Message from the Chair:

I am returning home after the 2013 Annual AASHTO meeting in Denver. For those of you who have hosted meetings you know how much work it takes, but as usual our hosts at the Colorado DOT did an exceptional job. It was a very busy meeting with one of our maintenance issues (ADA) taking center stage. The Board of Directors also passed significant policy resolutions that will serve to guide our Association during the reauthorization discussions that are well underway. The final versions will be available later this week. You should find the time to review them and become aware of the broad spectrum of issues involved in moving our country’s transportation forward.

On the maintenance side of things I provided a summary presentation of our activities (I will ask AASHTO to put the presentation on our website) to the Standing Committee of Highways (SCOH), our parent committee. As always, thanks to Chris and Jennifer for all of their support in helping me get ready. I informed the SCOH about our efforts with moving our MQA program to the next level, and had lot’s of support for what we are doing. But, by far and away our ADA resolution was much discussed. There was strong feelings by many states, but at the end of the day the SCOH passed our resolution. After that meeting I had the opportunity to meet with FHWA Administrator Mendez on the issue. He gave me a lot more background on all of the efforts that FHWA has been making in this area, they understand where our maintenance and pavement preservation professionals are at and what we are concerned, they are true partners. We both agreed that we all wanted to do the right thing and provide accessibility to all of our citizens.

The next step was on to the Board of Directors, where the issue was also being addressed within a resolution on Highways, which had come up through the Standing Committee on Reauthorization. Since that resolution came up first, and was passed, we tabled the one that came through SCOH.

While I believe that the discussions were great, and that there is a lot of support for accommodating ADA issues in a more strategic approach, as suggested by our committee, I don’t expect significant change in direction. There was a commitment to continue the discussion, but my recommendation to our community is to address the concerns of our community with disabilities in a proactive way, so that we can continue to preserve our roads in the more cost effective way possible.

As always, thanks for all of the passion you all bring to your jobs.

All the best - Carlos

Equipment Technical Working Group

Equipment Management Technical Services Program (EMTSP)

The EMTSP Oversight Panel continues their management of the program. Recent accomplishments include the following:

- FY 2014 State DOT annual contributions to AASHTO have been received from 18 states year-to-date.
- Action items in the EMTSP Strategic Plan have been updated and completed
- Modified the EMTSP website to provide similar information as the AASHTO Equipment Reference book to eliminate the need of continuing that publication
- Working in partnership with TRB Committee AHD60, Maintenance Equipment, and Florida DOT, convened a conference steering committee and commenced planning for the 2014 AASHTO/TRB National Equipment Fleet Management Conference, which will be held at the Coronado Springs conference center in Orlando, Florida on JUNE 6-12, 2014
- Continued coordinating the scheduled regional partnership meetings
- Continued work implementing findings from the final report of Research Project 20-07/Task 309 to identify and prioritize additional research projects
The revised EMTSP strategic plan can be found on the “About EMTSP” page of the EMTSP website at the following link: http://www.emtsp.org/about-emtsp/

If your state has not yet remitted the voluntary contribution for EMTSP, you are encouraged to do so in order for this valuable program to continue and expand its accomplishments, which serve the needs of highway agency equipment fleet professionals.

All state DOT equipment managers (and others interested in receiving periodic e-mail related to the EMTSP) are encouraged to subscribe to the EMTSP listserv by clicking on this link: EMTSP General Listserv

Equipment Technical Working Group (TWG)

Research

The Equipment TWG’s research problem statement titled *Guidelines for the Development of Highway Operations Equipment Replacement Lifecycle Criteria* and assigned NCHRP project number 13-04 has now been approved by the AASHTO Board of Directors. NCHRP is in the process of assembling the project panel to initiate the project.

NCHRP Synthesis 43-14, *DOT Fleet Replacement Management Practices*, has been completed and has been approved for publication.

The Equipment TWG’s most recent research problem statement titled *Guidelines for the Development of Highway Operations Equipment Utilization Measurement and Management* was presented to the Subcommittee on Maintenance at the summer meeting and was voted #1 by the subcommittee and submitted to NCHRP for consideration.

