



The WisDOT Connector *Express*

March 27, 2008...Volume 9, Issue 4

WisDOT clarifies rules regarding downtown civic banners

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) wants to help municipalities avoid a potentially costly mistake. The department has recently had to ask several communities to remove downtown civic banners that violate state and federal laws. As part of downtown beautification efforts, many communities install banners (frequently from light posts) that highlight community attributes or historical themes. Such light post banners are generally allowable if they simply welcome visitors. The problem occurs when such banners (located along numbered state highways) mention commercial business sponsors. State and federal laws prohibit commercial messages within state highway right-of-way. Banners that stretch across a state highway require a WisDOT permit. Municipal officials with questions or concerns about downtown banners may wish to contact their regional WisDOT office (www.dot.wisconsin.gov/about/locate/dtd.htm).

Hiawatha proves records are made to be broken

More and more people are choosing to “ride the rails.” Amtrak’s Hiawatha Service accommodated 50,413 riders last month, an astounding 22% increase over February of 2007. The Hiawatha Service has now set monthly ridership records in 38 of the last 40 months. Through the first two months of this year, a total of 98,228 people have climbed aboard Hiawatha Service trains – an increase of nearly 18% over the same period in 2007. Likely factors behind the ridership increase include rising fuel prices and the fact that Hiawatha trains provide Milwaukee-to-Chicago travelers a reliable and stress-free commuting alternative.

State Capitol visitors will be seeing orange

During the week of April 7 – 11, people who drive past or enter the State Capitol in Madison will notice lots of orange. As part of National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, the Capitol dome will be illuminated with orange light during nighttime hours. A display in the first floor Capitol rotunda will serve as a public reminder for motorists to drive safely in work zones. An April 8th noon event in the rotunda will feature 132 orange traffic cones representing the number of people killed in Wisconsin work zone crashes over the last 10 years. While protecting construction workers is an ongoing concern, nearly 95% of deaths in Wisconsin work zone crashes over the last decade have been motorists.

Travel information signs “got the blues”

WisDOT administers a “Specific Information Sign” or SIS program that allows eligible businesses to put their logo on blue traveler information signs along designated state highway corridors. Along with advertising for gas, food, lodging, and camping, the SIS program was recently expanded to include “attractions” – locations that provide amusement, historical, cultural, or leisure activities to the public. An advisory council reviews applications to determine if they meet the program’s guidelines. More information on the SIS program can be found on the WisDOT Web site at: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/business/rules/property-signs-directional.htm.

The WisDOT Connector Express is produced by:

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Office of Public Affairs, PO Box 7910

Madison, WI 53707-7910

Phone: (608) 266-3581

E-mail: opa.exec@dot.state.wi.us

Web site: www.dot.wisconsin.gov

Back issues available at www.dot.wisconsin.gov/library/publications/format/newsletters/connector.htm