



New program awards funds for hazard elimination

Local officials have an opportunity to make their roads safer through the Small Local Hazard Elimination Safety (HES) Program which began this year. Projects must cost less than \$25,000; \$400,000 was available statewide. At least two projects can be funded in each WisDOT district.

"The objective is to respond quickly to local, spot safety problems," says Chuck Thiede, who coordinates the program. "Projects are approved by the districts and the goal is to reduce paperwork and keep administrative costs to a minimum."

Replacing hazardous bridge railings in the Marinette County Village of Wausaukee is one project funded as of the new federal fiscal year in October. The bridge is very narrow and railings are weak. "The ends of pipe stick out at you. They are real dangerous," says Larry Wacker, planning and program supervisor in WisDOT District 3. The new railing, projected to cost \$15,000, will have safer turned back ends.

"This program requires a lot less paper work," says Wacker. "The locals took photographs and drew up a simple plan with one or two pages of sketches. Sometimes, under other programs, it can be more trouble than it's worth to seek funding for these small projects."

In Vernon County, HES funds will rebuild a doubly blind intersection. "Traffic traveling 55 mph (or faster!) comes from the west on V over a blind knoll and traffic from St. Patrick's enters from a very steep incline," wrote Kathryn Granger, Town of Greenwood town clerk. The intersection is also very difficult to plow and sand, and erosion gullies make it impassable after a rainstorm. Improving it involves raising the town road 30 feet at the intersection and blending it into the slope of the hill. The old "Y" intersection will become a safer "T."

About 13 proposals came in to District 5. The V-St. Patrick's intersection and another proposal to convert a Y intersection to a T were chosen because the proposed solutions were "the obvious fix," according to Preliminary Design Engineer Allan Johnson. "Some proposals wanted to do things



Bridge railing made of pipe is flimsy and dangerous (left). The intersection of County V and St. Patrick's Road is blind to drivers on both roads (right).

that we weren't sure would fix the problem," he says.

Local officials may want to begin thinking about potential projects for next year's HES program. Only construction or hardware installation is funded. The project must stand alone and not be part of something bigger. To help streamline the process, competitive bidding is not permitted; work must be done only through negotiated contracts.

"This is the program's first year. We plan to evaluate it and may make changes or add dollars to the program," says coordinator Chuck Thiede. The program will be publicized and managed through the districts again next spring.

For help in identifying street and highway hazards, plan to attend the **T.I.C. Safety Workshop**, in January. You can also request a free copy of the T.I.C.'s 40-page **SAFER Manual**. See **Resources** on page 6.

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