



# STATE AID SCENE



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## NEEDS PROGRAM REPLACEMENTS SET TO DEBUT 1/10/2000

The CSAH and MSAS Needs Update Programs will be replaced with new applications based on an Oracle database platform, and will be made available to the cities and counties via the SALT Division website.

There are two key differences between these new applications and those that have been used in the past. The first big change is that the new applications are written for the Microsoft Windows operating system and will support the use of the mouse. The other big change is that there will no longer be a need to "download" and "upload" data files. Instead, everyone will access the application via the SALT Division website and the data will always reside at one central point.

Even though there are going to be some big differences this year, many other things will still look familiar. The input screens, and the order of the fields on the screens, will be very much like they are in the old application. This should make it as easy as possible for those who are used to the old application to make the transition to the new one.

It also should be noted that although the technology used to perform the Needs update is changing, the Needs review process will not change at all. The local agencies will still submit their updates to the DSAEs for approval just as they've done in the past. In the new system, when an agency is done with their annual update

rather than upload a file, they will simply click a button that will make the data read-only for that agency and will make their data available for the appropriate DSAE to review. When the DSAE has completed their review of the agency's data, s/he will click a button that will make the data read-only for them and will make the data available for review and processing by the appropriate Needs unit in the SALT Division.

### **The requirements for the new system are:**

- Windows 95, 98, or NT 4
- A Pentium-class PC, (200mhz or greater recommended)
- Web-browser software (Internet Explorer 5 is preferred, but Netscape 4.x and Internet Explorer 4.x will also work well.)
- Access to the Internet

Because it will now be necessary to access the data "live" a high-speed Internet connection will afford the best performance, but the system should also perform adequately over dial-up connection. SALT will continue to offer a limited number of dial-in connections via our WinFrame server for those agencies that do not currently have access to the Internet, although we highly encourage local agencies to acquire their own means of access.

We will begin testing the performance of the application, using the members of the MCEA Automation Committee as "beta testers," during the week of 11/22/1999. The intent of this testing

will be to identify any problems with the software functionality, and to gather data about the performance of the new application over different connection speeds and on a variety of PC configurations.

The implementation date for the applications has been set as Monday 1/10/2000. We felt it was best to wait until after "millennium week" has come and gone to introduce the new system, just in case there are any unforeseen difficulties on our end or yours due to Y2K.

Implementing these new applications will be a big transition, and although we are trying our best to make sure that things go smoothly, we fully expect that there will be some bumps, but hopefully not too many bruises, along the way. A key advantage to the web-based technology is that it will be much easier to make changes and adjustments to the application, and our intent is to continue to "tweak" and improve the application throughout the year so that it will run as efficiently as possible.

Additional information regarding the implementation of the new applications will be sent out to local agencies at a later date. Please watch for information in your mailbox in mid-December. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Karen Wright, Project Manager by phone, (651) 282-6074 or by e-mail. [k.wright@dot.state.mn.us](mailto:k.wright@dot.state.mn.us)

### **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS**

A few agencies have needed variances on state aid cooperative agreement projects, typically because bids are opened before the plan is approved. Often the city or county staff assume Mn/DOT's trunk highway staff will obtain plan review and approval from the State Aid Division while Mn/DOT staff assume the local agency is responsible for their funding requirements. Because of the turnover in both local and

Mn/DOT staff, don't assume everyone is clear on this process. The local agency is responsible to make sure the plan gets state aid review and approval. The plan must include a signature block for State Aid approval and be signed before bids are opened.

For federal aid projects, the project must be authorized by the FHWA prior to advertising.

Another issue involving cooperative agreements is the amount of time it takes to achieve plan review and approval. Scheduling should be discussed during project scoping with generous time allotments for each step. Many county and city engineers have been surprised at the time required to get a cooperative agreement plan to advertising.

### **DECEMBER VARIANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

The State Aid Variance Committee will convene on Thursday, December 23, in Conference Room 148, Water's Edge Building, Roseville, Minnesota. Requests shall be submitted to the State Aid Engineer, attention: Terri Burns, Mn/DOT SALT Office, Mail Stop 500, 395 John Ireland Boulevard, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155, and should also copy the District State Aid Engineer. Requests must be received by December 1<sup>st</sup>, and **must** include the certified resolution, as required by Minnesota Rules 8820.3300, Subp. 1. Notices will no longer be published in the State Register until the certified resolution is submitted to the State Aid Engineer. Requests received after the deadline may delay the request being heard until the next Variance Committee meeting, in March, 2000.

## STATUS OF RULES

The rules committee met on September 30<sup>th</sup> to discuss and recommend adoption of the proposed rules. The main reason for revising the rules was conversion to English units. Currently the changes are being drafted by the Office of the Revisor of Statutes and a Statement of Need and Reasonableness (SONAR) is being prepared by State Aid staff. Upon the SONAR's approval for publication by an Administrative Law Judge, it will be published in the State Register for comment.

