

December 1, 2008

Mr. Joe Jones
MoDOT Design Division
1320 Creek Trail Drive
Jefferson City, Missouri 65109

**Re: MoDOT 2009 Practical Design Awards for Excellence
I-70 Online Public Meetings, Process Improvement Category**

Dear Mr. Jones and Members of the Selection Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to submit the attached application for the MoDOT/Practical Design 2009 Awards for Excellence.

Our project is the I-70 Online Public Meeting, which was held in support of the I-70 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) currently underway. This innovative public involvement tool collaboratively created by MoDOT and HNTB is Missouri's first-ever electronic public meeting and is believed to be only the second such online meeting in the country.

The tool was developed to meaningfully and cost-effectively engage motorists, travelers and other I-70 stakeholders across the state. The project stretched over a 200-mile corridor snaking through rural and urban regions. In such an environment, the difficulties of organizing, publicizing and implementing multiple meetings needed to reach across the state would have been enormous. That's why MoDOT and HNTB moved the mid-project update meeting to the Internet to take advantage of convenient, compelling features such outreach offered stakeholders.

The online meeting could be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at www.improvei70.org. A video simulation and electronic versions of informational displays regarding important data and concepts could be replayed – or downloaded – by stakeholders to absorb at their own pace. A survey and study team contact tools enabled people to get their specific questions and concerns addressed immediately. And to ensure that stakeholders had full access to the process, the online meeting was supplemented with informal listening sessions at three locations within the corridor.

Due to this innovative approach, up to 10 times as many people attended the online public meeting as had attended previous physical meetings at a cost comparable to or less than onsite meetings. More than 256 participants accessed the online meeting, and 87 completed the survey. The listening sessions at O'Fallon, Columbia and Oak Grove resulted in the study team interacting with another 34 people.

Here's how the project compares to the Practical Design guidelines:

A. Purpose and Need:

This project meets the purpose and need by maximizing public input through an online meeting that provided stakeholders with a mid-project update to the I-70 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. The meeting conveyed findings and recommendations to date (August 2008) and summarized impact evaluations.

B. Cost Savings:

Previous I-70 studies had schedules that enabled MoDOT to hold a long series of public meetings at key communities throughout the corridor. This study, however, had only a 12-month schedule. Such a short span of time called for a different, faster public input approach that would still achieve broad outreach and public attendance/engagement.

Building off the experience of having had 7,500 people watch a YouTube.com video about how truck-only lanes might work, the project team decided to try a cost effective, online public meeting. The resulting online public meeting and listening stations were publicized in many innovative ways:

- Paid ad on Mapquest.com for those searching for I-70 addresses/directions. The ad was shown more than 141,000 times, generating 62 visits to www.improvei70.org.
- MoDOT added a link to the online meeting to the following Web sites: www.modot.org, www.modotblog.blogspot.com and I-70 Video YouTube posting.
- Requested links and/or announcements on the organizational Web sites of the: City of Columbia, East West Gateway, Jackson County, Mid American Regional Council, Missouri Agribusiness Showcase, Missouri Motor Carriers Association, Missouri Petroleum Makers, OOIDA, Scenic Missouri, Sierra Club and State of Missouri.
- Along with traditional media, the team sought coverage from key topic bloggers. Blog coverage included: www.stltoday.com/blogzone/along-for-the-ride/ and BoCoMo Buzz.

These methods supplemented more traditional promotional outlets, including:

- Press release including links to project Web site and online meeting location.
- Postcard to a 1,200-name project mailing list.
- MoDOT Express Lane e-newsletter
- Quarter-page paid advertisements in: Boonville Record, Concordian, Columbia Daily Tribune, Kansas City Star, Odessan, St. Charles Journal and Warrenton Journal.
- Flyers about the online meeting in the Oak Grove Petro Station driver's lounge and in other Petro stations throughout Missouri.

C. Improvement in Business Efficiency

The online meeting gave people the opportunity to express their input at their convenience, without driving long distances to attend a public meeting. To ensure a two-way dialogue, online visitors could e-mail questions at any point during the month-long meeting schedule. Answers were posted to a "Q&A" page periodically.

To supplement the online meetings, MoDOT also conducted three in-person "listening stations" at a truck stop in Oak Grove and at public libraries in Columbia and O'Fallon. The process also eliminated numerous hours of work MoDOT and HNTB personnel that would have needed to be done had typical meetings been held.

