

## Ratings review: WEB-WISLR use up

*Entering the rating information directly into WEB-WISLR gives local governments instant access to their current pavement data.*

**CONGRATULATIONS** to the local officials around the state who rated the condition of their pavements and submitted those ratings to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation before the December 15, 2007 deadline.

Given the early, persistent and severe weather that hit most of Wisconsin this past winter, it looks like the impressive 87 percent of local governments who submitted road ratings on time planned ahead. The **total** compliance rate in past years is just seven points better at 94 percent of all local governments submitting ratings.

Another fact worth noting is that more local governments than ever used the WEB-WISLR (Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads) data entry screen to submit 2007 ratings. Introduced about four years ago, the data management system is emerging as a powerful decision-making tool for local officials as they inventory roads and plan improvements.

Fifty-seven percent of local governments made ratings submissions directly into WEB-WISLR last year compared to 45 percent in 2005. This method of registering ratings numbers has gained momentum as more local governments achieve better web access and staff members become more

comfortable with web applications. Ongoing improvements in the WISLR data entry screen also make it easier to use.

### Data instantly accessible, useful

Entering the rating information directly into WEB-WISLR gives local governments instant access to their current pavement data. No waiting for someone in Madison ▶

Pavement Rating	Rating Year	Surface Type	Surface Year	Surface Mile	On Route	Alt Route	Alt Offset	Toward Route	Section Length	Local ID
0	2005	70	1979	33	Aaron Ct	Eben Ave	0	Termini	207	3090
0	2005	70	1979	32	Aaron Ct	Eben Ave	207	Termini	4	3590
7	75	75	1964	56	Aberg Ave	Ramp (4)	0	Ramp (4)	634	n/a
7	75	75	1964	50	Aberg Ave	Ramp (4)	0	McCormick Ave	53	n/a
0	2002	75	2000	64	Aberg Ave	McCormick Ave	0	Shopko Dr	1364	2323
7	75	75	2000	64	Aberg Ave	Shopko Dr	0	Ramp (4)	1590	n/a



WCPM Director Susan Paddock

## Training programs build skills, add value

**EMPLOYEES** who manage or hope to manage any aspect of local government operations take on a lot of responsibility. They:

- keep essential services running effectively,
- meet many complex budget and technology challenges,
- inspire people they supervise to exceptional job performance.

Training programs that help managers build critical leadership skills increasingly matter as the public sector competes for the best and brightest.

### WCPM hones practical skills

Among training options local Wisconsin governments tap to improve management strength is the Wisconsin Certified Public Manager (WCPM) program. UW-Madison administers the nationally accredited statewide program for managers in federal,

state, tribal and local governments. Participants receive 300 hrs of training on a range of management and supervisory topics.

Director Susan Paddock, who founded the program in 1990, says bringing public managers at all levels together is a unique benefit of WCPM. "State and local governments need to understand one another to appreciate what influences the decisions each of them make, decisions often with far-reaching effect.

"They address familiar challenges and explore solutions together in a way that teaches them more than great manager skills," Paddock adds. "It is a powerful shared learning experience where they see and recognize what managers in other public sector specialties face."

Paddock says unlike general management courses, the WCPM program is "practice oriented."

Graduates return to their work assignments with specific tools and ideas they can apply strategically and operationally.

Since the program emphasizes practical skill building, the curriculum itself evolves to meet real-world issues. For example, the push to measure how well a government entity meets its mission places new demands on public managers to set and report performance goals. A changing workforce requires new recruitment and human resources skills.

Participants also research and write a paper applying supervisory concepts to a work situation or challenge they face. Projects range from planning initiatives for evacuation exercises and a cost analysis of winter maintenance to assessing security needs in county facilities. ▶

to enter the data or upload an electronic spreadsheet.

With new ratings entered, local officials can take advantage of the WISLR's mapping, pavement analysis and budget tools. They can prepare and communicate maintenance plans, three- or five-year plans, and budget proposals for the coming year.

A WISLR printout of the updated ratings also is useful in the field. Local officials can use it to record any new deterioration or new condition ratings when inspecting roads in spring for winter damage. It is a helpful guide to revising annual maintenance plans that result from inspection.

Remember users can update their pavement ratings in WISLR any time. It is a good idea to do so after each spring inspection rather than waiting for the December deadline. At the end of the construction and maintenance season, revise and enter ratings of the improved roads.

