

Construction & Materials Research Report

July 2011

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MoDOT Transportation Research and Innovation Library Support: Fiscal Years 2010-2011

Prepared by

University of Missouri-Columbia
and Missouri Department of
Transportation

Final Report

RI09-024

**MoDOT Transportation Research and Innovation Library
Support: Fiscal Years 2010-2011**

Prepared for
Missouri Department of Transportation
Construction & Materials

by

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16. Abstract: In 2003, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), Research Development and Technology (RDT) division contracted with the University of Missouri to implement an automated library system. To maintain this system, two graduate students were hired from the University's School of Information Science and Learning Technologies (SISLT). Unfortunately, despite these improvements, staff turnover and inconsistent support created obstacles to ubiquitous library access. To resolve these issues, while also seeking to offer a system of better information dissemination, a full-time librarian was hired in 2006. In 2008, the librarian resigned her position; however, a new two-year contract was signed to hire a replacement. This report provides a review of activities and accomplishments to ascertain the direction in which the library is moving.			
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Executive Summary:

To provide information for employees, MoDOT's research division cataloged their library using an integrated library system in 2003. Now staffed by the University of Missouri and partnered with the Missouri State Library, MoDOT's library has grown precipitously. This is because a full-time librarian was hired five years ago to remove obstacles to information access.

This report discusses the activities of that librarian. Though not everything can be documented in a single report, 262 Short Reference questions were answered and 297 Literature Searches were conducted during the past two years. Some 7,061 electronic and print items were circulated and 4,572 more were added to the library; a 117 percent increase. The library also engaged numerous partners and borrowed 346 items free of charge, while maintaining a high level of satisfaction.

Based on these facts, it may be said that past barriers to library access have been removed. This is evidenced by a variety of activities undertaken. Consequently, things are moving in a positive direction.

Still, MoDOT is a different organization than it was in 2003 due to a recent restructuring. The "information landscape" has changed thanks to shifting technologies. Consequentially, this report concludes that in order to build upon past accomplishments, a strategic review of the library should be undertaken. Past objectives have been met necessitating this evaluation.

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Problem, Background and Significance:

In 2003, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), Research Development and Technology (RDT) division contracted with the University of Missouri to implement an automated library system. The division's library used an outdated, legacy catalog. Moreover, unlike many state departments of transportation, Missouri had no central transportation library causing technical information to be scattered across the state.

Improvements – detailed in two RDT research reports – eventually led to the realization of a usable, modern online public access catalog (Nemmers et al. 2004). To maintain this system, two graduate students were hired from the University's School of Information Science and Learning Technologies (SISLT). Unfortunately, despite these improvements, staff turnover and inconsistent support created obstacles to ubiquitous library access. Even utilizing an automated catalog, MoDOT could only manage publications on an ad hoc basis as time and expertise allowed.

To resolve these issues, while also seeking to offer a system of better information dissemination, a full-time librarian was hired in 2006. The library also joined two regional consortia, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Missouri State Library to combine efforts and became involved in a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Pooled Fund Study.

Keeping with past trends, work was again contracted out to the University of Missouri. In 2008, the librarian resigned her position; however a new two-year contract was signed to hire a replacement. This report provides a review of activities and accomplishments to ascertain the future direction of the library.

Biennial Library Report:

Five years ago, a report by the London-based Butler Group found that searching for information costs employees around 10 percent of their time (Butler, 2006). This conclusion may be suspect, but the thrust of its argument is not; time is money and professional employees spend time searching for information to do their jobs. At the Missouri Department of Transportation this is true for most “knowledge workers.”

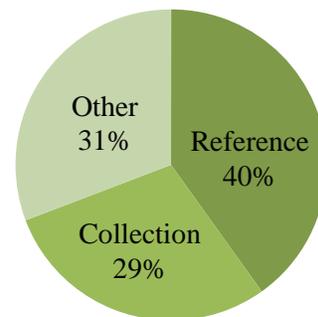
This report details how MoDOT’s library benefited the agency. It does so by reviewing activities from June 1, 2009 to May 31, 2011. Subjects are broken into six areas: Time Spent, Reference Services, Circulation, Collection Development, Networking/Collaboration and User Satisfaction. A conclusion is made that past barriers to library access have been removed. Finally, several recommendations are provided regarding the library’s future.

