

Mn/DOT NEWS

Awards

Mn/DOT librarian wins quality award

Jerry Baldwin, librarian, Office of Communications, was chosen to receive the Quality in Action Award from the Minnesota Chapter of the Special Libraries Association.

To qualify for this honor, an individual or a team develops a significant quality initiative that improves service to clients, advances the organization's mission and goals, and enhances the information profession.

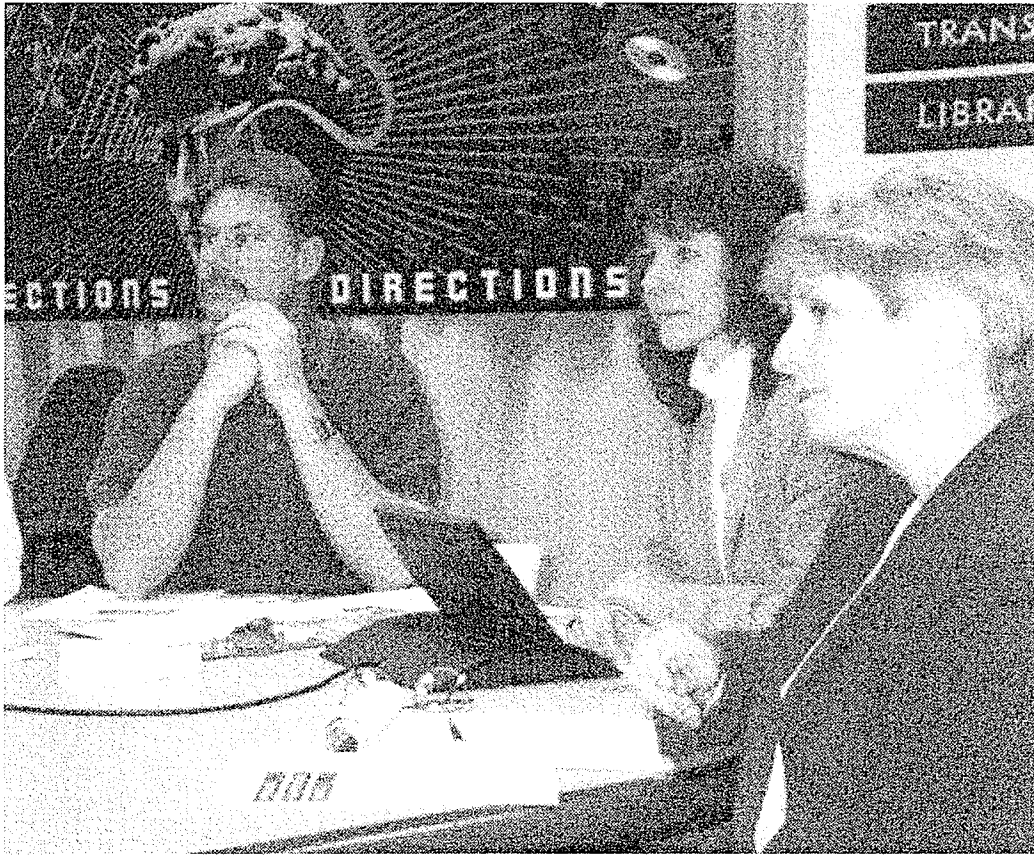
The award recognizes Baldwin's leadership to create a partnership between Mn/DOT and the Center for Transportation Studies to serve the entire Minnesota transportation research community.

Baldwin received the award at a dinner at the University Club on September 19.

logon@the.library.day

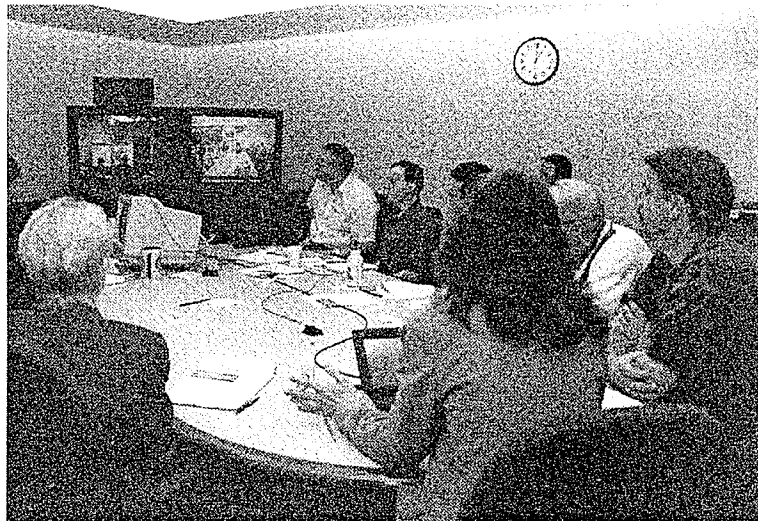
The Mn/DOT Library celebrated National Library Week by presenting logon@the.library.day Tuesday, April 16. The presentation was a videoconference between the Central Office and district offices to demonstrate information products that are available not only in the library but also from employees' desktops via Mn/DOT's wide-area network. The videoconference was repeated four times during the day and featured demonstrations of: a transportation database, business database, and computer information database on CD-ROM, Mn/DOT's home page on the World Wide Web, and the library's online catalog.

