



Celebrating NJDOT's 50th Anniversary

The year was 1966. "Bonanza" was the most popular show on television. "The Bible" was the top grossing film. Gasoline cost 32 cents per gallon. The average cost of a new car was about \$2,600. The country was just beginning a cultural upheaval that would last past the end of the decade and redefine American life. The year 1966 was also the year that the New Jersey Department of Transportation was born. And this year, 2016, the NJDOT celebrates its 50th Anniversary.

While this agency was created as the New Jersey Highway Department in 1920, it was almost a half-century later that it was merged with the State Bureau of Aeronautics and the newly-created Commuter Operating Agency (a precursor to NJ TRANSIT) to form the NJDOT. We were the very first state transportation agency to be

established in concert with the new U.S. Department of Transportation, which was created in October, 1966.

New Jersey has an undeniably rich transportation history that includes many "firsts." The first stagecoach service started here. The world's first steam ferry service started here. The first hot air balloon flight landed here.

And the first asphalt pavement in the nation was laid here. We are also the first state in the nation to officially recognize and take responsibility for roadway improvements.

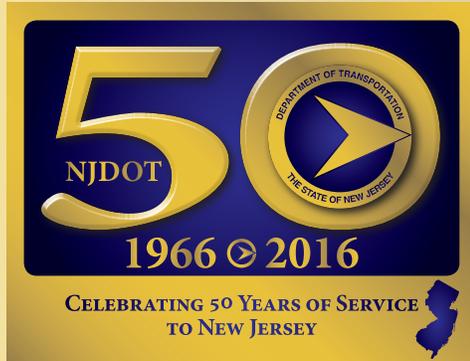
We also have been in the forefront of innovative highway design efforts including the construction of the first three-lane highway, the first traffic circle and the nation's first cloverleaf interchange. Our engineers were also responsible for developing the ubiquitous concrete safety

barricade that is universally known as "Jersey Barrier."

I am very excited that in conjunction with our 50th Anniversary we are re-launching the *Transporter* after a three-year hiatus. Originally named the *Newsletter*, the first issue of the *Transporter* was produced in 1967. Issues dating back to this first one are posted on our intranet site. While the *Transporter* provides a nostalgic glimpse into the past about life here at the NJDOT, it also serves as an historical journal of sorts. Our legacy is inscribed in its pages, and I could not be more pleased that we are bringing back this institution.

As we celebrate our Golden Anniversary I want to thank the NJDOT's current and former employees—to whom the *Transporter* has traditionally been dedicated—for all their hard work and devotion.

Rick



To see photos from the 50th Anniversary picnic click [here](#).



Hammer

A Walk Down Memory Lane with Acting Commissioner Rick Hammer

The New Jersey Department of Transportation has been a place where people could get a job, grow professionally, and build a long and successful career. Through our first 50 years, we have had several employees who

have served for more than 40 years, including five who have been with the department for more than 45 years. Sadly, one of our longest serving employees, **James Cerchio**, who had been at NJDOT for 47 years, passed

away recently. Our thoughts and prayers go to his family, friends, and coworkers.

One of those longtime employees is Acting Commissioner **Richard T. Hammer**. Although he has only been with the Department

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A Walk Down Memory Lane Continued from front page

for 34 years, the *Transporter* thought it would be interesting to learn about some of Rick's experiences since he began his career at NJDOT in 1982.

Q: When did you start at the Department, what was your position, and who was the Commissioner?

A. I started at the NJDOT 34 years ago in June 1982 as an inspector in the Bridge Inspection Unit with the title of Provisional Civil Engineer Trainee. Commissioner

Anne Canby, the NJDOT's first female commissioner, resigned in March of that year and the late **John Sheridan** had just come onboard as Commissioner following his appointment by Governor **Tom Kean**.

Q: What was your first project?

