

## New funding cycle for Local Roads to start

Over \$48 million in state funds supported about 1,200 Local Road Improvement (LRIP) projects in the 2002-03 biennium, according to a new WisDOT report: *Summary of the 2002-3 Local Roads Improvement Program*.

The report describes the program's performance for the biennium, and lists in detail each local government that received funding, how much they got, and for what specific improvement, says Mary Forlenza, WisDOT's Chief of Local Transportation Programs and Finance, whose section manages the LRIP program. Project types approved under the program varied; mostly reconstructions with a few resurfacing, bridge and design projects.

"The flexibility and minimal red tape in LRIP help locals get their improvements completed successfully with little hassle," says Forlenza. "The program helps local economies statewide, from providing welcome funds to large counties and cities to add flexibility to highway budgets, to providing dollars for smaller towns and villages that may not be eligible for federal improvement funding."

The next LRIP program cycle, for 2004-5, will begin in late summer. Statewide meetings will be held with county commissioners this fall. "Although the state budget was not final as of this newsletter



Some towns jointly choose larger LRIP projects.

deadline, the Governor's budget includes 2.5% annual increases for LRIP," Forlenza says. "County highway commissioners are critical in helping administer the program," she notes.

"Take the opportunity to review safety hazards when planning LRIP projects," recommends Don Walker, T.I.C. Director. Improved road surfaces may lead to higher traffic speeds and the potential for more crashes, he notes. "For a little additional cost and effort you can remove or improve hazardous guardrail, culvert drop offs, and other roadside hazards," Walker says. The T.I.C.'s *SAFER Manual* has ideas for identifying and treating local road safety issues.

Coordinate with nearby local road agencies. "We see, and encourage, a trend among communities to get together and choose significant projects within their counties rather than dividing the available money evenly among all the towns within the county," says Forlenza. The towns in each county elect five town chairs to review potential applications and select several larger LRIP projects.

"LRIP is an established, successful program that has seen strong support from the Legislature. If a county has eight or ten townships and they approve two to three projects a biennium, over five to six years, each of those townships could see a significant improvement project," Forlenza says.

*The 2002-03 LRIP Summary Report will be available by June 30th, only on the Web. The SAFER Manual is available from the T.I.C. (See Resources page 6.) For specific program questions, contact your county highway commissioner or an LRIP manager:*

*Maria Cole, WisDOT Districts 3,4,7,8, 608/264-7336, [maria.cole@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:maria.cole@dot.state.wi.us); or Janice Watzke, WisDOT Districts 1,2,5,6, 608-266-9497, [janice.watzke@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:janice.watzke@dot.state.wi.us)*



### Signs

What is your "sign IQ?" Test yourself by trying

to answer some questions from the February T.I.C. Signing Workshops. Instructor Tom Heydel, Traffic Operations Engineer, WisDOT District 2, supplied the answers. For more information on signing basics, see T.I.C. Bulletin #7, *Signing for Local Roads*, newly revised to include changes to the MUTCD and the Wisconsin Supplement.

**Do I have to install a RR advance sign where a roadway parallels a RR track and it is less than 100' between the parallel road and the track?** Yes. This is a new requirement. The proper sign would be W10-2, 3, or 4 depending on the location of the track. It is placed on the road that parallels the track and is required on all recognized streets or side roads at a location based on the stopping sight distance.

**Is it still required on a low volume road?** Yes. Part 5 Section 5F.03 of the *Manual*

discusses this. It's not always clear how to sign or mark a specific situation.

**Can I place a stop sign at a RR crossing if there are active warning devices (flashing light signals)?** No. People sometimes think using a Stop sign will help slow traffic down as it approaches a track, but this use is not permitted. The MUTCD, Section 8B.07, does not allow stop or yield signs at RR crossings with active warning devices.

*continued on page 8*

## Crossroads

This newsletter provides information on roads and bridges to local officials and is published quarterly by the Wisconsin Transportation Information Center, part of the nationwide Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). **Crossroads** is produced with assistance from the Federal Highway Administration, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Non-profit organizations are welcome to reproduce articles appearing here. Please contact us first for any updates or corrections.

Wisconsin Transportation Information Center (T.I.C.), UW-Madison Department of Engineering Professional Development, 432 N. Lake St., Madison, WI 53706. Phone: 800/442-4615 Fax: 608/263-3160.

Don Walker, <i>director</i>	<a href="mailto:donald@engr.wisc.edu">donald@engr.wisc.edu</a>
Ben Jordan, <i>staff</i>	<a href="mailto:jordan@engr.wisc.edu">jordan@engr.wisc.edu</a>
Steve Pudloski, <i>staff</i>	<a href="mailto:pudloski@engr.wisc.edu">pudloski@engr.wisc.edu</a>
Susanna Fuerstenberg, <i>program assistant</i>	<a href="mailto:tic@epd.engr.wisc.edu">tic@epd.engr.wisc.edu</a>
Lynn Entine, <i>writer and editor</i>	Entine & Associates
Susan Kummer, <i>graphic artist</i>	Artifax