

# What's Up - What's Coming

For registered users of the  
Fiscal Management Information System

April 1, 2009

## Funds Control Training is Popular

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## FMIS System Updates

New **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Program Codes**, available for obligations and funds, have been loaded into FMIS.



The **L04A** report is back in production. Minor changes were made to capture changes to prior year adjustments.



**Business Objects XI training** was completed on March 4.



**Congressional Districts have been updated in FMIS.** Run report T61A for a listing of Congressional Districts by County. Note that redistricting changes are **added** to the table. Deletions are not made due to their use on historical project records. Notify the FMIS Team of any errors or omissions.



**Multiple Demo ID testing** has concluded. Thanks to the State and Division users who helped in this daunting task. Implementation is still on schedule for early April. An announcement will be sent to our user base prior to implementation.



Many FMIS 4.0 users have recently noticed a **delay in the processing of transactions for demonstration projects from the Technical Corrections Bill** (Public Law 110-244). Further guidance was required from the Program Office before the FMIS Team could proceed. For any demonstration project which receives an upward adjustment in budget authority, the Program Office has elected to incorporate those amounts with the 2009 allocation. Other changes, such as project description, are being entered in FMIS.



**Standard Place Codes are in a different ... place.** The source of an important bit of FMIS 4.0 information has changed. The two-digit numbers for States which were once administered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) are now managed by the U. S. Census Bureau. [The Census Bureau's own site succinctly states](#) the reason for the Codes and makes clear that the responsible agency has changed:

*American National Standards Institute codes (ANSI codes) are a standardized set of numeric or alphabetic codes issued by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to ensure uniform identification of geographic entities through all federal government agencies. These standards replace the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) codes previously issued by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).*

The current tables can be found at: <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ansi/statetables.html>. 



**Winding down Motor Carrier projects:** The FMIS team is working with FMCSA at the HQs level to determine the disposition of FMCSA projects in FMIS. Division Financial staff should await guidance before attempting to close out FMCSA projects.

Regression testing is being conducted on the next generation of **Business Objects XI (BOXI.3)** which will be implemented this quarter. In a welcome change, users will be able to save queries that they are in the process of creating. There are other user-friendly updates.

Our **BO-XI training** is being revamped in structure, content and deliver method. The comments received from class attendees on the Course Evaluation Surveys have been very useful in helping us design more effective training. We are exploring the possibility of producing a self-paced online course. Currently, we offer training at the beginner and intermediate levels. More advanced training will be offered next year. 📧

## FMIS Team Contacts

For assistance, users may email the FMIS Team at [FMISTEAM@dot.gov](mailto:FMISTEAM@dot.gov). Individual members of the Team may be contacted by telephone or email:

[Donna L. Jones](mailto:Donna.L.Jones@dot.gov), FMIS Team Leader  
202-366-2924

[Eric Cline](mailto:Eric.Cline@dot.gov): 202-366-2864 (Editor of *What's Up—What's Coming*)

[Jatona Hatcher](mailto:Jatona.Hatcher@dot.gov): 202-366-2846

[Keenan Hillary](mailto:Keenan.Hillary@dot.gov): 202-366-6254

[Edward M. Johnson, Jr.](mailto:Edward.M.Johnson.Jr@dot.gov): 202-366-2911

[Joy K. Kelly](mailto:Joy.K.Kelly@dot.gov): 202-366-2922

[Paul D. Smith](mailto:Paul.D.Smith@dot.gov): 202-366-8761

[Mark Tessier](mailto:Mark.Tessier@dot.gov): 1-866-758-8565

## Communications

By Donna L. Jones

Communicating is the most essential element of all that we do. In Joe Dailey's interview with Eric Cline (starting on page 5), notice how often he makes reference to various forms of communication amongst stakeholders in the Federal-aid Highway Program. Information must be readily available to all interested or affected segments of the Fed-aid community. In recent years, the FMIS Team has made great strides in improving communication. This newsletter is an example. It started as a year-end report to our users in 2005. It has progressed into this newsletter that we are continuously working to improve. Over a year ago, we launched a website – **FMIS User News and Information**. We call it the FUNI (pronounced "funny") pages. It serves as a portal which provides access to information which addresses questions frequently asked of us.