A. As a bridge inspector, my first assignment was to inspect bridges on the newly built section of the Route 18 freeway in Monmouth County. It was my first real "hands-on" job here at the Department. Later, as a Project Manager, I was handed a group of about 20 projects to oversee. The first one of that batch to go out to construction was a job that I worked on with in-house design to correct an "S" curve on Rt. 73 in Camden County. I remember how rewarding that felt to have my first job go out on the street.

Q: What have been the most significant changes at NJDOT?

A. Certainly there have been many changes to materials and methods of roadway and bridge



construction, but among the most significant here at NJDOT was when we reorganized back in 1995 to create a "cradle to grave" system of project management. We also have shifted our main focus from that of a system builder to a system maintainer. We have not built a major road or new alignment for about 20 years and with our aging infrastructure our primary role now is maintaining it.

Q: What is your top priority as Commissioner?

A. I want to keep the Department on track to meet infrastructure improvement and investment goals, which will depend a great deal upon the reauthorization of the Transportation Trust Fund. It's crucial that we continue to reduce the backlog of structurally deficient bridges and improve the riding surface of our pavement. I also want to

continue to make the NJDOT a challenging and rewarding place to work.

Q: What would you tell someone just starting their career at the Department?

A. There is no better state agency to begin your career than here at NJDOT. There are many opportunities to develop professionally and in areas that one might never have previously considered. I

believe the NJDOT is the best agency in State government.

TRANSPORTER

E-News



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Employees and Retirees

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Chris Christie

Lt. Governor
Kim Guadagno

Acting Commissioner
Richard T. Hammer

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New Jersey Department of Transportation celebrates 50th Anniversary

By *Debbi Hutton and Glenn Catana*

The year 2016 marks the 50th anniversary of the New Jersey Department of Transportation! Originally established as the New Jersey State Highway Department (NJSHD), the New Jersey Legislature passed the Transportation Act in 1966 that created the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT). The Transportation Act combined the NJSHD and the Bureau of Aeronautics (transferred from the Department of Conservation and Economic Development) and established the Commuter Operating Agency (COA) to provide commuter rail services. NJDOT would be a multimodal agency by integrating various modes of transportation.

We were the first such State transportation agency to be established in concert with the creation of the U.S. Department of Transportation in October 1966. **David J. Goldberg** was named the first NJDOT Commissioner. There have been 25 commissioners to lead the Department through these past 50 years.

New Jersey transportation history

During the early colonial era, New Jersey was two separate provinces, divided into West Jersey and East Jersey. Several

Public Roads Acts were passed by the provincial assemblies in the late 1600's to build public roads and fund them with taxes. The first Public Roads Act was passed in 1673.

Roads Act of 1894, created the position of Commissioner of Public Roads separate from the Secretary of Agriculture. **Edward Burrough**, former president of the State Board of Agriculture became the first Commissioner.

Recognizing the need for a better road system, the Legislature took a significant step toward that goal with the creation of the State Highway Commission in 1909. Eight years later the Legislature created the State Highway Department, governed by the State Highway Commission's eight members, two of whom were required to be qualified and competent engineers.

Through the years, organizational changes were made and in 1935, highway management and administration was changed to a single State Highway Commissioner reporting directly to the Governor. From 1935 until today, a single Commissioner serves under the

Governor of New Jersey as administrative and executive head of the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

Milestones through the decades

NJDOT has had many milestones since its creation in 1966 including the first issue of the *Transporter* on August 4, 1967.

New Jersey Transportation Firsts

In addition to NJDOT becoming the first State transportation agency in the nation, New Jersey has had the honor of many transportation firsts:

- 1772: stagecoach service
- 1793: balloon flight in America, landed in Woodbury
- 1811: regular steam ferry service, Hoboken
- 1837: steam locomotive manufactured in America, Paterson
- 1848: cable manufactured for suspension bridges (Brooklyn Bridge, Golden Gate Bridge), Trenton
- 1870: asphalt pavement laid in America, Newark
- 1891: grant money dispersed to counties for road construction
- 1897: submarine constructed in America, Elizabeth
- 1900: submarine purchased by the United States Navy
- 1909: airplane manufacturing plant, Paterson
- 1919: aviation facility to be called an "airport" in the world, Bader Field, Atlantic City
- 1925: traffic circle in America constructed, Airport Circle, Pennsauken
- 1929: cloverleaf intersection in America constructed, Route 1&9 and Route 35, Woodbridge
- 1931: longest man-made steel arch bridge constructed in the world, Bayonne Bridge
- 1956: intermodal container service launched in the world, Newark
- 1959: scientifically-designed highway barrier used to separate opposing lanes of traffic and reduce head-on collisions, became known as "Jersey Barrier"
- 1969: breakaway sign developed

