

Design Academy

The 13th WSDOT Design Academy was held December 3-6 at the Red Lion Hotel in Olympia. Forty two participants from all six regions, Urban Corridors, and Washington State Ferries attended the 4 days of training and team challenges. The academy is facilitated by the region project development trainers and led by Blane Long, the HQ Design Office Project Development Training Coordinator.

The mission of the Design Academy is to "To enhance the continued professional growth of the department's designers by providing a statewide venue to share design experiences through the use of structured classes, informal discussions, and open forums." The goal is to focus on the project delivery process while offering courses that will provide designers the tools and expertise to make sound engineering decisions.

Participants attended eight courses: Design Decisions, Project Management, Risk Assessment, Deviations 101, Access Management, Bridge and Structures, Geotechnical Issues, Design Manual, and Survey Issues. There were also evening presentations on Combining a Cost Risk Assessment with a Value Engineering Study, Real Estate, Environmental and using the Self Modeling Risk Spreadsheet.

Participants were divided into 6 teams to work on selected design problems. The students were challenged to come up with creative solutions to the design problems that they were presented with. At the end of the week each team presented their project solutions to the other teams along with executives and senior management.

The academy is currently offered twice a year. The next Design Academy will be the week of May 5th, 2008.

Value Engineering

This is a synopsis of the annual value engineering reported submitted to the FHWA for the fiscal year 2007.

During the past year, WSDOT conducted 18 studies and finalized 14 studies on projects that had a combined original construction estimate of over \$1.871 billion. The design teams implemented 50 of 96 recommendations for a total net savings of \$293 million. This equates to an implementation rate of 52 percent.

In addition to tracking cost savings, we continued tracking performance measures for our value-engineering program. Of the recommendations that were implemented in FY 2007, 38 percent minimized right of way and/or environmental impacts, 48 percent enhanced operational performance, 36 percent improved constructability, 26 percent compressed the schedule to deliver, and 18 percent developed partners and/or built consensus.

The continued success of the WSDOT value engineering program can be attributed to the timing of studies, careful selection of team members, and working proactively to improve our value engineering program. Four of the studies performed this year combined a cost risk assessment (CRA) with the value engineering process. WSDOT found this combination to be extremely valuable. Those studies that are not combined with a CRA include a risk analysis segment within the value engineering process.

Overall the WSDOT Value Engineering program saves \$452 in project costs for every \$1 spent on a VE study.

Access

The Access Unit has been busy coordinating Interchange Justification Reports (IJR's), Access Approaches, and Access Reports, and continuing the training offered to the regions. We were able to provide Southwest Region a "Micro Training for Access" for people new to the Access and Utilities section. This included reviewing the Access requirements for projects: IJR's, the Access & Design Hearing process, and Access Breaks. They also were able to visit the HQ Plans Office and RES Office. They said they learned a tremendous amount from just the few hours spent in our office. This Micro-Training will be used in the future - it is an excellent opportunity especially for the Access Managers in each region to learn about how everyone falls into the big scheme of things when it comes to Access.

Also, during the Micro Training, they were able to view our new Access GIS layer on ARC GIS (This has been a work-in-progress for the past year - hat's off to LeRoy Patterson, Steve Chestnut & Becky Hawkins!) This information is now available to anyone within arm's reach of a computer. Managed Access or Limited Access designations are shown on all state routes, and referenced by milepost. This easy-to-use tool will be an asset to designers, planners, and others during all phases of a project.