

@AMATS

THE GREATER AKRON AREA'S TRANSPORTATION JOURNAL

July-December 2013

Volume 2, Issue 2

Inside



**Community Focus:
Rittman**
.....page 4.

**Study Shows Greater
Akron Area Crashes
Continue to Level Off**
.....page 6.

**2013 Marks a
Successful Bike-N-
Brainstorm Season**
.....page 7.

COVER:
Randy Cole, the Ohio
Controlling Board president,
was the featured speaker
during the 2013 AMATS
Annual Meeting. Cole
described how communities
and local governments are
benefitting from the state's
Beyond Boundaries initiatives
and reforms.



Sharing the Word About Shared-Service Strategies

.....pages 2-3.

Sharing the word about shared-service strategies

With its themes of regional collaboration, cooperation and shared services, the AMATS Annual Meeting drew nearly 160 people to the Sheraton Suites in Cuyahoga Falls in early October. Among the day's events were a presentation by Ohio Controlling Board President Randy Cole, a panel discussion moderated by Cole, and a Year-in-Review Summary by AMATS Director Jason Segedy.

Cole coordinates shared services and government reform initiatives for Governor John Kasich's administration. In addition to serving as controlling board president, he is policy advisor to Ohio Office of Budget and Management Director Tim Keen. Last March, Cole was named as one of the nation's Top 25 Doers, Dreamers & Drivers of 2013 by *Government Technology* magazine and the Center for Digital Government.



COLE

The controlling board president spoke about how local governments can utilize new strategies and technologies to use public dollars effectively and gave his audience the benefit of some his unique insights as to how to do so. In his presentation entitled *Beyond Boundaries – A Shared Services Action Plan for Ohio Schools and Governments*, Cole described the Kasich administration's efforts to reform government through shared service strategies and initiatives.

"We can be public employees or we can be public servants. We can be bureaucrats or we can be public entrepreneurs," Cole continued, "Those are small word changes (but) huge cultural changes."

The term "shared services" encompasses a collaborative strategy for optimizing staff, equipment and facilities and other public resources across jurisdictions to improve operational efficiencies and service delivery. Cole noted that, while shared services is not a new strategy as it has been used by governments for decades, it is being used with greater frequency in more areas of operation than ever before. "It is how we need to do things and it's not going away," Cole observed.

Technological changes are allowing more creative solutions to problems as government funding resources remain stagnant or diminish. As an example, Cole noted that GPS technologies allow the Trumbull County Engineer's office to build a new joint salt storage facility for 14 townships. The engineer's office will use GPS to integrate and synchronize its truck plow schedule and routes more effectively, which will help the townships to meet a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency mandate as to which salt storage facilities remain open. Cultural and demographic changes are accompanying these technological changes almost simultaneously, according to Cole. The younger generation tends to be more embracing of these new technologies and – as the Baby Boom generation retires – younger, more tech-savvy workers will be available to replace them.

Another significant cultural change is that the word "regionalism" doesn't evoke the consternation among smaller governmental entities that it used to. In the past, smaller entities were fearful that they would be consumed by larger entities if the two cooperated together on issues, Cole observed. That fear is being overcome as entities have adopted a "birds-of-a-feather" approach and are cooperating with similar-sized organizations. Townships are pooling their resources with other townships and school districts are working across jurisdictions and so on, according to Cole. "I say that shared services will work much better today because the vision of it is that it's a network. Everybody can bring something to the table. Agencies of the same size can work together," Cole said.

Sharing of services and other resources were discussed at length during the panel discussion. Moderated by Cole, the five-member panel had a frank discussion regarding the fiscal challenges facing local and state governments. Panelists included Tallmadge Administration Director Tom Pascarella, Streetsboro Mayor Glenn Broska, ODOT Highway Management Administrator Dave Ray, and Hudson Public Works Director Frank Comeriato.

While the reasons why each panelist's employer pursued shared service strategies varied, the end results have largely been the same: improved efficiency and revenue savings. Pascarella noted that by consolidating its dispatch operations with those of several nearby communities, the city of Tallmadge has experienced tremendous cost savings. "Our general fund balance, which is generally in the neighborhood of \$2 million, through the recession, has gone up. It's now almost \$6 million. So, it's almost tripled our general fund balance," he said.

