

26th meeting of the
IOWA FREIGHT ADVISORY COUNCIL

June 7, 2019
 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
 Courtyard Marriot
 2405 SE Creekview Dr, Ankeny, IA 50021

Members

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| x | Jillian Walsh for Andy Cernin | x | Bob Rafferty for Delia Moon-Meier |
| | Tom Determann | x | James Niffenegger |
| x | Randy Worth for Greg Dickinson | x | Kelli O'Brien |
| x | Don Egli | x | Chad Lambi for Joe Parsons |
| x | Greg Jenkins | x | Dan Sabin |
| x | Calean Kokjohn | x | Mike Steenhoek |
| x | Ron Lang | x | Reilly Vaughan |
| x | Brent McKenzie | x | Tony Miller for Ron White |
| | Don McDowell | | Tim Woods |

Ex-Officio Members

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|---|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| x | Dylan Mullenix for Todd Ashby | | Mike Norris |
| x | Mike Hadley | | Paul Ovrom |
| | Mark Johnson | | Robert Palmer |
| x | Michael Kober | x | Joseph Rude |
| x | Sean Litteral | | Col. Steven Sattinger |
| x | Mark Lowe | | Louis Vander Streek |
| x | Shirley McGuire | x | Jennifer Wright |

Iowa DOT

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|---|----------------|---|------------------|
| x | Stu Anderson | x | Justin Meade |
| x | Phou Baccam | x | Phil Meraz |
| x | Mikel Derby | x | Tammy Nicholson |
| x | Sam Hiscocks | x | Garrett Pedersen |
| | Laura Hutzell | | Charlie Purcell |
| x | Alex Jansen | | Angel Robinson |
| x | Renee Jerman | x | John Selmer |
| | David Lorenzen | x | Melissa Spiegel |
| x | Craig Markley | x | Jeff von Brown |
| x | Scott Marler | x | Andrea Henry |
| x | Amanda Martin | x | Susan Fenton |

Guests

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|---|------------------------------|---|--|
| x | Mark Nahra (Woodbury County) | x | Jantina Wennerstrom (Soy Trans. Coalition) |
| x | Zhi Chen (DMAMPO) | | |

Meeting input objectives

1. Develop a list of potential options to address supply chain resiliency in the state – namely approaches the DOT can take to improve current responses.
2. Identify any opportunities to enhance Iowa DOT operations in the areas of funding distribution, external communication/promotion, and Legislative interaction.

10:00 AM Safety Briefing

Phil Meraz
Iowa DOT

Welcome and Introductions

Ice-breaker: Was your company impacted by flooding this year? How? And how did your company respond?

Mike Steenhoek, Chair
Soy Transportation
Coalition

Phil Meraz opened the meeting with a safety briefing. Mike Steenhoek, Chair of the FAC, then led introductions and ice-breaker topics discussed by the group. Each member was asked, “Was your company impacted by flooding this year? How? And how did your company respond?” Responses included:

- Mike Steenhoek informed the group that Governor Reynolds has created a working group with subcommittees to address flood resiliency, one of which is infrastructure. State Chief Operations Officer Paul Trombino, formerly the DOT Director and FAC Ex Officio Member, is involved, and Mr. Steenhoek reached out to volunteer the FAC to help in any way.
- Reilly Vaughan discussed the major impacts to farmers, including delayed planting and difficulties moving grain, machinery, and equipment due to flooding and moisture.
- Don Egli mentioned impacted supply chains, businesses, residents, and others. Mr. Egli also shared that many Iowa motor carriers are volunteering time, trucks, and trailers to deliver relief supplies.
- Calean Kokjohn shared that Southeast Iowa has had a difficult time with flooding and access to rail has been a major challenge.
- Mark Nahra discussed the difficulties in getting roadways operational again after flooding impacts.
- Tony Miller mentioned the delays being experienced by the barge industries are having major ripple effects for other industries.

10:20 AM Panel: Flooding and Supply Chain Resiliency

A panel on the impacts of and responses to flooding, followed by a facilitated discussion on supply chain resiliency and addressing these events as they seemingly become more common.