Two group email accounts have been established for your use in contacting us. The address [FMISTEAM@dot.gov](mailto:FMISTEAM@dot.gov) delivers your emails into the personal inboxes of each member of the FMIS Team. Your emails addressed to [FMISUPPORT@dot.gov](mailto:FMISUPPORT@dot.gov) reside in a shared inbox which can be accessed by all FMIS Team members as well as our technical support team.

Frequently, we post notices on the FMIS log-in screen. These messages generally pertain to matters which affect system availability, such as downtime. When we need to reach all users, even those who access the system infrequently, we may send messages via UPACS. This tool pulls email addresses from each user's UPACS profile. A valid email address in the user profile is a security requirement for access to FMIS. Mail returned to us as undeliverable could result in the user's FMIS access being terminated. Check the email address in your profile – we want to be able to communicate with you.

Another form of communication is the training course evaluation forms which are sent out to training attendees. Your ratings and comments are important to us. They help us design more effective training to fit your needs. So, please return the evaluation forms. Let's keep information flowing in both directions. 📧

## Funds Control Training Inaugural Sessions

We hear you  
**We hear you**

Improvements are being made

On February 26, 2009, we sent an email to all FMIS users in which we announced training in FMIS Funds Management. To say that we underestimated the demand would be an understatement. Within one hour after the email was sent out, all sessions were fully booked. Soon afterwards, we received over 50 emails. The response to the training offering was gratifying, but the registration was frustrating for our users. For that, we offer you our apology and assurance that we are making improvements.



We intended to conduct the first three series, solicit comments, and then refine elements of the training to better suit the users' expectations. This is being done for the next set of courses. (See page 8.)

**Viewing vs Participating:** All of our training is designed to be participatory: not just a presentation. Attendees are strongly encouraged to participate at their desk and computer. More exercises are being added which will require

that participants have access to a computer.

What were we thinking? During the past year, we have conducted training in Business Objects XI via web-conferencing. Our experience as well as participants' course evaluations identified the registration process as an area which needed improvement. As a result, for the Funds Management training, we utilized the automated registration process managed by the National Highway Institute. It is a great improvement; however, the structure of this training - three sequential sessions - posed different challenges for registration.

We appreciate your patience while we work to tailor all elements of the training process from registration to presentation to develop a top-notch FMIS training program.



**Limited number of sessions:** The FMIS has over 2,000 users. The training was scheduled to accommodate only 75 users. It was not our intent for the March/April sessions to be the only offerings this year.

**Registration information:** It is very important that registration information is complete:

- first and last name as shown in your UPACS profile with common name in parenthesis, such as William (Bill);
- organization and location, such as FHWA Texas Division or Minnesota DOT;
- complete telephone number;
- complete email address

We need to know who you are and how we can contact you. Incomplete registrations are more likely to be cancelled.

**Cancellation:** The registration through NHI does not offer a mechanism to cancel a registration. Please notify us via email to [FMISSUPPORT@dot.gov](mailto:FMISSUPPORT@dot.gov) if you are unable to attend the training for which you are registered.



## Interview: Financial Management Director Joe Dailey

*Joe Dailey has a history of tackling tough jobs. In his youth in northeast Ohio, he did a stint as a steelworker. He served on active duty as an Armor Officer in the U. S. Army for 10 years. Shortly after Operation Desert Storm, he left the military and went to work as a civilian employee for the Army. He worked for 15 years on financial management issues in various places and ended up at the Pentagon. He was there during the 9/11 attacks. In 2005, he joined the newly-formed Office of Financial Management within FHWA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer. With credentials as both a Certified Government Financial Manager and a Certified Defense Financial Manager, Joe is at home when he is solving financial problems. He talked with What's Up Editor Eric Cline.*



***Joe Dailey: He Only Looks Relaxed.***

**EC:** Joe, this newsletter is called *What's Up*. So, what's up?

JD: SAFETEA-LU [*Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users*, the authorizing legislation which governs surface transportation funding] is up for re-authorization this fiscal year. Big issues are going to need to be resolved, such as the role of the Federal government in surface transportation, the role of the private sector, integration of new tools such as congestion pricing, and the mechanism used to fund transportation infrastructure to deal with the long term financial stability of the Highway Trust Fund which funds the majority of Federal-aid.

