

Mn/DOT NEWSLINE

On the Web: A list of more than 2,000 Mn/DOT publications

Did you know you can find a listing of more than 2,000 Mn/DOT publications with a single click of your mouse? It's as easy as clicking [here](#).

Once you've brought up the list, you can search it by keywords or date of publication. More than 200 of these reports are viewable at your desktop by clicking [here](#).

These listings and reports are accessible around the globe through the services of more than 40,000 libraries. So, if you've produced a report and want the world to know about it, make sure it gets cataloged by sending the report—or, if it's in electronic format, its Web site location—to Mn/DOT Library at MS 155 ("Library" on GroupWise).

For more information about the library's catalog, check out <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/library/worldcat.html>, or call the library at 651/296-2385.

By Jerry Baldwin, Mn/DOT Library director

New online service combines catalogs from transportation libraries to improve information access

In the field of transportation, locating a needed report, article or book has never been an easy task.

For years, the only index to these resources has been the Transportation Research Information System database compiled by the Transportation Research Board. However, transportation practitioners, especially those without access to experienced librarians, often found it difficult to get the full text of an item indexed in the TRIS database.

All that changed March 1 with the launch of TransCat, a new online service that makes the catalogs of many of the nation's largest transportation libraries—including Mn/DOT's—available to anyone with access to the Internet.

With nearly 300,000 resources listed in TransCat, the database is second in size only to TRIS in covering transportation resources. Unlike TRIS, which is an indexing service, TransCat catalogs only available resources owned by participating libraries. This means that nearly all of the resources found when searching the database can be readily located and made available to the user.

Although many of the items in TransCat are also listed in TRIS, a recent study showed that 52 percent of recent reports available within TransCat were not indexed in TRIS. (See <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/library/mtkn.html> for more information on the study.)

Midwest transportation librarians have been working with OCLC (www.oclc.org/about), the world's largest consortium of libraries, since 2001 to develop TransCat. The National Transportation Library provides start-up funds for the service.

Click [here](#) to use TransCat.

By Jerry Baldwin, Mn/DOT Library director

Photographer David Gonzalez illustrates new road-building book for children

A new book about road building for children now resides among a row of highly technical journals in the Mn/DOT Library.

The basics of road building are well known to most Mn/DOT people, but a new book for young children explains the process in simple sentences and photos. Mn/DOT's David Gonzalez, a photographer with Administrative Services, provided many of the book's pictures.



Photographer David Gonzalez. Photo by Pamela Gonzalez

Gonzalez took photos of construction on Hwy 52 and other sites used in "From Rock to Road," a book recently published by Lerner Publications in Minneapolis. The photos include activities such as grading, paving and striping.

The book's publisher gave copies to Gonzalez and the library to show its appreciation for Mn/DOT's role in the book's creation. The new title is part of a series of books for children.

Gonzalez's work can also be seen on Mn/DOT's iHUB front page, *Mn/DOT Newsline* and other department electronic and print publications and at the new transportation exhibit at the Minnesota History Center.

The book is available for loan from the Mn/DOT library.

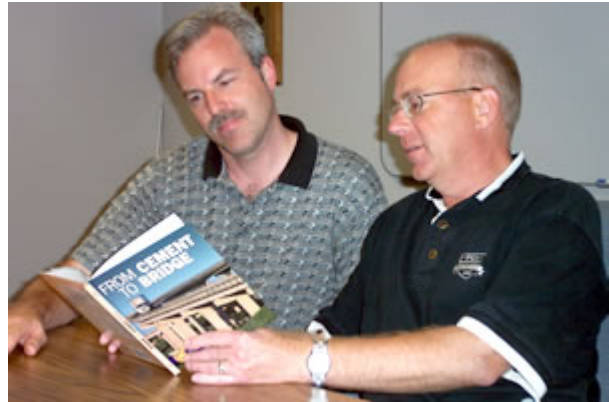
By Craig Wilkins

New book helps kids understand the bridge-building process

Mark Spafford's three young sons know their dad works on bridges, but now, thanks to a book he helped create, they understand his work even better.

