



The Certified Environmental Professional

The Newsletter of the Academy of Board Certified Environmental Professionals

<http://www.abcep.org>

August-September 2016

President's Message

As summer draws to a close each year I begin what I call my "Winter Plan". As workload changes and field crews come indoors for more office time, it necessitates a minor retooling of resources to keep workflow on track and keep people busy. ABCEP is no different. Volunteer staff has more (or less) time on their hands as different professions drive different schedules and we prepare for conferences, meetings, and for revisiting our organization's strategic growth plan.

I am so appreciative of the time and efforts put into the growth of the organization by volunteer staff, from Kris Thoemke who runs the Certification Review Board with all its intricacies, to the individual members of the Board of Trustees who give tirelessly of their time to follow up, to make about a million calls per month to mentor, and assist membership in their growth. Bower Management who keeps everything from falling apart, is an invaluable "tool" in our arsenal that gives us the ability to take our growth ideas and put them into action.

I sometimes wonder what it is that drives our volunteers to the desire to serve the organization. Even more so I wonder what it is that keeps folks from feeling like they have the capacity to contribute. I suspect that there may be apprehension on the part of some of our membership to step forward and volunteer to help. You may have noticed that almost every month I put out the clarion call for volunteers. This isn't as much because we're all overburdened, but more because we realize the value and benefit you will see from helping other professionals. There are opportunities to mentor, to work in membership, communications, CRB, and other aspects of the organization.

I would hope that as we move into the winter months, you as professionals in this industry, will look to the volunteer opportunities that ABCEP can offer you and those around you to foster your growth and the growth of those you have stewardship over. I have met both young and old CEPs who have taught me things that I didn't know.

ABCEP has added a position for a non-voting member of the Board of Directors that is a CEP-IT. This will provide an opportunity for the rising young professionals to have a voice on the board and work towards achieving your goals. Tina Richards has been appointed by the Board of Trustees to initially fill this position. We have seen Tina operate within the organization at a very enhanced level and anticipate great things coming from her as she fills this role on the BOT.

As always my door/email is always open for discussion and idea sharing.

Best to you,
Mark F. Gerber, CEP, ABCEP President



Mark F. Gerber
ABCEP President

This Issue - Transportation

Articles:

- *Sunshine State Highway Crossings Provide Safety and Benefit Both Wildlife and Human Travelers*
- *FAST Act - An Overview of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation System Act - Key Highway Provisions*
- *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of NEPA Assignment - An Interview with TxDOT's Carlos Swonke, Director of the Environmental Affairs Division*
- *NEPA Assignment - What's the Big Deal?*

Get Connected:

- *Seeking CRB Members*
- *Emerging Environmental Professional Achievement Award*

NEXT MONTH 's NEWSLETTER

TOPIC: Sustainability

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear CEPs:

Where would we be without a means of getting somewhere. It can boggle the mind when you think of the advancements we have made from the days of Lewis & Clark hiking and rafting to explore uncharted territories to moon landings, space stations, and now Elon Musk's hyper loop. From moving people to products, the economy of this country relies on numerous ways to move workers and goods to destinations faster, cheaper, and more efficiently than ever done before.



A web of highways, railways, rivers, and pipelines connect us across this great country. Multiple aspects of this infrastructure system touch our lives every day. This edition of the *Environmental Professional* provides insight on actions people in our profession are taking to improve that system along with adapting new approaches to implement policy and processes.

The October newsletter will focus on **SUSTAINABILITY** - an area of CEP practice. I look forward to seeing what you share with our community.

The deadline for submittal of your articles is **October 21, 2016**. If that doesn't get your attention, how about shining a light on what our profession brings to the GOVERNMENT sector in November.

I'll continue to beat that same old drum - we can't have a newsletter without your participation.

Your support is needed and will be appreciated!

Shari Cannon-Mackey, CEP, ENV SP; Newsletter Editor



As a CEP you are recognized as a leader in our industry. How do you demonstrate that day to day? Being a member NAEP is an excellent way to be part of a very active conversation about what we are doing and where our industry is going. It is also a great way to easily build your CEP credits as we near the end of the year. Join us!