Mike Steenhoek
Soy Transportation
Coalition

- **Chad Lambi**
Iowa Interstate Railroad
- **Mark Nahra**
Woodbury County

- **Scott Marler**
Iowa DOT
- **Kelli O'Brien**
Union Pacific Railroad
- **Tony Miller**
Artco Fleeting

Continuing the discussion introduced by the ice-breaker question, Mike Steenhoek facilitated a panel discussion on the impacts of and responses to flooding and improving supply chain resiliency. Mr. Steenhoek invited each panelist to give a brief overview of their company's experiences, current and past, with flooding impacting operations and some positives from recovery efforts.

Chad Lambi began by showing photos of past flooding that Iowa Interstate Railroad has had to deal with including losing an 800-foot bridge to washout, rebuilding several others, and raising tracks up four feet across an entire river bottom. The company was able to get one particular railroad bridge operational in less than a week to keep trains moving. The company has also worked closely with connecting railroads to help get around closed/flooded routes.

Iowa Interstate Railroad has had to make changes to capital planning and approaches to other things in dealing with this "new norm" of flooding, including devoting more time, resources, and effort to respond to catastrophic events. Hydraulics and drainage are primary considerations now when constructing new railroads. Mr. Lambi mentioned that large rivers aren't as big of a concern because they can be forecasted and planned for. Rather, flash flooding has the biggest impact now. The Iowa Flood Center has been very helpful but there is a need for more data including more river gauges and hydraulic forecasting models. Older 50- to 100-year trends and data are not as helpful any more as flooding seems to be more consistent.

Mark Nahra shared past experiences in his career with flooding beginning in 1965 in the city of Davenport, which was considered the "major flood" in the state for a long time. Mr. Nahra has now experienced 11 FEMA-declared disasters, the last of which was the strangest. He has never experienced a flood in March and this flood included water in areas that had never been flooded before. Other impacts from the Spring 2019 flood included:

- Frozen culverts due to receiving three inches of rain while there was still snow on the ground;
- A new section of four-lane U.S. Highway 20 was closed due to flooding causing the County road system to be used for rerouting traffic;
- Severely damaged roadways were left when the water went down, requiring repair of shoulders and pavements before reopening;
- The difficult evacuation of a town during the flood cresting due to closed roadways; and
- The absence of a complete East-West or North-South route continuously open across Woodbury County for the first two days of the flood.

Mr. Nahra identified numerous positives including the timeliness and effectiveness of a group working together in the same room to address needs and responses, an increased importance and appreciation is now put into the planning and constructing of the County road network, the County and State designing for bigger flood events, and positive working relationships.

Scott Marler provided the Iowa DOT perspective of the 2019 floods, which resulted in road closures lasting up to two months in some places. Mr. Marler shared a series of photos from the Western portion of the state showing major flooding across Interstate, U.S., and State highways, damages to structures, debris across farms, and response efforts. Other major impacts were bridges and culverts needing to be replaced as these are major pinch points, overhead bridges needing to be repaired as they were designed to carry traffic over a roadway rather than over running water and replacing/strengthening roadway shoulders that had been washed away.

There have been numerous meetings to address flooding responses. Resiliency is about infrastructure but also planning, relationships, and regional collaboration. Mr. Marler shared that Iowa DOT tried new things that hadn't been done in the state before, including adding gravel over highways as a temporary solution to get traffic moving again. One of the major concerns has been drivers ignoring road closure signs. At the time of the meeting, flood waters were also beginning to rise again.

Kelli O'Brien shared the Union Pacific perspective, mentioning that the company has experienced large-scale flooding multiple times in recent years. Work has been completed to raise tracks in Council Bluffs, Missouri Valley, and Cedar Rapids. Other areas around the state and nation are being invested in to improve resiliency and protect infrastructure.

The bomb cyclone in the spring took out multiple subdivisions that needed to be rebuilt, meaning many customers were unable to get what they needed. Ms. O'Brien complimented the State of Iowa agencies and shortline railroads operating in the state as working relationships made responses to flooding go smoother than in other areas. At the time of the meeting, Union Pacific was experiencing 11 network outages across the country and Iowa was serving as a reroute area until normal service is functioning again, most likely not until August due to flooding impacts.