Time Spent:

Every quarter the library estimates how time was spent on various tasks. These tasks are broken into three categories. Estimates are documented in a quarterly report. To provide a baseline measurement, a detailed evaluation was conducted in 2009 which found that most figures match a real and objective reality.

Assuming that the baseline evaluation was accurate, by averaging staff time (two years’ worth) a breakdown followed: Reference Services – 40 percent, Collection Development – 29 percent and Other – 31 percent (Figure 1). As a point of clarification, “Reference Services” included time spent directly serving patrons and meeting their factual and information requests. “Collection Development” included all duties related to building and maintaining the library. Finally, “Other” referred to collaborative work with external groups, special information projects and similar ancillary tasks.

Figure 1: Percent Time Spent, 2009-2011



An analysis of the results showed that 60 percent of staff time for the past biennium was spent on non-reference activities. Accordingly, the library focused on duties that were envisioned when a full-time librarian was hired five years ago. These duties included building the collection and the “Other” tasks mentioned earlier.

Reference Services:

The increased focus on non-reference duties, however, should not be taken as neglect. Since the current contract began, Reference Services accounted for the library’s greatest expenditure of time, and for good reason; providing support to staff freed them to pursue their specialized primary responsibilities. For example, engineers were better able to focus on building roads rather than searching online databases. MoDOT’s library operated according to this paradigm.

To determine the extent of biennial operations, figures were collected using standards defined by the Midwest Transportation Knowledge Network (MTKN), a regional consortium (Appendix A). These were broken into two areas: Short Reference and Literature Searches.

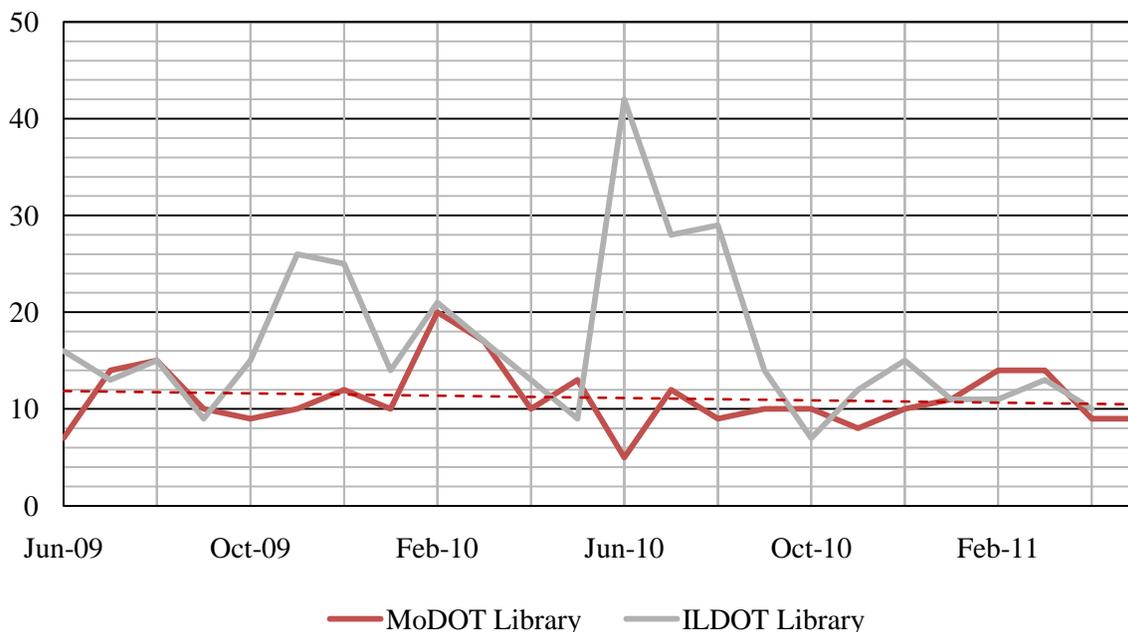
Interestingly, many arguments made about the value of Reference Services can be quantified. A 2007 study by Outsell, Inc. found that, “Information end users with access to an enterprise library [...] realize substantial benefits [...]. Assistance from such a function, or access to the tools or databases it provides, result in an average time savings of nine hours per interaction and saves \$2,218 in direct costs” (Strouse, 2007). A second less formal study at the Minnesota Department of Transportation concluded that Literature Searches save 16 hours per transaction. Short questions were found to save 2 hours per transaction (Baldwin, 2004).

