

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Iowa PWSB to launch Salary Survey Reports
- 2 From the Director: Give something away
- 3 Tips to stay safe in the summer heat
- 4 In brief: Lasting LTAP impacts
- 5 CP Tech Center study offers insights into fiber-reinforced concrete overlays
- 6 MnDOT study assesses No Right Turn on Red sign types
- 7 Workshop and conference calendar
- 7 Save the date: Iowa Streets and Roads Workshop and Conference

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Transportation

Iowa PWSB to launch Salary Survey Reports

CITIES ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT SALARY DATA STARTING WITH FY 2026

In just four years, the Iowa Public Works Service Bureau (Iowa PWSB) has been fulfilling its mission of connecting cities and providing their staff resources in part through offering to its 760 members a variety of reports: financial, street, bridge condition, bid tabulation, and Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), among other pieces of valuable information.



PWSB
Public Works Service Bureau

In order to offer its members even more, Iowa PWSB staff has been collecting salary data from cities since March in order to provide Salary Survey Reports on its website. The Iowa PWSB is encouraging cities of all sizes to submit their salary data starting with fiscal year 2026 to help generate the data for the reports.

“If you’ve ever wondered what other cities are paying their public works employees but don’t have the budget for an expensive compensation study, the Iowa PWSB wants to help you,” said Iowa PWSB Program Specialist Beth Richards. “But first we need your data!”

Cities interested in submitting their salary data must specify whether they’ve got a population under or over 10,000 and then provide some basic contact information before entering either salaried or hourly data by position and the pay range. Information can be submitted via an online form or Excel file.

Cities’ employees must be Iowa PWSB members and logged in to submit their data; however, joining is free, and allows city staff to access all of the Iowa PWSB’s resources.

Once enough data have been collected to put together and share the Salary Survey Reports on the Iowa PWSB website, cities will still be encouraged to submit their information to make the reports more robust.

“These reports will provide cities comprehensive data on local compensation trends across various categories and job roles. They’ll provide valuable insights for businesses and professionals to assess competitive pay structures and make informed decisions,” Richards said.

The Iowa PWSB reports currently available are also updated regularly. The Street Reports were updated last fall, the Financial Reports were updated in March, and the Bridge Condition Report will soon be updated. Also, the Bid Tabulation Report currently contains over 600 bids and more are constantly being added.

More information about the Iowa PWSB and some of its resources, such as the job board and training opportunities, are available to non-members at <https://www.iowapwsb.org/>; however, to fully experience the website and all the service bureau offers, consider becoming a member and joining for free today. ■

From the Director: Give something away



A couple of days ago, I was given something precious. This item wasn't something physical, at least with regard to how most people would define that word. I could not touch it, but I definitely could hold it, and I could feel it. How is this possible, you might ask? Well, it came in the form of a meaningful teaching. I believe we are surrounded by teachers, and they don't always come to us dressed in accoutrements. In fact, some may even have fur!!!

Lucky for us, teachings, great or small, when they are meaningful within the context of our lives, can be absorbed, felt, and held. These teachings can come out of nowhere, and at other times they are more formal in nature. In some cases, they are things we already really know, in our hearts, but we have forgotten. This forgetting is something that happens for me over and over again as all my efforts of productivity carry me away from some of the bigger truths of life. During the best of times, a meaningful teaching brings me back quickly, and I adjust my actions. During the worst of times, it can take a week or a month, and many reminders, to crawl out of it. I have found, however, that my level of forgetfulness often coincides with the level of busy-ness in my life and the subsequent shrinking of my world into the small sphere of "getting things done." Eventually, with any luck and acceptance, the truth sinks in again. I can only hope that they are with me well before I'm directly confronted with the trials and tests of being separated from everything I know. There is no avoiding that.

Okay, so that's a lot of words to get to the teaching that I was provided recently and how I interpret it at this moment in time. The teaching, while simple, was also profound. It was simply that we should give something away if we are feeling out of sorts. The example they used was feeling sad during the grieving process, but for me this teaching works for a lot of emotions or experiences. And, like I mentioned above, although it may be the first thought that comes to mind, the "thing" given away doesn't always mean something physical (e.g., money). Some of the most precious items we can give away, in my opinion, are things like gratitude, attention, kindness, and more generally, our time. These are things that can't be replaced and are unique to the situation.