Collaboration with TRB

Various members of the Equipment TWG have been involved with preparing and arranging for papers on relevant equipment management topics to be presented at the January 12-16, 2014 Annual TRB Meeting.

Highway Safety and Reliability Technical Working Group

**HS&R TWG at the Summer SCOM meeting - Vermont**

Sincere thanks go out to all the participants that made the Safety and Reliability TWG breakout sessions so successful. Approximately 80 people participated in one more of the three breakout sessions. Those in attendance were treated to excellent presentations, discussions and sharing. The Group endorsed a research needs statement – “Transitioning Toward Performance-Based Winter Maintenance: Developing a Toolkit of Measures, Standards and Monitoring Tools to Fit Any Climate and Budget.” This statement was submitted by the SCOM as its second overall priority research need. As soon our work ended in Vermont, the TWG leadership turned its focus to West Virginia for the summer of 2014. The Safety and Reliability Technical Working Group would like to hear from you on content for next year’s breakout sessions. Please connect with Steve Lund, Minnesota Department of Transportation, 651-366-3566, steven.lund@state.mn.us if you have ideas or suggestions – thanks.

**National Winter Maintenance Peer Exchange**

The fourth biennial National Winter Maintenance Peer Exchange was held on September 10-11, 2013 in Vancouver, Washington. The theme of this Peer Exchange was “Sustainable Winter Service—Moving From Art to Science”. The Safety and Reliability TWG lead in the planning, organizing and conduct efforts along with the Clear Roads and Aurora research consortia.

Attendees this year totaled 103 that came from 36 state DOTs, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, 3 Universities, AASHTO, TRB, FHWA, NCAR, APWA, and NACE.

The purpose of the Winter Maintenance Peer Exchange was to bring state DOT snow and ice control experts and the private sector providing equipment and materials together to share information and network on snow and ice control related issues. There was also a need to bring research organizations into the discussion so they could understand where the communications, knowledge and technology gaps existed so strategies will be developed to bridge those gaps.

Attendees brought a broad array of experience, from frontline snow fighters and foremen to department chiefs. They came to present their winter maintenance successes and problems, discuss them with their peers and present the unsolved problems to the researchers who will take up the research challenge, and vendors who supply the winter maintenance equipment, chemistry and technologies. Progress on solving those problems that need additional research is posted on the Winter Maintenance Peer Exchange website and updated every four to six months.
In addition to the above accomplishments, the 2013 Winter Maintenance Peer Exchange provided a unique opportunity to provide the attendees an overview of MAP-21, particularly Section 1203 “Performance Management” and its impact on winter maintenance (safety, congestion reduction, system reliability, and environmental sustainability). Attendees were shown how the FHWA’s “Sustainable Highway’s Self-Evaluation Tool” and the use of OM-12: Road Weather Management Program would assist them with minimizing environmental impacts while providing continued or better level of service. Attendees were also provided a comprehensive overview of the NCHRP 20-07/Task 318, Chapter 8, “Winter Maintenance Operations and Salt, Sand, and Chemical Management”. The chapter was completely revised in spring 2013 and contains a listing of nearly 100 snow and ice control best practices which will help state DOTs to accomplish the requirements set forth in Section 1203.

Peer Exchange attendees completed a written evaluation of the two day exchange. Attendees rated “…relevance and value of content to you and your work….able to actively participate in discussions and have my research needs considered…overall session and speaker quality…” in the high average to excellent range. A summary of all of the evaluations is posted to the National Winter Maintenance Peer Exchange website which can be found at http://www.westerntransportationinstitute.org/professionaldevelopment/national-winter-maintenance-peer-exchange.

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**Bridge Technical Working Group**

Jeff Milton is the new chair for the Bridge TWG. He replaced Pet Weykamp who retired earlier this year. Welcome aboard Jeff.

FHWA in collaboration with subject matter experts representatives from FHWA, AASHTO and industry have produced three self-paced web-based training modules for construction and maintenance personnel. Each module is 90 minutes long, this training is in the process of being posted on the SSPC website and will be offered free to everyone. The three modules are: 1) Safety during preservation projects, 2) Coating and Painting Bridge Superstructures, and 3) Sealing and Waterproofing Bridge Decks.