Short Reference:

Without fully evaluating these conclusions, it is possible to use them as a guide when ascertaining value added. As a case in point, 262 questions were answered by the MoDOT librarian over the past two years. In comparison, Illinois DOT’s library answered 385 questions for a period that was one month shorter (Figure 2). Reference questions, for tracking purposes, were counted as service requests that required less than 15 minutes to answer.

Ostensibly, library service saved the organization money in the following way. Assuming a number of simple factors; first that employee time is worth an average of \$26.00 an hour based on the Missouri Blue Book, and second that an average of 2 hours were saved per request, the resulting total comes to \$13,624 (Secretary of State, 2009). The number is imprecise, but ultimately what matters is not the result but the story it tells – that the library provided a substantial benefit.

Figure 2: Reference Questions by Month, 2009-2011



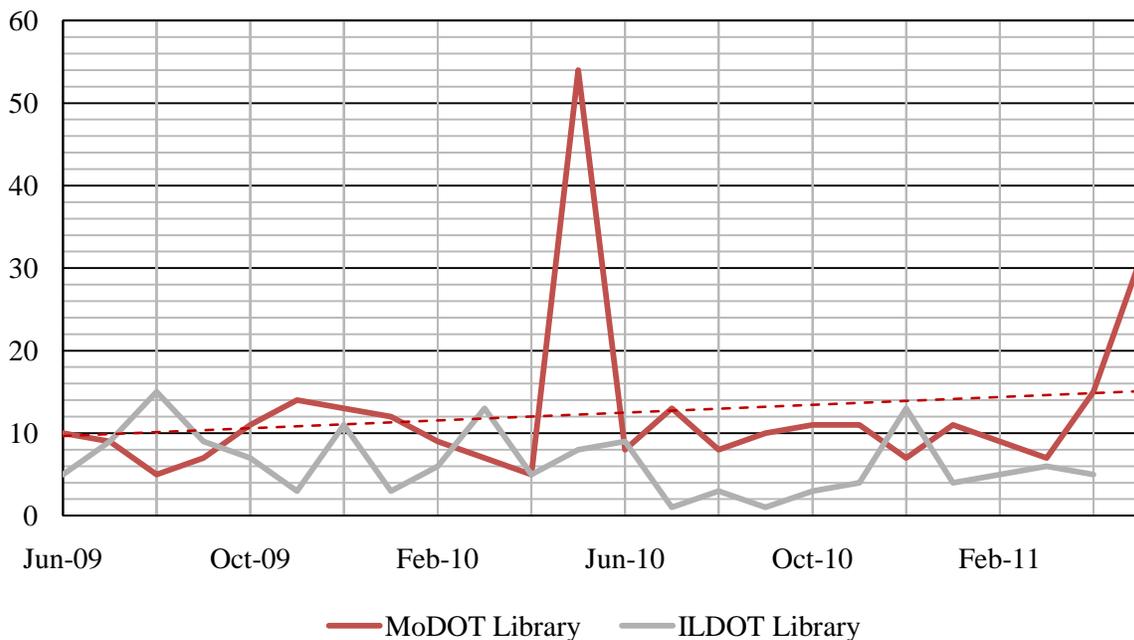
Literature Searches:

While answering quick questions helped staff, the most beneficial support provided by the library came from detailed searches. Reflecting again upon the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT's) library, it should be recalled that Missouri answered fewer short questions during the past two years. For detailed searches their roles reversed. In Missouri an emphasis was placed on providing comprehensive research support.

For the same period, MoDOT conducted 297 Literature Searches, while IDOT completed 148 (Figure 3). Once again, by assuming Baldwin and Strauss' findings the library saved staff time. At 16 hours per search, the library saved the state an estimated \$123,552. This is a substantial number, if not also a methodologically satisfying one.

Finally, it is possible to check the two aforementioned reference studies against one another. The results are promising. When taking into account Baldwin's time savings estimates, and when these figures are calculated for all MoDOT Reference Service figures, the average is 9.5 hours per transaction. This is in line with what was found by Outsell, Inc. and shows that, minimally, their conclusions about efficiency supported one another.