Tony Miller with Artco Fleeting gave an overview on the impacts to barge traffic on the inland waterways. There are many barges currently sitting idle due to high water levels and some terminal locations along the Mississippi River are experiencing flooding, preventing access to barges and railroads for shippers in and out of the flood plain. The company typically lays off employees for three months in the winter due to the inability to run barges – this year employees will be laid off more days than they will be working as a result of flooding. There has been a significant impact to all commodities typically moving on the water, including fertilizer that is shipped upriver for planting season. Mr. Miller went on to mention that industries are hit the hardest when barge and rail are both impacted by flooding. There are specific links in the rail network that, if improved, would add a great deal of resiliency to the supply chain. It is important to identify these critical links and protect them.

Following opening remarks by the panelists, Mike Steenhoek facilitated a question and answer session for the group. Mr. Steenhoek requested that the discussion be focused around things we could all do better, what the Iowa DOT could do better, and how we can work together. The following metaphor was used to guide the conversation:

- Slipping the punch: can you avoid getting hit;
- Taking the punch: to what extent does it hurt; and
- Getting off the canvas: how quickly can you recover?

Mr. Steenhoek asked, "When it comes to slipping the punch, or avoiding a major impact from natural disasters, what preparations, predictive analysis/forecasting, communication, and/or innovative designs have been used? Which have been the most effective?" Responses included:

- Tony Miller shared that the bomb cyclone caught a lot of people by surprise. Improved communication of closures would be helpful to know whether or not a ripple effect is coming.
- Mark Nahra mentioned that continuous communication with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about forecasting and information relating to releases from the upstream dams was helpful. However, more predictability for unregulated tributaries in Southwest Iowa is needed. Working with the Iowa Flood Center to figure out how predictable we can be and what we can do would be beneficial.
- Scott Marler stated that modeling for major levee breaches, at least this many at once, hasn't really been done. However, modeling is now needed for the impacts of levees breaking including hydraulically to figure out where impacts are and how to prepare. Iowa DOT currently has a positive relationship with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to work on this.
- Mark Lowe followed up with the fact that a systematic approach is needed. State leaders now know this can't be approached on a levee to levee basis. The State works a lot with the Iowa Flood Center and has discussions on where to add USGS water gauges for reporting.
- Chad Lambi stated that more water gauges on smaller rivers would be very helpful as these smaller tributaries seem to be the issue now due to flash flooding.
- Mark Lowe then promoted the idea of a more holistic approach to look at the entire system of things impacted and try to improve predictability.
- John Selmer agreed and added that GIS technology should be utilized more to look at ways to predict scour, flows under bridges, and other things.

Mr. Steenhoek asked, "When it comes to taking the punch, or experiencing a major emergency, what is the impact? Are there innovations, materials, methods, etc. that will allow the system to better withstand the catastrophe?" Responses included:

- Chad Lambi shared that Lidar data has been very helpful to Iowa Interstate Railroad. Lidar is used to assist with hydrological modeling. If the State of Iowa can continue to keep Lidar data updated, industry can use it to plan.
- Mark Lowe followed with the need to consider how outages on the primary system impact other systems. Drivers don't think about the roadway system they're on, they just want to get there. How do we maintain information about all levels?

Mr. Steenhoek then offered a few closing thoughts on the discussion. Mr. Steenhoek would like to continue the discussion of responding to catastrophes and using innovation, new concepts, etc. to be better prepared in the future. In addition, the group was asked to continue thinking about how to solve issues with poor communication and laborious processes at the Federal, State, and Local levels. Mark Lowe added that we could all learn from these emergency situations on how to move quicker and more efficiently in times of non-emergency situations.

11:45 AM Flow of Transportation Dollars

An overview of how transportation funding is distributed – where it comes from (Federal, State, Local, gas tax, EV tax, swap, etc.), where it goes, and how it is calculated.

**Stu Anderson
Iowa DOT**

Stu Anderson provided an overview of transportation funding throughout Federal, State, and Local agencies. The presentation included State revenue sources and how they're distributed, an update on Electric Vehicle user fees, Federal funding sources and how they're allocated, and FAST Act reauthorization.