The AASHTO, TSP.2 is hosting a national bridge preservation conference on April 21 – 25, 2014 in Orlando, Fl. The objectives of the conference are: to share best practices; introduce new materials, equipment, technologies, and research; conduct interactive workshops; discuss performance measures for risk-based asset management; and conduct live demonstrations of bridge preservation products and methods.

The Bridge Technical Working Group (BTWG) of the AASHTO Subcommittee on Maintenance (SCOM) had very productive break-out sessions during the 2013 SCOM meeting in Burlington, Vermont.

The new leadership team for the Bridge Technical Working Group is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. L. Milton</td>
<td>Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Preservation Specialist</td>
<td>Structure and Bridge Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Department of Transportation</td>
<td>Phone: (434) 856-8278 Cell: (434) 841-1463 e-mail: <a href="mailto:Jeffrey.Milton@VDOT.Virginia.gov">Jeffrey.Milton@VDOT.Virginia.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David R. Miller</td>
<td>Vice Chair for Performance Measures and Environment</td>
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The following research problem statements were presented during the business meeting:

- Quantifying the Environmental Benefits of Bridge Preservation Treatments
- Maintenance Actions for Fatigue Cracking in Steel Bridge Structures
- Detection and Remediation of Total Soluble Salt Contamination Prior to Coating Structural Steel

These research problem statements have been submitted to NCHRP.

A joint resolution with the Pavement Technical Working Group was presented to formalize the organizational relationship between the TSP2 Regional Preservation Partnerships and SCOM. This resolution was passed by the Committee.

The 2014 work plan for the Bridge Technical Working Group also includes the following actions:

- **Focus Area - Workforce Development**
  - Continue working with TSP.2, ETG, and industry on collection of maintenance training material and make available for practitioners
  - Support the FHWA proposed Peer exchange idea for bridge maintenance

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The Maintenance Manager 3
- Support the planning efforts for the TSP.2 2014 national bridge preservation conference
- Serve as a liaison and facilitator between the TSP.2 regional partnerships and AASHTO Leaderships
- Continue working with TSP.2, ETG, and industry on collection of acceptance and use of materials and products

- **Focus Area - Performance Measures**
  - Provide comments on the FHWA NPRM for performance measures on bridges and for asset management.
  - Collaborate with FHWA ETG, and other stakeholders on defining “State of Good Repairs” as it applies to the bridge assets.

- **Focus Area – Environment**
  - Modify and resubmit the RNS on quantifying the environmental benefits of bridge preservation treatments.
  - Review and provide comments on Phase II of research project “current practices, benefits of environmental requirements for bridge cleaning and washing”

- **Focus Area – Research**
  - Submit research problem statement described above
  - Implementation recommendations for NCHRP 14-24, Report 742 “Communicating the value of preservation”
    - Working with FHWA to add a training module to the NHI bridge preservation Course
    - Planning to conduct a workshop during the national bridge preservation conference
    - Recommend that SCOM work with PI to host webinars
    - Recommend that copies of the report “playbook” be provided to state DOTs managers such as public affairs, maintenance and operations, and other groups

The Chair of the Bridge Technical Working Group has provided endorsements for the following national initiatives:
- Proposed CY 2014 Domestic Scan Program titled Bridge Recoating Best Practices
- Proposal to elevate the TRB Bridge Preservation joint subcommittee to standing committee status

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### Pavements Technical Working Group

**Pavements Technical Working Group Report, 10/18/13**
Eric Pitts, Georgia DOT, State Maintenance Engineer

It seems like just yesterday that we were all together in beautiful Burlington, Vermont for the annual SCOM meeting – but the fall weather has clearly arrived, and snow has already fallen in many northern states, and much has happened in the pavement maintenance community since we were together.

The summer meeting was well attended, and the participation level was high. One of the activities we organized in the PTWG meeting was to give every attendee three sticky notes on which to write their top three challenges in pavement maintenance. Not surprisingly, funding – or more precisely a lack of funding – was the top issue. As a result, the PTWG prepared a domestic scan proposal designed to help identify best practices that State DOTs could implement to help secure adequate funding for pavement maintenance. We will let you know if our proposal was accepted in an upcoming edition of the Maintenance Manager. Please feel free to contact me if you would like a copy of the proposal.