Figure 3: Literature Searches by Month, 2009-2011

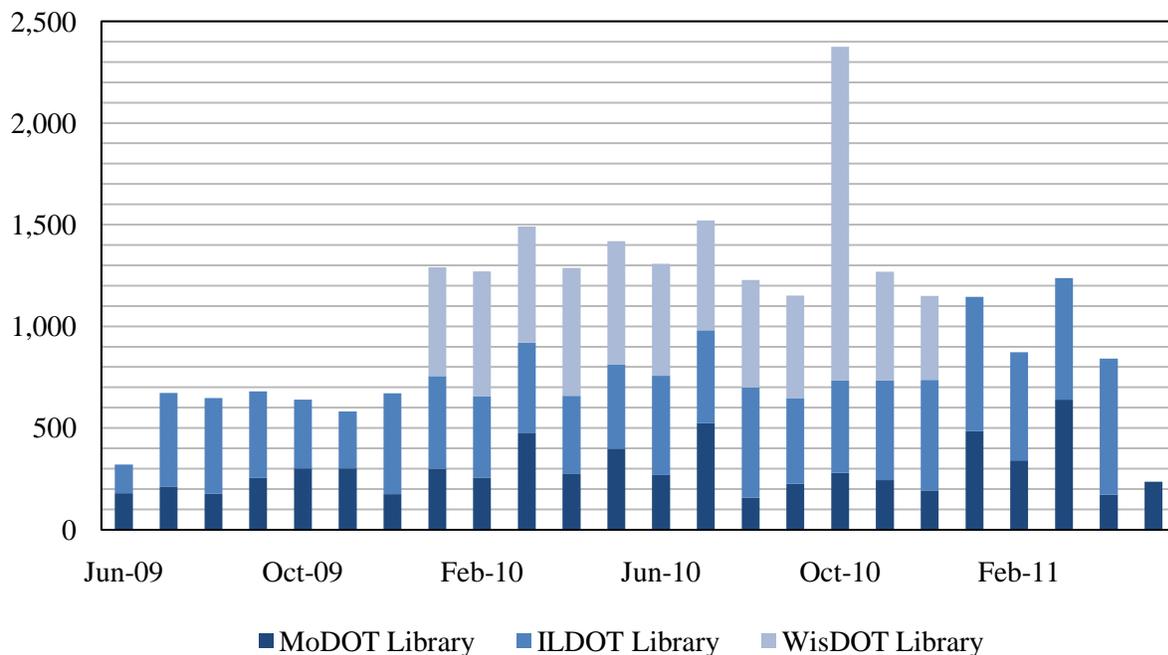


Circulation:

Every time that an analyst, engineer or other employee used the MoDOT library, an item circulated. Circulation tracked the movement of library items. This included checkouts and information provided through Reference Service. As another set of figures standardized by the MTKN, Circulation comprehensively demonstrated the way in which library services were used (Appendix A). Unlike reference, it is difficult to determine the *actual* value that employees received. This can better be determined by looking at the quality of service and patron feedback which is done later in this report. For now, Circulation is useful for comparative purposes.

Over the past two years MoDOT's library circulated 7,061 items, while IDOT circulated 10,575 and Wisconsin (WisDOT) circulated 7,662 for shorter periods (Figure 4). Generally, less was circulated at MoDOT than elsewhere. Yet, because Missouri's librarian played a far more analytical role, the dissimilarity reflected agency differences more than performance ones. Illinois and Wisconsin were more traditional. As such, their libraries "pushed" information rather than disseminated it.

Figure 4: Total Circulation by Month, 2009-2011



Collection Development:

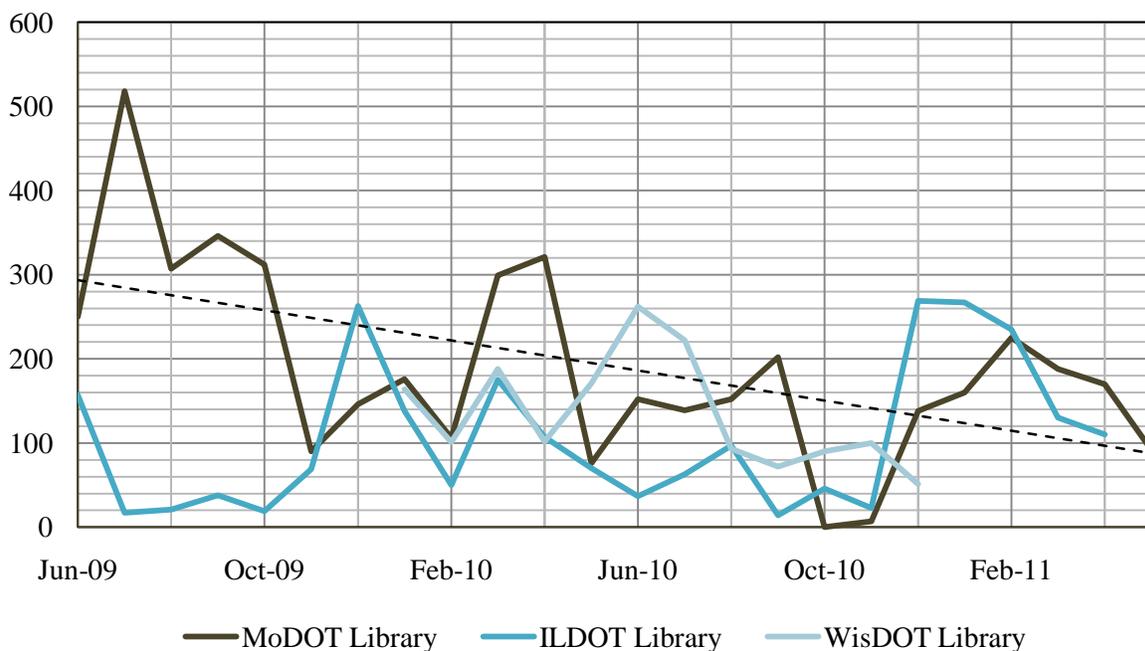
Regardless of if a library pushes information or disseminates it, almost all spend time collecting material. This is something that defines a library. In 2003 and 2004 MoDOT focused on this responsibility, but as time progressed reference duties began to take more and more time. It stands worth noting, then, that reference did not take away from Collection Development this biennium.

Figures from the MTKN hammer this point home. During the most recent contract period 4,572 items were added to MoDOT's circulating collection (Figure 5). Indeed, when compared to a total of 8,467 items available, this represented a 117 percent increase. It stands to reason that time constraints were not a concern.

Interestingly, MoDOT's peer libraries did not grow as fast. In Illinois, 2,415 items were added to an already large library. Wisconsin added 1,616 during a one-year period. Given their relative size, proportionally each of their growth rates were smaller.

So, how then did this happen and why? One reason is that the MoDOT librarian had a cataloging background. This substantially sped up the process. Another is that Missouri produced research that had not been made available and needed to be processed immediately. Perhaps the most important reason, however, seems to be that over the years MoDOT built up a substantial amount of uncataloged material.

Figure 5: Items Cataloged by Month, 2009-2011



Networking and Collaboration:

This year, the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission (MHTC) approved a “bolder” five-year direction (MoDOT, 2011). This plan called for reducing the Department’s workforce while implementing various cost-saving measures, all born of necessity. The “Great Recession” exacerbated existing problems, and MoDOT was forced to scale back its construction program. Fortunately, the library was in a position to adjust.

Existing partnerships allowed MoDOT to leverage funding during the past biennium. The TPF-5(105) and TPF-5(237) Pooled Fund Studies (TPF) used federal research dollars for networking. A collaborative partnership with the Missouri State Library also offset costs associated with daily operations. Membership in the MTKN and Missouri Online Bibliographic Users Service (MOBIUS) did the same. In short, by networking and collaborating the library was able to thrive in a difficult environment.

Library Pooled Funds:

Each TPF study helped MoDOT connect to the larger transportation community. The first project allowed 24 agencies to pool research dollars to attend training events, negotiate discounted cataloging costs and network with each other. This resulted in the strengthening of relationships with libraries that Missouri worked with. It also paid to connect MoDOT’s collection in WorldCat and developed a long-range plan for the transportation libraries (Sacco, 2010).

When the first Pooled Fund ended in September of 2010, MoDOT’s library took a leadership role in lobbying for, creating and ultimately managing a second study. This project, unlike its predecessor, emphasized providing raw financial support to regional groups like the MTKN. It made a greater push for the creation of tangible products according to TPF-5(105) recommendations as well.

MOBIUS, MTKN and State Library:

Finally, collaboration with the Missouri State Library helped support library service. Already housed by the State Library, MoDOT received cataloging and technical support for its integrated library system. This included staffing and checkout service according to the MOU (Appendix B). Moreover, material support (shelving, carts, etc.) were provided along with a new library webpage. This page, located on the State Library website, now provides a portal for transportation researchers to begin their work.

Membership in the MTKN and MOBIUS also allowed the library to borrow a substantial number of items. Thanks to reciprocal lending agreements, a noteworthy 346 items were requested via inter-library loan. Engineering and technical information is often expensive. At \$25 dollars apiece, all 346 inter-library loans for the past biennium would have cost \$8,650 to buy.