Please visit <http://www.naep.org/> or call NAEP Headquarters at 856-283-7816 for more information.

Thank you,

Leslie Tice, CEP

NAEP Elected Board Member and Membership Committee Chair

leslie.tice@erm.com

76.4%

of workers drive alone to work every day

Source: US Census Bureau, 2013

66%

of US-NAFTA Freight (value) is carried by truck accounting for \$31.2B of \$47.9B total imports, and \$28.1B of \$42B of total exports; compared to:

15.8% by rail

5.4 % by vessel (containerized freight)

3.9% by pipeline

3.7% by air

Source: USDOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics

The US Highway System is composed of

4 million miles of roads and streets

600,000 bridges

Source: www.nationalatlas.gov

10 cities with the worst traffic in America

(based on hours spent in traffic in 2015)

#1 Los Angeles - 81 hours

#2 Washington DC - 75 hours

#3 San Francisco - 75 hours

#4 Houston - 75 hours

#5 New York - 73 hours

#6 Seattle - 66 hours

#7 Boston - 64 hours

#8 Chicago - 60 hours

#9 Atlanta - 59 hours

#10 Honolulu - 49 hours

Source: USA Today

34.1%

of the total tonnage coming through US Water Ports comes through the following 5 ports:

Port of South Louisiana LA

Houston TX

New York NY/NJ

Beaumont TX

Long Beach CA

Source: USDOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Sunshine State Highway Crossings Provide Safety and Benefit Both Wildlife and Human Travelers

Mike Adams, CEP

Under most circumstances highways and wildlife don't mix. Add in an automobile traveling at 70 mph or more, and the safety risk can become very high for both people and animals. In central Florida, thousands of acres of undeveloped forest and wetland conservation land flank existing Interstate 4 (I-4) for most of the distance between Daytona Beach and Deland. I-4 is a major east-west commuter route, and serves as one of the direct arteries into Orlando and its attractions including Disney World. Tiger Bay State Forest, a Volusia County preserve, and other lands along I-4 make up a vast wildlife travel corridor, stretching from Everglades National Park through the Ocala National Forest to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in southern Georgia.

This patchwork of undeveloped and conserved lands support a larger population of wildlife than other areas of the state. Wildlife of all sizes, from raccoons, feral hogs, white-tailed deer, and black bear to the illusive Florida panther can certainly pose a traffic hazard to vehicles traveling along I-4.

Interest in adding highway crossings for wildlife is growing nationwide as the public and traffic engineers search for ways to improve travel safety and protect wildlife. The state of Florida is one of the leaders in such safety innovations. Studies have shown that wildlife, especially large animals such as black bears need to be able to move among populations to preserve genetic diversity and health. University of Florida studies have shown that even plants benefit from wildlife corridors. Bridges and underpasses work well to separate traffic from wildlife and protect people from collisions while allowing wildlife populations to interact and not become genetically isolated from one another. Years ago, underpasses were built along I-75 between Fort Lauderdale and Naples, which have contributed to a reduction in the number of panther-vehicle collisions (and resulting panther deaths) along that stretch of highway.

For the I-4 widening, the Florida Department of Transportation consulted Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation as well as other agencies. Engineers, biologists, and other experts examined the highway and adjacent habitat to identify locations with the highest incidence of roadkills as a way to identify corridors of natural wildlife movement as where the construction of wildlife crossings would be helpful. The underpasses being developed as part of the I-4 project include three long span bridges (104 feet long) with a 10 foot vertical clearance, large enough



SOURCE: Florida Department of Transportation News-Journal

to make any bear feel safe.

Although construction has not been completed, bears have already been using the underpasses. There has been evidence of many other animals using the crossings including alligator, deer, bobcat, fox, raccoon, coyote, and even smaller animals like rabbits, mice, and turtles.

The underpasses, not visible to cars whizzing past on the interstate, provide other benefits. They were built relatively flat, eliminating the need for the road to be elevated, saving on construction costs. The highway widening itself is expected to be complete later this year.

