

National Maintenance Quality Assurance Peer Exchange

The first-ever national maintenance quality assurance (MQA) peer exchange, October 11-13 in Madison, WI attracted highway maintenance managers from some 36 states and provinces (and three counties). MQA programs help measure and report the condition of highway assets.

Feedback on the peer exchange has been overwhelmingly positive. “This was an excellent event, organization and sessions were great, lots of good information was exchanged,” reported one participant on an anonymous evaluation. “Hats off to all the steering committee. Exchange was well developed and thought out. I gained tremendously,” noted another.

Wisconsin’s Secretary of Transportation Frank Busalacchi welcomed participants. Two keynote addresses – from Carlos Braceras, Utah DOT, Chair of the AASHTO Highway Subcommittee on Highway Maintenance, and from David Vieth, Wisconsin Director of Highway Operations – kicked off the 2-1/2-day event, which featured presentations, facilitated discussions, and many informal opportunities to learn from other states.

The peer exchange was sponsored by FHWA, the Midwest Regional University Transportation Center at University of Wisconsin - Madison, AASHTO’s subcommittee on highway maintenance, and 21 participating states participating in the national pooled fund project on asset management. The MRUTC coordinated the event.

Peer exchange participants agreed upon six national priorities in their field of maintenance management:

1. Develop a budget allocation model that is not only based on history, but also incorporates MQA data and feature inventory.
2. Determine how to turn conditions and dollars to outcomes.
3. Develop meaningful and consistent performance measures for winter.
4. Integrate pavement management systems, maintenance management systems, and MQA.
5. Develop a guide to MQA Stats. The guide should answer the following questions: What do I really know with the data I have? What sampling techniques and analytical methods should I use? It should show successful examples of how different agencies have bridged gaps in data.
6. Find more effective ways to tell the maintenance story, to show in words and pictures what we do, why it matters, what it costs, and what happens if we don’t do it.

The group also charged the steering committee with developing several products and resources over the coming months:

- Maintain the MQA online library. Includes documents from MQA programs across the country and presentations from peer exchange. Searchable by state or

document type. <http://www.mrutc.org/outreach/MQA/> This is available now and will be updated regularly through end of year.

- Open a listserv of people interested in MQA. It will be unmanaged, and will be hosted by UW through the MRUTC. It should be running by the end of the year.
- Issue proceedings from the peer exchange, which will include presentations, a brief narrative, and a list of all attendees.
- Report on the possibility of national measures for maintenance, derived from a review of submitted MQA program materials.
- Maintain the peer exchange website. This includes links to peer exchange materials and library. It will include links to proceedings and reports as they are issued. <http://www.mrutc.org/outreach/MQA/>

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