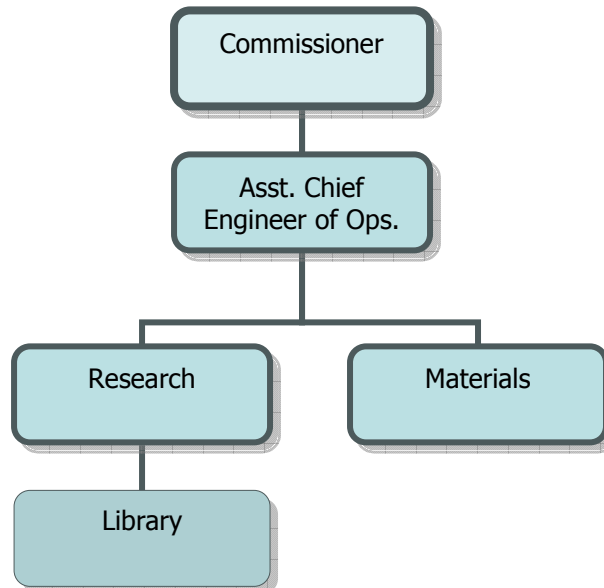


Date: 22 April 2008
Site: Mississippi Department of Transportation
Staff: James Watkins, Research Director
Tina Leavy, Administrative Assistant

Site Visit Summary

History & Overview

The Mississippi Department of Transportation Library is part of the Research Department. Mississippi is the only state where the DOT is overseen by an elected commissioner, and does not have a secretary of transportation. The commissioner is not tied to the governor and answers only to the legislature. The library does not have a dedicated budget, similar to most DOT libraries.



Staff

The Research Department has a staff of 15 that includes a computer specialist, office manager, administrative assistant, pavement management and research staff.

James Watkins is the Research Director at MDOT. The library is one part of his many responsibilities, which include operational functions, such as nondestructive testing equipment, pavement management which have become Research Department responsibilities over time.

The Library is staffed by a part-time by Tina Leavy, the Research Department Administrative Assistant. Tina has learned a great deal about library operations on her own by populating the Library's MS FoxPro database and by filling requests for information and resources within the DOT. She is very customer service focused and is eager to learn more about library operations by participating in the pooled fund and the Eastern Transportation Knowledge Network.

Physical Space

As for most libraries, space is a concern at MDOT and James would like to invest in digitizing the entire collection and keeping materials on CDs and backed up on a server. He predicts they will only lose physical space in the future, not gain any square footage or library storage or shelving improvements. Since this is a trend that is likely to continue, James is interested in the idea of digitizing sizeable portions of the collection and stresses the need for redundancy in the process so that data is protected.

Collection & Services

The Library has 12,546 items in the FoxPro database as of the site visit. The collection includes Mississippi and out-of-state reports, TRB and AASHTO materials, and some legal and historical resources. Some of the older research reports and historical photographs are not cataloged in the MS FoxPro database at this time. Tina catalogues the new materials and adds 50-100 new titles each month. The FoxPro database was designed in-house and has worked well for them for about 12 years; however we discussed the need to participate in reciprocal borrowing and to get the MDOT collection into TLCat. Part of the benefit of pooled fund membership is the technical assistance MDOT needs in the library software selection and purchase process. In order to move forward with resource sharing and TLCat, the MDOT library needs cataloging software that is MARC compatible and will allow Tina to continue cataloging in text fields. OCLC Batchloading is their preferred system to continue adding records and updating holdings in WorldCat and TLCat once the initial conversion and upload is complete. We estimate with the MDOT software purchasing guidelines, data conversion, training that they can go live with the catalog and begin their OCLC subscriptions in the second half of 2009.

Information and reference services are handled by request, following the "pull" model of delivering information. The lack of staff and training hasn't allowed MDOT to "push" information out to the agency and has also curtailed outreach to potential customers. James believes that most of the department is unaware of the depth of the collection and its value, and may in fact be scarcely aware of the library's existence. He would like to change that.

James is eager to participate in a national transportation library network and has tasked Tina with representing MDOT in ETKN. He sees the developments on the NTKN as movement in a positive direction and a chance to expand MDOT's access to information and improve its library's services by sharing best practices. Tina is new to the systematic and established practices in libraries and plans to learn as much as she can by working collaboratively with other information professionals and is very interested in the possibilities.

MDOT's Expectations for the Pooled Fund Study

LTRC's priorities for the pooled fund study going forward are:

- OCLC subscription cost subsidies
- Adding holdings to WorldCat and TLCat
- Marketing of library services and outreach to potential customers
- Support in participating in ETKN and related efforts,
- Connecting with and learning from special librarians that work in transportation

More about MDOT:

[MDOT Web Site](#)

[MDOT Research Reports](#)