The panelists noted that it is often not elected officials or the public who are the most apprehensive or resistant to shared service strategies – often they are its most ardent supporters - but public employees who fear that they may be negatively impacted. Depending upon the circumstance, that apprehension can be overcome through dialogue. Soon after a tornado in Twinsburg, Mayor Broska said that Streetsboro began considering a mutual-aid service agreement after witnessing how community safety forces assist one another during crises. Streetsboro officials realized that - if a similar approach were to be used among municipal services successfully - they should meet with union officials and service department employees at the outset to explain that the sharing of services between cities would not be on a daily basis. Such instances would be largely limited to extreme situations. The mayor said that the city made assurances that overtime pay and employment would not be adversely impacted.

Another potential impediment to the pursuit of shared service strategies and community collaboration doesn't come from organized opposition, but rather mindset. Many communities are so mired in tradition and procedure that the idea of working beyond their communities' boundaries is not even a thought.

"If the Soviets had been really smart, they'd never have put a wall in the middle of Berlin: They'd have put a county line there," Pascarella said to rounds of laughter. He explained that, in years past, he seldom communicated with officials in nearby communities, much less worked with them on projects and services. Now, Tallmadge is collaborating with its neighbors on a host of endeavors, such as with Portage County on an emergency mapping project. "That wall has come down," he added.

In his presentation, Segedy reviewed AMATS' many accomplishments during 2013. Among the agency's achievements were: a record year for project funding with over \$27 million going to local governments for such improvements as the Kent Esplanade, State Road and 25 resurfacings throughout the area; completing a new four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and long-range *Transportation Outlook 2035*; an ongoing survey of the Montrose area; a successful Bike-N-Brainstorm season; a Pavement Condition Rating agreement among AMATS' member communities; and the awarding of two new Connecting Communities Program grants to Barberton and Bath and Copley townships.

Pdfs and videos of annual meeting presentations and the panel discussion are available for viewing in their entirety on the AMATS web site at amatsplanning.org and on YouTube at [AMATSPPlanning](https://www.youtube.com/AMATSPPlanning).



SHARING IDEAS: Moderated by Ohio Controlling Board President Randy Cole, at right, the AMATS Annual Meeting panel had a frank discussion regarding the many fiscal challenges facing local and state governments. Panelists, from right were Cole, Tallmadge Administration Director Tom Pascarella, Streetsboro Mayor Glenn Broska, ODOT Highway Management Administrator Dave Ray, and Hudson Public Works Director Frank Comeriato.

Community Focus: Rittman

Community Focus presents information about communities within the Greater Akron area. In July, the city of Rittman joined AMATS as a full voting member of the agency's Policy Committee. Rittman is the second community to join AMATS in the last year.

Founded – In 1814 originally as "Arkona," but - because of its similarity to nearby Akron - the town's name was changed in the late 19th century.

Population – 6,491 (2010 U.S. Census Bureau)

Area – 6.49 square miles

Policy Committee Member – City Manager Larry Boggs

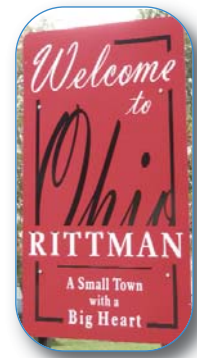
History – Rittman's early economy was bolstered by grist mills, tile-making, wagon-building and tobacco farming. Businesses grew up around newly built train stations and the heart of the business community moved north to the present square area. Shortly after the Civil War, the southern section of Rittman - then called Milton Station - became a stop of the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad, which later became the Erie Railroad. The Lake Shore and Tuscarawas Railroad, later the B & O Railroad, opened a station in 1888, but the station had no name. After several failed naming attempts, the railroad named the stop after its treasurer, Frederick B. Rittman. That name was gradually accepted by local residents and became the town's name.

The discovery of salt deposits in Rittman in 1897 led to the founding of Wayne Salt, which eventually became Morton Salt - one of Rittman's major employers. E.J. Young, who started the salt company, needed a way to package both his salt and his matches that were made in nearby Wadsworth. Young formed the Ohio Boxboard Co. in 1903, which became Rittman Paperboard and had roughly 1,200 employees at its peak before closing in early 2006.