Highways provide a stage for the interaction of humans and wildlife across North America, particularly in rapidly growing areas of Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, and Texas. Like the I-4 crossing, there are innovative ways to reduce the impacts of our roads on wildlife, keeping both humans and animals safe.

Author

Mike Adams is a conservation biologist, educator, researcher and author. He's been a CEP since 1989 and has lived and worked in northeast Florida for 36 years.



Seeking CRB Members

As everyone who is a CEP knows, you were awarded the CEP credential after the Certification Review Board reviewed your application and determined that certification was warranted. Here is an opportunity to be on the opposite side of being the applicant.

The CRB is looking for some dedicated volunteers to add to our ranks.

Briefly, here is how the process works. When an application is sent to the CRB, a panel of seven CRB members is assigned to review the application. One CRB member is assigned as the Lead Reviewer and is responsible for directing the review process. Each member will review the applicant's general information, read and evaluate the essays, and make a decision on whether certification should be awarded. Once assigned to a panel, members are expected to complete their evaluation in 30 days or less. As a CRB Member, you will be assigned to one or two panels per month.

The work of the CRB is the heartbeat of ABCEP. Without the CRB's work, we would not exist as an organization. Please consider becoming a member of the CRB.

If you are interested in becoming a CRB member, please contact Kris Thoenke, CRB Chairman at kthoenke@cecifl.com for more details.

FAST ACT - An Overview of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation System Act - Key Highway Provisions

Adapted from USDOT FHWA Office of Policy & Governmental Affairs Presentation, June 2016

Overview

- ▶ Signed by President Obama on December 4, 2015
- ▶ First long-time authorization act in a decade
- ▶ Provides 5 years of funding certainty for infrastructure and planning investment
- ▶ Authorizes \$305 B (across all modes) over FY 2016-2020
- ▶ \$70B in transfers to keep the Highway Trust Fund ‘solvent’; fully ‘paid for’ (offset) by unrelated savings

Program	5-Year Funding (billions)
Federal Highway Administration	\$ 226.3
Federal Transit Administration	\$ 61.1
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	\$ 3.2
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration	\$ 0.4
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	\$ 4.7
Federal Railroad Administration	\$ 10.3
Total	\$ 305.0