### Working with WisDOT

Susie Forde, WisDOT's Chief of Data Management, says the PASER/WISLR training sessions held last year by the TIC in conjunction with her office helped make many more local officials comfortable using WEB-WISLR.

She encourages local govern-

ments eager to simplify ratings submissions and improve the value of the database they create to work with WisDOT. Some communities did request extra time to submit ratings for 2007 because of the weather. A few local governments with GIS databases of their own have an extension to work with WisDOT staff to build a better interface between their system and WISLR.

As the success of 2007 suggests, this web technology has the potential to become routine and provide local governments an invaluable way to maintain quality data and manage resources. ■

"These applied projects demonstrate what people learn about what they need and the research they do is helpful for all of us," explains Paddock.

### Close the knowledge gap

Greg Epping, a 2007 graduate of the program and TIC Advisory Committee member, says WCPM closed a knowledge gap for him in ways that made a genuine difference in his manager's role.

Epping wears many hats as Superintendent of Public Works for the Village of Darien. He and his small staff run the water

utility, oversee the sewage system, manage streets and parks, and maintain public buildings.

"The training covered many areas I didn't know quite how to approach," he says. "It gave me the resources to better organize and plan and be more proactive on the job." He also gained confidence in managing performance reviews in a way that benefit staff and the operation as a whole.

Epping developed a public works safety program as his applied project. The process gave him the focus, he says, to formalize something everyone agrees is

important but puts off in response to daily demands.

"Safety is in the forefront now," Epping notes. "We do training on a regular basis, coordinating it with our workload. We saw results almost right away, a fact that tells me creating the plan was time well spent."

### Make lasting connections

Jim Hessling, Director of Public Works for the Village of Cottage Grove, describes achieving his certification through the program as a source of pride. He completed the program in 2005 and continues to use the extensive resource materials to test out a strategy or idea. And he still checks in with members of his colleague group.

"I made lasting connections with other managers I still talk with when something comes up." Hessling notes that the open discussion format encouraged people to share issues and explore solutions together. "It made you appreciate you weren't alone in trying to tackle a tough problem."

Hessling's project—a simple capital improvement plan for Cottage Grove—became the catalyst for a more-ambitious document. He now has a 20-year, village-wide plan that addresses a range of public works projects, including future sidewalk projects

### Resources

[www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/wislr/index.htm](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/wislr/index.htm)

Web page entry point to gain first-time access to WEB-WISLR. Follow the instructions at *How to access and get started using WISLR*.

### (608) 266-7139

#### Pavement Hotline

Call with questions about the pavement rating submittal.

*The WCPM program makes it easy to incorporate the training schedule into a professional work life.*

### Contacts

Susan Paddock, Director Wisconsin Certified Public Manager Program  
[spaddock@dcs.wisc.edu](mailto:spaddock@dcs.wisc.edu)

### Resources

[www.dcs.wisc.edu/pda/cpm/index.html](http://www.dcs.wisc.edu/pda/cpm/index.html)

WCPM website with links to details about program courses, faculty, registration and more.

<http://www.dcs.wisc.edu/pda/academy.htm>

Web link to Public Works Supervisory Academy course and enrollment details.

[www.wisconsin.apwa.net](http://www.wisconsin.apwa.net)

Wisconsin Chapter of the American Public Works Association website with links to education and scholarships.

## Public Works Supervisory Academy

This continuing education program serves the skill-building needs of first and second line city and county public works supervisors. Gregg Epping of Darien and Jim Hessling of Cottage Grove—both heading up public works departments—attended the Public Works Supervisory Academy before or in conjunction with their Certified Public Manager training and consider it a good introduction. Academy courses also meet the supervisory training requirement for Phase I of the WCPM.

A series of ten basic management workshops are offered over a four- or five-month period in locations around Wisconsin. Each six-hour workshop costs \$155. Local governments that belong to the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Public Works Association may receive partial reimbursement after completing the program.

Topics include creating goals and work plans, personnel management, customer service, managing conflict, better communication and negotiation, budgeting and grant administration, and issues of workplace safety. Participants can enroll in individual workshops without enrolling in the Academy.

Go to <http://www.dcs.wisc.edu/pda/academy.htm> for information on the winter/ spring workshops or contact the Public Works Supervisory Academy in the UW–Madison Department of Professional Development and Applied Studies at (800) 442-4617.

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