D. Improvement of End Result:

The project team's commitment to providing the most cost-effective outreach effort without compromising public involvement excellence is reflected in the final results. More than 95 percent of those who completed the survey said the materials made a good case for reconstructing I-70; 73 percent favored the truck-only lanes concept. A complete summary of the online meeting can be found at the Improve I-70 Web site.

We are excited to submit this project for consideration in the 2009 Awards of Excellence.

Sincerely,
HNTB Corporation

Betty Burry, AICP
Senior Public Involvement Manager

Enclosures

2009 APPLICATION FORM

(required for each entry)

Complete this section for (check one): **Small Project** **Large Project**
 Post-Design Solution **Off System Project**

Job No. _____ Route _____ County / LPA _____

Description (attach separate sheet if necessary) _____

Complete this section for: **Process Improvement**

Process or Product Online Public Meetings for the I-70 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Description (attach separate sheet if necessary) In order to maximize public involvement, an online public meeting was created to serve as an update to the I-70 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. The displays that normally sit on easels at a public meeting were made into interactive PDFs that were available for one month. The online public meeting was supplemented by three listening stations in O'Fallon, Columbia and Oak Grove, Missouri.

Project Leader Bob Brendel (MoDOT's PM and PI), Betty Burry (HNTB PM)

Key Team Members (include key personnel irrespective of employer-nine individuals maximum)

Michael DeMent, HNTB _____

Jeff Wine, HNTB _____

Project Budget:

Initial Cost / Estimate \$ 10,000 **Final Cost / Award** \$ 10,000

What would make this entry stand out from the rest of the entries when considering MoDOT's practical design philosophy? (In layman's terms - 200 words or fewer-attach separate sheet if necessary) See attachment.

Send entries to: MoDOT Design Division, ATTN: Joe Jones
1320 Creek Trail Dr., Jefferson City, Missouri 65109

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON DECEMBER 1, 2008



Attachment

Why would this entry stand out from the rest of the entries when considering MoDOT's practical design philosophy? (In layman's terms - 200 words or fewer-attach separate sheet if necessary)

Innovation, creativity and collaboration were key components in delivering a practical solution in the development of the I-70 online meetings. The primary goal of the project was to gain public input about I-70 and truck only lanes and to provide valuable feedback to MoDOT and the Supplemental Environment Impact Statement study. The online meetings gave people the opportunity to express their input at their convenience and by not having them drive long distance to attend a public meeting. To supplement the online meetings, MoDOT also conducted three in-person "listening stations".

Practical design concepts were applied at every opportunity to make this cost effective. These savings were accomplished by issuing press releases, mailing postcards, sending e-newsletters, buying ads in newspapers, adding a link to MoDOT's Web site and asking key bloggers around the state to provide information on their websites.

The project team was committed to providing the most cost effective design for this project while never compromising public involvement. The final result – more than 95 percent of the people who completed the survey said the displays had made a good case for why I-70 needs to be reconstructed, and 73 percent were in favor of the truck-only lanes concept.

I-70 SEIS On-line Update

What is an SEIS?

A Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is used to study new issues related to completed Environmental Studies. The environmental study process:

- is designed to help the public, agencies and elected officials make informed decisions,
- shows how improvements would affect both the natural and man-made environment,
- is required by the federal National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), and
- is one type of environmental document needed to get federal funding or permits for improvements.

[Click here to view the document "A Citizen's Guide to NEPA."](#)

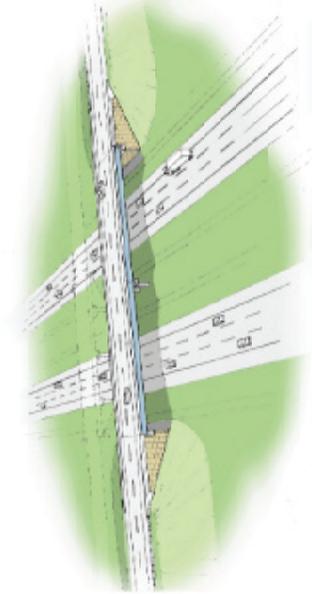
[Click here for more information on NEPA and Transportation projects.](#)



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I-70 SEIS On-line Update

The I-70 SEIS is comparing the impacts of rebuilding and widening I-70 to six lanes with rebuilding with truck-only lanes. When completed, the SEIS will compare impacts on nature, as well as people, homes, businesses and communities.



Rebuild and widen



Rebuild and widen with truck-only lanes

[Click here for more information on the I-70 SEIS.](#)

Navigation buttons: BACK, NEXT, EMAIL, Q&A

I-70 SEIS On-line Update

When would improvements happen?

