

Metrication Clearinghouse offers help

AASHTO, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Organizations, has set up a Metrication Clearinghouse to help supply information to local government officials. It is housed at the Texas Transportation Institute in College Station, Texas.

Local officials are invited to take advantage of information in the Clearinghouse's databases. Topics covered include transportation-related metric issues, metrication publications, metric standards, metric conferences, and metric contacts.

There is a World Wide Web site:

<http://tti.tamu.edu/metric> or you could call at 409/845-5770, fax at 409/845-9848, or e-mail at amenefee@tamu.edu

For a listing of metric publications and other resources available from the Wisconsin DOT call Shelly Carney at 608/267-0763.



New wage laws

Daily overtime requirements for work performed on public works projects changed recently when Governor Thompson signed a new wage law. As of April 30, 1996, people can work four 10-hour days before overtime is required. Time and one-half will also be required for Saturdays, Sundays and six selected holidays. Several other changes in the new bill also took effect at the same time.

Contracting agencies now must post "white sheets" with prevailing wage rates in at least one conspicuous and easily accessible place on the site of the project. A local governmental unit may post them at a place normally used to post public notices if there is no common site on the project. This formerly was the contractor's responsibility. These requirements apply to projects which cost at least \$150,000 when more than one trade is required to complete the job and \$30,000 when at least 85% of the job can be done by one trade.

"Change has been badly needed," says Pat Schultz, lead investigator at DILHR's construction wage standards section. "These laws were instituted in the 1930s and haven't been updated since." The laws will affect all public works construction.

Prevailing rates will be more realistic

Starting January 1, 1997, the Department of Industry Labor and Human Relations (DILHR) will begin setting prevailing wage rates for each county using a new method and basing rates on annual surveys. These changes will now also apply to local highway, street, and bridge work.

"I think we'll see a major change in wage rates in less populated counties," says Schultz. "Under the old method we used the bargained wage rates to set prevailing rates when no other information was available. The new rates will be more realistic."

There will be an annual survey of every Wisconsin employer in construction and related industries. Then, under a new formula, the rate paid for more than 50% of the hours worked in a trade becomes the prevailing rate. If no rate has more than 50% of the hours, then the new rate is determined by a weighted average of the top 51% of wages paid on private sector work in the county.

The details of the new law were worked out with several focus groups which included representatives from employers' associations, unions, municipal associations, other state agencies, and DILHR staff before it was introduced into the legislature.

Watch your association newsletters for information. A summary of changes is available from the T.I.C. Use the form on pg. 7 or call 800/442-4615. Additional information is available from Pat Schultz, DILHR Construction Wage Standards Section, P.O. Box 8928, Madison, 53708, phone 608/266-6469, fax 608/267-4592.

Calendar

T.I.C. workshops

Specific details and locations for workshops are in the announcements mailed to all **Crossroads** recipients.

Liveable Neighborhoods: Rethinking Residential Streets Are you getting requests from neighborhoods to do something about the speed, volume, or character of traffic on their streets? Do they say it's too noisy, too fast, too much? Are you able to respond to their requests in a satisfactory way? This national satellite workshop will bring you up to speed on the latest ideas on traffic calming and crime prevention through environmental design. Hear from experts and learn from three case studies with very different approaches to this issue.

June 19, 11:00 am to 2:30 pm at four locations in Wisconsin

Winter Road Maintenance Your opportunity to rethink your operations, learn from others and tune up your approach to snow and ice control and other winter maintenance activities.

Sept 11	Brookfield	Sept 17	Tomah
Sept 12	Green Bay	Sept 18	Eau Claire
Sept 13	Barneveld	Sept 19	Cable
Sept 20	Rhineland		

UW-Madison seminars

Local government officials are eligible for a limited number of scholarships for the following engineering courses in Madison. Use the form on page 7 for details or call 800/442-4615.

Cost Effective Drainage System Design, Aug. 13-16

Effective Detention Basin Design Techniques, Sept. 9-12

Traffic Engineering Fundamentals, Sept. 30-Oct. 2

Managing Snow and Ice Control Operations, Oct. 7-8

Traffic Signal Design Software, October 21-23

Advanced Traffic Signal Design Using TEAPAC, Oct. 24-25