Most State funding comes from the Road Use Tax Fund (\$1.45 billion) with some manual appropriations from the State Legislature. There are statutory appropriations for the Road Use Tax Fund, which means funding comes in monthly and then is distributed. Another major source of State funding is the TIME-21 Fund (\$221 million). Recently, the Iowa DOT was tasked with developing a report to estimate impacts to the Road Use Tax Fund due to high efficiency vehicles. The report included estimated impacts, evaluation of mitigation alternatives, and mitigation recommendations. The study also evaluated electric, hybrid, and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. As a result, a bill was passed to add an excise tax rate per kWh starting in July 2023.

Around \$530 million in Federal funding was allocated to Iowa in the last year, some of which was utilized by the Iowa DOT and the rest was allocated through metropolitan and regional planning organizations throughout the state. Federal funding was also available through different pieces of the FAST Act, which has been a positive for states around the country. Unfortunately, there wasn't a major increase in buying power and no long-term solution for transportation funding has been decided on.

Mike Steenhoek thanked Mr. Anderson for the presentation and added that it is worth mentioning that Iowa DOT and other state DOTs complete five-year transportation programs and revisit it each year. There is no reason Congress can't do the same thing rather than finish a transportation bill and then only revisit when it is about to expire. In addition, Mr. Steenhoek stated that the distribution of funding is equally as important as the volume of funding. There is room for improvement in these flows and processes. Mark Lowe added that revenue optimization is something the DOT and other state agencies are very focused on.

12:15 PM Lunch

1:00 PM Iowa DOT Communications Strategy

A brief overview of the DOT's public communication strategy and tools used in outreach efforts, followed by a group discussion on how the DOT focuses other promotion efforts such as utilization of the state gas tax funding.

**Andrea Henry
Iowa DOT**

Andrea Henry gave a presentation on Iowa DOT's communication strategy. This includes what is communicated, such as mobility and traveler information, safety, and others. The DOT website is one of the most dynamic sources of information, although it is difficult to organize it all with such a multifaceted agency.

Other techniques include a blog (Transportation Matters), working with news media, social media platforms, Message Mondays, and other types of short summary documents. The agency tries to be as proactive as possible with news releases and likes to include human interest stories in the blog. As far as social media, the DOT has 55,000 followers on Facebook and posts 5-7 times per day for two-way communication with followers, 38,000 followers on Twitter and posts over 10 times per day for quick news, 2,300 followers on Instagram and posts twice a day for more visual/human interest items.

A number of members complimented the DOT's effectiveness communicating things via different platforms. Mark Lowe added that the department tries to humanize communications, not communicate like old government in the third person.

1:30 PM Iowa DOT Interactions with the State Legislature
An outline of the DOT's process for interacting with the Iowa State Legislature including internal solicitations for topics, bill/budget proposals, and responding to inquiries.

**Susan Fenton
Iowa DOT**

Susan Fenton provided an overview of the DOT's interactions with the State Legislature, summarized as representing the Governor's Office on transportation issues. Ms. Fenton highlighted a typical day at the capital and shared that the DOT registers as undecided/neutral on most bills but does have priority bills that are recommended to the Governor by the DOT Director. These bills are drafted, presented as agency bills to the Transportation Committee Chairs in both chambers and get feedback on priorities. The DOT also attends committee meetings and provide presentations/information to legislators as timely and accurate as possible. Mark Lowe added that legislators are like a Board of Directors to state agencies and should receive information as such.

Mike Steenhoek asked if legislators are told of ribbon-cutting events or informed regarding completion of critical projects, especially those relating to things they voted on. This could include legislative newsletters or other techniques to allow the opportunity to celebrate projects and move legislators along the continuum of more support. Mark Lowe responded that the nature of those events varies by project, but supportive legislators are targeted to be involved. Andrea Henry added that locals drive those events sometimes. Mark Lowe added that continuing conversations on this topic would be beneficial.

Mike Steenhoek concluded the meeting by inviting other members to submit future meeting topic ideas and asked that an ongoing, deeper-dive into resiliency-related topics and revenue optimization be considered for the next meeting.

2:00 PM Adjourn

2019 meetings: September 6, December 13