A videotape of the logon@the.library.day is being edited and will be available in a few weeks to borrow from the library. For an instruction sheet on accessing the CD-ROM network via Mn/DOT's wide-area network, or for searching assistance, call the Mn/DOT library at 612/296-2385 or send an OfficeVision note to libinfo.



KEVIN WALKER (2)

▲ (from left to right)
Tom Heining, Pam
Newsome and Liz
Pawlak participate in
logon@the.library.day.



Mn/DOT library reassigned to Research Administration

The Mn/DOT Library will be transferred from the Office of Communications to the Office of Research Administration (ORA) this fall. Both offices agree that Mn/DOT customers will benefit from the change.

A business planning process has begun by the ORA, library staff and customers to determine future directions. The process will also help planning for new library space in the Transportation Building.

Monitoring shows continued misuse Employee Internet use receives continued scrutiny

"The Internet is a great tool—it helps us do our job; it provides us another tool to communicate with our partners and our customers," says Lucy Kender, director, Office of Communications.

"That's why recent reports of employee misuse of Mn/DOT-provided Internet services are especially unfortunate," she notes, "because it makes it easy to blame the technology for what is really a behavior problem."

Mn/DOT has again drawn news media attention because some employees have been violating policy, notes Linda Bjornberg, assistant division director, Finance and Administration.

"Mn/DOT policy prohibits using state resources for personal use. This includes using Mn/DOT-provided access from your home or after hours for non-work related business," Bjornberg explains. "This may have been confusing to some employees. The access is the Mn/DOT resource—not just the computer you are using. So,

employees calling in from home on their own time but using the Mn/DOT provided access are still violating this policy."

In response to incidents of employee misuse, the department began monitoring Internet use several months ago. "The monitoring indicated that some Mn/DOT employees have continued to use Mn/DOT access to visit 'adult sensitive' sites; software has now been installed that blocks these sites," she adds.

"The Internet has many positive uses for Mn/DOT employees," notes Anne Mackereth, librarian, Mn/DOT library. "The Internet is a great way to learn more about the world of transportation. Many Mn/DOT employees are finding it to be a helpful research tool."

However, like most new technologies, the Internet is not a panacea.

"The learning curve can be high," explains Mackereth. "If you don't understand the principles of doing an Internet search, you can waste a lot of time."

Mackereth also stresses that not everything that is on the "net" is reliable. "You have to pay close attention to where it's from to be sure that it is timely and accurate information."

The library staff encourages Mn/DOT employees to bring their questions to the library. The staff can help employees learn to navigate the Internet and help with other types of searches.

Mackereth recommends some sites that may be especially useful to Mn/DOT employees.

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics page at <http://www.bts.gov> is wealth of information including the full text of the publication "Highway Statistics" at <http://www.bts.gov/ntda/national>.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) site at <http://www.aashto.org/main> includes listings of AASHTO staff, committees, meetings and events, program information and their publications catalog.

Thomas, a service of the U.S. Library of Congress, helps

employees monitor bills in Congress, keep up to date on other federal issues and find information on the U.S. legislative process. Visit the site at <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

Mn/DOT's own site is growing rapidly as more offices are developing pages. Most recently, the Office of State Aid added a home page. Mn/DOT partnered with the State Historic Preservation Office and the Federal Highway Administration to highlight Mn/DOT's work to inventory and evaluate Minnesota's historic bridges.

A 38-item synopsis of Mn/DOT's 1997 legislative proposals is now available on Mn/DOT's web site. Hard copy of the report is also available by contacting the Office of Communications (296-3581) or the Office of Intergovernmental Policy (297-2932). A weekly update on the progress of transportation-related legislation is provided via profs to all managers throughout the legislative session.

Access Mn/DOT's home page at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us>.

Mn/DOT's home page currently gets about 14,000 hits (visits) a month. This is more than double the 6,000 hits the site received in June.



DAVE GONZALEZ

▲ Anne Mackereth, a Mn/DOT librarian, demonstrates Mn/DOT's home page on the Internet.

Professional, supervisory employees benefit

Rotation program opens new vistas for job enrichment

Two employees are gaining new job experiences through Mn/DOT's pilot professional and supervisory rotation program. The program gives employees an opportunity to explore something new that is related to their present position.

Pam Newsome, reference librarian, Mn/DOT Library, and Patti Strohmayer, personnel officer, Metro Human Resources are on three-month rotations under the year-long pilot program.