In fact, I've personally found that when I do these types of things I always feel like I've received more than I have given. Some of the smallest kind actions can have the most dramatic impact. These types of activities also help me feel less connected to the "goodie bag" and more connected to the good that surrounds us. The great thing, too, is that we can do them at any time.

Summer is construction season for many of our customers and so it is a slower time at Iowa LTAP. But, we do have a few activities happening. For example, the Iowa County Engineers Association (ICEA) Mid-Year Conference and affiliate meeting at the Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) Annual Conference are in July and August, respectively. Our field days for motor grader operation at Camp Dodge is also this summer. We are concurrently busy planning for fall and winter events including the Streets and Roads Workshop and Conference, ICEA Annual Conference, safety series, excavation safety, winter maintenance, work zone safety series, and the fall monthly webinars. These are just some of the things we are doing, and we look forward to seeing you at them.

Have a great summer,
Keith ■

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith".



2024 motor grader operator hands-on field session

Tips to stay safe in the summer heat

As temperatures and humidity levels rise with the arrival of summer, workers exposed to the elements are at risk of heat-related illnesses.

A heat-related illness occurs when there is an increase in the worker's core body temperature above healthy levels. There are a variety of heat-related illnesses that include heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, heat syncope, and heat rash.

While these illnesses can be a matter of life and death, they are preventable.

The Iowa LTAP has a number of resources available to managers and workers alike to prepare for and prevent heat-related illnesses.

Through its Worker Safety Training Resources for Public Agencies web page, available under the Resources dropdown menu on the Iowa LTAP home page, the Iowa LTAP has collected a several tools for agencies to conduct heat illness safety training.

These include several Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other similar resources, such as details about OSHA's "water, rest, shade" campaign and a video that covers preparing to work in hot environments and how to treat heat-related illnesses.

While OSHA does not have a specific standard that covers working in hot environments, employers have a duty to protect workers from recognized serious hazards in the workplace that includes heat-related hazards.

To access this and other safety resources, visit <https://iowaltap.iastate.edu/safety-resources-main-face/>. The Iowa LTAP asks that you provide basic information initially during login to use these resources, in an effort to track who is using the materials, but the trainings are offered free of charge.

The Heat Illness Safety Training available through the Iowa LTAP website is just one of nearly two dozen safety training topics curated to specifically assist local public works and county secondary roads departments with their safety training for employees. Each training can be made applicable for your particular agency and its unique needs.

Additional details about how to use the safety resources pages are available in the October–December 2020 Technology News available at <https://iowaltap.iastate.edu/technology-news-new/>. For other questions or more specific information about the Worker Safety Training Resources, contact Paul Albritton. ■



In addition to the Worker Safety Training Resources, Iowa LTAP has available three heat-related Tailgate Talks from the National LTAP, also accessible through Iowa LTAP's Resources dropdown menu, or to access directly, visit <https://nltpa.org/information-exchange/nltpa-tailgate-talks/>. ■

In brief: Lasting LTAP impacts

In May, the classroom sessions for the 2025 Motor Grader Operator (MoGO) Workshops were held at five locations across Iowa: Oelwein, Webster City, Ainsworth, Storm Lake, and Atlantic.

“We had 192 participants registered for 2025, compared to our four-year average of 213,” said Paul Albritton, Iowa LTAP Technical Training Coordinator.

The sessions focused on instruction and presentations—including several roundtable discussions new for 2025, primarily focusing on blading techniques for different tasks, roadway/roadside cross section elements, safety, and equipment. Because participants were from cities and counties across the state, their unique experiences promoted an exchange of ideas and techniques that made the workshop even more successful.

“I would like to thank everyone who participated for their hard work. The 2025 workshops were a great success, and that’s a direct reflection of everyone’s efforts and professionalism,” added Albritton.

Additionally, for newer operators that attended a classroom session in 2025, an optional, hands-on field session will run from August 11–15 at Camp Dodge, the Iowa National Guard base located in Johnston. This session offers participants the opportunity to work one-on-one with an instructor.

Additionally, an optional, hands-on field session will run from August 11–15 at Camp Dodge, the Iowa National Guard base located in Johnston, offering participants the opportunity to work one-on-one with an instructor.

“[It’s] a great place for young operators to learn new techniques and skills,” said Kary Obman, one of the instructors from the 2024 hands-on session.

Taking place on Camp Dodge’s closed gravel roads, the field training will focus on helping participants learn the basic operation of a grader. This includes demonstrations on moldboard pitch, blade angle, articulation, adjustments required for proper roadway crown, shoulder work, aggressive blading techniques, as well the importance of pre-trip inspections.

