

ST. LOUIS
COMMERCE
MAGAZINE

INTERSTATE

64

**HIGHWAY 40/I-64
USER GUIDE**

The 12-Mile **REBUILD:** A Once in Our Lifetime Project



By Jim Baer

Already, giant elevated ramps are growing towards the sky. Earth has been moved. New roads are being constructed, and homes in the right-of-way have been demolished. Roadwork has begun in earnest and the I-64/40 three-year rebuild is underway. The monumental 12 mile-rebuild from Sarah Avenue in the City to Spodee Road in

the County has started. And it began not a moment too soon.

When the major arterial bridge spanning the Mississippi from Minneapolis to St. Paul collapsed, lives were ruined and nearly everyone took notice. That was a stark reality in what inferior systems could mean in the loss of lives while impeding major trans-

portation routes. Some aged spans here are 50 and 60 years old.

The \$535 million dollar highway rebuild was mandatory. It was just a question of *when* to start. This is the largest undertaking by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) in state history. Within three years, starting January 2, 2008, there will be pain, and in the end there will be tremendous gain.

MoDOT has brought its "A" game to get this project, making certain it will be done professionally, on time and on or under budget.

Suffice to say, if they put a shovel in the hands of lead engineer Lesley Hoffarth, she'd probably start digging along with the rest of the crew. Hoffarth, project director, brings 10 years of unique bridge and road construction experience to the table and oversees crews in the thousands who will convert Highway 40 into a sleek traffic mover.

This once-in-our-lifetime project represents a half-billion dollar investment. More than \$1.8 billion economic output benefit comes to the region as a result. A total of 400 new jobs are being created and 30 new bridge overpasses will span the length of the new road-

"We've already accomplished a lot of the preliminary work. We are either on or slightly ahead of schedule."

**- LESLEY HOFFARTH,
I-64 Project Director,
MoDOT**



STEPHEN DOLAN

to be purchased and demolished, making way for new construction. "We thought we were going to have to buy homes in the 200 range, but it turned out to be less than 70," says Hoffarth.

Originally, planners looked at closing the highway in stages over six to eight years. By closing significant stretches (west of Brentwood Boulevard in 2008, and east of Hanley to downtown in 2009) the project can be completed in just three years.

By using a more modern method of building—Design/Build, the project delivery method combines the design and construction phase into one contract, allowing the contractors to save both time and resources.

"We've already accomplished a lot of the preliminary work. We are either on or slightly ahead of schedule. We want to make sure



(Left to right): Linda Wilson, I-64 Community Relations Manager & Lesley Hoffarth, I-64 Project Director, Missouri Department of Transportation.

way. The project means improved safety, better traffic flow, quicker and safer access to I-170; high-speed ramps from I-64 to I-170, and the end to bottlenecks at Skinker and at I-170.

Tight diamond and single point interchanges replace wide looping exit and entrance ramps. Along the Hanley road stretch and on Eager on the south side of I-64, homes had



Quality Control inspectors test a batch of concrete to make sure it meets specifications.

ECONOMIC IMPACT
\$1.8 BILLION

and do as much work as we can before the rainy season hits," says Hoffarth.

She says attention to detail and quality control is paramount to the success of this project. "We have many inspectors on the job. MoDOT is doing about 10 percent of the inspections, and federal inspectors are doing the rest. We need to pour concrete without any cracks. Cracks will lead to freezing and that's what damages bridges so quickly," she says.

At the same time, the eye is on esthetics. They will, to some degree, be replicating the design work seen presently on overpasses at Lindbergh, Spoede and McCutcheon. "These reflect the richer St. Louis art-deco era, and still look fairly good after so many years of wear. We don't just slap on a façade to a bridge," she says. Plans call for replacing hundreds of trees with new ones, and reducing grassy access areas. "The less mowing, the better," she figures. All facades, walls, bridge materials and railings will be perfectly matched the entire stretch.

"We anticipate a 50-year or more life to these bridges and roads. We will all grow old together," she reasons.

At the same time, MoDOT's community relations' manager Linda Wilson has been on a whirlwind preparing businesses, community organizations, schools and other groups for this challenge.

At a minimum, MoDOT must get 15 to 20 percent of the current traffic load off the roads during construction.