Transportation Challenges – Rittman is located in northeastern Wayne County and southeastern Medina County. State Route 57 runs through the city, which connects it to Interstate 76 in the north and state Route 585 in the south. Rittman City Manager Larry Boggs says that the city's main goal is to restore a major "brownfield" site, which was the location of Rittman Paperboard. Demolition of the site's buildings is expected in the coming weeks. The nearly 300-acre site will then be renovated into a new industrial park with two different and separate rail spur capabilities. Boggs indicates that planning and preparing for this new park's infrastructure will be the main goal and priority of the city in the next several years.

Rittman completed a "Rails-to-Trails" parkway between the city and the Village of Creston two years ago and would like to connect that system to other rails-to-trails systems. To view a video of this *Community Focus* feature, visit our YouTube channel at [AMATSPanning](#).

Web site – www.rittman.com



Project Updates

The following table lists significant projects that have been awarded between June 11, 2013 to Nov. 5, 2013.

PROJECT	ESTIMATED COMPLETION	AMOUNT
McClintocksburg Road - Bridge replacement spanning Kale Creek in Palmyra Township.	09/01/2014	\$543,603
Fred Fuller Park Drive - Bridge replacement in Fred Fuller Park in Kent.	06/30/2014	\$1,295,226
North Depeyster Street - Resurfacing, from East Main Street to Crain Avenue, in Kent.	11/16/2013	\$169,949
Greensburg Road - Resurfacing, from Etter Drive to Green East Corporate Line, in Green.	10/11/2013	\$924,550
Cleveland-Massillon Road - Resurfacing, from Ghent Road to Ira Road, in Bath Township.	11/21/2014	\$1,019,972
Interstate 76 - Replacement of Clark Mill Road and Summit Road bridges spanning I-76 in Norton.	06/30/2015	\$3,113,611
State Route 59 - Resurfacing and repair of 18 bridges, from Interstates 76 and 77 to East Market Street, in Akron.	09/15/2014	\$6,868,905



CHANGES COMING TO I-271: ODOT is poised to start a nearly \$65 million, 2.6-mile widening of Interstate 271, shown above, to six lanes through Macedonia in 2014. Given the project’s significance to the Greater Akron area, AMATS hosted public meetings on Nov. 19, shown at left, and Dec. 12 at the Akron-Summit County Public Library - Main Branch. The agency sought public comments before amending the area’s four-year Transportation Improvement Program and long-range *Transportation Outlook 2035* to include the project.



Study shows Greater Akron area crashes continue to level off

The number of crashes on Greater Akron area roadways and intersections remains stable, according to the latest three-year analysis compiled by AMATS. The agency's analysis found that there were 50,573 crashes in Portage and Summit counties between 2010 and 2012, which is nearly the same as 2009 and 2011. Similarly, the number of injuries and fatalities remains largely unchanged.

Dave Pulay, AMATS transportation engineer, says that the agency has documented an overall leveling off in crashes on the area's roadways and intersections over the last several years with the total number of crashes hovering in a range of 16,000 to 17,000 per year. "Thankfully, the overall trend over the past 10 years has been down," Pulay observes.



Agency officials believe that the completion of much-needed safety projects throughout the Greater Akron area are contributing to the improving crash totals. The region may see future declines as new projects - such as Cuyahoga Falls' recently completed improvements at the intersection of Main Street and Howe Avenue - will be fully factored in during the agency's next three-year analysis, which will span 2011 through 2013.

For its most recent analysis, the agency identified 123 high-crash roadway sections and 263 high-crash intersections in the Greater Akron area. AMATS prepares its reports based on crash records provided by the Ohio Department of Public Safety. The agency uses this information to identify needed projects throughout the area. Communities rely on the report when applying for Highway Safety Program funds through the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).

Other findings of the analysis are that:

- Akron is home to five of the 10 highest ranked high-crash roadway sections and six of the highest ranked high-crash intersections in the Greater Akron area.
- In Portage County, the highest ranked high-crash roadway section is East Main Street (state Route 59), between Horning Road and the Kent East Corporate Line, in Kent while the highest ranked high-crash intersection remains state Routes 14/303 and 43 in Streetsboro.
- Alcohol was a factor in 4 percent of all area crashes, but was a factor in 44 percent of all fatal crashes.
- The area's intersections account for 46 percent of total crashes during the three-year period.
- Out of 331 bicycle-related crashes, 78 percent resulted in an injury and one of them in a fatality. Twenty-one percent of these total crashes involved children age 12 and under.