And while we are planning to administer the large amount of recovery funding, it's complicated by the fact that we operated under a Continuing Resolution until the 2009 Federal budget was passed on March 11. So while the Appropriations Committees

were focused on finalizing the 2009 spending bills, they couldn't work on the 2010 Federal budget, all of which translated to a bit of uncertainty for all of us.

In short, this is going to be a challenging year for FHWA.

***EC: With all these challenges, what can Division and State personnel do to increase their effectiveness?***

JD: FHWA Federal-aid Division Office staffs and their State DOT partners should work to increase the amount of transparency in their longstanding relationships. The Divisions can be effective partners in their oversight role if they have ready access to state project management information and financial data of their States.

To help States build their financial expertise,

*Continued on Page 6*

# Interview: Financial Management Director Joe Dailey

*Continued from Page 5*

we are working on expanding our use of distance learning techniques to increase availability of training to our nationwide user community.

We are working towards a long range goal of hosting a periodic multi-day user conference for Division and State FMIS users.

**EC: How does the Office of Financial Management maintain good ties with the Division and State offices?**

JD: We have monthly web and video conferences with Division staff. The CFO, DCFO and I usually are speakers at one or more national or regional transportation conferences and meetings.

As a member of AASHTO's Standing Committee on Finance and Administration (SCOFA), in this role I can speak directly with State Transportation officials to build and maintain a strong relationship with our State

partners.

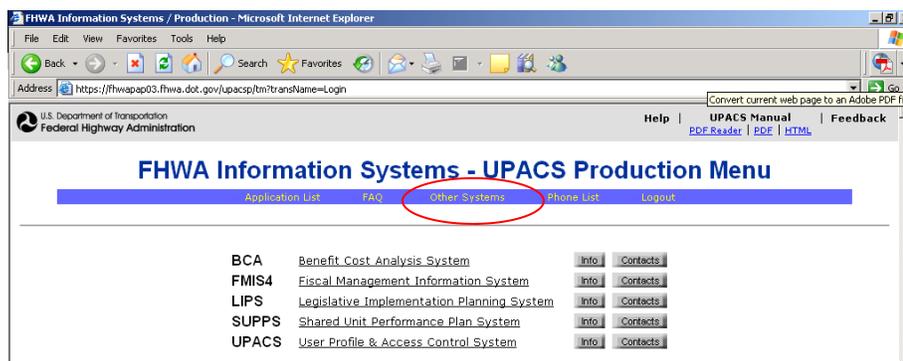
**EC: What else is the Office of Financial Management involved in that affects Division and State offices?**

FHWA Federal-aid Divisions are our main customer in this office. We work through them in resolving policy and procedural questions from their State partners. I also oversee FHWA's FIRE [Financial Integrity Review and Evaluation] program [a review and oversight program that supports FHWA's annual certification of internal and financial controls].

FMIS issues are a bit unique since States access the system in a variety of ways (electronic interfaces, direct access, Division input) so we are always mindful of maintaining those electronic interfaces when implementing system patches and enhancements such as the Multiple Demo ID upgrade we are working

*Continued on Page 7*

## FMIS TEST: The "Hidden" Benefit



The FMIS Team is pleased to note that numerous Division and State users are signing on to use FMIST (the test environment) to better prepare them to work in the live data of FMIS 4.0.

However, a common question is now being sent to the FMIS team: where exactly is FMIST?

The answer: From the main UPACS production menu, click on "Other Systems" on the blue menu bar along the top (see above). The next menu after that will include FMIST. 🗑️

## Interview: Financial Management Director Joe Dailey

*Continued from Page 6*

on. And while it is a separate system, we are also mindful of the critical role of RASPS to our State partners' financial stability. I spend several hours a week on operations and maintenance issues for the FMIS system.

One of my other responsibilities is the development of a career discipline for FHWA field financial managers. I co-chaired a task force of agency financial experts that developed a set of financial management competencies and a work force plan. The Federal-aid and Federal Lands portions of that program are pretty well fleshed out. Now we are working on expanding it to FHWA Headquarters personnel in the next year or so. As part of this work, we encourage detail assignments for Division personnel. We've had detail assignments hosted here almost continuously since this office was created. Both HQ and Division learn to put faces with names, they learn about our procedures and perspectives and we learn about theirs. Plus, we can always use the extra pair of hands here!

