

Highway Extension and Research Project for Indiana Counties

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Purdue University, through its School of Civil Engineering, has pioneered and maintained active highway research and extension programs that go back as far as 1915, when the first Purdue Road School was organized. These early programs were mainly an extension effort and consisted of the annual Purdue Road School for both state and county highway officials, supplemented by extension visits to the counties by representatives from Purdue's School of Civil Engineering. This phase of Purdue's highway extension effort has continued and expanded through the years until the present time. Today the Purdue Road School is recognized as one of the nation's important highway conferences, and is attended by some of the nation's foremost highway leaders; yet it affords all segments of the highway fraternity, state, county and city officials and materials and equipment men, here in Indiana with the opportunity to develop a closer relationship through the discussion of mutual problems.

In 1936 the Joint Highway Research Project was organized at Purdue as a result of legislation which authorized the State Highway Commission to appropriate funds to Purdue University to conduct programs of highway research and extension. The text of this legislative act and its amendment is shown in Appendix A.

The Joint Highway Research Project, which operates as a cooperative effort between the State Highway Department of Indiana and Purdue University, over the years, has matured a great number of highway research reports which cover the full range of highway design, construction, maintenance, administration, and operation. These reports have produced many direct benefits and contributions to the procedures of the Indiana State Highway Department. In this way, the Joint Highway Research Project has gained national recognition in the field of highway research and has served as a model for the development of similar organizations in many other states. We are

proud of our accomplishments in this area. Numerous schools and workshop conferences have been organized, the monthly issue of *Highway Extension News* finds its way into the hands of almost every highway official in the state, over 100 reprints of published research reports have been made available, and over 200 men have received advanced degrees in the field of highways at Purdue.

During the past year the Highway Extension and Research Project for Indiana counties was organized at Purdue to implement legislation passed by the 1959 General Assembly which appropriates funds to Purdue University for the purpose of conducting extension and research programs specifically for the county highway departments throughout the State of Indiana. This most recent legislation gives the staff of the School of Civil Engineering a welcome opportunity to expand their existing highway extension and research program at the county level. Most certainly an expanded program of extension and research is desirable as a public service to lend guidance and assistance to county highway officials in their problems of management, planning and operation of county highway departments throughout the State.

Because this is the newest highway extension activity to be established at Purdue and because of the tremendous interest in the use of the county highway system, it therefore seems timely and appropriate to review the organization of this new project and the opportunities it affords for improving our highway facilities at the county level. To present a more complete picture of this newly organized project the text of the bill which was passed and became Chapter 331 of the 1959 Acts of the Indiana General Assembly is reproduced in Appendix B.

In accordance with the requirements of this legislation, Dean G. A. Hawkins, director of the Engineering Experiment Station, convened the first meeting of the advisory board July 7, at Purdue.

The membership of this newly-appointed Advisory Board is as follows:

FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION:

North West District—Charles E. Craw, Commissioner of Tippecanoe County, West Lafayette.

North East District—Warren Sollars, Commissioner of Delaware County, Muncie.

West Central District—Eric Boesen, Commissioner of Putnam County, Greencastle.

South West District—Fred Hoffman, Commissioner of Dubois County, Ferdinand.

South East District—P. L. Redington, Commissioner of Decatur County, Greensburg.

At Large—P. M. Cross, Commissioner of Dearborn County, Aurora.

FROM THE FACULTY OF PURDUE UNIVERSITY:

Prof. K. B. Woods—Head, School of Civil Engineering and Director, Joint Highway Research Project.

Prof. J. F. McLaughlin—Associate Professor of Civil Engineering and Research Engineer, Engineering Experiment Station.

Prof. H. L. Michael—Associate Professor of Highway Engineering and Assistant Director, Joint Highway Research Project.

Prof. W. H. Goetz—Professor of Highway Engineering and Research Engineer, Engineering Experiment Station.

Prof. E. J. Yoder—Associate Professor of Highway Engineering and Research Engineer, Engineering Experiment Station.

Prof. R. D. Miles—Associate Professor of Highway Engineering and Research Engineer, Engineering Experiment Station.

At this first meeting, the advisory board worked largely with the organization of the project and "Highway Extension and Research Project for Indiana Counties" was adopted as the official title. For the first year, Prof. W. H. Goetz, Purdue, was elected chairman of the advisory board, and Mr. P. M. Cross, commissioner of Dearborn county, was elected vice-chairman. The board will alternate the office of chairman and vice-chairman on successive years between a member from the county commissioner group and a member from the Purdue group. Professor Jean E. Hittle of Purdue was appointed secretary to the board.

Since this first organizational meeting, the advisory board has held four other meetings, at which times proposed study plans have been reviewed for approval; likewise progress on approved projects have been reviewed. The advisory board has made substantial progress in getting organized and in developing sound programs of research and extension.

Because HERPIC is a rather new organization at Purdue, its extension and research program are by no means fully developed. However, the main theme of the initial effort has been an extension-type activity wherein guide manuals, that set forth recommended procedures,

are prepared and released to county highway officials to assist them in the solution of their local road problems. In this approach, we see a great opportunity to make available to our county highway officials a wealth of information that has been developed in the past, by our Joint Highway Research Project staff and by other organizations in the field of highway extension and research.

In addition to the preparation and assembly of existing information, we also see great opportunities to organize workshop conferences on the application of improved procedures to county highway management and operation. Such workshop conferences are to cover groups of counties, say five to ten counties, and would be attended by county highway officials to discuss and review local road problems and recommended methods of correction and improvement. In fact, we plan to initiate such a series of one-day workshop conferences over the State in the next few weeks. Appropriate notices of these meetings can be expected in the near future.

SUMMARY

This reviews briefly the new county highway extension and research program at Purdue. We are optimistic that tremendous good can result from this newly formed project; most certainly a great opportunity exists. As our local communities expand and develop, so likewise does the need for and interest in county road development. The application of the results of the HERPIC program to Indiana's county road systems will unquestionably produce many direct benefits to local community development throughout the State.

Purdue University, through its School of Civil Engineering, is proud to serve the citizens of Indiana in this new program and welcomes the opportunity to join with county officials in producing better highway transportation facilities at the county level.