- There is currently no funding to rebuild I-70.
- There is no targeted start date for design or construction of major improvements to I-70.
- MoDOT looks to state and federal lawmakers along with citizens to determine funding sources.



MODOT FUNDING



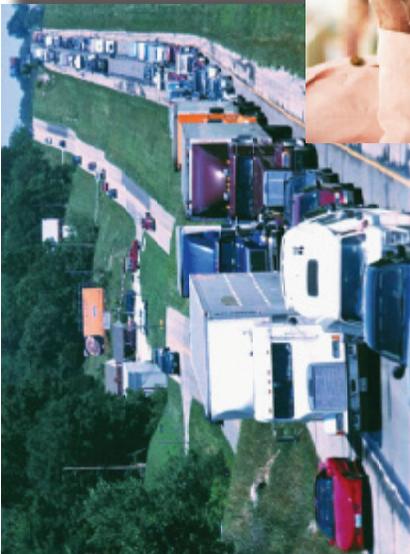
[Click here for more information about MoDOT's funding sources.](#)

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I-70 SEIS On-line Update

Why are we studying potential I-70 improvements?

- I-70 is critical to Missouri's economy,
- I-70 has served Missouri well past its planned life, and
- I-70 is carrying more traffic than it was designed for, and even more traffic is expected in the future.

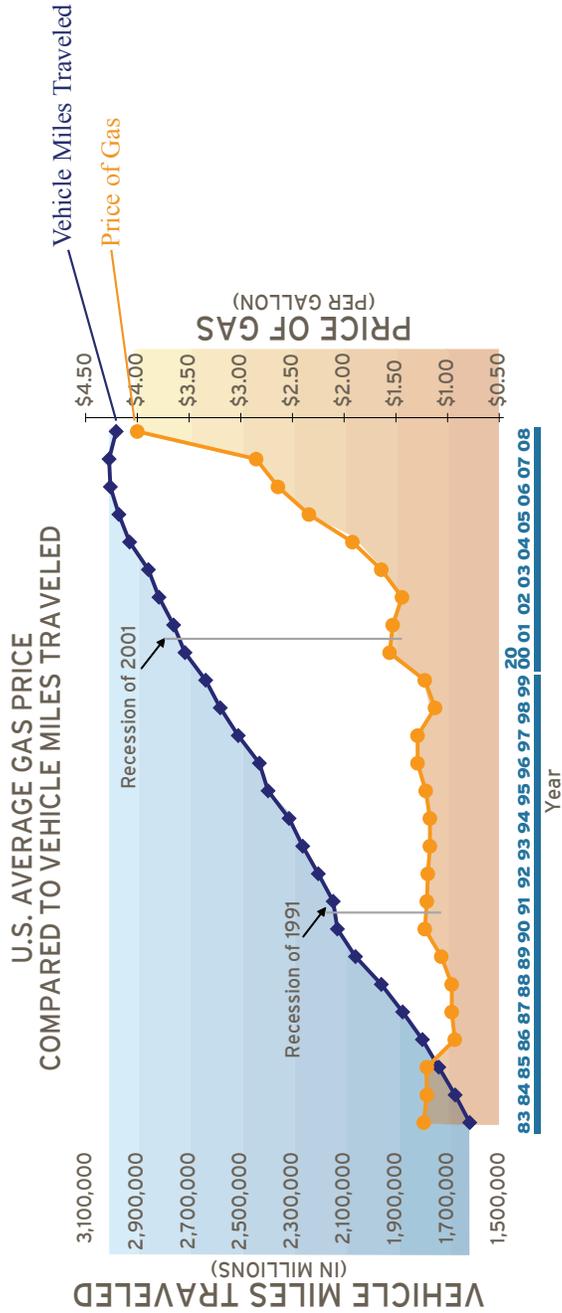


Navigation icons: BACK, NEXT, EMAIL, Q&A

I-70 SEIS On-line Update

MoDOT is monitoring how rising gas prices change travel

The full impact of rising gas prices is still unknown. In the past, travel has quickly returned to the nation's highways – and then increased – despite higher gas prices. It would take a 75% reduction in traffic to eliminate congestion on key sections of I-70. Even then, the highway's aging foundation would still need to be rebuilt.



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Online public meetings and YouTube.com greatly expanded the tools like this truck simulation shown above. This screen shot above depicts a truck merging onto a truck only lane.



Online public meetings and YouTube.com greatly expanded the tools like this truck simulation shown above. This screen shot above depicts a truck exiting off from a truck-only lane.