**EC: You mentioned the FMIS system -- any thoughts on where FMIS is headed in the future?**

JD: FMIS is a nationwide system that is interfaced electronically with the accounting or project tracking systems of twenty-five of the States. Good Information Technology policy will ensure that there will always be department and government-wide initiatives to consolidate and reduce the number of Federal systems. Despite that I'd say that FMIS will be around for a while, given its large user base and critical role in administration of the Federal-aid Highway Program.

We encourage State DOTs, at their own initiative, to work with both Divisions and

AASHTO to create a prioritized list of suggestions, and modifications. We have a governance committee of Headquarters and Division users called the FMIS Focus Group who assists us in setting system priorities and direction.

The recent modification to accommodate Multiple Demo IDs is a case in point. It came from a real need stemming from the large number of earmarks in SAFETEA-LU and recent appropriation bills. The FMIS Team worked with Divisions and States, and continues to provide information and education. We also solicited State and Division support in testing the upgrade.

No matter what issues come up, teamwork is what gets them solved, it truly does take a village.

**EC: Any parting thoughts for the FMIS user community?**

JD: Not to be satisfied with the current state of things, we need to constantly strive to improve our ability to use the data that we collect to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our operations. This isn't just limited to using traditional tools: relational databases and spreadsheets. Integration of new software tools (mash-ups, social net works, and other Web 2.0 tools) where they add value is a challenge that we all need to rise to. These tools will present opportunities to deal with some of our current and future challenges, so becoming familiar with them now is key if we are to continue to be relevant in the future. Like many others I'm an old dog learning new tricks too -- I've got accounts on LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com/in/jsdailey>) which has a very interesting Q&A feature as well as a personal Twitter account (<http://twitter.com/joediver>). 🐦



**Becoming a Broker of Knowledge**

Recently, I had a choice between: spending about \$90 on a new printer for my home, or pushing a piece of plastic to the left for a couple of seconds to fix my old one. Easy choice, eh? But only if I realized I had one.

Let me back up. A few months ago, my home PC printer (i.e., my private property) went on the fritz. It stopped pulling in paper from the tray. I cleaned all reachable surfaces, but could see nothing to fix; these days, products are built to be replaced, not repaired. But replacement was \$90 for even the sorriest, cheapest black and white printer.

I googled the name plus "repair." I got a lot of ads for companies that would do it ... for about \$90.

I tried one more time. I googled the name and the terms "repair" and "doesn't pick up paper." This time, the first result was from some company's blog, with a surprising solution. It seems the ink carriage had jumped its track which (strangely, to me) affected the paper feed. Solution: just open the ink carriage cover and push the carriage to the left a couple of inches.

Keeping in mind that it was on my shoulders if I damaged my printer even further (and their disclaimer said the same thing) I tried it. It has been a couple of months now, and I've used the printer regularly with no problems.

Since it took me two seconds to save \$90, I basically earned \$45 per second. Maybe I should talk to HR about adjusting my salary proportionately.

That brings me to the thought for the day: FHWA Executive Director Jeff Paniati has said in a couple of different written communications: "More than ever, we have to be a broker of knowledge rather than a broker of money."

There's no doubt we broker money. But knowledge can help to increase the effectiveness of the available money. I saved \$90 by having a small bit of information. The FMIS system contains far, far more than a bit of knowledge. How much is it able to save? The training our office provides is also knowledge; how much money are Divisions and States able to save, I wonder, because of our training?

Do you have an example of how a piece of vital information, or a software tool, or a documented procedure, was introduced and resulted in a measurable cost saving? If so, please drop me a line at [eric.cline@dot.gov](mailto:eric.cline@dot.gov). I would like to feature you in a future issue. 📧



**FUNDS MANAGEMENT TRAINING SCHEDULE**

All Sessions are 2-4 p.m. EDT

**SESSION I**

- June 2 ([Click here to register](#))
- June 8 ([Click here to register](#))
- June 16 ([Click here to register](#))
- June 23 ([Click here to register](#))

**SESSION II**

- June 4 ([Click here to register](#))
- June 10 ([Click here to register](#))
- June 17 ([Click here to register](#))
- June 24 ([Click here to register](#))

We have thirty student slots for each session. The Funds Management Training is designed for hands on participation; **group viewing is not advised**. In addition, the Sessions build upon each other. **If you are unable to register for Session I, please do not register for Session II.**

**SEPARATE FROM THE NEW TRAINING:**

If you attended a previous session but were unable to complete all three sessions, please send an email to [Joy.K.Kelly@dot.gov](mailto:Joy.K.Kelly@dot.gov). Indicate in the email the session(s) that you missed. We will conduct makeup sessions starting in April.