DAVID GONZALEZ



▲ Pam Newsome trades her duties as a librarian for a three-month assignment with the Management Analysis Unit.

Newsome is working in the Management Analysis Unit of Financial Management giving task force and committee facilitation and support. She is also involved in a pilot research and analysis project for the new Access Management Office.

"These responsibilities fit in beautifully with my skills, knowledge and experience," says Newsome, who has been with Mn/DOT's library for 12 years. She sees a proposed library research and analysis service benefiting from experience she will gain through the rotation program.

"Librarians have a unique role at Mn/DOT, unlike engineers or maintenance people who would have more opportunities to use their expertise in different areas," says Newsome.

She sees this rotation as a way to see what life is like in other parts of the department, to see something different yet related to what she does as a reference librarian.

Strohmayer, who has been with the department since 1986, is pursuing a bachelor's degree in environmental design. Her eventual goal is to earn a master's degree in landscape architecture.

Working in Environmental Services gives Strohmayer exposure to many projects. "The people I work with have been very helpful in taking me out on projects so I can see how a variety of environmental programs work," Strohmayer says.

A recent planting was done near the northbound exit from I-35W at Lake Street in Minneapolis. Strohmayer was involved in the planting partnership that involved Mn/DOT and this historic district in the city's Central Neighborhood. Some 500 flow-

ers and more than 300 shrubs and trees provided by Mn/DOT were planted by neighborhood volunteers. This combination noise screening and beautification project complements the historic homes in this neighborhood. Community volunteers are responsible to maintain the plantings.

Strohmayer will be planning a new beautification project in Edina that will involve taking soil samples, shooting photos, getting a base map of the right of way, checking existing vegetation and drawing plans for new vegetation. She will meet with community representatives to present the plan, gauge community support and coordinate the volunteer planting and maintenance effort.

Although only two employees participated in the first round of rotations, the program has sparked interest and resulted in many inquiries, notes Betsy Brown, rotation pilot project manager. An employee must have an individual development plan and the approval of their supervisor to participate in one of the three month rotations.

“Long-term benefits outweigh the short-term inconveniences. This program not only gives the people on rotation new experiences, it also provides an opportunity for others to step into positions within their office and see what the big picture is,” states Brown.

Watch the bulletin boards for postings about the rotation program along with application information. Contact Betsy Brown at 612/296-1363 or Bobbi Iverson-Roesler at 612/297-2912 for more information.



KEVIN WALKER

▲ Patti Strohmayer, at left, and Eileen Jordahl, project manager, Environmental Services, paint markings to prepare for a roadside planting in the Central Neighborhood of Minneapolis.

Renovation leads to an almost brand new facility

Work continues on the Transportation Building renovation project, says Mark Pavelich, Facilities Management. Contractors are completing life safety improvements on the vacated third and fourth floors and installing new air handlers in the sub-basement.

The offices of State Aid, Communications and Contract Management, division directors and the commissioner's office will begin moving back to the fourth floor in early December.

The third floor will be ready for occupancy by early January and will house Investment Management, Management Data Services, Transit, and the Office of Alternative Transportation Financing.

Work is also progressing on building systems. A new air handler is running in the garage, improving climate control in the building. A new ventilation system has been installed in restrooms on floors five through eight and on the ground floor. The building is still operating on a reduced number of air handlers, notes Pavelich, and employees may notice some extremes in temperatures until December.

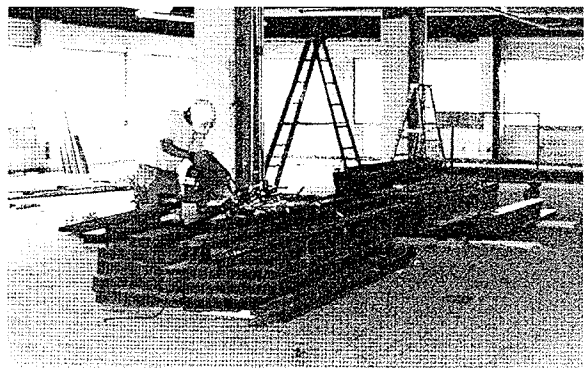
Work on the loading dock will start within the next two weeks; the dock will remain open during renovation.

In preparation for work on the first floor, Department of Public Safety employees have moved out of the building to new headquarters in Town Square. The Rice street entrance from Lot F will remain open but the lobby area will be closed for asbestos removal and renovation work.

Next year the Information Center will move from its current location in the basement of the Transportation Building to a new location on the first floor where the staff will provide customer service to both callers and walk-in customers. The Office of Research Administration, Equal Employment Opportunity, Contract Management and the Mn/DOT Library will also be located on the first floor.



Coils of cable await installation.



▲ A construction worker welds metal framework as renovation of the Transportation Building progresses.



◀ *Ted Rausch, Facilities Management (at left) confers with contractor's employees working on the building's heating and ventilation system.*