

Date: 27 January 2006
Site: Kansas DOT Library
Staff: Marie Manthe, Librarian

Site Visit Summary

History

The KDOT Library is part of the Research Unit of the Bureau of Materials and Research, under the direction of Dick McReynolds. The Kansas Department of Transportation Library moved into a new space at KDOT Headquarters in downtown Topeka in September, 2004. Previously, the library was located in the basement of the department's Materials and Research Center.

The KDOT Library was founded in 1962 when the State Highway Commission of Kansas hired its first librarian. Over the next 40 years, the library grew far beyond any one person's ability to maintain it. Everything that was ever received was saved, including many duplicate copies, and items which were not transportation-related. Although the result was an overwhelming amount of material to weed and account for, the KDOT Library today has a rich collection of older and hard-to-find reports and documents because of it.

A Kansas Quality Management team was formed in 1996 to examine the library's role in the context of KDOT's goal of providing the best service possible to both internal and external customers. The team's report, *The Paper Chasers*, was published in May 1997. It included recommendations for acquisitions, document retention, creation of an online catalog, and the purchase of additional moveable shelves. The shelves were obtained, and an online catalog was started some time later, but the retention guidelines were not fully enacted until after the librarian retired in late 2002. By that time, it had been decided that the KDOT Library should be relocated from the Materials and Research Center to the new KDOT Headquarters building.

Marie Manthe started her job as the KDOT Librarian in September 2003 and inherited the task of bringing order to the large backlog of unclassified materials. In the months between the prior librarian's retirement and Marie's arrival, 35 tons of paper had already been weeded and recycled in preparation for the move. A classification system had also been developed by Becky Klenklen-Welsh, the Research Unit's Publications Writer, and many KDOT items had already been cataloged and labeled. Much progress has been made, but they are still weeding and evaluating what was salvaged. This is an ongoing project for Marie and her staff.

Staff

Marie Manthe, Librarian
Krystal Taylor, Office Assistant
Christi Huard, Scanning Operator

Marie is a solo librarian at KDOT. This is her first full-time professional librarian position, and she is thrilled with her job and all of its challenges. Marie's library degree is from the University of Arizona. Marie has two "long-term temporary workers" to help her out in the library. Krystal was hired for the new Office Assistant position in November 2005. It is a part-time position, approximately 20 hours per week. Krystal assists Marie with many of the library's day-

to-day tasks, including shelving and labeling books, and checking in magazines. She also does much of the data entry which is necessary to add items to the Electronic Library Catalog. Christi is the Scanning Operator. While she is located in the KDOT Library, her primary tasks support the growth of KDOT's Electronic Library Catalog. She scans and creates PDF files of KDOT publications, Transportation Research Records, and other items on an as-needed basis. The files can then be added to the Electronic Library.

Although Becky Klenken-Welsh is not a member of the library staff, she deserves mention here for her digitizing efforts on both the KDOT Electronic Library Catalog, which is available on KDOT's intranet site only, and the KDOT Research Reports Catalog, the external internet site containing PDF files of KDOT's K-TRAN research reports. Becky and Marie work in concert to populate the internal catalog with full-text reports whenever possible, and directions on how to obtain those that are not available in their entirety in the catalog. The result is a truly fantastic tool and a potential source of digitization expertise the pooled fund may want to draw on in the future.

Physical Space

The new KDOT Library is-very spacious and welcoming. The stacks are 3 shelves high, which is due to the floor's weight limit, and Marie likes the open feel the lower shelves provide. Many older wood and glass bookcases were salvaged from the former location, and they house reports and books. An assortment of old archival photos were mounted, and are displayed throughout the library. Marie has managed to mix the old and new in her library, giving a sense of past, present and future to her operation.

The library's previous location in the Materials and Research Center is now the library annex. That space contains mostly reports published prior to 1980, older serials that they plan to keep indefinitely (as opposed to current three years at the main library), and duplicate copies of titles held in the main library. There are some international materials at the annex as well, including items from Switzerland, Japan, China, Korea and India. Marie visits on an as-needed basis to fill requests and shelve materials.

Collection

The KDOT library contains:

- Current and historical KDOT documents and manuals
- K-TRAN reports
- Publications by federal agencies and national associations such as:
 - FHWA
 - AASHTO
 - TRB
 - ASTM
 - NCHRP
 - ASCE
- Other Kansas State agencies' publications
- Other states' transportation-related publications¹

As mentioned above, numerous documents are available in digital format through the KDOT Electronic Library Catalog. The collection is arranged by an in-house numbering system, initially

¹ KDOT Library brochure, *KDOT LIBRARY: The Corporate History Resides Here*.

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developed by Becky, and modified by Marie as needed. Subject headings and keywords come from the TRT thesaurus and the keywords provided by the authors of the technical reports.

Plans & Goals

Marie's main concerns for the KDOT library are budget constraints, and continuing to work through the backlog of materials while processing new acquisitions in a timely fashion. The goal of cataloging all of the states by January 2006 was met, as Washington D.C. materials have just been completed. The next group of materials that are a priority are older and current Kansas reports, AASHTO publications, and additional TRB publications beyond Transportation Research Records. The TRR series has been a priority for full scanning, and will continue to be: numbers 1 through 500 are already in the internal catalog, each article with its own entry, and Christi and Becky are now working to add numbers 501 through 1000. Marie's long-term goal is to finish the backlog and have everything in the catalog, so she'll know what's in the library, and will be able to locate requested items quickly and easily.

KDOT Expectations for the Pooled Fund Study

Marie believes strongly in the benefits of transportation knowledge networks. Her hopes for KDOT's involvement in the pooled fund study are: assistance with OCLC costs, better communication and resource sharing among the members, and the desire to participate in this national effort to establish a transportation knowledge network.

Photos:



Marie Manthe in the Reference Area

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More about KDOT

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