All city and county engineers will be notified of its publication. Final approval and adoption of the rules is expected next summer. In the meantime plans prepared in English units must be designed in accordance with the administrative variance that was executed July 7<sup>th</sup> of this year.

## BID LETTINGS

Minnesota Statutes shown below describe legal requirements for advertising for bids. In general, a reasonable amount of time allowed for contractors to prepare their bid will result in better, lower bids. This also allows the contractor to get sub-contractor confirmation and time to secure bid bonding.

Minnesota Statutes 1998, 471.345 Uniform municipal contracting law.

Subdivision. 1. Municipality defined. For purposes of this section, "municipality" means a county, town, city, school district or other municipal corporation or political subdivision of the state authorized by law to enter into contracts.

Subd. 2. Contract defined. A "contract" means an agreement entered into by a municipality for the sale or purchase of supplies, materials, equipment or the rental thereof, or the

construction, alteration, repair or maintenance of real or personal property.

Subd. 3. Contracts over \$25,000. If the amount of the contract is estimated to exceed \$25,000, sealed bids shall be solicited by public notice in the manner and subject to the requirements of the law governing contracts by the particular municipality or class thereof provided that with regard to repairs and maintenance of ditches, bids shall not be required if the estimated amount of the contract does not exceed the amount specified in section 103E.705, subdivisions 5, 6, and 7.

Subd. 4. Contracts from \$10,000 to \$25,000. If the amount of the contract is estimated to exceed \$10,000 but not to exceed \$25,000, the contract may be made either upon sealed bids or by direct negotiation, by obtaining two or more quotations for the purchase or sale when possible, and without advertising for bids or otherwise complying with the requirements of competitive bidding. All quotations obtained shall be kept on file for a period of at least one year after receipt thereof.

Subd. 5. Contracts less than \$10,000. If the amount of the contract is estimated to be \$10,000 or less, the contract may be made either upon quotation or in the open market, in the discretion of the governing body. If the contract is made upon quotation it shall be based, so far as practicable, on at least two quotations which shall be kept on file for a period of at least one year after their receipt.

Subd. 5a. County or town rental contracts. If the amount of a county or town contract for the rental of equipment is estimated to be \$60,000 or less, the contract may, in the discretion of the county or town board, be made by direct negotiation by obtaining two or more quotations for the rental when possible and without advertising for bids or otherwise complying with the requirements of competitive bidding. All

quotations shall be kept on file for a period of at least one year after their receipt.

Subd. 6. Applicability of other laws. The purpose of this section is to establish for all municipalities, uniform dollar limitations upon contracts which shall or may be entered into on the basis of competitive bids, quotations or

purchase or sale in the open market. To the extent inconsistent with this purpose, all laws governing contracts by a particular municipality or class thereof are superseded. In all other respects such laws shall continue applicable.

### JOINT FACILITIES

AMC has included a point in their Legislative platform supporting Mn/DOT in efforts to secure general fund money for the TRLF to be used to finance shared facilities. Several projects in the past have not gone ahead because one of the interested parties could not budget the funding in the same time period as the other partner. The intent is to make TRLF funds available as a low interest loan to those agencies who can't get the money into their budgets in the year needed for construction.

Julie Skallman needs to hear from any of you who have begun talking about building a shared facility with any other agencies. These could be with Mn/DOT, counties, cities, DNR, townships, etc. Please call or send a note describing what type of facility is planned, when you hope to construct and approximate dollar cost to the various partners. This information will be used in support of any Legislative initiative.

### MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH RETRIEVAL

Most of you receive the semi annual and annual computer listings of crashes supplied by

Mn/DOT's Office of Traffic Engineering (OTE). OTE wants to let you know there are many more

reports available. A few examples of the more additional reports include:

- all the crashes in your county or city within the past 5 years in one single report
- only crashes that meet your selection criteria
- crash rates for all needs segments

In addition, as the base maps become available on a county by county basis, the plotting of crash "Pin Maps" will also become available.

Loren Hill is in charge of this area, and is anxious to get more of this information into your hands. Give him a call, and arrange for him to visit your agency or any quarterly multi-agency meetings. He can be reached at 651-284-3455.