Pulay adds that the upcoming freeway analysis for the entire state will be compiled by ODOT. The department's results for the Greater Akron area will be released in the coming weeks and will be posted on AMATS' web site. The *2010-2012 Crash Report* and reports dating back to 2005 are available on the agency's web site at amatsplanning.org.

2013 marks a successful Bike-N-Brainstorm season

AMATS hosted three successful Bike-N-Brainstorm rides in 2013 - one in Kent in April, one in Green in June and a final one in Barberton in September. Together, the three events drew nearly 170 participants with the Barberton ride drawing a record 70 cyclists.

The agency's Bike-N-Brainstorms are an innovative way that the agency uses to gain public insight as to what should be done to improve biking in the Greater Akron area. A Bike-N-Brainstorm is a group bike ride along key corridors so that cyclists may experience firsthand what it's like to bike there. At the end of their ride, group members participate in a brainstorming session with agency personnel to share their ideas as to what can be done to improve bike travel within the area.

Participants in the Barberton Bike-N-Brainstorm met at the Snyder Avenue Trailhead (Wolf Creek Trailhead) and rode along a nearly 10-mile route through various parts of the city including along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and through downtown. The city of Barberton, the Barberton Community Foundation, Neighborhood Development Services, Inc., R-D Bike Shop, ManorCare and SourceCare helped organize the final ride of 2013.



BIKING IN BARBERTON:

Cyclists trek down Barberton's Tuscarawas Avenue, top, and share their ideas afterward in September, bottom.



Information gleaned from this event will be used by Barberton officials as they develop the city's *North-South Community Connection Plan*. In May, the city was one of two recipients selected by AMATS to receive a \$50,000 grant from the agency's Connecting Communities Planning Grant Program for its proposed connectivity plan. The plan will identify how to overcome barriers between residential neighborhoods and downtown and identify potential bicycle, pedestrian and transit enhancements. AMATS Planning Coordinator Krista Beniston says that potential improvements could include bike-related projects.

"This ride was the first that was planned as part of a planning grant study funded by our agency. It was a tremendous opportunity for our agency and Barberton officials to engage the cycling community and consider their ideas almost immediately," she says. The plan should be completed next year and will include additional opportunities for public input.

Among the issues identified by participants during the Barberton brainstorming session were the need for repaved roads, bike lanes or widened berms, improved signage and enthusiasm for an upcoming connector bridge. The city was awarded \$224,000 from the Barberton Community Foundation for the construction of the connector, which will span the Tuscarawas River, from the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail into downtown Barberton near the Robinson Avenue Bridge.

Agency officials are already planning rides for 2014 throughout the Greater Akron area. You may view video features of past Bike-N-Brainstorms on our YouTube channel at [AMATSPanning](#).

Dates to Remember

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Committee/Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
February 17	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Presidents Day
March 13	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom C
March 13	6:30 p.m.	CIC	Akron-Summit County Public Library
March 20	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
May 8	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom C
May 8	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
May 15	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
May 26	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Memorial Day
July 4	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Independence Day
July 17	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
July 17	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
July 24	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
September 1	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Labor Day
September 18	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
September 18	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
September 25	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
October 13	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Columbus Day
October 17	8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Annual Meeting	Sheraton Suites - Cuyahoga Falls
November 11	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Veterans Day
November 27-28	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Thanksgiving
December 11	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
December 11	6:30 p.m.	CIC	To Be Determined
December 18	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Quaker Square Inn, Grand Ballroom B
December 25	*	*	AMATS Offices Closed - Christmas

Persons with disabilities needing assistance are asked to contact Billy Soule, Assistant to the Mayor for Community Relations, 166 S. High Street, Room 200, Akron, Ohio 44308, (voice) 330-375-2189, (TDD) 330-375-2345, at least seven (7) days in advance.

@AMATS is published by the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study, 806 CitiCenter, 146 S. High St., Akron, Ohio 44308-1423. Editorial comments are welcome.

Director - Jason Segedy Editor/writer - Kerry Prater Phone - 330-375-2436 / Fax - 330-375-2275
E-Mail - amats@akronohio.gov Please visit our web site at: www.amatsplanning.org

This report was prepared by the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and the Village, City and County governments of Portage and Summit Counties and a portion of Wayne County.

The contents of this report reflect the views of AMATS, which is responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official view and policies of the Ohio and/or U.S. Department of Transportation. This report does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.