

## **Railroads**

Ahmer Nizam attended the 2007 National Rail Safety Conference on November 5-7. The conference brings together railroads, federal agencies, state DOTs, and local agencies to discuss safety and security issues at highway-rail grade crossings. Conference sessions included land use planning adjacent to railways, risk analysis methodologies, federal initiatives, and several other sessions focusing on specific engineering treatment and case studies. The conference provided a valuable opportunity to keep up-to-date on evolving engineering practices and policy initiatives, as well as to discuss the Department's own railroad grade crossing safety program with a national group of participants.

## **Utilities**

The Statewide Utilities Engineers Meeting was hosted by the Olympic Region November 6th and 7th. The meeting was attended by all region and HQ Utilities Staffs along with the Attorney General's staff and FHWA. Highlights of the meeting were presentations by Puget Sound Energy natural gas engineers on the safety of non-encased pipe installations, Dave Mariman's of HQ Construction presentation on Standard Specification changes regarding utilities preconstruction conferences and utility relocation schedules in our construction contracts. Other highlights included a technical presentation on Bentonite provided by Will Wonch of the Olympic Region, and "Pocket" Plans Reading Course for utility company personnel, utility relocation incentive payments and High Visibility Work Zone apparel requirements.

## **Design and Traffic Tri-State Meeting**

Dave Olson, Larry Hinson, and Mark Sujka, from the HQ Design Office, and Terry Thayer, and Rick Mowlds from the HQ Traffic Office attended the annual Tri-State Design Standards Meeting on October 24<sup>th</sup> in Troutdale, Oregon. Each year, design standards experts from the states of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington meet to discuss new and emerging transportation design issues. Regional representatives from the Federal Highway Administration also attend these meetings. This meeting provides opportunities to see how peers in other states have applied design standards to resolve problems and comply with federal regulations.

This year's meeting covered a broad range of topics including; signing, pavement marking, rest area partnership, de-icing chemicals, bridge railings, cable barrier, w-beam guardrail, and ADA accessibility requirements. During the course of the meeting, various design standards were discussed in each category. Each state outlined their experiences and issues they addressed in their standards. Oregon DOT presented research on use of de-icing chemicals and their impacts to concrete pavements and structures. WSDOT shared their recently completed report on experience with cable barrier systems. Next year's meeting is planned for October with Washington State as the host.

# Agreements

## Agreement Reviews Completed October 2007

Total Agreements Completed - 48      Total Dollar Amount - \$1E,833,908