"That's what I've been doing the past 24 months, meeting with everyone who wants to meet and learn about

dealing with the construction," says Wilson. She predicts the shutdown will cause ripple effects that will show up on nearby Clayton and Ladue roads and Olive Street near the project and as far away as I-44, I-55 and I-70 on the periphery.

"People need to be creative during this period. We need people in carpools, riding Metro buses and the MetroLink light rail system," she says.

Wilson has used creative thinking to get schools, for instance, to seek alternative planning. "Say Vianney is playing Chaminade in sports, we have asked their athletic departments to shift their game schedules. Maybe they can play more on weekends than weekdays to take some of the load off the roads. We've asked Ladue schools to look how they plan their extracurricular activities. I am out speaking constantly to hotels, motels, restaurant associations, all offering suggestions and plans," she says.

Getting the big trucking rigs off I-64 is no problem. Inter-state trucks will be routed around the perimeter on I-270. "I worry more about the local delivery trucks. Getting products to Schnucks and Dierbergs is where our focus is these days," she says.

"Gridlock is not the solution. We will help our businesses and our citizens make good decisions and we'll all survive," says Wilson. ■



Options for



Getting Around

Know the alternate roads to your destination

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flex your hours or days; avoid traveling between 6:30-8 a.m. and 4-6 p.m. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about transit programs from Citizens for Modern Transit, (314) 231-7272, www.cmt.stl.org |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work from home or a satellite office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form a carpool or vanpool |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use phone or videoconferencing for meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact RideFinders at (800) VIP-RIDE, www.ridefinders.org |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule appointments to avoid peak travel times | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ride a bike |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ride MetroBus or MetroLink | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get biking suggestions from Trailnet, (314) 416-9930, www.trailnet.org or the St. Louis Regional Bicycle Federation at www.stlbikefed.org |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check transit schedules by contacting Metro (314) 231-2345 in Mo or (618) 271-2345 in IL. www.metrostlouis.org | |

Plan Your Trip

Before You Drive Visit www.modot.org

- Click on the New I-64 for daily traffic updates
- Click on the Gateway Guide for current traffic conditions
- Click on Map My Trip to get street-to-street closures
- Call 511 for current traffic information

On the Road

- Read message boards with current travel times and lane closures

Questions About MoDOT Work

- Call Customer Service at 1-888-ASK-MODOT
- Call 1-64 infoline for project specific questions at (314) 524-9191

For Regular Email Updates

- Sign up at www.modot.org for all St. Louis information
- Sign up at www.thenewI64.org for I-64 weekly updates



Q & A with MoDOT CEO Pete Rahn

Pete Rahn is the CEO for the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and manages the statewide operations of more than 6,000 employees who plan, build and maintain the state transportation system. The Missouri roadway system includes 32,000 miles of highways. Director Rahn recently returned from a conference in China and granted an interview to *Commerce Magazine* concerning the importance of the I-64/40 12-mile rebuild in St. Louis proper.

