

Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Secretary's Report
Meeting of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Board of
Directors
Board Room, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts
Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Opening Remarks

As I, and members of my team, continue to make our way around the Commonwealth to engage people in the conversation we've been having about transportation and new revenue, I'm encouraged at the conversations that are also taking place with the Legislature.

In fact, yesterday, I was with each Division Administrator and Chairman Jenkins and Director MacDonald to testify before the Joint Committee on Transportation. I want to thank members of my team and the Board for their participation and continued advocacy.

Also last Friday, I joined Governor Patrick, Secretary Malone, and Secretary Shor to testify at a hearing held by the Joint Committee on Ways and Means to continue those discussions. In his testimony, the Governor spoke to the solution for transportation financing in terms of *what* we would do with additional revenue, and *how* we would use it to make investments.

So, *what* we would do with the revenue? Under The Way Forward, additional revenue would be comprehensive, dedicated, competitive, and fair. What does that mean? It means, being able to raise enough revenue to meet many of the demands our customers identified for us during two rounds of statewide listening tours in 2012. It also means being able to separate those funds from everything else and demonstrating to the people we are asking to pay more where that money is specifically going. It also means that the sources of new revenue would be based on criteria that would not unduly burden any one socioeconomic demographic, or any one city or town, or region. And, it means it would be done in a way that

would allow us to get closer to our goals of stimulating economic growth and leaving a system behind that is sustainable.

In terms of *how* we would use the revenue: we could break the bad habit of using capital funds for our operating needs in the Highway Division. We could fix the T's structural deficit, we could start addressing the backlog of very necessary infrastructure projects – whether it's upgrading the signal system on the Red Line, or redesigning high-crash locations so they are safer and more efficient.

As we've talked about before, 80 percent of The Way Forward goes toward what we already have, but that has been so poorly neglected; and 20 percent funds long-awaited projects that get put off because of our existing problems continue to hold us back: commuter rail to the South Coast, and the Green Line to Somerville and Medford are just two important projects that come to mind.

I look forward to continuing the conversation with our customers, stakeholders, and legislators in the coming weeks and months, as we work toward a solution.

MassDOT Employee Recognition Program

This month we recognize an employee from the Aeronautics Division as the March 2013 Employee of the Month.

Steven L. Rawding, Aviation Planner, Aeronautics Division

As an Aviation Planner for the Aeronautics Division one of Steve's responsibilities is developing and implementing Aviation Education programs and initiatives and coordinating education outreach events across the Commonwealth with the FAA, the Office of the Governor, Department of Education, and secondary schools. One such program is the Real World Design Challenge (RWDC) for which Steve serves as the State Coordinator, a role he is being recognized for this month.

The RWDC is an annual competition that provides high school students the opportunity to work on real world engineering challenges in a team environment. As the Massachusetts State Coordinator, Steve is the primary point of contact in the state for all teachers, mentors, state officials and RWDC staff. He is also responsible for recruiting teams and organizing state judges to evaluate the RWDC Team's solutions. Steve's infectious enthusiasm for aviation education has helped ensure the ongoing success of this program which provides the participating students a valuable introduction to Aeronautical Engineering.

Executive Order 513, signed by Governor Patrick in 2009, states that to compete in the global economy and with other states, Massachusetts needs to leverage more effectively its resources in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); increase student interest in, and preparation for, careers in STEM; and keep high school and college graduates living in the Commonwealth. Programs such as the RWDC are an important step in enabling the state to deliver the high quality education and workforce training necessary to encourage students to pursue careers in these disciplines.

As a result of Steve's efforts, four schools competed in the FY13 RWDC Aviation Challenge State Competition which involved designing a Small Unmanned Aircraft System that included one or more fixed-wing Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and a supporting business plan. The mission scenario for the system: locate a missing, injured and immobilized child in a large area of New Mexico. Marlborough High School repeated as Massachusetts State Champion this year earning "Team Wingit," their coach and state coordinator an all-expense-paid trip to compete in the National Challenge in Washington, D.C. on April 19 - 22. Congratulations and good luck. We'll be rooting for you in Washington.

For his contributions to the success of these, and many other talented high school students and for passing on his love of aviation to the next generation Steve Rawding is being recognized as the MassDOT March Employee of the Month.

ABP Mega Projects: Longfellow Bridge and Whittier Bridge

When we last met, this Board voted to enter into contracts on two of our five signature projects that are being funded through this Administration's Accelerated Bridge Program. Following the Burns Bridge in Worcester and the Fore River Bridge in Quincy and Weymouth, we are now able to move forward with the Longfellow Bridge connecting Cambridge and Boston and the Whittier Bridge, which brings I-95 over the Merrimack River in Amesbury and Newburyport.

Since its creation, the Accelerated Bridge Program has created or sustained just under 19,000 construction jobs and with the Longfellow and Whittier projects expected to break ground later this year, both jobs promise to add to that total.

While these two new projects will rebuild critical links that connect people to jobs, educational and recreational opportunities, they also represent a chance to bring our infrastructure up to a standard that folks expect. With the addition of cycling and pedestrian amenities, the finished products of both will be open to more modes of transportation to meet that increasing demand. I look forward to these getting under way and I also look forward to awarding the contract to reconstruct the Route 79/I-195 "Spaghetti Ramps" in Fall River in just a few short months.

Thank you. That concludes my remarks.