**American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) links**

A wealth of information is available on the ARRA at the Federal Highways official site at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/economicrecovery/index.htm>. Of particular note to State officials might be the Questions and Answers section consisting of accumulated questions from State Departments of Transportation, at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/economicrecovery/qandas.htm>.



*What's Up — What's Coming* is celebrating its 80th anniversary of continuous publication this year. As part of that, we are proud to reprint part of the very first edition of the publication which was the ancestor of *What's Up*, as it originally appeared 80 years ago today! Enjoy!

# The Bureau Bugle April 1, 1929

News-letter of the Finance Office of the Bureau of Public Roads

## Motorcar Manufacturers request "bail-out" from the Congress

The Captains of the motor carriage crafting industry have warned Congress that, absent a financial favorment to which they give the fanciful novelty term "bail-out," they may suffer a Calamaty! The list of companies so affected includes a "who's-who" of American industry:

Anchor Buggy  
Biddle Motor Car Company  
Bryan Steam Car

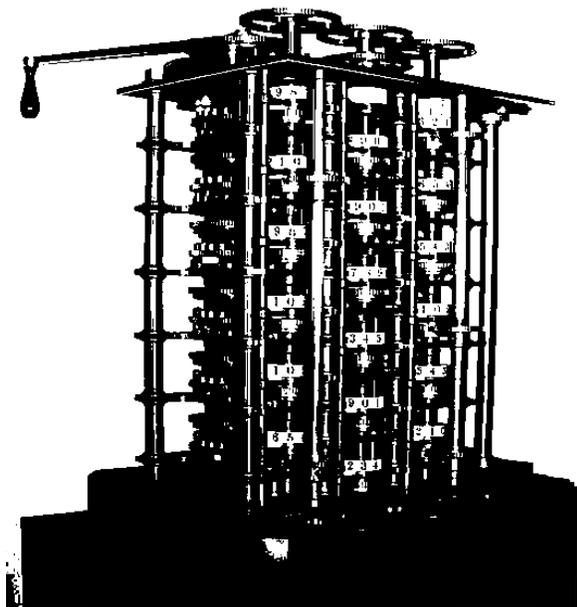
Buffalo Electric Carriage Company  
Crane & Breed  
Crow-Elkhart  
Eisenhuth Horseless Vehicle Company  
George W. Davis Motor Car Company  
Grout Brothers  
Pope-Toledo  
St. Louis Motor Carriage Company  
Stevens-Duryea

May they never disappear!

## Diverse New Class of Engineers Hired



## Get Ready for the "Paper-less Office", as BPR Finances Become Auto-mated



No, you have not accidentally opened the Buck Rogers comic serial! This fancy gadget, the "Difference Engine," was recently acquired by the BPR to handle calculations. It can multiply up to **two times faster** than a man with a pen and paper, and it can add columns of **up to five decimal places!**

**NEWS ROUND-UP:** The BPR shall take a one-time charge of \$25,000 this FY to **install asbestos** into all its facilities. ● **The Dirt Road Trust Fund**, which funds the BPR, may go broke soon without **refreshment from the public purse of the Treasury**. Due to the agency's success in paving over dirt roads, revenue from them has declined. The two contradictory goals, of both paving over dirt roads and getting revenue from dirt roads, seems to have caused this budget shortfall, and may lead to a re-assessment of how the agency is funded, so that this **never happens again**. ● New study "**15 Saves Lives**" suggests an optimum national speed limit. ● Several HQ employees were recently disciplined for **excessive personal use of the telegraph**. ● The Missouri Division Office has gotten a new, **private telephone number** to replace its previous party line. ● Congratulations to **Joy Kelly** for 10 years of service!

Answer to the Page Four Puzzle, up-side-down

April Fools! Some real historical accounts of the excellent work done by the Bureau of Public Roads during its history as an independent agency are available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/pubsandprod/>