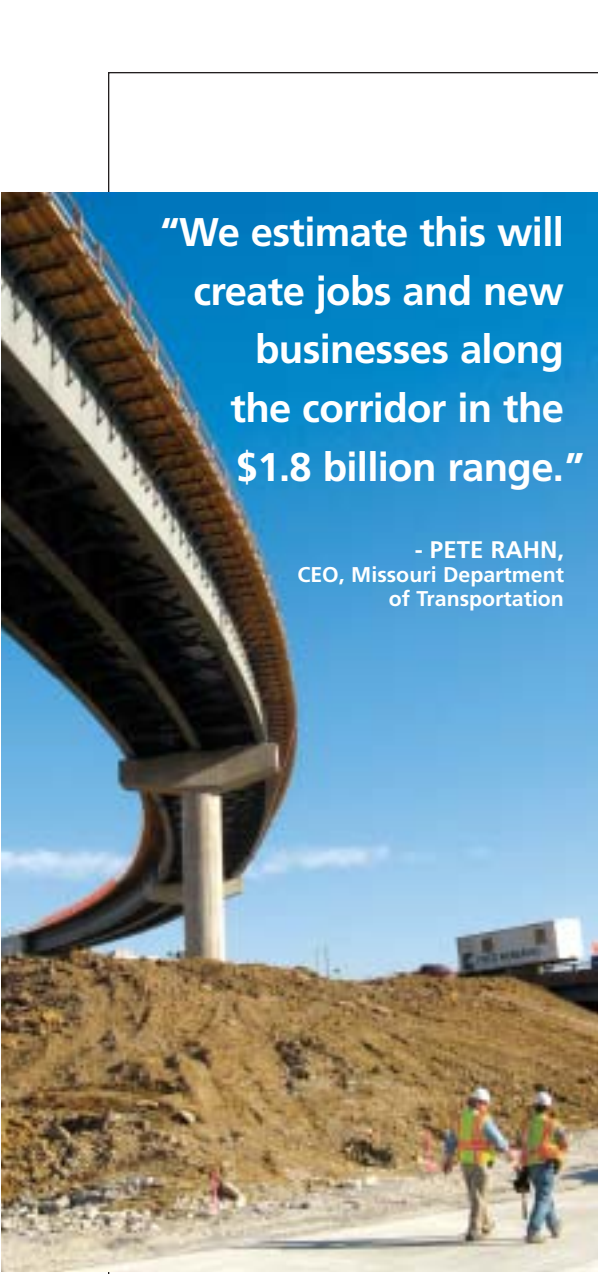


Commerce Magazine: You state that you brought your "A" team to the St. Louis area—I-64/40 project?

Pete Rahn: "I was in error. We brought our A+ team. It is incredible what we are producing, and we have not been disappointed with

the innovative approach by the team. We brought in an outside consultant to work with the design/build concept, and we are trying at least 20 new things with this project. This is a bold move, extremely innovative and will pay off for those who use this sys-

tem. We are getting a lot of project for what we are paying for. I know there is a lot of fear in St. Louis, and we are extremely confident that in the end, this will not be a ball and chain around the ankle of St. Louisans."



“We estimate this will create jobs and new businesses along the corridor in the \$1.8 billion range.”

- PETE RAHN,
CEO, Missouri Department
of Transportation

You have done much in the public relations arena to make certain those who use this highway know what is coming and what alternative plans to make?

Pete: “We are doing everything we can to lessen the pain and the negative impact upon the community. We made a \$1 million grant to businesses to help them strategize and to survive during the construction. Some legislators were critical of this large grant, but we knew this was the right thing to do for the people and the businesses.”

So what will the design look like?

Pete: “It won’t have a space age look. Using stainless steel or materials like that would not fit into the look that St. Louis would want. If you look at the materials, the retain-

ing walls, the piers of the bridges, it will have a look and feel that will be very familiar to St. Louisans. It goes by Forest Park and it will fit nicely into that part of the community. I would say you will see more familiar aesthetics. It was clear that St. Louis did not want to give up park land (Forest Park), so we worked around that. We've added acceleration lanes and an additional driving lane west of I-170 and will make it much safer for everyone."

How did you make the decision to select Gateway Constructors to do the entire project?

Pete: "We had a clean sheet of paper and this is the first time we ever used design/build. We selected Fred Weber and Millstone-Bangert because they have such tremendous road experience and they know the community so well. They both have great reputations and are able to give us 95 percent of what we are dreaming of. Joining that team for design/build expertise is

Granite Construction of Watsonville, Calif. This is the new way to procure and assemble a construction team. Other methods provide opportunities for finger pointing and ways for things to go wrong. The taxpayers have paid for this and now, designers and builders work hand-in-hand and foster more cost efficiency in the process. We had a limited amount of money, and we asked them to do it as quickly as possible."

In your estimation, how long do you think the roads and bridges will last?

Pete: "We design bridges to last 75 years and we know they will last at least 50 years with the projected growth in traffic for this highway. Pavement has to be maintained, but we estimate no high-grade maintenance on the road surfaces for at least 10 years. We say it's like buying a car. You use them up, then buy another one. The better you maintain that car, the longer it will last."

Is this the largest single road project in Missouri history?

Pete: "By far. Building I-70 cost more than a billion dollars, but that was done in different stages. The bridge at Cape Girardeau was in the \$175 million range. We are investing a half-billion dollars in the St. Louis region and we need to be doing a lot more road projects. In China, I found they were investing \$300 billion on roads in the next year and we (the U.S.) spend in the neighborhood of \$70 billion. The Chinese understand how roads impact their economy and their overall transportation system. It is just not in the public conscious for us to do such projects on that grand a scale."

What role overall does this highway project play in the future of St. Louis' overall economy?

Pete: "We estimate this will create jobs and new businesses along the corridor in the \$1.8 billion range. It will produce good paying jobs





A worker directs the flow of concrete onto the deck from one of two concrete pumps.

business went down, did it all bounce back quickly? That's why the study will run for a year after all construction is complete."