From post-workshop classroom evaluations, it was found that 48% of 2025 MOGO Workshop participants have had less than one year of grader experience.

For questions regarding the MoGO Workshop series, please contact Paul Albritton at 515-294-1231/palbritt@iastate.edu. Don’t forget to continue sharing your impact stories with us!

Article written by Brandy Haenlein, a communication specialist with InTrans. ■



CP Tech Center study offers insights into fiber-reinforced concrete overlays

RESEARCH SUGGESTS MACROFIBERS REDUCE CRACKING, SUPPORT EXTENDED JOINT SPACING

Iowa leads the nation in the construction of concrete overlays, with more than 2,000 centerline miles constructed since record-keeping began in the 1970s. Recently, new overlay projects have more often been constructed using fiber-reinforced concrete (FRC).

FRC, where synthetic macrofibers are mixed into fresh concrete and embedded throughout the concrete mass, is more commonly used on thin overlays to improve performance by resisting crack opening and providing additional residual strength.

However, until the National Concrete Pavement Technology Center (CP Tech Center) recently concluded research into the subject, the full scope of the characteristics and behavior of FRC overlays had not been fully understood.

“The impacts of FRC on crack opening and fatigue life are well understood, but a number of other proposed benefits of using fibers in concrete overlays have not been studied as thoroughly,” said CP Tech Center Director Peter Taylor, who was the principal investigator (PI) on the project.

The research included conducting tests on 37 unique overlay sections with variables consisting of overlay type, overlay thickness, transverse joint spacing, fiber dosage rate, and geotextile use, which provided a number of key insights into concrete overlay behavior, which could impact their future design and construction.

“The findings and recommendations of this study can be immediately useful to state and local agencies in Iowa looking to improve and optimize the design of concrete overlays, both with and without fiber reinforcement,” said CP Tech Center Research Engineer Dan King, a co-PI on the project.

Highlights from the findings include the following:

- Fiber-reinforced sections had fewer cracked slabs than sections without fiber reinforcement.
- The use of fibers appeared to prevent mid-slab transverse cracking in overlays with extended joint spacing designs, whereas that type of cracking occurred in nearly all slabs in the corresponding sections without fibers.
- The use of fibers did not appear to demonstrate improvements in terms of joint load transfer efficiency, pavement smoothness, or curling/warping behavior.
- Joint activation rates were 100% for nearly every section with a joint spacing of 9 ft or greater, while no sections with a joint spacing of 6 ft or less achieved 100% joint activation. However, the presence of unactivated joints did not predict any negative performance outcomes.
- Concrete on asphalt (COA) overlays, both with and without fibers, appeared to benefit significantly from bond to the underlying asphalt pavement in terms of structural capacity and load transfer efficiency, even when they were not designed as bonded overlays.

“The results of this study should help agencies in the evaluation of their existing concrete overlays, providing insight into the relative performance of different types of overlay designs in their network and suggesting adjustments that could be made to typical existing designs,” King said.

For more findings and recommendations, visit the [research project page](#). For more on the CP Tech Center’s extensive research into concrete overlays as well as to view webinars on FRC overlays, visit the center’s [Concrete Overlays](#) page. ■



Fiber-reinforced concrete overlay in Buchanan County

MnDOT study assesses No Right Turn on Red sign types

INTRANS RESEARCHERS' PROJECT PROVIDES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USE

Across the US, few studies exist on the effectiveness of dynamic No Right Turn on Red (NRTOR) signs, that is NRTOR signs that can be activated by time of day or by pedestrians to prohibit drivers from turning on a red light.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) was interested in adding to the literature by studying the difference between dynamic and static NRTOR signs in terms of driver compliance and operational and maintenance needs, as well as adopting strategies to optimize the use of the dynamic sign type.

The recently concluded MnDOT research project, led by Institute for Transportation (InTrans) Research Scientist Chris Day—an expert in traffic signal operation—provides recommendations for adoption of dynamic NRTOR signs and guidance on which sign type may be preferred at a given intersection.

“This study is, to my knowledge, the first to examine NRTOR compliance rates at intersections where the dynamic NRTOR treatment has been in use for a long time,” Day said. “In addition to driver compliance, the study also examined maintenance requirements for dynamic NRTOR.”

The Iowa Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS) Design Manual provides general guidance on circumstances when local agencies may prefer to use either a static or dynamic NRTOR sign. However, the findings from this study may offer more specific recommendations for local agencies to select the preferred type at various intersections in Iowa as well.