User Satisfaction:

Much has been done in this report to stress the library's biennial accomplishments. Yet, because the data presented only reflects activities, one can argue that it is incomplete. A discussion of quality is needed to provide a truly accurate portrait of the services rendered. Fortunately, customer service data can help to paint this very picture.

Every year, Organizational Results conducts a customer satisfaction survey. For 2010, the survey asked patrons to quantify how happy they were with the library. This biennium the results were positive. On a scale from 1 to 4, with 4 being "very satisfied," 94 percent of respondents responded with the top two levels. Anecdotal feedback reinforced this portrait (Figure 6). Correspondingly, it seems that library users benefited from the services that they received.

Figure 6: Select Patron Feedback

4/13/2011	"Thank you AJ for helping me and Neal track down all the books we needed for the PE Test. Without the 13th ED Steel Manual, ASCE 7 and IBC, it is very doubtful I would have been successful during the exam and while preparing for the exam. Although it was great to have the other references available if needed, those in particularly really helped me." – <i>Andrew Hanks, Senior Structural Designer</i>
9/1/2010	"Thanks so much for the very quick turnaround time on this request. It was very helpful to me for my presentation at the SASHTO conference. Just wanted you to know I really appreciate you making the time to do this on such short notice. Thanks a lot." – <i>Sharon Golden, Senior Professional in Human Resources</i>
1/6/2010	"That's great AJ. I have been concerned that I haven't had time to do more searching for HR as they really want our help, so this is just wonderful! Thank you and I'll share it with them." – <i>Renee D'Alessandro, Performance Analyst</i>
9/21/2009	"We're hosting our Maintenance Supervisors Meeting this fall. Some of the guys have these old books called Managing Highway Maintenance. I couldn't find them, so I went to OR and looked up Bill. He put me in touch with Anthony, and together they found this outdated book. I just wanted someone down there to know how much I appreciated their efforts to help me. You've got two gems from my point of view." – <i>Tonya Lohman, Area Engineer</i>

Conclusions:

Five years ago, when a librarian was hired, the primary goal was to provide MoDOT with the services of a full-time information professional. This goal was met. In fact, during the past two years the breadth of library activity has testified to this reality, yet the agency's "information landscape" has also changed. This is largely due to the recent "bolder" five-year direction and changing technology.

Though not everything can be documented in a single report, 262 Short Reference questions were answered and 297 Literature Searches were conducted. Some 7,061 electronic and print items were circulated and 4,572 more were added to the library; a 117 percent increase. The library engaged numerous partners, including the Missouri State Library, and borrowed 346 items free of charge. All of this was done while maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction.

Based on these facts, it may be said that past barriers to library access have been removed. This is evidenced by a variety of activities undertaken and by the librarian's direct impact to MoDOT's bottom line. Consequently, things are moving in a positive direction.

As with everything, though, new problems call for new solutions. MoDOT is a different organization than it was in 2003, and thanks to shifting technologies the library is due for a strategic review. Web-based tools are much more important than they once were. It should be concluded that to build upon past accomplishments a reformulation of efforts must be entertained, and new library objectives are needed.

Recommendations:

As part of the recommended strategic review, six goals are provided to ensure that MoDOT's library continues to evolve and adapt all while continuing to provide top-notch service. No single goal should take precedent. All presented, however, are based off of the observation that the new goals are needed. Necessarily, some suggest striking out in new and unique directions.

Goal 1: Maximize existing partnerships. Because governmental budgets are unlikely to increase in the future, it is important for the library to make the best of *all* its resources.

Goal 2: Continue to maintain a high level of customer satisfaction and service. Without providing a tangible benefit, the library has no purpose.

Goal 3: Substantially increase marketing. While promotion has occurred in the past, efforts have been piecemeal. An integrated approach is needed.

Goal 4: Catalog publications with a focus on electronic items. Though the library's original backlog is nearly complete, care should be taken to ensure that a new one does not pile up.

Goal 5: Reduce the time spent on "Other" tasks. Activities that provide a direct return to MoDOT and its partners deserve priority. The remainder does not.

Goal 6: If applicable, provide long-term stability for the library and its partners. This means identifying how and where the library fits into MoDOT's mission. Sustainability should be a focus.