What is the overriding importance of this study?

Pete: "We just felt we owed this to the people of St. Louis. We want to find out the effectiveness of our communications and our outreach programs. We need an independent outside view to tell us these answers. We don't fear the results we will get. If something didn't work, we need to hear about it, just as well about all the things that worked well. This will impact large road projects that we do in the future."

Where are you in the RFP Process?

Pete: "The deadline to submit an RFP was October 15. We received three very qualified proposals and we are reviewing them now. Interviews with the selection committee began in early November."

for the next 20 years. We are very aware of the importance of St. Louis in terms of economic growth. St. Louis is one of the engines to drive Missouri's economy. This project will support high quality jobs and a better lifestyle for those who live in the area."

report on information prior to, during and for one year after the construction is complete. We think it is very important to track our success or failures to this unique approach."

This is such a big project that we understand MoDOT has commissioned a Request for Proposal (RFP) to report on the findings of three years of work?

Pete: "Normally, even the largest road project will not have a study of economic impact and regional mobility. We are trying so many unique approaches to this project that we needed to do this study. This study will

What things are you trying to find out through an economic and operational survey?

Pete: "We want to find out things like where did the traffic go during construction? How did they handle alternate routes? Will drivers come back to I-64/40 after finding other ways to get around? We want to know more about the economic impact upon businesses. What was the volume of business during this three-year period? What was the level of jobs? If

Who will study and digest all this data?

Pete: "When I came to this job several years ago, the first thing I did was merge the strategic planning and research teams. We need to share data and disseminate information as best we can. When we are done, we will share this information with everyone. We will share the organizational results with the citizens of Missouri, the media, everyone."

SIDE NOTE ON MODOT SAFETY:

Recently, MoDOT won an award for the highest level of national road safety. Last year, there were 840 fewer driving fatalities on interstate roads nationwide. Missouri was able to account for 161 fewer fatalities of that 840 national figure. That was the highest single drop by any of the 50 states. Missouri has been the single largest contributor to the drop in fatalities nationwide the past year.



How lucky do you feel to be Missouri's Transportation Director?

Pete: "I can't believe how lucky I am to have this job. I feel like the person who throws the saddle on the horse then grabs the horn and holds on for dear life. This is a signature project and it is vitally important to do it well. If we don't do it well, we won't live it down for a generation." ■

A NEW Route

By Jim Baer

Come January, when the wind is howling and the temperature is hovering around the freezing mark, radio listeners will have warmer thoughts while constantly hearing the Beach Boys "I Get Around." This is all part of a civic initiative to assist businesses, tourists, and commuters during the Highway 40/I-64 reconstruction. "Project Get Around" is formed to make sure St. Louis stays "Open for Business" during the massive rebuild.

The program is a partnership of the RCGA, Downtown St. Louis Partnership,

Citizens for Modern Transit, Forest Park Forever, Gateway Arch Riverfront, National Park Service, Metro, RideFinders, City of St. Louis and St. Louis County.

St. Louis CVC Chief Marketing Officer Brian Hall explained that one key effort was creating a website to help drivers, businesses and citizens alike to maneuver around the massive construction congestion and survive with their sanity. The URL is simply www.getaroundstl.com.

"Traffic is like water. It will seek its equilibrium. Like flowing water, it will seek the path

of least resistance. We may have mayhem at first, but it will smooth out in a couple of weeks coming the first of January," says Hall.

"I am super impressed already with the work done by MoDOT, Gateway Constructors and all the contractors involved with the rebuild," he says.

The civic collaborative sought an original grant of \$810,000 to keep everyone informed and received a \$340,000 grant to run its program. Lesser amounts went to communities and local chambers of commerce in the construction zone region.

The grant allows municipalities and companies to purchase assets from the Get Around group including point-of-sale materials, banners, brochures and other soft goods. "Our idea is to unify the entire community, and be the center-point of communication for everyone involved," says Hall. The centerpiece is the website.

Drop-down menus on the website will help readers find open restaurants, businesses, updates for attractions, sporting events, etc. "Every business, from the smallest drycleaner to the largest enterprise can use our website free-of-charge," reports. Hall. "At least 20 percent of the cars have to come off the road, according to MoDOT," and we are determined to help them do this," he says.

