee Meeting, Annual Conference, and Awards Banquet on September 3rd and 4th in Minneapolis, MN. Conferees dug deeply into key elements of the highway quality mission, displaying commitment and confidence in advancing the NPHQ agenda.

### Steering Committee

NPHQ Co-Chairman Doug Rose, Deputy Administrator and Chief Engineer for Operations, Maryland State Highway Administration, kicked off the group's proceedings with introductions of three new members of the Steering Committee.

- Dennis Jackson, representing the Foundation for Pavement Preservation, is Senior Project Manager with Kristen Betty & Associates in Olympia, Washington.
- Amar Bhajandas is the new representative from the AASHTO Subcommittee on Construction. He is the Director of the Bureau of Construction and Materials for Pennsylvania DOT, and succeeds Ken Stoneman from Oregon DOT.
- Georgene Geary is the new representative from the AASHTO Subcommittee on Materials. She is the State Materials and Research Engineer for Georgia DOT, and succeeds Mark Felag from Rhode Island DOT.

Co-Chairman Rose, NPHQ Executive Director Bob Templeton, and Subcommittee Chairs led conferees through a series of action items. A few of the many topics:

- the proposed timeline and milestones for implementing of the NPHQ Long Range Plan over the coming year;
- creation of a Future Meetings Task Force, with members Brian Deery, Warren Sick, Byron Lord, Valerie Edgar, Monica Worth, Terry Donovan, Bill Gregoricus and Bob Templeton to consider concepts to make the format and content of future meetings more serviceable;
- a report from the Special Task Force on Membership and Funding, and a resolution mandating a partner share in NPHQ funding;
- discussions of the feasibility of sponsoring a national Quality Summit, a State Quality Partnership Workshop, and/or a Training and Certification Workshop, among other ideas for technology and skills dissemination throughout the roadway program;
- and the rollout of the 2003/2004 NPHQ Communications Plan, which includes monthly editorial packages to a comprehensive list of roadway program influencers and media.

### Annual Conference

Special presentations covered diverse quality topics, with the 2003 conference theme, "Reintroducing Partnerships" threading throughout each. Briefings and speeches were delivered by NICET's Mike Clark, Kiewit's Larry Cochran, Bill Ballou of the Foundation for Pavement Preservation, Dean Carlson of Carlson Associates, Minnesota DOT's Patrick Hughes, Doug Rose, and Bob Templeton. Kiewit's quality manager, Cochran,

offered a comprehensive overview of the company's impressive quality program, highlighting the results and reasoning behind Kiewit's commitment to the concept.

### National Achievement Award Program

The stars came out for the Awards Banquet on September 4: ten stellar teams recognized in the 2003 National Achievement Award program. Thanks to the superb work of state DOTs in assembling the extensive nomination packages--and of NPHQ's Industry Awards Task Force in thoroughly assessing them over a span of months--the decisions were finally at hand. Assisting with the honors was NPHQ Co-Chair Dave Geiger, who is FHWA's Director of Asset Management. And the envelopes, please?

### National Achievement Award

**New Jersey Department of Transportation, J.H. Reid General Contractor, and Parsons Brinckerhoff-FG, Inc.** for the US Route 9 Bridge Over Nacote Creek Project.

### Special Recognition for a Small Project

**Michigan Department of Transportation, the Nagel Construction Company, and the URS Corporation** for the M-11 at M-37 Intersection Reconstruction in the Cities of Grand Rapids and Kentwood.

### Special Recognition for a Structure Project

**Texas Department of Transportation, the TXDOT/Houston District Bridge Section, and Williams Brothers Construction Company** for the US 59-Southwest Freeway Project (Houston Gateway).

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## Gold Level Winners

- **Arizona Department of Transportation, Sundt Construction Inc., and the URS Corporation** for the US 93-Boulders Reconstruction Project.
- **Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (SHA), IA Construction, and the Wilson T. Ballard Company** for the Canal Parkway Project.