Spafford, an engineering specialist with the Bridge Construction Section at Oakdale, collaborated with a writer to help create "Cement to Bridge," a book about bridge-building for children aged 4 to 10.

The plainly written, well-illustrated book takes readers through the stages of bridge construction, from making concrete to placing beams.



From left, Mark Spafford, Bridge Construction Section, and Dan Dorgan, Office of Bridge director, check out the newly published "Cement to Bridge" book for young readers. *Photo by Craig Wilkins*

Spafford's work on the book started when Dan Dorgan, Bridge office director, received a call for help from Gretchen Bierbaum of Lerner Books in Minneapolis.

Bierbaum was looking for assistance with technical terms. She received that plus the photos taken by Spafford and his co-workers as well as their expertise in the sphere of bridge construction.

Once the book was in draft form, Spafford and Bierbaum reviewed it several times to ensure accuracy and completeness. The book was published this spring.

"Cement to Bridge" joins Lerner's "Start to Finish" series that includes "[Rock to Road](#)," a book that features photos by Mn/DOT's David Gonzalez.

Both books are available from the Mn/DOT Library.

Spafford said he has read the book several times with his sons.

"I learned a lot about editing and producing a book and they learned what it takes to build a bridge," he said. "It's a good book for kids to learn from."

By Craig Wilkins

New state highway map guides travelers in Minnesota

Minnesota's state highway map, the faithful companion of many travelers, re-appears this spring featuring a guide to many of the state's natural attractions and geographic landmarks.

A new printing technique that uses random dot patterns instead of ruled dot screens, creates color patterns that are more even and eye-appealing, said Denny Brott, supervisor of the Geographic and Mapping Section in the Central Office.

The new map also uses larger and bolder typefaces and heavier lines to increase its readability, he said.

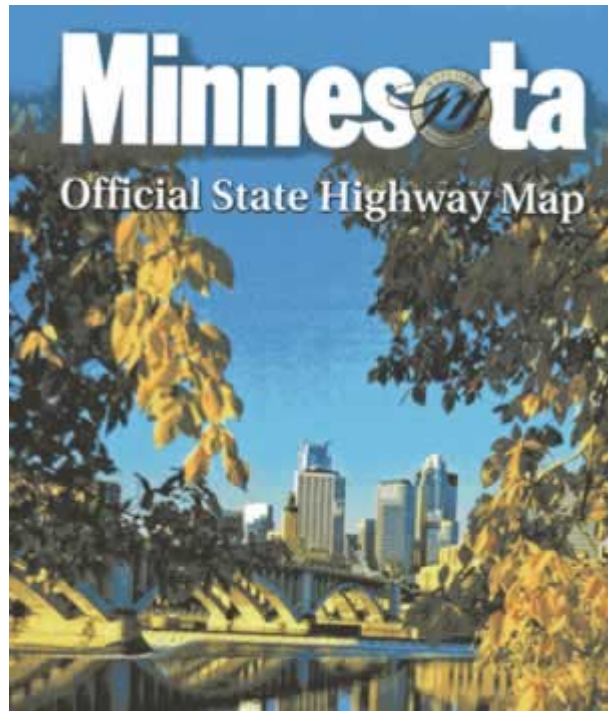
Minnesota's map earned second place honors for design and usability at the annual meeting of the annual Geospatial Information Systems for Transportation Symposium held April in Lincoln, Neb.

The 2005-06 map is also the first to appear simultaneously on the World Wide Web and in print. The 2003-04 version of the map issued in the spring was posted to the Web in November of that year.

The 2005-06 map includes a guide to some of Minnesota's most striking natural landscape features: the cliffs of Blue Mound State Park near Luverne, the rocky gorge of the St. Croix River near Taylors Falls and the new Big Bog recreational area east of Red Lake in northwestern Minnesota.