HELLO METRO

In October of this past year, MoDOT announced a \$3 million incentive plan to get





BRIAN HALL,
chief marketing officer, St. Louis CVC



people to use alternate forms of transportation other than their cars. The grant went to Metro to get people to consider all modes of transportation to help the region survive during the construction process. With the agreement, Metro will document ridership each month. For every additional rider, Metro will receive \$1, up to a maximum of \$1.5 million each year for two years. MoDOT is also providing additional park and ride lots at Interstate 44 and Eureka and other locations, and recently completed the new parking lot next to the Richmond Heights MetroLink station. "I'm pleased to announce MoDOT and Metro are working together to help get more people off the road and onto transit," says MoDOT Director Pete Rahn.

At the same time, MetroBus and MetroLink are boosting alternate forms of transportation, according to Jeff Siwak, director of marketing for Metro.

"When the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure was held



Metro

earlier this year, we transported 20,000 riders downtown to the event. That was an enormous effort for us," says Siwak.

"Not everyone realizes we are one and the same system with both buses and trains and serving riders alike," he says.

Adding to the system is Metro's No. 1 priority. Additional bus lines are going into service, and more cars will be added to the existing MetroLink corridors. "We need extra service to reduce stress and strain on the alternate roads," he says.

"If everyone would consider using our services just one or two days a week, or even one or two days a month—that would make a tremendous difference in terms of volume on the roads," says Siwak.

February is an important month for Metro. County voters will have a chance to approve a tax levy to allow Metro to continue operating at its current level and begin to offer expanded MetroLink rail service. "We still have capacity to bring on new riders to our system," he says in conclusion.



JEFF SIWAK,
director of marketing, Metro

FINDING A RIDE

From Granite City and the Madison County Transit Authority, Joe Wright heads up the RideFinders operation.

RideFinders is funded under Clean Air acts of Congress to reduce overall air pollution. Cars, of course are the main contributor to this toxic waste. St. Louis ranks very high in childhood asthma based primarily because of high levels of airborne pollutants and gases.

RideFinders maintains a fleet of 85 vans that transport workers, primarily from the outer reaches such as St. Charles, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe counties to downtown.

"We are like a free dating service for riders. We match up riders with preferences—smokers with smokers, non smokers with non smokers, etc."

Van pooling has been quite popular, especially with large companies and federal agencies. Vans come and go daily to Boeing, the Defense

Mapping Agency, the National Personnel Records Center in Overland and Scott Air Force Base near Mascoutah.

From a miniscule starting data base, RideFinders has grown to a listing of more than 1,600 individual names with the month of June alone showing a net gain of 400 more car pool participants. Five years ago, 300 companies took part in the Van Pool program and that number is 1,200 today.

"Ride Sharing has benefits for the entire region. That translates into \$6 million in overall savings and we have reduced air pollution by two million pounds." As Wright indicated, "170,000 cars have to go somewhere. MoDOT needs to reduce car ridership during construction by 15 to 20 percent, and we're helping do that," says Wright.

KICKING INTO HIGH GEAR

Planning to rebuild I-64 from the City to Spoede Road has been in the works for 10 years. In 2006, as start-up neared, the RCGA jumped in head first to facilitate business survival strategies for the region.

Susan Stauder, vice president infrastructure and public policy, was an active force in bringing parties together.

"RCGA worked with other stakeholders and MoDOT and invited businesses to meetings to talk about what was coming. We needed to spread the word that businesses could take action to get



JOE WRIGHT,
director, RideFinders





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SUSAN STAUDER,
vice president infrastructure and public policy, RCGA

their employees to work during construction and keep their customers, too.”

Stauder, who has 25 years experience in

and County, Metro and Ride Finders. This group linked up with the St. Louis Convention and Visitors Commission, Arch

infrastructure improvements and public policy was determined to keep disruptions to a minimum during the two-year construction phase.

“We wanted to mitigate the disruption that was going to occur to the many businesses along the route and when MoDOT selected Gateway Constructors as the project builders—everything kicked into high gear,” she says.

