Missouri Department of Transportation (HQ) / ACEC Missouri Liaison Committee ZOOM Videoconference

Monday, September 28, 2020
2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Attending from MoDOT:
Ed Hassinger, Deputy Director/Chief Engineer
Dennis Heckman, State Bridge Engineer
Travis Koestner, State Design Engineer
Michelle Kratzer, Multi-Modal Ops Director
Patrick McKenna, Director
Eric Schroeter, Assistant Chief Engineer
Julie Stotlemeyer, Asst. State Design Engineer-LPA
Kenny Voss, Asst. State Design Engineer
Jay Wunderlich, Governmental Relations Director

Attending from ACEC-Missouri:
Ed Alizadeh, Geotechnology, Inc.
Bob Gilbert, Bartlett & West, Inc.
Howard Gotschall, Hanson Professional
Aaron Kober, Modjeski and Masters, Inc.
Vicki LaRose, Civil Design, Inc., Board Chair
Dave Maxwell, HR Green, Inc.
Linda Moen, EFK Moen, LLC, Cmte. Chair
Steve Wells, Hg Consult, Inc.
Todd Welz, Quigg Engineering, Inc.
Dawn Hill, ACEC/MO Staff
Bruce Wylie, ACEC/MO President

Discussion Items:

1) Introductions/MoDOT Staff and MHTC Updates – Mark Croarkin SE District Engineer – Linda Horn Statewide Director of Communications – New Commissioner appointed W. Dustin Boatwright, PE, Executive Vice President at the Little River Drainage/Levee District.

2) Director McKenna opened the meeting with a good update and some highlights follow:
   - Essential services kept flowing with MoDOT and ACEC-Mo staff through the pandemic.
   - MoDOT Staff is back to full hours – the shared work program saved MoDOT $14M in salary budget which will allow them to match more federal dollars for construction work.
   - FY 2020 construction program was $100M ahead of last year.
   - Overall revenue from motor fuel tax (MFT), fee collections and diesel fuel tax has been 7-10% off the mark and that could include for several more months. There has been ~$40M shortfall in motor fuel tax revenue and most of that was replaced into the program budget through MoDOT cost savings. MoDOT hopes to be able to manage this budget shortfall with internal cost savings without greatly impacting the construction program.
   - Winter operations is a concern – COVID caused a late-start in hiring and they need 400 operators ready for snow removal. MoDOT is very concerned that COVID illness could impact a maintenance facility and delay snow removal activities. 80 counties in MO have only one maintenance facility.
   - Federal on-year Continuing Resolution for the FAST Act passed the House (and 9/29 passed the Senate)

3) ACEC-MO communicated that the effect of the PPP Loans on FAR overhead will become a big issue for our member firms – Patrick offered to help carry a message and ACEC-MO will follow up with him to keep communicating on this issue.

4) Jay Wunderlich and Director McKenna shared MoDOT’s State Legislative Priorities:
   - Top priority is to get a distracted driving bill that prohibits texting and handhelds for all drivers – TMA hits are really on the rise and distracted driving is a big contributor to this along with contributing to MANY other types of accidents on the road and in work zones. There is positive momentum for this in the legislature.
A primary Seat Belt law would save 40 lives per year.

2+2+2+2+2=10-cent total fuel tax increase over 5 years may pass the Hancock test. Adding indexing to this draws “taxation without representation” opposition.

MoDOT is submitting an aggressive budget to the Governor showing a 15% increase (increase of $154M in the construction program) to be ready for any type of Federal funding increase in the next year.

Bruce Wylie shared the Missourians for Transportation Investment support for these state legislative priorities and noted that any additional Federal infrastructure funding will create a much larger need for Missouri to have matching state funds available. We would like to see state funding addressed in a Governor legislative proposal.

Call to Action: Get to know the likely new Speaker of the House Rob Vescovo and make sure he understands the need for transportation solutions soon.

5) Ramping up Consultant Projects - Upcoming RFQ’s – The shared work program at MoDOT affected some in-house project schedule and there have been challenges acquiring right of way during social distancing orders. In addition, the Bridge office recently had 7 retirements in the last 6 months. The Bridge office reviews their workload quarterly and the Districts do similar reviews. MoDOT intends to spread out the RFQ’s.

MoDOT will have a Revenue Meeting in early October now that the Continuing Resolution is in place and will update the project RFQ and bid letting schedules.

Design-Build projects lining up:
- I-70 St. Charles Outer Roads
- FARM BUILD
- Rocheport Bridge Replacement
- ADA in the Central District

Multi-Modal funding has had success with a $10.4M Grant to work with BNSF on Route 60 grade crossing improvements and the KC Street Car has been very successful; however, the Aviation Trust Fund is down by 27%, mostly from decrease in commercial travel while fortunately air freight and personal air travel have had better numbers. The Missouri River levels are low impacting barge traffic (mostly crops and windfarm components). MO received an FTA Cares Act Grant and “No Fare” Transit in KC is spurring good conversation elsewhere in the state.

6) Centralized consultant negotiation is piloting on a couple projects in the SW District.

7) Training Opportunities:
- MoDOT U(niversity) is adding content that ACEC-Mo member firms can access.
- “Live” Projectwise, Microstation/ORD trainings already have over 175 attendees per session, but they are recording these trainings and there is still more to come. MoDOT will try to find a way to communicate when new content is available.
- Steve Atkinson plans to send an overview of what training is/will be available to Dawn for distribution to ACEC-Mo member firms.

8) Ed Hassinger noted that we can all speed up the recovery by being vigilant with precautions and work protocols that keep staff healthy and working, which has been key to Missouri’s success to-date.

9) Next Meeting Dates – December/January – After December 11 MoDOT Budget Update.