Other sections of the map include detailed maps of the Twin Cities metropolitan area and major cities in Greater Minnesota as well as indices to locate cities, counties, state parks and historical sites. The map also lists cities served by regularly scheduled passenger air, rail and bus service.

The map carries messages urging motorists to use extra care in highway work zones and to use the state's automated road and weather reporting service by calling 5-1-1 or going to 511mn.org on the Internet.



Minnesota's new state highway map earned second place honors in April for design and usability at the annual meeting of the annual Geospatial Information Systems for Transportation Symposium.

The departments of Transportation and Administration and Explore Minnesota Tourism produce the map biannually.

Printed versions of the map are available without cost from travel information centers and Mn/DOT offices throughout the state.

To access the Web version of the map, go to www.dot.state.mn.us and then click on the "Getting Around" button.

"The new state highway map and the 5-1-1 system can help tourists, business travelers, commuters and other motorists find their destinations easily and safely," said Lt. Gov./Transportation Commissioner Carol Molnau.

By Craig Wilkins



Jim Byerly, Mn/DOT Library, displays the new highway map and several earlier editions. The library has a highway map collection dating from 1914. *Photo by David Gonzalez*



Open Houses are more than a place for free cookies

Qin Tang is the technical services librarian in the Mn/DOT Library. She started working for the department in May 2000.



Qin Tang, Mn/DOT Library, believes that open houses give employees an opportunity to build a sense of community and get a big picture of the whole organization. *Photo by David Gonzalez*

As a Mn/DOT employee for more than six years, I have to admit there are still many offices and operations within Mn/DOT that I know little about.

But for someone like me who works in the library and whose job is to help employees and the general public find information, it is important to know this organization and what each office does. I find open houses provide a good opportunity for me to meet people from other offices and find out what they do, which in turn helps me do a better job.

The Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations' open house on Aug. 1 provides a good example of what I mean.

By walking around the office, talking to people and asking questions, I learned a lot. To my shame, however, I also realized that I had made a mistake. Not too long ago, a woman came to the library wanting to start her own company providing transportation services for individuals to hospitals. I showed her where to find information about starting a small business, registering the company, etc., and I referred her to the Department of Public Safety for licensing and permit questions.

At the open house, I realized what I told the woman was wrong; I should have referred her to the OFCVO instead of Public Safety for a special transportation services permit.

Now I know better.

I think we should hold open houses not only for special occasions, but on a regular basis, too. Our jobs are so compartmentalized and specialized that we often don't know what the person sitting next to us does. Open houses give people the opportunity to meet others, learn about other offices, build connections and a sense of community, and get a big picture of the whole organization. As a result, we can all do a better job. People are more likely to provide better services and help in a timely manner to those they already know by name or face.

Providing cookies at the open house will probably get more people in the door, but it's not a requirement. People will come if they are truly interested. I like to go to open

houses and ask lots of questions. I might even ask some stupid questions, but so what?
As long as I learn something new, I feel good.



DOT librarians explore ways to improve information network services

By Craig Wilkins

When John Siekmeier, a research engineer with the Office of Materials, needs to find an obscure technical paper and its author, he knows where to go.

He contacts the Mn/DOT Library where staff members handle his frequent requests with ease.

“Library staff members can locate a document that might take me two hours to find in about two minutes,” Siekmeier said.

Being able to contact authors easily, he said, allows him to pursue issues in more depth, gain added context and possibly establish a working relationship that benefits both.

He related his experiences at a panel discussion during a national conference held by transportation librarians Sept. 19-21 in St. Paul.

The conference addressed several issues including further expansion of transportation library service networks throughout the United States, said Jerry Baldwin, director of Mn/DOT’s Library and conference host.

In 1996, Mn/DOT and the University of Minnesota’s Center for Transportation Studies established the Minnesota Transportation Libraries program. That system provided the model for Midwest Transportation Network.