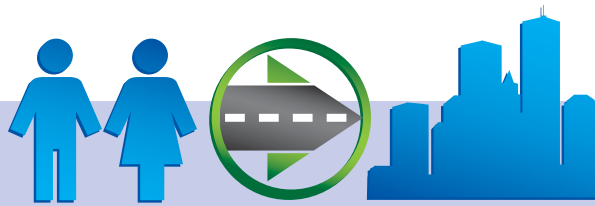
Out of the initial meetings in 2006 came a partnership that included Citizens for Modern Transit, the Downtown St. Louis Partnership, St. Louis City

Riverfront and the various attractions in Forest Park. The new, expanded collaboration was subsequently awarded \$340,000 in funding under a “Business Access” grant from MoDOT to help maintain access to businesses, institutions and attractions along the corridor. The catchy web-based program called “GetAroundSTL.com” resulted.

“We continue to offer businesses help in getting their ‘access’ programs off the ground. We put together meetings, bring parties together and discuss best practices to keep businesses open and thriving,” says Stauder.

“We are going to be going through a challenging two years and we will need to use every tool in the tool box to ‘Get Around.’ Everyone agrees that transit is one of the answers to avoid a big slowdown in commuting,” according to Stauder.

“People (business owners) just need to understand that big changes are coming and they’d better be prepared,” says the RCGA official. ■



Options for Employees

By Jim Baer

From large to small, St. Louis' companies are giving their employees options to get around orderly during the I-64/40 rebuild project.

Case in point is Commerce Bank. Diane Kroner, Commerce Bank's employee relations manager explains.

"We have 1,300 employees, spread out from Bonne Terre, Mo. to downtown. The major population base is at the corporate towers in Clayton. The headquarters' operation is nearly within view of the rebuild project.

Commerce issued an employees' survival kit, complete with maps, suggestions how best to get around and reference to various helpful websites.

"It is critical that we continue meeting the needs of our customers. The first thing we did was conduct an employee survey. We asked our employees: Where do they live? What routes do they take? And what was the typical drive time to their work location?

"The response rate was 75 percent, that was very high and got our attention," says Kroner.

Out of the survey came 11 major employee initiatives, ranging from flextime expansion



STEPHEN DOLAN

▲ DIANE KRONER, employee relations manager, Commerce Bank

to shifting work hours more to Saturdays. "We introduced RideFinders and 58 (employees) signed up. Right off the bat, we had 20 people starting to carpool on a daily basis."

Kroner checked around with BJC and Enterprise Leasing to see what they were doing for their employees.

"We are mainly a relationship-based operation, so we can't have too many employees working from home. We did expand our flex hours to accommodate our employees," she says. "Our focus remains on productivity." Asked if the shifting and accommodations will continue after the construction phase is complete, she says, "We'll see what happens."

Commerce issued an employees' survival kit, complete with maps, suggestions how best to get around and reference to various helpful websites. Some non-essential corporate duties were shifted away from headquarters to available bank office space in Kirkwood. "We are trying to use satellite operations to our fullest," she says.

Meanwhile, Washington University in St. Louis continues adjusting and accommodating for its 20,000 employees both on the Hilltop and at the Medical Center.

"The first thing we did was issue free Metro passes to all our employees and students. We are fortunate to have MetroLink serve both our locations," says Steven Hoffner, assistant vice chancellor of Washington University.

One innovative initiative was a fleet hours program through the auspices of Enterprise Leasing. "A lot of our employees were concerned with being able to leave for meetings or making a doctors' appointment. Now, they can check out a car for an hour or so, use a speed pass and be on their way with our transportation," says the vice chancellor. Renters pay just \$8 to \$10 per hour for this privilege. At the same time, the university just opened a new underground parking garage with 200 plus spaces currently available.

Washington University strives to keep its staff and faculty fully informed. "We send out a weekly email that talks about the Highway 40 lane restrictions and gives details of all the detours. Our people are adapting to this quite well," says Hoffner.

AmerenUE has been taking part in the planning process now going on nearly 14



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- STEVEN HOFFNER,
assistant vice chancellor,
Washington University

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months. Chris Marchioro, PhD, managing supervisor Workforce Planning and Policy has sat in on numerous large company plan sessions with companies the likes of Anheuser-Busch, A.G. Edwards and Enterprise Leasing to name a few.

“We are fully prepared and ready to go,” says the supervisor. For one, Ameren developed a unique intra-company website loaded with pertinent information to help maneuver around the construction zones. “When we told our employees this would not just be a construction project—but an actual shut-down, ears started to perk up,” he says.

Metro has 9,000 employees in four

states; 3,000 in the metro and 2,200 living in Missouri and 800 in Illinois. Marchioro figures that approximately 1,300 of the overall total will be impacted either moderately or severely.