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Appendix A

MTKN Data Collection Standards:

Item: Any physical item from your library's collection, photocopied or scanned from your library's collection, acquired through ILL, or the URL of a specific document or page provided to a customer in response to a direct request or to fulfill a reference question whether or not the item is to be returned to the library. It does not include items from stocks of maps, brochures, or other items meant for general distribution. (at MoDOT, this would include highway maps, "Off the Cliff" brochures, etc.)

ILL: Items received from non-MoDOT library sources. This includes members of the various TKN's, the University of Missouri and the State Library. In some instances this means that material can be accessed by the MoDOT Librarian without going through a traditional inter-library loan (ILL) process.

- **Item Request:** Any request from a customer for any information resource for which the customer supplies enough information to identify the item so a search for complete bibliographic information is not necessary. (Ex: "I need a copy of TRB Special Report 284.")
- **Reference Question:** Any request from a customer for particular facts, information or assistance that can be answered by consulting information resources or from your personal knowledge or a request for a resource for which the customer does not provide sufficient information to uniquely identify the needed item. (Ex: "I need to know the name of the act that authorized the Interstate Highway System.")

Literature Search: Any instance where one or more catalogs, databases or other information resources are searched to identify information on a particular topic for which the customer is provided with one or more titles, abstracts and/or URLs identified as relating to the topic or where the customer is informed that nothing related can be found. (Note: this also includes questions where one or more items of information are sought from multiple states or state agencies.)

Other Circulation: Any unsolicited information sent or circulated among patrons that does not relate to another request or project. This is collected to help MoDOT stats match up with MTKN.

Short Reference: Any reference request that does not fall under the definition of Literature Search. This includes requests categorized as "item request" and "reference question" by MTKN. Does not include directional questions. ("Where's the bathroom?" etc.)

Appendix B

State Library Memorandum of Understanding:

This Master Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter, “MOU”) is entered into by and between the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) acting by and through the Missouri Department of Transportation (hereinafter “Department”) and the Missouri Secretary of State Office (hereinafter “SOS Office”).

Witnesseth:

Whereas, the Department’s Organizational Results Division has established a library to serve employees, researchers and industry partners. This library contains materials in paper format, which are bibliographically catalogued according to current national standards, and

Whereas, the Department wishes to make this information more readily available to its researchers and state employees and other Department clientele, and

Whereas, the Department and the SOS Office agree to maintain the Department’s library collection at the Missouri State Library to be included in the state library’s integrated online library catalog,

Now, therefore, in consideration of the mutual promises, covenants, and representations contained in this Agreement, the parties agree as follows:

1. Basic Understanding and Objectives:

- a)** This memorandum of understanding describes the duties and responsibilities of the SOS Office acting by and through the Missouri State Library (hereinafter “State Library”) and of the Department acting by and through its Organizational Results Division. The SOS has the statutory authority over the State Library. The Reference Services Division of the State Library serves the information needs of Missouri state government and provides information about the work of the government.
- b)** The bibliographic records in the Department’s library collection will be included in the statewide Missouri Online Bibliographic Users System (MOBIUS) catalog. This will provide ready access to researchers and state employees, since this catalog can be accessed through the Internet. Requests for the material can be placed remotely and delivered to the requester within a few days. This collection will be available to all who may borrow material from the State Library.

2. Responsibilities of the SOS:

- a)** To serve as the host library for the Department’s Organizational Results library paper collection.
- b)** Maintain oversight of the cataloging for these materials.
- c)** Supervise the library staff provided by the Department while staff is working in the State Library.

- d) Ensure these staff members are trained in the use of the appropriate modules of the State Library's integrated online library system.
- e) Provide circulation services for this collection, so the material can be loaned to researchers, state employees and other clientele of the Department.
- f) Consult with the appropriate staff at the Department/Organizational Results Division, or their designees, concerning additions and withdrawals to this collection.
- g) Investigate the possibility of including the electronic version of the materials within this collection in the State Library's trusted electronic repository for state publications. This would provide instant and long-term access to the text of these publications from remote locations.