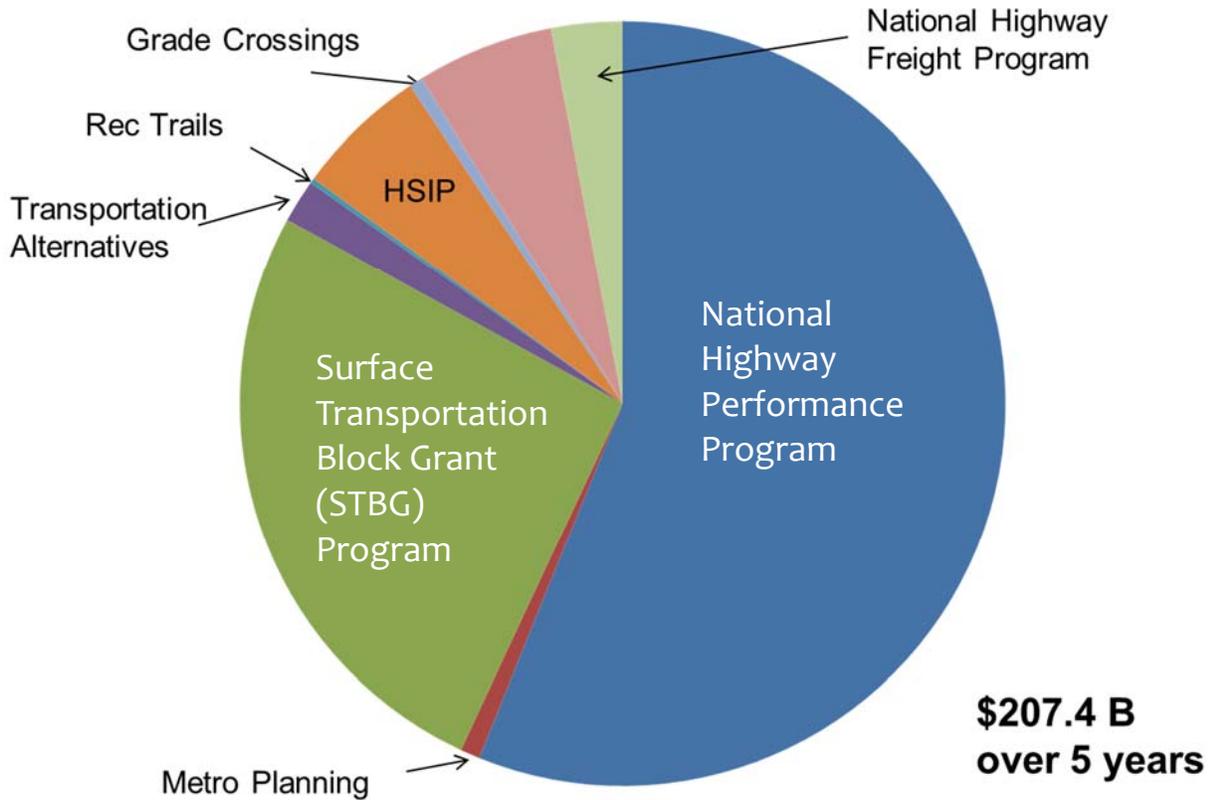
Key Highway Facts

- ▶ \$226.3 B for highways over FY 2016-2020
- ▶ Builds on the program and structure reforms of MAP-21
- ▶ Continues focus on accelerated project delivery
- ▶ Adds a new freight formula and expands freight network
- ▶ Adds a new discretionary program for nationally significant freight and highway projects
- ▶ Provides a new tribal self-governance options

For more information visit www.transportation.gov/fastact

Continued from page 6

92% of Highway Funds 92% of Highway Funds



Top 20 States in Apportionments (in Millions)

State	5-Year Total	State	5-Year Total
California	\$ 19,439.2	Virginia	\$ 5,389.6
Texas	\$ 18,281.9	New Jersey	\$ 5,228.2
Florida	\$ 10,034.8	Indiana	\$ 5,046.6
New York	\$ 8,890.2	Missouri	\$ 5,014.0
Pennsylvania	\$ 8,689.9	Tennessee	\$ 4,475.6
Illinois	\$ 7,530.0	Alabama	\$ 4,018.2
Ohio	\$ 7,099.3	Wisconsin	\$ 3,985.1
Georgia	\$ 6,838.6	Arizona	\$ 3,875.1
Michigan	\$ 5,576.4	Louisiana	\$ 3,717.2
North Carolina	\$ 5,523.8	Washington	\$ 3,590.5

SOURCE: ENO Center for Transportation

'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly' of NEPA Assignment - An Interview with TxDOT's Carlos Swonke, Director of the Environmental Affairs Division

Shari Cannon-Mackey, CEP, ENV SP

In September, I had the privilege of sitting down with Carlos Swonke, Director of TxDOT's Environmental Affairs Division (ENV), to get his perspective on how he and the staff in ENV view the changes that have occurred in project delivery and their day-to-day operations since taking on NEPA Assignment from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in December 2014.

QUESTION - Looking back, what influenced TxDOT to take on NEPA Assignment?

ANSWER - First, the overall size of the TxDOT Program - the state's economy is very large and the opportunity for funding was growing. Good infrastructure supports a good economy. Second, streamlining and efficiency - with a large program comes a large workload. There were bottlenecks at FHWA based on staffing and pressure from legislators and the public to get projects moving forward. TxDOT and FHWA had multiple and differing priorities which made decision-making challenging.

QUESTION - What challenges has TxDOT experienced now that NEPA Assignment is in place?