The study, which included a review of 4,500 hours of video from intersections with dynamic or static NRTOR signs in Minnesota, found more driver compliance with the static signs. However, anecdotal observations suggested drivers obeyed the dynamic signs when a pedestrian was present but turned once the path was clear even if the sign was still activated, suggesting that the dynamic NRTOR signs appeared to alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians compared to intersections without any sign.

“One advantage of using dynamic NRTOR signs is that the conditional display of the sign means that it is not necessary to prohibit the movement when there are no pedestrians present,” Day said. “This improves intersection efficiency by allowing right-turning traffic to proceed when there is a gap in cross street traffic while still drawing some attention to pedestrians.”

Recommendations in the final report offer sign type guidance based on an agency's ultimate objective, whether it aims to improve NRTOR compliance, increase pedestrian safety, or create gaps on the crossing street. The report also provides guidance on improving the efficacy of dynamic NRTOR signs.

In addition to a literature review and the video assessment, InTrans researchers also conducted a survey of transportation agency staff across the US that found that the maintenance requirements for dynamic NRTOR signs do not appear to be burdensome.

“From a maintenance perspective, the static sign is the easier option, yet dynamic NRTOR signs do not seem to be especially problematic to install or operate according to the results of the practitioner survey,” Day said.

Additional findings and recommendations from the final report and research summary are available on the [InTrans project page](#). ■



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—CHRIS DAY, PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR ON THE NRTOR PROJECT

Workshop and conference calendar

[Information current as of June 30, 2025] Iowa LTAP will continue holding both virtual and in-person events and trainings throughout the summer.

For the most up-to-date information about in-person attendance requirements and additional upcoming virtual events, please check regularly at LTAP's [Upcoming Events page](#) and consider subscribing to our mail list through LTAP's [home page](#) for email updates.

2025	Event Name	Location	Contact
July			
10	ICEA Mid-Year	Ames	Keith Knapp
August			
19–22	ICEA Affiliate Meeting at ISAC Annual Conference	Des Moines	Keith Knapp
September			
9–11	Iowa Streets and Roads Workshop and Conference	Des Moines	Keith Knapp
24–25	MINK Conference	St. Joseph, MO	David Veneziano

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David Veneziano, 515-294-5480, dvenez@iastate.edu

EVENT DETAILS AND ONLINE REGISTRATION

Watch for details and online registration information, by specific dates and events, on the [Iowa LTAP Workshops page](#). ■

Save the date: Iowa Streets and Roads Workshop and Conference

The Iowa Streets and Roads Workshop and Conference will be held from Tuesday, September 9 to Thursday, September 11 at the Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport. Registration for the event is expected to open in July.

Additional details about the event that allows city and county maintenance staff to come together, share ideas, and gain insights from presenters is available on the [workshop and conference page](#), and a registration link will be provided on the page once open for both vendors and attendees.

This year's workshop will be held on September 9, and the conference will be on September 10 and 11. Attendance to either the workshop or the conference is not necessary to participate in the other.

In 2024, the event was held outside of Ames for the first time, as attendance grew beyond the long-time venue. The new location proved to be a success, and so the event will remain at the same Des Moines venue this year.

The additional space saw attendance grow even further—a nearly 25% increase at the workshop and a nearly 7% increase at the conference. In addition to the added space for attendees, vendors had more opportunities to showcase their wares.

“We really enjoyed the new location. The extra space allowed for interior display of equipment, which generated more conversations,” read one vendor evaluation after the 2024 event.

The change was also hailed by workshop and conference attendees, with one noting, “New location is FANTASTIC!!”

In addition to the chance to continue to grow the event over the years, the change of venue also offers more opportunities for tour sites.

“Everyone enjoyed the change to a new location, and with more space we can reach more participants to come and learn at our conference,” said Sherrie LaFleur, LTAP’s research and event administrator. ■



Attendees gathered for the keynote presentation at the 2024 Iowa Streets and Roads Workshop and Conference

ABOUT LTAP

The Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) is a national program of the FHWA. Iowa LTAP, which produces *Tech News*, is financed by the FHWA and the Iowa DOT and administered by the Institute for Transportation at Iowa State University.

The mission of Iowa LTAP is to foster a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound transportation system by improving skills and knowledge of local transportation providers through training, technical assistance, and technology transfer, thus improving the quality of life for Iowans.

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