

Date: 16 February 2006
Site: Oregon DOT Library
Staff: Laura Wilt, Librarian

Site Visit Summary

History & Overview

The Oregon Department of Transportation library was established in 1937, making it one of the pooled fund's oldest libraries. The library has been moved several times, but usually within the headquarters building in downtown Salem. In 2000, it was decided that the library was to be closed. However, after trying to farm out the collection to various offices, the decision was reversed and the library survived this close call.

Laura Wilt has been the ODOT librarian for the past two years. When she arrived, she realized that many publications were not cataloged, some since 1994. They were instead arranged numerically (i.e., NCHRP and FHWA publications), however catalog access seemed a non-issue for these kinds of publications. The catalog was only available on the librarian's desktop, and customers were accustomed to retrieving these publications by going to the shelf and browsing by number. Knowing this level of access was not what she strived for, Laura launched the department's first webpac and spent six months waiting for IS to set up the server while she cataloged feverishly, determined to get as many records in the database as possible. The EOSI system is now operational and the webpac is available on the ORDOT intranet. Laura hopes it will be on the internet eventually. Currently the library is using many of the EOSI system modules including cataloging, GOPAC (OPAC), and the databridge (Z39.50 gateway). Serials and circulation are not used at this time.

Chris Warden, Records & Media Manager, is Laura's supervisor. The library is currently under Business Services in the organizational chart, which also includes graphic arts, photo video, aerial photography, large document reproduction, and general files/history center. Laura indicated that they will be changing the name of the unit in the near future to be more representative of the group. Chris is an enthusiastic supporter of the library. He says the library used to be a place where books and periodicals were handed out, but now with Laura, it has become an information center and more fully a part of the research process.

Laura is working at forging more of a relationship with ODOT's Research department, and it is in fact Research who is sponsoring the library in the pooled fund. Laura has developed a wonderful PowerPoint presentation to market the library's services¹, and sends welcome letters to new agency employees². She would like to add a library services brochure to the new employee welcome packet, and be made aware of new hires in a more systematic way with the help of the Human Resources office. Emailing tables of contents has proven to be an effective outreach tool as well.

¹ Laura's PowerPoint presentation can be viewed at <http://www.ctcandassociates.com/lpfblog/?p=42>

² ODOT Library new employee welcome letter can be viewed at <http://www.ctcandassociates.com/lpfblog/?p=42>

Staff

Laura Wilt, Librarian

When Laura took the job at ODOT, her position was administrative. Since then it has been restructured to the state librarian level. The library originally had one library assistant, but that position was done away with in the late 1990s. Laura earned her M.L.S. from Emporia State University.

Physical Space

The library is located in the basement of the ODOT headquarters, a space it has occupied since 1994. Laura feels the visibility is not optimal, but it is quite accessible and most transactions are by telephone or email. There is plenty of room to grow, which Laura feels is an advantage. Another plus is the library's proximity to the graphic arts, maps and history center. The library and history center had no prior relationship before Laura came to ODOT in 2004. Now Laura and Pat Solomon, the ODOT archivist, work closely together to pool their resources to assist patrons. The history center was established in 1990 and has a rich collection of correspondence, photographs, and publications. There will be a seismic retrofit of the building in the future, and that may offer an opportunity for a more visible location, although no date has been set for the renovation.

Collection & Services

Monographs - 14,000

Serials (active titles) - 65

Audiovisual - less than 50

Online databases - 60+ available through the state library

CD-ROMs - 100

The collection is heavy in highways and bridges with planning, geo-hydro and geo-environmental materials also being well represented. As noted above, there is a [wide selection of databases available through the Oregon state library](#), although Laura would like to see more engineering databases in the future. There are office collections around the agency, and Laura says the current custodians are receptive to having the titles added to the catalog. There is another collection at the materials lab, but it is not affiliated with the ODOT library.

Laura rates the following services in order of demand at ODOT:

1. Literature searches for roadway and bridge research
2. Research requests from within the agency and from the public
3. Video requests
4. Article and publication requests
5. A/V equipment requests
6. Training/presentations

ODOT Expectations for the Pooled Fund Study

Laura is interested in the pooled fund's ability to provide platforms for information sharing among transportation agencies. She points out that not only do many state DOTs don't have libraries and would benefit from being part of a network, that marketing and promoting library services are essential to raising visibility of DOT libraries within the agencies fortunate enough to have them. Laura is very interested in having the ODOT library's holdings represented in TLCat and participating in the group catalog. We also discussed the potential for OCLC's Content DM for photos and historical collections, if funds were to become available. Laura has investigated applying for grant money – perhaps federal matching funds and using private grants to offset the costs. This has been put on the back burner since the most recent reorganization at ORDOT. Assistance with original cataloging and serials cataloging is also high on Laura's wish list.

Photos:



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