## State Winners

- **Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), its Maintenance Office, construction manager Mickey McGee, Shepherd Construction Co., Inc. and E.R. Snell Contractor, Inc.** for the I-285 Resurfacing Project.
- **Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), construction manager Bart Bryant, Hinkle Contracting, Central Rock Mineral Co., and H.W. Lochner, Inc.** for the Paris Pike Reconstruction.
- **North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the S.T. Wooten Corporation** for the White Oak River Bridge Replacement.
- **Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), ODOT District 6, the Kokosing Construction Company, and Parsons Brinckerhoff Ohio Inc.** for the Interstate 70 Reconstruction.
- **Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), construction manager Ron Clay, contractor J.C. Compton, Inc., and Senior ODOT Designer Tandra Mortensen** for the Oregon 99w Brutscher Street to Main Street Project in Newberg.

At the banquet, NPHQ also took the opportunity to add its Commendation Award to the winners of the National Asphalt Pavement Association's Sheldon G. Hayes Award: the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department and K. Barnett & Sons Inc.

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*The Maryland team is presented with the NPHQ 2003 Gold Level Winner Award on Sept. 4 in Minneapolis. I-r, Bob Templeton, NPHQ Executive Director; Neil Pedersen, Administrator, Maryland State Highway Administration; David Wallace, Partner, Rummel, Klepper & Kahl; Lisa Choplin, Assistant Chief of Highway Design, Maryland State Highway Administration; Robert Bond, Senior Vice President, The Wilson T. Ballard Company; Doug Rose, NPHQ Co-chair and Deputy Administrator/Chief Engineer for Operations, Maryland State Highway Administration; Dave Geiger, NPHQ Co-chair and Director of the Office of Asset Management, Federal Highway Administration.*

*The Arizona team accepts its NPHQ 2003 Gold Level Winner Award. I-r, Josiah Roberts, Roadway Designer, URS Corporation; Cade Rawley, Project Engineer, Sundt Construction Inc.; Heddy Bagherpour, Project Manager, Sundt Construction Inc.; Sam Elters, District Engineer, Kingman District, Arizona Department of Transportation.*



*With the NPHQ Commendation Award, NPHQ added its kudos to the winners of the National Asphalt Pavement Association's prestigious Sheldon G. Hayes Award. I-r, Bob Templeton, Bill Gregoricus, Director, Quality and Business Performance Division, New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department; Tracie Christie, Associate Director of Awards and Marketing, NAPA; K. Barnett, President, K. Barnett & Sons Inc; Dave Geiger; at the podium, Doug Rose.*

## Partner Perspective:

# A Community of Practice

by Greg Smith, Esq.

Greg Smith is ARTBA's Director, Contractors Division and Vice President for Environmental & Regulatory Affairs. He is also ARTBA's representative to NPHQ and shares in this issue the ARTBA perspective on the environment and quality.



**T**HE transportation sector has been the driving force for much of the dramatic improvement in the U.S. environment over the past 30 years. In that time, the American Road and Transportation Builders Association has joined forces with a community of practice from the public and private sectors to propel the environmental quality movement simultaneously on multiple fronts. Among them: the use of high technology, innovative project design and construction, cleaner-burning fuels and intensive recycling of waste materials.

Recognizing and encouraging notable strides is a goal of ARTBA's quality program, and each year the ARTBA-Transportation Development Foundation presents Globe Awards that single out environmental excellence in transportation construction. Two examples of this year's winners are the Berthoud Pass Mountain Access Project in Colorado and the Virginia Dare Memorial Bridge Project in North Carolina. In the Colorado project, an innovative system was designed for recovering and reusing thousands of tons of sand deposited on the highway each winter for traction, rather than pushing the sediment into the forest floor. In addition, extensive efforts were undertaken to enlarge wetlands and rehabilitate unseeded areas and two underground animal tunnels were constructed for elk, deer and lynx.

In the North Carolina project, the bridge was aligned at a 70 degree angle to

the shoreline in order to reduce impacts to wetlands. In addition, an innovative system of collectors and drainpipes was integrated into the project to carry oil, antifreeze and other fluids off the bridge, vegetable-oil based hydraulic fluid was used in construction equipment to avoid water contamination, and a special vacuuming process was used to remove sand displaced by pile driving.