“The National Transportation Library supported development of that network to demonstrate what needs to be done on a national basis,” Baldwin said.

Mn/DOT Library at a glance



Mn/DOT Library's collection covers all aspects of transportation, especially highway engineering, design and intelligent transportation infrastructure, as well as public administration, computer applications and office management. The collection includes:

- 13,000 books and reports
- 12,000 microfiche reports
- 400 periodical titles
- 600+ videotapes

Photo by David Gonzalez

Nearly a score of consultants and librarians from state DOTs attended the conference;

several others took part in workshop sessions via a live, Web-based video connection.

The participants toured the Mn/DOT Library and examined methods to help libraries become more flexible and responsive to customer needs.

They discussed creating more standardized index terms, ensuring the use of compatible network systems and protecting documents from being changed inadvertently during electronic data transfers.

Cheryl Bodan, a librarian with the Pennsylvania DOT, said the conference will help her make improvements in her agency's library system.

"We want our library's services to be as easy as possible to use," she said. "There are a lot of ideas here that I can take home to improve our library network's operation and improve service to our customers."

- [Mn/DOT Library](#)



Jerry Baldwin, Mn/DOT Library director, leads a tour of the library during a national meeting of state DOT librarians in St. Paul. *Photo by David Gonzalez*



Employees earn co-workers' appreciation

This week is "Employee Recognition Week" in state government. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your dedication and commitment to serving the citizens of Minnesota each day. I want to thank you for the work you do 52 weeks a year to make Minnesota's transportation system one of the best in the nation.

I also want to make sure each of you hear this message. Whether you answer the phone or build bridges, every job here is important and every job should be recognized. Hopefully within your office or district you will celebrate this week with some type of gathering. Take this time to also thank your team members and co-workers for their support.

It is only if we rely upon each other that our mission can be accomplished. Please take a moment and just say "thanks."

In honor of this week, Newsline asked readers to send in their nominations of co-workers who, through their knowledge, skill and professionalism, serve the public well. Please read the responses below.

Lt. Gov./Commissioner Carol Molnau



Vicky Sarner, Office of Information Technology, gives a presentation about Mn/DOT's new voice over Internet protocol phone system. *Photo by David Gonzalez*

I have been working on the VoIP (voice over Internet protocol phone system) project since I started at Mn/DOT in August 2006. During that time I have been amazed at the organization skills and follow-through of **Vicky Sarner**, Office of Information Technology. She has taken an immense project and made it seem very easy. Vicky has coordinated planning, ordering, training, installation, meetings and every aspect of the project with much patience. She answers all questions or refers you to the correct person. I think Vicky deserves recognition for all her efforts.

*Jacki Smiley,
Civil Rights and Administrative Services*

Jim Swanson, District 7 transportation district engineer, provides an excellent example of leadership for the employees in District 7. Mr. Swanson sincerely cares for and supports the district employees. He

looks out for the traveling public's best interests and the best use of taxpayers' dollars.

Lynn Bisch, District 7

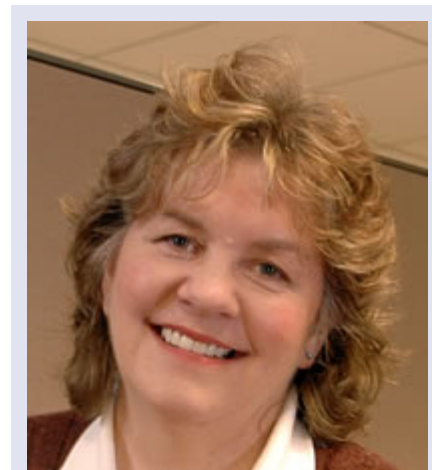
Tim Paul, engineering specialist, St. Cloud/District 3 Surveys, is without a doubt one of the most valuable assets I have as a senior construction inspector. He's ALWAYS on the job, available, ahead of the game and the man with the answers when we need them.