Nearly 200 years later, in 1891, the Legislature passed the State Road Aid Law establishing a \$75,000 fund to help the counties in the construction of highways making New Jersey the first state in the nation to advance toward better funded transportation. This law also designated the president of the State Board of Agriculture to be the administrator of roads. Three years later, the Public

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Jersey Barrier

Here are some highlights from the 1960s. More milestones from the 1970s to present day will be highlighted in future issues of the *Transporter*.

1967:

- Expansion of the Department by breaking ground for a new Finance and Administration Building
- Installation of milepost signs throughout the state highway system
- Implementation of a comprehensive maintenance management system
- Participation in the

development of a snowplowable raised reflective pavement marker

1968:

- Development of a new departmental emblem for identifying equipment and property of NJDOT
- Development of an optimum chemical premix for snow removal
- Commencement of Route 29 Freeway construction
- Operation of commuter trains on Penn Central track between Trenton and New York

1969:

- Introduction of the Load Concentrated Breakaway Coupling (LCBC) for large signs, a national first designed by NJDOT staffer **Richard A. Strizki**
- Installation of the first diagrammatic traffic signs at the I-287 and Route 22 interchange
- Announcement of the award of eight construction contracts totaling \$36.5 million, the largest dollar amount of contracts ever to be awarded at one time
- Creation of the federal National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 impacts NJDOT processes

The Department has had many changes in its 50 year history but its mission has basically remained the same - to provide reliable, environmentally and socially responsible transportation and motor vehicle networks and services to support and improve the safety and mobility of people and goods in New Jersey.

From the Editor

Welcome Back!

Welcome to the first issue of the relaunched *Transporter*! After a three-year hiatus we're bringing the *Transporter* back, in part to celebrate NJDOT's 50th anniversary. In researching our history for the celebration, the back issues of the *Transporter* proved invaluable in painting a picture of the department through the years – both in terms of the projects, but more importantly the people.

The *Transporter* was founded as an employee publication designed to publicize the work of the Department and our employees. In the early days, it featured items about engagements, weddings, promotions, retirements, and other notable employee accomplishments. Over the years, it evolved to include more information on projects and programs. Going forward we plan to include a mix of Department activities and achievements, as well as our projects and programs.

Nearly every issue of the *Transporter*, beginning with August 1967 through the fall of 2013, when it was last published, has been [archived](#) and available on NJDOT's intranet site thanks to the time and efforts of **Tom Lawrence**, **Debbi Hutton**, and **Glenn Catana**.

In this issue we feature a look back at New Jersey's early transportation accomplishments and the Department's first decade—the 1960s, get to know a little more about Acting Commissioner **Richard T. Hammer's** many years at NJDOT, and our new mentoring program helping to ensure we are continuing to foster our employees' development for years to come.

We plan to produce the *Transporter* quarterly. The fall and winter issues will continue the 50th anniversary celebration by looking back through NJDOT's accomplishments over various decades, as well as provide information about what is happening today at NJDOT. If you have news that you think would make a good story in a future issue please contact **Kevin Israel** at Kevin.Israel@dot.nj.gov.

The Gem of Route 72

It should come as no surprise that the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) is building something. That's what we do. Normally, our projects consist of roads or bridges, but one major project under construction also includes a very special, small structure.

The Route 72 Manahawkin Bay Bridges project is an enormous undertaking by the Department. Our team has constructed an all new span from Manahawkin to Long Beach Island and now they're rehabbing the old bridge. This \$350 million project began in 2013 and is expected to continue through 2020.