ANSWER - Modifications to our internal structure and management of our large program. We've implemented rigorous processes in our day-to-day work to ensure NEPA compliance and satisfy the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between TxDOT and FHWA. We have stringent quality assurance/quality control measures to enforce plus the completion of audits to know how the system is functioning. We strive to achieve the correct balance between satisfying these reporting requirements without lessening the benefits of a streamlined process. The size of our program also takes special attention. We have staff across 25 Districts plus the Austin headquarters. We're working from the top down to provide consistency across the Districts and in how we provide support to our city and county partners as well.

QUESTION - What types of changes did the organization make?

ANSWER - As part of the internal structural changes, we have implemented self-assessments to look at our performance; to determine what have we done or what works well and areas where additional changes may still need to be made. These self-assessment exercises also feed into the

compliance audits we conduct with FHWA. The auditing process is completed every year for the first 4 years of assignment; then we will enter a maintenance phase. The audits focus on process and areas of risk:

- Program Management
- Documentation and Records Management
- Quality Assurance/Quality Control
- Legal Sufficiency
- Performance Measures
- Training

It has required TxDOT to take a new look at the project development and planning process - timing of environmental clearances related to right-of-way acquisition and letting. We have also updated and will continue to update our guidance documents and tools as the process continues to evolve.

There are also costs involved in taking on NEPA Assignment - program changes resulting in guidance document updates, changes in our organizational structure, the need for new in-house expertise, and development of an electronic documentation system.

QUESTION - What benefits has TxDOT experienced?

ANSWER - We are a little more than 18 months into these new processes so quantifying changes is a little challenging. We have seen a reduction in the time it takes to deliver an Environmental Assessment (EA) - from 3 years down to 2 years. We feel this is attributed to TxDOT making independent decisions along the way; requiring fewer touches (back and forth) with FHWA. To date we have completed 5 EAs (start to finish) under NEPA Assignment. We also see improved consistency and accountability as staff become more familiar with the required processes.

QUESTION - How do you see NEPA Assignment continuing to function in the coming years?

ANSWER - We're in continuous improvement mode. It will require us to continue to refine each step as well as our supporting guidance. We are looking at ways to streamline coordination under special purpose laws through developing new programmatic agreements (w/USFWS regarding the golden-cheeked warbler) and refining existing ones to further expedite reviews.

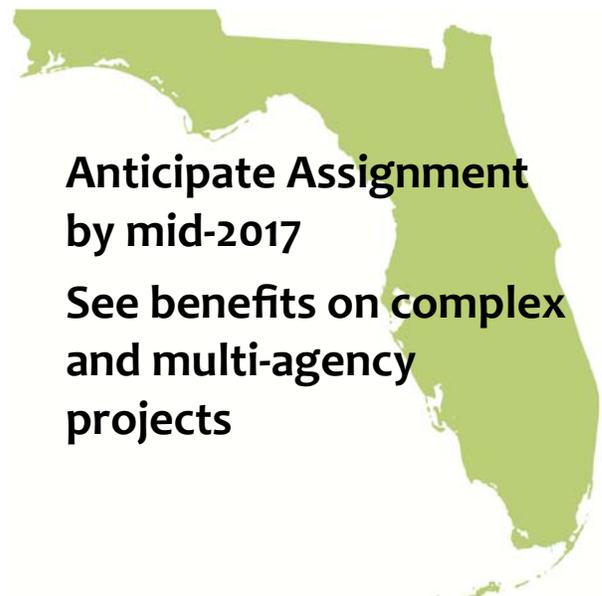
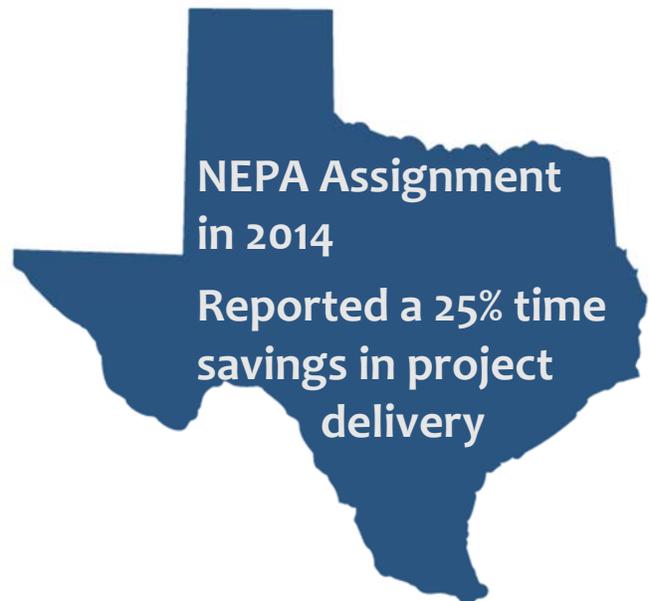
Author