I wish there was some way to calculate the amount of time and money saved the people of Minnesota and contractors by professional and conscientious people like Mr. Paul anticipating schedules, delays, design-build problems and an endless list of construction challenges we face every year. Even though Tim is a supervisor, he is still in the field nearly every day training his people or running a crew just to help out.

Mn/DOT needs a better way to retain these type of people as I'm certain that if a guy like Tim would leave for a better paying consulting position elsewhere, a lot of people might follow (myself included).

Kevin Kiess, St. Cloud/District 3

Pam Gonzalez, Mn/DOT Library, is the most diligent, organized, detail-oriented routing clerk we have had in the library that I know. She has weeded and re-organized the entire periodical collection. She has ensured the entire book collection is in order and has completed extra projects related to her job. Pam is competent, has a positive attitude, sets a high standard for her duties and is conscientious about completing her work earlier than scheduled. She goes above and beyond her duties and takes initiatives to do more. Pam accepts other's suggestions for improvement. I appreciate Pam's dedication to her work and her thoughtfulness in dealing with co-workers.



Pam Gonzalez, Mn/DOT Library
Photo by David Gonzalez

Qin Tang, Mn/DOT Library

I would like to recognize the work of **Linda Chaney** in Business Services. What can you say about someone who is in demand by others, but always serves your needs like you are her only client?

Linda is always so responsive and professional. In truth, our requests are not always so reasonable. We have asked for things that are hard to find, deadlines that are difficult to meet and things that are hard to fix.

I just want Linda to know that the Office of Communications appreciates her commitment to excellence. Thanks, Linda!

Paula Gustafson, Office of Communications

Although I am lucky enough to work with many great people in the State Aid Division, one person stands out as an extra special co-worker: **Merry Daher**. As federal aid plans engineer, she is in charge of reviewing plans and setting letting dates for all locally initiated projects that have federal funds.

Merry has made it her job to make sure that everyone in State Aid gets a personalized

birthday card on their birthday. Merry is an excellent cook and regularly brings goodies in to share with the State Aid office. Her sugar cookies at the Hiwayan Club craft sale last month are just the tip of the iceberg! Merry is always merry, just as her name suggests. On days when she is out of the office she is missed.

Lynnette Roshell, State Aid Division



Phoenix program student BJ Yang participates in Seeds Day in August 2006. Photo by David Gonzalez

I would like to recognize our **Mn/DOT Seeds and Phoenix students**—past and current! Each student contributes uniquely to Mn/DOT, often balancing work with families and a full load of classes. **April Lucas**, mother of four, brings a sense of loyalty, drive and enthusiasm to work each day. **Lisa Yang**, Communications, is responsible for our greatly improved [Seeds Web site](#). Civil engineering students **David Sheen** and **Abdulkadir Jama** just received job offers with Mn/DOT's graduate engineer program. High school student **BJ Yang** regularly gets glowing reports from his supervisors in Transportation Data Analysis. These are just a few of the many students who contribute to Mn/DOT. Thank you to the **supervisors, mentors, program staff** and **Mn/DOT leadership** for believing and investing in programs like Seeds and Phoenix. The investment is paying off and will continue to do so!

Emma Corrie, Office of Human Resources

I would like to recognize **Jim Cownie** and **Bart Martinez**, each distinct in his own way yet they share the common trait of “giving their best efforts” in making things happen.

Jim's easy-going manner and willingness to go that extra step is apparent in his everyday work. He almost always finds a way to achieve a positive outcome on any contract situation that comes his way. This year, Jim participated on the Governor's Drive to Excellence Sourcing Team, where he worked on identifying ways for Minnesota to drive down its purchasing costs. As the go-to person for contracts, he has assisted numerous offices and districts reach legally binding and enforceable agreements.