The new bridge is 2,400 feet long with a vertical clearance of 55 feet over Manahawkin Bay. Ultimately, it will function as the bridge for eastbound traffic once the project is completed.

While the new bridge might seem like the most impressive aspect of the project, there is a much smaller and equally impressive structure built for the celebrities of the bridge - Peregrine Falcons.



The powerful, fast flying Peregrine Falcon hunts medium-sized birds, often dropping down on their prey from high above. They were virtually eradicated from eastern North America by



(Photo Credit: Readings from the North Side, 11/11/2015)

pesticide poisoning in the middle 20th century. After significant recovery efforts, Peregrine Falcons have made an incredible rebound and are now regularly seen in many large cities and coastal areas, although they are still listed as endangered.

These amazing birds will often make their homes in urban settings where they utilize the tall structures to hunt. One of the falcons' favorite spots to nest is under large bridges. This can be a dangerous undertaking as their babies (called eyasses) often fall.

NJDOT worked with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), NJ Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and New Jersey Department of

Environmental Protection Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) to design a Peregrine Falcon Eyrie (nest) under the new Causeway to help give the falcons who attempt to nest there a decent shot at success in one of the most precarious of locations.

The *Gem of the Bridge* is a plywood platform that links to the top of one of the piers, affording the falcons the tight, protected seclusion they seem to enjoy, while also giving the eyasses some room to stretch their legs and wings.

In the spring of 2015, after construction had started, a new pair of falcons began nesting on the bridge. They have returned and there are now two chicks that are calling the nesting box home.

Once construction is complete, a permanent nest box will be installed on the existing bridge, equipped with similar features as the temporary box. The permanent nest box will include access for ENSP personnel to accommodate banding of chicks in the future. We hope this will greatly increase the falcons' chance of survival and ensure they will be part of the ecosystem for years to come.

Mentoring Makes a Comeback with "Speed Dating" Event

Mentoring is back at NJDOT! An initiative of Women in Transportation (WIT), the Mentorship Program kicked-off on April 8 and has grown to meet the needs of all employees. On May 3, 32 mentors and 45 mentees attended the "Mentoring Speed Dating" event in the Headquarters Multipurpose Room (MPR). Potential mentors sat at tables as mentees moved around and were given 2.5 minutes

to 'break the ice' by asking each prospective mentor one important question. It proved to be an insightful and fun way to select a partner.

Senior Leadership was actively involved at the affair. Four Assistant Commissioners participated: **Jeanne Victor, Bill Kingsland, Dave Kuhn,** and

Gary Brune. Also in attendance were Directors **Victor Akpu, Elkins Green, Dana Hecht, Snehal Patel, Mike Russo, Debbie Stevenson** and **Michele Shapiro.**

Intranet online mentee survey. They will be paired shortly. Those willing to help others grow and develop in their careers, and share insight gained from their experiences are welcome to join

the "mentors bench". The figurative "bench" is comprised of those who have volunteered to be mentors. As people decide to participate in the Program, they can choose available mentors from the "bench."



The next event, Engaging to Excel, was June 20. Mentoring pairs were given tools to assist them in getting started. They were provided a sample Partnership Agreement to sign and codify the relationship. Topics on creating SMART goals and types of High Gain questions to get meaningful answers were discussed.

The Mentorship Program is designed to help employees wanting to build effective partnerships for their growth and development and improve the Department's retention efforts. The program will offer lunch time and special events in an environment where individuals will be able to build effective partnerships by providing knowledge, skills, encouragement, career guidance and role modeling to assist in the achievement of personal/professional goals and the Department's strategic business plan.

More than 200 individuals seeking mentors responded to the

Mentorship Program Committee members include **Dana Hecht, Chrystal Section, Aarti Gupta, Nicole Einthoven** and **Susan Pigula.** For more on the Program, please visit the WIT website at <http://njdotintranet.dot.state.nj.us/about/wit/opportunities.shtm> to get the latest updates.