Shari Cannon-Mackey, CEP, ENV SP, is the Office Coordinator and Section Manager for Burns & McDonnell's Austin Texas Office. She is a member of the ABCEP Board of Trustees and serves on the Advisory Board of the Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) Heart of Texas Chapter.

NEPA Assignment - What's the Big Deal?

NEPA Assignment was first announced in 2005 under the Safe, Affordable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy of Users (SAFETEA-LU); and updated by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). Section 6005(a) of SAFETEA-LU (and modified by MAP-21) established a Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program that allows the Secretary of Transportation to assign, and a state to assume, the Secretary's responsibility under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and all or part of the Secretary's responsibilities for environmental review, consultation, or other action required under any Federal environmental law (e.g., Section 4(f) of the DOT Act, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, etc.) with respect to one or more highway projects within the state.

Two states currently operate under NEPA Assignment - California and Texas. Ohio and Florida are making progress to become the next states to take it on. Alaska, Idaho, Virginia, and Utah are all in various stages of evaluating the program.





**Log on to
CEP-EXPRESS
today and take
credit for all
your hard
work!**

Upcoming Newsletter Topics:

OCTOBER

Sustainability

(due October 21, 2016)

NOVEMBER

Government (CEP Area of Practice)

(due November 18, 2016)

DECEMBER

Innovation (impact analysis tools and technologies)

(due December 16, 2016)

JANUARY

New Year - New Ideas

(Reflections and Resolutions)

(due January 20, 2017)

FEBRUARY

Water Quality (CEP Area of Practice)

(due February 17, 2017)

Send all articles to:
scannonmackey@burnsmcd.com



THE ACADEMY OF BOARD CERTIFIED ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS PRESENTS:

THE EMERGING ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD!

**Nominate
Someone
Today!**

This award recognizes environmental professionals for their leadership, professional involvement, commitment to foster environmental improvement, and actions to help make the world a better place for future generations.

We are requesting nominations from you, your company, or agency! Simply send your references containing personal testimonies, corroboration of professional experiences, achievements, commendations from employers, Board of Directors, and/or other professional associations, societies, governmental or private sector group to

Office@ABCEP.ORG.

Visit <http://www.abcep.org/blogs/awards> for more info!

***Our newsletter is only as strong as
our members can make it.***

***So don't be afraid and
GET INVOLVED!***

The Certified Environmental Professional

The ABCEP Newsletter is published monthly and is intended to be a:

- ◆ Communication vehicle for the Board of Trustees and ABCEP Committees to inform and engage with CEPs and CEP-ITs on current activities within ABCEP and its future direction.
- ◆ Forum to report on current and emerging environmental issues, regulation and policy changes, and professional trends.
- ◆ Forum to provide professional guidance and advice to expand the professional growth and knowledge of members.
- ◆ Means for members to communicate with one another on current accomplishments, interesting projects, or lessons learned on the job with new approaches and successful problem solving solutions.
- ◆ Platform to acknowledge, highlight, and welcome active CEPs and CEP-ITs.

All members are encouraged to be active in their profession and affiliated professional organization.

If you have an article or a topic of interest that you would like presented in *The Certified Environmental Professional* newsletter please submit your completed article or topic request to Shari Cannon-Mackey, CEP ENV SP, at scannonmackey@burnsmcd.com; or to Andrea Bower at office@abcep.org.

Thank you,

Shari Cannon-Mackey, CEP, ENV SP
Editor