Bart extends his talents beyond that of a contract compliance specialist for the Office of Civil Rights. Need a Spanish interpreter? Just ask Bart. He has used his bi-lingual talents not only for Mn/DOT but for other agencies, too. For the National Civil Rights Conference held in Minnesota this past year, Bart took a lead role in organizing the evening event—which received rave reviews by attendees. Perhaps most important, however, was his role as chairman for the Minnesota State Employees' Combined Charities Campaign. The goal was to raise a million dollars and, through leadership like Bart's, I understand they got close to meeting their expectations.

Both Jim and Bart are team players who make a positive difference!

Joanne Wagner, Office of Civil Rights and Administrative Services

John Aleksuk, Documents and Records Management Section: The wheels never stop turning in John's head. He never settles into routine; he is constantly learning, asking questions and thinking of ways to do things better. He has a gift for using past experiences as analogies for current situations, and for using what he learned from past experiences as the basis for solving new problems. His dedication to helping his customers is awesome, and his ability to teach through storytelling is quite effective. John deserves special recognition for Employee Recognition Week. Thank you.

Pam Newsome, Documents and Records Management Section

During the past year I've had the honor and the pleasure to trace the history of the interstate highway system in Minnesota for Mn/DOT.

The task allowed me to meet with scores of fellow employees, retirees and others in the transportation business and hear their first-hand accounts of the way things were done in the first 50 years of interstate planning and construction. I thank you all for sharing your time and stories with me.

I'd also like to thank my co-workers in the Office of Communications and those from other Mn/DOT offices who helped make the work rewarding and fun.

Craig Wilkins, Office of Communications

We would like to recognize the positive attitude, team spirit and commitment to public service that exists within the crew who work at the Deer Lake truck station located between Togo and Effie in northern Itasca County. Crew members are **Chris Cheney, Bud Drewlow, Ken Porter, Dennis Waytashek** and **Bob Lavern**, supervisor. Chris wrote and recorded "The Deer Lake Crew," which is a ballad vocalizing how they "work for you." Others deserving recognition are **Walter Leu, John Bray, David Gonzalez** and **Gary Andrist**, who assisted in turning the vocal recording into a multi-media presentation. We can all choose our attitudes, and this ballad shows the outstanding one these people have chosen. They deserve our praise!

District 1 Management Team
Click here to read the [ballad lyrics](#).



The Deer Lake Crew, from left: Dennis Waytashek, Chris Cheney, Ken Porter, Bud Drewlow, Bob Lavern receive Above & Beyond commendations on Nov. 30. *Photo by John Bray*



Mn/DOT Library's Qin Tang featured in "Information Outlook" magazine

Qin Tang, Mn/DOT Library's technical services librarian, is on the cover of and featured in the March 2007 edition of "Information Outlook," the membership magazine of the Special Libraries Association.

The profile, "A Roundabout Route to Minnesota," traces Tang's global journey from her home in Jiangsu province in eastern China, to Heidelberg, Germany, where she earned a master's degree in German literature and linguistics and met her future husband, to St. Paul, where Mn/DOT hired her full time in May 2000 to work as a librarian. Along the way, Tang also earned a master's degree in library science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The article quotes a librarian from the University of California-Berkeley, who describes Tang as "one of the best transportation catalogers in the country."

The article also quotes Jerry Baldwin, her supervisor, and describes the agency's library, which has 18,000 cataloged books and reports, 30,000 microfiche reports, 400 periodical titles, 1,000 videotapes and 350 CDs and DVDs.

For more information:

- [Information Outlook article](#) featuring Tang
- [Mn/DOT Library](#)
- [Open Houses are more than a place for free cookies](#) (Opinion piece by Qin Tang in Mn/DOT Newsline, Aug. 9, 2006)



Qin Tang, Mn/DOT Library's technical services librarian, is on the cover of and featured in the March 2007 edition of "Information Outlook," the membership magazine of the Special Libraries Association. *Photo by David Gonzalez*