



**2007 NASCIO Awards Nomination
Digital Government: Government to Government (G to G)**

Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Construction Tools Web Site

Submitted by Gopal Khanna, State CIO

I. Executive Summary

In 2006, the Minnesota Department of Transportation created a one-stop, Web-based information resource for three customer groups: transportation construction field personnel, contractors and the general public.

The Construction Tools Web Site <<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/const/tools/index.html>> was created in response to a direct need of a targeted audience and facilitates the administration of highway construction projects with a readily available digital toolbox that answers questions about how to administer state construction projects, meet state regulations and guidelines and do business with the state. The Construction Tools Web Site centralizes the range of information necessary for highway construction project administration into an indexed, customer-friendly format. It contains information from a variety of sources within the Department of Transportation and links to secondary sources useful to its clientele.

The Web site is not an end, but rather a means to help both government and business customers find accurate, current information so that they can complete highway construction projects more efficiently and effectively.

As a result, construction projects are managed more efficiently, with 24/7 information available to construction field personnel, regardless of location throughout the state. Contractors have ready access to the rules and regulations that allow them to successfully serve the state. Mn/DOT innovative contracting information and procedures are shared with the public and with other government entities, including other states.

The Web site serves a small, but targeted audience and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

II. Justification of Nomination

A. Title: Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Construction Tools Web Site <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/const/tools/index.html>

Web Team: Sue Stein, Project Manager; Dan Servatius, Clancy Finnegan, Leigh Kriewall, Karen Peters, Jay Hietpas, Greg Johnson and Jennie Carlson, Department of Transportation.

B. Business Problem and Solution

The Problem: Highway construction projects involve a myriad of issues, from approved construction products, to work zone safety and everything in between. Information must be readily available to a variety of government entities and third-party contractors located throughout the state and often onsite at remote locations. Until this site was created, individual personnel used their own bookmarks from a variety of Web-based sources to find the information they needed and/or called Mn/DOT during regular business hours to get their questions answered.

Purpose of the Web site: The Minnesota Department of Transportation Construction Tools Web Site is aimed primarily at highway construction personnel. The goal is to facilitate the administration of highway construction projects by creating a readily available digital toolbox that answers questions about how to administer state projects, meet state regulations and guidelines, and do business with the state. Whether a customer needs phone numbers, forms, guidelines or information on the way to make changes in a construction contract, the Web site provides one-stop shopping anytime, anywhere. This is both a government-to-government (G to G) and a government-to-business (G-to-B) Web site.

Customers: The Web site serves three customer groups:

1. Construction field personnel (primary customers) – Mn/DOT, city and county project managers, engineers, inspectors, technicians and office personnel who administer construction contracts for the Department of Transportation.
2. Contractors, subcontractors and their employees and vendors (secondary customers) – those performing work on projects and needing information, especially prevailing wage information (through labor compliance) and certification information to make sure personnel are properly trained.
3. Third parties - citizens, Minnesota state agencies and other states interested in what's going on at Mn/DOT, particularly in the area of innovative contracting.

The Web site: Mn/DOT's Construction Tools Web Site was designed for construction field personnel to quickly and easily find all the information they need to administer highway construction projects.

Examples:

- Need to find out how to change a contract? *Check out contract changes*
- Missing a form? *Review the forms page*
- Not sure of how much to pay employees? *Labor compliance can help*
- Need to know what products are approved? *Skim the references page*

The Construction Tools Web Site offers answers to these and many other questions that arise before and during highway construction projects. The site also links customers to the best source(s) of secondary information. The site even includes construction zone information for kids.

Major themes for the site include:

- Innovative Contracting

- Contractor Payment and Documentation
- Contract Changes
- Contract Time
- Labor Compliance
- References
- Contacts

Development Process: The Web site was initiated in 2005 and fully operational by 2006.

Initially, suggestions were solicited from the Automation Advisory Group, a cross-section of employees who administer construction projects. They were asked to share what they'd like to see on a Web site and to send their lists of bookmarked sites. The Web team built upon that small collection by adding resources as customers requested them.

In order to introduce the Web site, Mn/DOT staff sent an e-mail to a select number of potential users for feedback on effectiveness and improvements, analogous to a "soft" opening of a retail store. They then announced the site by e-mail to primary customers and contacted cities and counties through the State Aid Office. They continue to highlight the Construction Tools Web Site at informational sessions with Mn/DOT construction staff and external groups.

The Labor Compliance portion of the Web site was marketed through annual labor compliance trainings and various publications issued by Mn/DOT's State Aid Division.

C. II. Significance of the project to the improvement of the operation of government

The Construction Tools Web Site centralizes the range of information necessary for highway construction project administration into an indexed, customer-friendly format. The Web site helps both government and business customers find accurate, current information so that they can complete highway construction projects more efficiently and effectively.

In 2006, the Web site saw monthly averages of 2700 unique visitors, with 4045 visits monthly. Feedback from customers has been excellent, with continued site refinement based on suggestions.

"As a frequent customer I use the site as a table of contents / index for data, information, forms I need to do my job every day. I have the Construction Tools Web Site set as my internet home page and I encourage all the technicians who work in this office to do the same. When I show the Web site to Mn/DOT technicians who were previously unaware of its existence they are very appreciative of this tool to help navigate through the maze of forms and information available."

- Dave Kovala, Construction Office Manager, Mn/DOT District 1 – Virginia

"I have been using the Construction Tools Web Site for over a year now. The references are very useful since they are all in one spot. I have been pushing the use of the Web site to the inspectors for references, the convenience of the forms and for any contacts that they might need. On average, I go to the Web site about four to five times a week. I have recently used it for looking up approved products, a new form for Labor Compliance, a link for a contractor for Certificate of Compliance for traffic control devices and the form for Extraordinary Enforcement. This has become a very useful tool for office managers, engineers and inspectors."

- Nicole Madison, Construction Office Manager, District 7E

"The Construction Tools Web Site is an extremely valuable external Web site tool for all road and bridge construction engineers and inspectors, including those working for Mn/DOT, other Minnesota agencies that use Mn/DOT specifications and procedures, along with consultants and

contractors. This Web site has up-to-date links to literally thousands of different types of information, from approved products list from the Mn/DOT Office of Materials, to different forms, updates on Digital Inspector, Resident Engineer' staff phone numbers, the Standard Specification Book, and on and on. The information and Web site format and function is user-friendly, and Sue Stein, the Project Manager for this site, is very receptive to new ideas and changes in format to make it even more functional. This information is now available for users from any computer tied into the Web, so real time, accurate content is available as the users are spread out over the whole state, from remote areas to the Metro area."

- Ted Sexton Resident Engineer, Mn/DOT Duluth

D. Public value of the project

The Construction Tools Web Site benefits the public in several ways:

- (1) Facilitates the administration of highway construction projects, saving time and money with 24/7 information availability;
- (2) Provides contractors with the information necessary to assure that projects meet state government requirements, rules and regulations;
- (3) Offers citizens a glimpse of the complexity of highway project construction and
- (4) Displays the tools that Mn/DOT uses in administering highway construction projects that may be useful to other states or entities.