“We are encouraging our employees to use public transit,” he says. The company is subsidizing a \$60 per month Metro pass with \$30 and the rest is paid by employees under the PERK pre-tax program. “Getting all those cars off the road is just the environmentally responsible thing to do. We will have some call center employees working from home, but that will be limited,” he says. Ameren even sponsored a transit fair on campus to

orient employees to different public transportation options.

What Ameren has come up with is more flex hours and a shift of work schedules. “That has been a corporate cultural change for us,” he indicates.

Ameren has stepped up its Metro shuttle service, running riders from Union Station safely to their campus just a few blocks away. “We had already been doing that for safety purposes and we’ve stepped that up. Shuttles now run every 10 minutes, and the downtown campus is open 24-hours a day.”

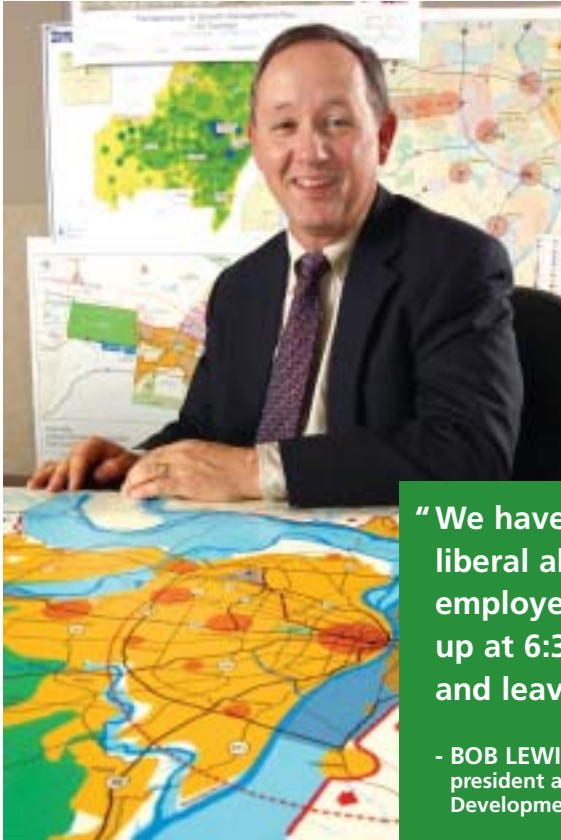
“If something big comes up like a natural disaster or a terrorist attack or even an ice



Ameren has stepped up its Metro shuttle service, running riders from Union Station to their campus just a few blocks away.

storm, we have to get our repair crews around. The less cars on the road, the better we will all be,” concludes Marchioro.

Recently AmerenUE earned a “Best Workplaces for Commuters” designation. Best Workplaces for Commuters demonstrates that alternatives to drive-alone commuting, such as mass transit, carpools and teleworking are economically beneficial,



"We have become more liberal about the hours our employees work. Some show up at 6:30 in the morning and leave by 3:30 p.m."

- BOB LEWIS,
president and principal partner,
Development Strategies

yielding value to workers, employers and the environment. AmerenUE is one of only five Fortune 500 companies in Missouri to earn this designation. Earning this title means AmerenUE has met the National Standard of Excellence in commuter benefits, a standard created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Small companies have to make plans too.

Development Strategies, a small downtown economic development firm with 20 employees has the bulk of its professional staff on the road much of the day.

Company professionals consult with urban planners, communities and real estate operations about creating the best possible economic developments. "Highway 40 has been a bit of a main street for us to get back and forth to our clients," says Bob Lewis, president and principal partner of Development Strategies.

"We met early in the process and discussed the alternatives among our entire staff. We've considered everything from the PERK program to serving free breakfast for early arrivals. We have become very liberal about the hours our employees work. Some show up at 6:30 in the morning and leave by 3:30 p.m. Instead of always visiting the offices of our clients, we are suggesting finding alternative meeting places, maybe halfway between the two places," he says. "Obviously we have to do something, we are all in this together," he reasons. ■



City & County

Work to Make Rebuild Smoother

By Jim Baer



“We cannot **not do this project, nor can we collapse from the weight of this project.”**

- GARRY EARLS, P.E.,
COO, St. Louis County

The buy-in by many municipalities alongside the highway I-64/40 rebuild was far from automatic. Garry Earls, P.E., COO for St. Louis County can recount the battles. For instance:

- The village of Westwood wanted to build and close gates on Conway Road, limiting access to residents only
- Webster Groves wanted to shut Elm Avenue to through truck traffic
- University City wanted to stop the lane expansion of Midland Boulevard

“Some cities feel like they won the battle—but they certainly lost the war,” says Earls from his command post for St. Louis County roads atop the ninth floor of St. Louis’ County Government Center.