Also at the summer meeting, the PTWG discussed the recent USDOT/USDOJ agreement concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act. As a result of that discussion, a resolution was created to express our several concerns with the agreement and the process was used in the agreement’s development. The SCOM leadership directed the final wording of the resolution, and at this writing it was passed by the by the AASHTO Standing Committee on Highways.

We’ll find out in the near future if the resolution was adopted by AASHTO during their annual meeting in Denver.

The AASHTO 20-07 Task 339 research on “Best Practices in Crack Sealing and Crack Filling” has progressed well, and the report is currently being written. Thanks to all of you who responded to the survey that was sent out by Mr. Dale Decker, the Principal Investigator on this project. The expectation is that the report will identify best practices that can be used by the entire pavement maintenance community to better preserve our pavement assets. Crack sealing and crack filling are viable pavement preservation technologies used by nearly every agency, but the programs, materials, specifications, staffing, and training to do projects that will extend pavement life in a cost-effective manner are widely variable. We look forward to seeing this report about the time that TRB meets in January.

I’m very happy to be able to inform you that Michigan State University has recently received a Federal grant to become the Tier 1 University Transportation Center (UTC) for Highway Pavement Preservation, along with 5 listed subgrantees: North Carolina A&T State University; University of Hawaii; University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; University of Minnesota; and University of Texas, Austin. This is a $1.4 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA). The grant program was authorized by Congress in the MAP-21 legislation, and The UTCs conduct research that directly supports the priorities of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to promote the...
safe, efficient and environmentally sound movement of good and people. Pavement Preservation is a perfect fit for this program. Congratulations to all who were involved in securing this grant!

Finally, I want to remind you that it is incredibly important that the States continue to support the Transportation System Preservation Technical Services Program (also known as the TSP2 program.) This is one of a number of voluntary contributions that the AASHTO solicits annually from the States, and it has been a key in the advancement and adoption of both pavement preservation and bridge preservation concepts by the majority of our members. The work is not done, but the needs to take good care of our existing transportation infrastructure assets are only increasing with time. I’m not telling you anything that you don’t already know, but I am asking you to continue to support this vital program that provides direct benefits to our members! Please don’t forget to include TSP2 when you receive your AASHTO contribution billing statements! My goal would be 100% participation from our members, so we are still missing a few of you since we are closer to 80% at last count.

Roadway/Roadsides Technical Working Group

Research problem statements were written by RRTWG leadership and two were funded as NCHRP 20-7 projects. “Reducing Risks to Worker Safety in Work Zones Due to Distracted Drivers” seeks to identify best practices by DOTs and contractors to alert drivers in advance of work zones to improve safety. “Determination of the Best Practices for Collecting, Processing and Managing Roadway Asset Inventory Data” focuses on assessing the methods and technologies DOTs use for asset data and recommending the most successful practices. The problem statements can be viewed at [http://web.transportation.org/nchrp/20-7/Listing.aspx](http://web.transportation.org/nchrp/20-7/Listing.aspx). A third proposal, “Determine the Consequences of Deferred Maintenance and the Optimal Maintenance Frequency of Highway Assets Other Than Pavements and Bridges” will be voted on in March 2014.

The Southeast Regional Maintenance Conference will be held November 20-21 in Biloxi, Mississippi. Register at [https://www.regonline.com/SRMC](https://www.regonline.com/SRMC).

The RRTWG invites you to submit topics of interest for an upcoming webinar early in 2014. The webinar will feature presentations by highway maintenance professionals, focusing on roadway and roadside maintenance. We are interested in any ideas you have for the webinar as well as topics you may want to present. Contact TWG Chair Mike Mattison - mike.mattison@nebraska.gov.