Transportation construction projects have gained ground (and wetlands!) across

tal and community enhancements than any other public or private effort. For example, from 1992-2000, \$547 million in federal highway funds were used to fund landscape improvements and roadside beautification projects. From 1992-2000, federal investment in bike paths and pedestrian projects also increased twenty-fold, from \$22.9 million to nearly \$416 million.

Clearly highway agencies and the industry take their stewardship to heart,

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*"In 2002, transportation construction projects created 2.7 acres of new wetlands for every acre disturbed during construction."*

the environmental spectrum. In 2002, transportation construction projects created 2.7 acres of new wetlands for every acre disturbed during construction. About 80 million of the 100 million tons of asphalt pavement that is removed each year is reused. Under TEA-21, more than \$8 billion has been provided to the states to support emissions-reducing traffic flow projects, cleaner fuels, improved transit and other projects under the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program.

The federal highway program provides more financial resources for environmen-

with results that confirm we walk the walk. A continuing challenge, though, is educating the public that transportation and a better environment go hand-in-hand. As a standard-setting industry, and as partners in the National Partnership for Highway Quality, we have a wealth of opportunities to get the message out to customers that we're constantly stepping up efforts to meet their environmental quality commitment – and that we match it. ●

Njord, from page 2

DOT so each can institutionalize the concept – training the trainers, so to speak. The National Cooperative Highway Research Program is creating performance measures for CSS. A new chapter on CSS is underway for the AASHTO Green Book. And, AASHTO will sponsor a quality-growth competition next year to promote best practices in that area.

These are just a few snapshots, from a much bigger picture, where highways, the environment, and quality converge. Leadership and excellence imply many things: ever-improving quality in the technical aspects, workmanship, and performance life of roadways; ensuring their utility for drivers; making them reflect the locale and community interests; and delivering availability, dependability, and convenience. That's a lot to tackle on behalf of current and future customers. But, business is advancing at a remarkably fast clip. It turns out that in the pursuit of highway excellence, there is no speed limit. ●

Advancing the Agenda, from page 4

The festive night capped off a productive two days that advanced NPHQ interests on multiple fronts. Co-Chair Doug Rose underscored the unified purpose of the conferees in his annual conference remarks: "All of us as leaders of public or private agencies have a responsibility to ensure this industry stays strong and viable. Our country's economy rides on the success of our highway programs. NPHQ exists to lead the highway quality movement in the new millennium together." ●

## P.S. for Partners

**W**OULD you like to share your organization's news for the next NPHQ Newsletter? Just e-mail a summary or photos to [monicaworth@mindspring.com](mailto:monicaworth@mindspring.com).

# Quirky Quality Dictionary

- Qubit** • Measurement of all of quality's dimensions
- Qubicle** • A place where many quality people work
- Qudos** • High praise for quality work
- Curiosity** • The desire to learn everything you can about quality
- Quisine** • Really good food
- Qult** • A group of people promoting quality
- Qultured** • Enlightened about quality
- Quort** • A place where the level of quality of a product is judged
- Quortesy** • Quality behavior
- Qupid** • The Roman god of quality
- Qure** • A quality remedy
- Quru** • A thought leader in the quality field
- Summa qum laude** • Graduating top in your class with a degree in quality (also qum laude, magna qum laude)

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## Calendar of Conferences and Conventions

The following is a partial list of major conventions and conferences sponsored by NPHQ partners. More information about these and hundreds of other noteworthy industry, state, federal and international workshops, meetings and conferences can be found at partners' web sites.

December 2-5, 2003	ACPA Annual Convention, Scottsdale, AZ
January 18-21, 2004	NAPA Annual Convention, Phoenix, AZ
January 30 - February 3, 2004	ATSSA Annual Convention and Traffic Expo, San Antonio, TX
March 8-10, 2004	NRMCA Annual Convention, Orlando, FL
March 10-13, 2004	AGC Annual Convention, Orlando, FL
April 25-28, 2004	APWA North American Snow Conference, Lexington, KY
May 9-12, 2004	ACEC Annual Convention, Colorado Springs, CO