Down the hall is the office of County Executive Charlie Dooley. “Charlie has made it clear to all of us, keeping the arterial roads open and moving during the project is our No. 1 job.”

Failure is not an option. “We cannot **not** do this project, nor can we collapse from the weight of this project,” says Earls in a commanding and clear voice.

The central corridor, where highway 40 cuts through is the golden triangle of economic growth and achievement for St. Louis

STEPHEN DOLAN



“A \$2 million upgrade will allow drivers in the downtown area quicker access to adjacent arterials and highways.”

- TODD WAELTERMANN,
director of streets, St. Louis City

STEPHEN DOLAN

County, or for that matter, the region.

Earls has charts to substantiate his notions:

- Of the entire St. Louis County population, 221,572 live in the impacted area (I-44 to the south and Midland Blvd. to the north)
- 195,129 jobs are in this area
- 13,975 businesses are located within these boundaries
- The property tax base of this area is \$5 billion
- 36 percent of the workforce of St. Louis County is located in Clayton, Richmond Heights and Brentwood

Status quo will not do. “Clayton Road is our most valuable access road located closest to the highway. We have taken every inch of road and maximized its use. We haven’t taken anyone’s land away, but we’ve restriped the road and we’re able to add more capacity. This road is very valuable because it links hospitals on both ends. We have our emergency vehicles now equipped to control the traffic signals should they need to do so,” he says. “We can transport hospital patients by helicopter, but you can’t take a fire truck on a helicopter,” says Earls.

Earls and his planners are trying everything in the book. For one, he highly suggests every driver sharpen his or her ability to be courteous. “If someone is coming from a side driveway, take a moment and let them in. Try and plan your trips to be making right turns

only. The UPS shipping firm plans routes for its drivers making right turns only.”

Ladue Road promised also to be a choke point. Road crews have added traffic lights to Warson and Ladue; Lay and Clayton, Price and Clayton, Litzsinger and McKnight. “The deal is, we put these lights in to move traffic along, and they are not coming out once the construction is done,” says Earls.

St. Louis County, along with the City of St. Louis and Metro, got significant shares of federal mitigation money to work out eventual traffic overloads. The County got \$3 million, the same for the City and \$6 million for Metro.

St. Louis County is looking at all options. People can now pay their taxes at satellite offices, rather than making trips to Clayton. “Tax bills can now be paid over the phone and by computers. We are trying everything. “We really don’t have any extra road capacity on our major streets. We have to try alternative things. In 2010 (when construction is complete) we will have a great road system and it will support the county for the next 30 years. Transportation drives economic development and we’re going to lead the way,” says Earls.

Meanwhile, the City of St. Louis is doing a number of things to prepare for the highway shutdown.

According to Todd Waeltermann, director of streets, the City has increased the Traffic Division’s general revenue budget to respond quicker to incidents. This was supported by the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen.

“These funds are being used to staff our operations 24/7. Our changes are centered on providing maximum support for the 10 periods of rush per week.”

The City received \$3 million from East-West Gateway Council of Governments to hire a consultant to synchronize signal operations. This consultant will inventory the entire City signal system, check to make sure that signals are operating properly and actually have a contractor on board to make physical repairs.

According to Waeltermann, “Another project, that was actually planned prior to the rebuild, will assist in traffic flow is the upgrade of all signals in the downtown area. This project covers all signals from Tucker and between Washington and Chouteau. A \$2 million upgrade will allow drivers in the downtown area quicker access to adjacent arterials and highways. This is a very difficult project, working within the confines of downtown with the old infrastructure. We are anticipating a late spring early summer completion.”

Naturally, the City Streets Department is gearing up for winter weather. “Severe weather will naturally worsen traffic flow, as it does under current conditions. Our winter force of equipment and manpower has been increased 25 percent to provide clearer roads sooner.”

Like good scouts, both the City and County are well prepared to tackle impediments to moving traffic in and around the reconstruction zones for the next three years. ■