ACPA, ISSA, and SSPC Web-based Training Opportunities

Dear State Maintenance Professionals

Please find a list of some recently developed construction focused web-based training. The training is as follows:

**American Concrete Pavement Association (ACPA)**
- Safety on concrete pavement construction sites
- Proper use of stringless paving technology
  **Coupon Code:** Pavement 1

**International Slurry Surfacing Association (ISSA)**
- How to construct high quality slurry seal and micro-surfacing treatments, Part 1
- How to construct high quality slurry seal and micro-surfacing treatments, Part 2
- How to construct high quality chip seal treatments

**The Society for Protective Coatings**
- Safety During Bridge Preservation
- Coating and Painting Bridge Superstructures
- Sealing and Waterproofing Bridge Decks

Maintenance Leadership Academy: Training Today’s Highway Maintenance Managers

Advance your skills as a highway maintenance manager or supervisor with the new Maintenance Leadership Academy available from the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) National Highway Institute (NHI). Designed to be an intensive program for State, district, and county maintenance managers and supervisors, the Academy can assist agencies in shortening the time needed to train new managers, as well as provide career development for more experienced staff. The training highlights both the changes in highway maintenance that have occurred over the past 20 years and the new technologies that will transform future
maintenance practices. Participants will study personnel management, materials selection, equipment use, budgeting, and maintenance planning.

Featured topics include:

- Use of maintenance administration to achieve highway agency goals.
- How pavement and bridge preservation treatments fit into an overall system preservation program and the optimal timing for treatments.
- Drainage maintenance and roadside management techniques.
- A maintenance manager's roles and responsibilities for developing, implementing, and managing a comprehensive plan to address weather-related events.
- Maintenance and use of traffic control devices, including work zone plans, work zone traffic control devices, signs, striping, guardrails, and median barriers.
- How environmental protection issues, regulations, and control measures affect highway maintenance activities.

Following an initial session in Texas, the Academy was held in fall 2012 in Tennessee. "It was a very good learning experience," said participant Ritchie Swindell of the Georgia Department of Transportation. "The information on pavement preservation was particularly helpful, as we are concentrating more on system preservation now. I brought the information from the pavement preservation module back and shared it with colleagues."

"The training was outstanding," said Tony Thompson of the South Carolina Department of Transportation. "As my previous experience was in construction, every aspect of it was useful for me. I think everyone appreciated the opportunity to meet participants from various States and talk about the ways we handle different situations. I would absolutely recommend it to others."

The Academy's 8-week schedule combines 12 days of classroom training with 32.5 hours of independent study and two 1-hour Web conferences, minimizing the time participants need to be away from their jobs. Participants should have previously completed "Pavement Preservation Treatment Construction" (Course No. FHWA-NHI-131110), or had equivalent training or experience in this content area. Agencies can host a session in their State or work with NHI to plan a regional session. The cost is $2,000 per participant, with a minimum class size of 20 and a maximum of 30.

The last session began in Phoenix, Arizona, in September 2013. For more information on the Maintenance Leadership Academy (Course No. FHWA-NHI-134063), visit www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov and select "Search for a Course." Information is also available by contacting Marty Ross at NHI, 720-963-3212 (email: marty.ross@dot.gov).

### Federal Funds for In-House Work Survey

In late 2012 a Federal Funds for In-House Work Survey was completed by Todd Shields, Manager for the Office of System Assessment for the Indiana Department of Transportation to the SCOH Maintenance Listserv.

Questions included: Are you utilizing federal funds for preventive maintenance work done with in-house forces? If so, what is the mechanism? Did you do a public interest finding? How do you document/bill FHWA for reimbursement?

FHWA will participate in PM type activities done by contract. Such activities include crack sealing, chip sealing, pipe lining, resigning and restripping.

Of the 30 states that replied only 5 responded that they use federal funds for in-house work; Indiana, Montana, Alaska, Maine, and New Jersey.

Indiana: Indiana does a significant amount of this type work with in-house maintenance forces. We have traditionally paid for this with our 100% state funded maintenance budget. We’re now looking for ways to “stretch” our maintenance (and state) funds.

Montana: Did chip and crack seals in the past and was reimbursed for materials only. Did Public Interest Finding and used MMS to document. It was more of a hassle than it was worth. Currently buy waterborne paint/breads with federal funds via a PIF.

Alaska: Getting more details

Maine: Only for paint operations; will get more info. Bought "back end" equipment for paint truck (not whole truck). Did a striping contract, but cost was 160% of in-house cost, so FHWA Maine Division Office allowed that as PIF; wrote letter to feds also.