3. Responsibilities of the Commission/Department:

- a) Provide appropriate staffing to allow 40 hours of coverage by professional library staff per week.
- b) The Department will provide the staff by contracting through the University of Missouri to obtain an individual who holds a master's degree in library science, information science or related field from an institution accredited by the American Library Association. While staffing, including professional development support, training and supplies, will be contracted through the Department, management of the contractor will be handled as described in (4), Joint Responsibilities of Both Agencies.
- c) Provide necessary funding (Attachment A) to defray all costs incurred by the Missouri State Library as a result of this MOU.
- d) Continue acquisitions of materials for this collection in consultation with staff of the Missouri State Library and retain ownership of this collection.
- e) Maintain the Department subscription to cataloging and interlibrary loan services through OCLC Online Computer Library Center. Department will pay for this service.
- f) If the Department employees or partners request materials and are not located within the MOBIUS delivery system, the Department can check out and deliver borrowed documents independent of SOS service to ensure service to the Department's transportation partners.

4. Joint Responsibilities of Both Agencies:

- a) Select the contracted staff member(s).
- b) Daily supervision of staff will be the responsibility of the Director of Reference Services and the Commission's Organizational Performance Administrator.
- c) Performance appraisals will be conducted jointly by appropriate staff from each agency.

- d) Disciplinary action, if required, will be conducted jointly by the appropriate staff from each agency.
5. **Financial Considerations:**
- a) The Department will pay licensing fees as identified in Attachment A on a quarterly basis or as billed for services rendered.
6. **Duration and Termination of MOU:**
- a) This MOU will be in force for the period beginning March 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2012, with a review of the project and pricing page at the end of each fiscal year.
 - b) Either party may cancel this MOU with written notice provided four months prior to the date of cancellation. In the event of a cancellation the Department shall compensate the State Library for any expenses incurred and not reimbursed prior to the effective date of the notice of cancellation as shown in Attachment A. Should the Department cancel this MOU, they will be required at their expense to remove the collection of material from the State Library and have their bibliographic and holdings records removed from the library catalog.
7. **Amendments:** No amendment, consent, or waiver of terms of this memorandum of understanding shall be binding unless made in writing. Any change in this Agreement, whether by modification or supplementation, must be accomplished by a formal contract amendment signed and approved by the duly authorized representative of the SOS Office and the Commission, signatories to this agreement. Any such amendment, consent, or waiver shall be effective only in the specific instance and for the specific purpose given.
8. **Commission Representative:** The Commission's Bill Stone, Organizational Performance Administrator, Missouri Department of Transportation, Organizational Results Division, P.O. Box 270, Jefferson City, MO, Phone: 573-526-4328, is designated as the Commission's representative for the purpose of administering the provisions of this Agreement. The Commission's representative may designate by written notice other persons having the authority to act on behalf of the Commission in furtherance of the performance of this Agreement.
9. **SOS Office Representative:** The SOS Office's Susan Morrisroe, Director of Reference Services, Missouri State Library, Reference Services Division, 600 W. Main St., P.O. Box 387, Jefferson City, MO 65102, Phone: 573-751-2862, Fax: 573-526-1142, is designated as the SOS Office's representative for the purpose of administering the provisions of this Agreement. The SOS Office representative may designate by written notice other persons having the authority to act on behalf of the SOS Office in furtherance of the performance of this Agreement.
10. **Audit of Records:** The parties must maintain all records relating to this MOU, including but not limited to invoices, payrolls, etc. These records must be available at all reasonable times at no charge to each other and/or their designees or representatives during the period of this MOU and any extension thereof, and for three (3) years from the

date of final payment made under this MOU.

11. **Successors and Assigns:** The provisions of this MOU shall apply to and be binding upon the parties executing this MOU, their successors, assigns, agents, subsidiaries, affiliates, and lessees, including officers, employees, agents, servants, corporations and any persons acting under, through or for the parties agreeing hereto.
12. **Law of Missouri to Govern:** This MOU shall be construed according to the laws of the State of Missouri.
13. **Venue:** It is agreed by the parties that any action at law, suit in equity, or other judicial proceeding to enforce or construe this MOU, or regarding its alleged breach, shall be instituted only in the Circuit Court of Cole County, Missouri.
14. **Section Headings:** All section headings contained in this MOU are for the convenience of reference only and are not intended to define or limit the scope of any provision of this MOU.
15. **Entire Agreement:** This MOU represents the entire understanding between the parties regarding this subject and supersedes all prior written or oral communications between the parties regarding this subject.
16. **Severability:** If any clause or provision of this MOU is found to be void or unenforceable by a court or agency of proper jurisdiction, then the remaining provisions not void or unenforceable shall remain in full force and effect.
17. **Authority to Execute:** The signers of this MOU warrant that they are acting officially and properly on behalf of their respective institutions and have been duly authorized, directed and empowered to execute this MOU.

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