### NEW FACES – NEW PLACES

After 34.5 years serving the cities in Minnesota **Ken Strauss**, MSAS Needs Unit Manager, retired in July. Two separate events were held to honor him, an informal lunch at the Transportation Building and a picnic at his home. Ken has been spotted occasionally, enjoying fishing and time with his family. **Marshall Johnston** has been promoted to MSAS Needs Unit Manager and hopes to continue the level of service the cities have received from that group. Filling Marshall's past position as MSAS technical aide is **Mark Channer**. Mark has been with Mn/DOT 10 years, working in the County Needs Unit for 5 years, and will bring that experience to the municipal group. **Julee Puffer** has joined the SALT division, filling the vacancy left by Mark's move. Julee has been a Mn/DOT employee for 20 years and has worked in the Mn/DOT offices of Special Provisions, Mail Distribution, and

Geometrics. **Kim DeLaRosa** has returned from maternity leave and has been working with both Needs sections as technical support. Congratulations to Kim and her husband Paul on the new addition to their family, **Alex DeLaRosa** who arrived on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

In the Federal Aid group **Al Lidberg** accepted a transfer to Metro State Aid where he will continue to be involved with federal aid projects, working with agencies from the ATP application phase through the construction of the project. Al has been in the Central Office for 12 years and is looking forward to working with old friends at Metro. **Ron Dahlquist** has joined the Federal Aid group as a plans specialist. Ron has been at Washington County for 16 years and has experience in surveys, construction inspection, and design, with the focus of his experience in design.

**Lowell Schafer** replaces Komal Sharma as Network Manager of the Division Information Resources team. Lowell was previously in the Finance and Administration division for 2 years. Lowell will concentrate on providing ability for the cities and counties to connect to SALT applications (like the Needs and the Finance Database) through a web interface.

**Kevin Western** is the new State Aid Bridge Engineer. He worked in the Mn/DOT Bridge Office for 12 years, 5 as a design squad leader, and 2 as the Structural Standards Engineer. His spare time is spent on four children and commuting to and from his home in Wisconsin. **Brian Rudie** has accepted a new position in Bridge Office where he will be designing special structures for the Light Rail Transit group. Brian will be available for the next month before transitioning to his new duties. Good Luck to **Chris Chen** and **Manjula Louis** who have transferred from State Aid Bridge to Mn/DOT Bridge and the Office of Research and Strategic Services respectively. **Dave Conkel** from Mn/DOT bridge will be joining Kevin in the near

future.

State Aid Finance congratulates **Diane VonKrough** on her retirement after 39 years of service. **Sandra Martinez** is welcomed to State

Aid Finance as a replacement for Brad Kennedy. Sandra moved from across the hall in Mn/DOTs finance group. Congratulations also to **Cindy Degener** on the birth of her son **Evan** also born in May.

District 1 welcomes **Walter Leu** as the new District State Aid Engineer. Walt has a variety of experience as past County Engineer for Lake of the Woods, Clearwater, and Chisago counties. Other agencies he has worked for include the City of Maple Grove, Getty Refining and Marketing, Consulting Engineers Diversified, City of Lakeville and Mn/DOT design. Mike Tardy accepted the position of Assistant District Engineer for Maintenance District 1A.

It's been just a year since Graduate Engineer **Todd Grugel** was injured while performing construction inspection duties at a Mn/DOT project in Eden Prairie. SALT welcomes Todd back to work, he has started with a part time position at District 4 in Detroit Lakes and is considering a position there in Hydraulics and Maintenance.

## METRO HAPPENINGS

Things (and people) are hopping once again in Metro State Aid! Since the last State Aid Scene, the following personnel changes have occurred: **Greg Coughlin**, former Assistant State Aid Engineer, accepted a position in Mn/Dot Detail Design. His position has been filled by **Patti Loken**. Patti has worked for Mn/DOT for 12 years. Her experience in Mn/DOT includes Traffic, Construction, Final Design, Bridge, Consultant Agreements, and Pre-Design.

☛ **Tony Winecki**, Federal Aid Project Manager, was promoted to a position in Consultant Design.

His position has been filled by **Al Lidberg**. Al has worked for Mn/DOT for 33 years, including Construction, Bituminous and Concrete Plant Inspection, Preliminary Design, and most recently Central Office State Aid.

☛ **Jim Schmidt** has left the Cooperative Agreement Section and Mn/DOT for a position with Koch Industries in Wichita, Kansas. His position has been filled by **Mike Kowski**. Mike has worked for Mn/DOT for 13 years, including Construction, Pre-Design, Central Office State Aid, Traffic Engineering and Tort Claims.

☛ **Dick Bunde**, Finals Inspector, will be retiring December 7, 1999 after 43 years with Mn/DOT! Congratulations Dick! We wish you well in your new venture.

For an updated organizational chart, check out our [web site](http://www.state.mn.us/metro/stateaid/default.htm) [www.state.mn.us/metro/stateaid/default.htm](http://www.state.mn.us/metro/stateaid/default.htm).

**Metro State Aid Training** has been scheduled for **December 8<sup>th</sup>** at the Capitol View Conference Center in Roseville. The training is scheduled to last the entire day and will include a general assembly with break out sessions. Look for registration information to be sent out in early November.

**Metro Federal Aid Training** has been scheduled for January 24, 2000 (pre-letting) and January 31, 2000 (post-letting) at the Arden Hills Training Center. Watch for more information on our web site and in future mailings.

**Don't forget about our web page at:**  
**[www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/)**