New Jersey: Bill FHWA for crack sealing with in-house forces. Use MMS to document costs. No PIF - bid a contract but was 3x estimate, so met with FHWA and agreed it was better to do in-house. Each year send FHWA a project-specific packet of which roads will get sealed.

The remaining 25 States noted that they do not use Federal Funds for PM type activities done with in-house forces. Comments received included: PM contracts only; Very little PM done with in-house forces; Only ER funds. Did do some traffic safety in the past, did public interest finding; Did investigate the option, but maintenance division did not
From the Editor’s Desk:
SCOM Assistant Secretary
John Perry, FHWA Idaho, Field Operations Engineer
Email: john.perry@dot.gov; Phone: 208-334-9180x116

As the new Assistant Secretary for SCOM I have appreciated getting the opportunity to meet and work with several of you at the summer meeting in Burlington, VT and look forward to continuing to work with you over the next several years.

FHWA Increases its Focus on Preservation and Asset Management
The Federal Highway Administration has created a research position to focus on infrastructure preservation and asset management. Mr. Morgan Kessler has joined FHWA as the new Infrastructure Preservation and Asset Management Research Engineer and is located at FHWA’s Turner-Fairbank Research Center in McLean, VA. Morgan has worked for several local public agencies in California and Arizona, most recently as Deputy Public Works Director for the City of Arcata in rural coastal northern California. He holds bachelor and master degrees from Humboldt State University, and is a registered professional engineer in the State of California. Having twelve years of direct and practical experience, Morgan looks forward to heading up the research aspects of asset management and infrastructure preservation at FHWA and collaborating extensively with internal and external partners, including AASHTO’s Subcommittee on Maintenance. His contact information is Morgan.Kessler@dot.gov and 202-493-3187.

AASHTO Strategic Plan Update
Carlos noted that the last AASHTO Strategic Plan was completed in 2008 and they are beginning to develop a new one. Cambridge Systematics is on board to assist with the development of the next update. Input is expected from individuals who work with States, committees and subcommittees. Questions could include: Where do we need AASHTO to go in the future? How can you do your job better at your State? What does this mean to us? Do we need to update the Subcommittees direction? What changes should be made in reshaping the strategic plan? The goal is to have approval of AASHTO’s Strategic Plan update by May 2014. Then SCOH will look at its Strategic Plan update by fall of 2014. Then SCOM may look at its Strategic Plan update by summer of 2015.

Two Distinguished Transportation Professionals Join AASHTO Leadership Team
American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Executive Director Bud Wright has announced the addition of two distinguished transportation leaders to the organization's management team. "We are fortunate to add the experience of two well respected transportation leaders to AASHTO," said Wright during the association’s Annual Meeting of its Board of Directors this week in Denver, Colo.

Jim Tymon, a Senior Capitol Hill staffer who has played an integral role in drafting and implementing the last three transportation bills, has been named AASHTO's Director of Program Finance and Management. Tymon currently serves as Senior Advisor to House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Penn) and as majority Staff Director of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee.

King Gee, a nationally recognized leader in the development and deployment of transportation technology and innovations and the management of transportation engineering issues, has been named AASHTO’s Director of Engineering and Technical Services. Gee leaves CDM Smith, where he held the position of Surface Transportation Performance Market Leader. From 2001 to 2011, Gee served as Associate Administrator for Infrastructure at the Federal Highway Administration.


**Summer meeting information**

West Virginia Department of Transportation - Maintenance Division

The Maintenance Division establishes maintenance policies and standards for highway facilities. The Division monitors maintenance operations to insure statewide uniformity. The Division establishes long range maintenance goals and recommends allocation levels for accomplishment of these goals.

The Division also provides a liaison between field maintenance organizations and central office organizations, coordinates intra-district maintenance operations, provides assistance to field maintenance organizations during emergencies, and coordinates building and grounds activities statewide.

Director
W. Kyle Stollings
Building Five, Room 350
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston WV, 25305-0430

The leadership team will begin coordination in November 2013. The final date for the SCOM Conference has been scheduled for July 25-31, 2014 in Charleston, WV. The DOT is trying to select a hotel at this point. Coordination efforts will begin around the beginning of the year.

No web site for the SCOM Conference is available at this time.