

**Statewide Directional Signing Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
November 7, 2006**

Meeting Time: 9:30 a.m.  
Location Virginia Tourism Corporation  
901 East Byrd Street, West Tower 19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

**1. Introductions**

Phil Hopkins opened the meeting; members, staff and guests introduced themselves. A sign in sheet was distributed.

**Committee Members Present**

Roger Cole	National Association of Truck Stop Operators
Julia Ciarlo Hammond	Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association
Ralph Earnhardt	Virginia Tourism Corporation

**VDOT Support Staff**

Phil Hopkins	VDOT Traffic Engineering
Rick Burgess	VDOT Traffic Engineering
Joy Shepherd	VDOT Traffic Engineering

**Virginia Logos Staff**

Floyd Williams	Interstate Logos, Inc.
Jason Newcomb	Virginia Logos
Barrie Bowers	Future Law, LLC

**Other Attendees**

Janet Appel	Shirley Plantation
Randy Carter	Shirley Plantation

**Committee Members Who Did Not Attend**

Martha Mitchell	American Automobile Association
Bob McCarty	Federal Highway Administration
Trice Craddock	North Carolina Department of Transportation
Donna Pugh Johnson	Virginia Agribusiness Council
Larry Land	Virginia Association of Counties
Ray Khoury	VDOT Traffic Engineering – Chair
Kimberly Pollard	Virginia Municipal League
Michael O’Connor	Virginia Petroleum Convenience and Grocers Assoc.
Dale Bennett	Virginia Trucking Association
Leighton Powell	Scenic Virginia

## **2. Previous Meeting Minutes: June 6, 2006**

The minutes of the June 6, 2006 meeting were accepted as written.

## **3. IDSP**

### **a. Status of Participation (Logo, TODS, Supplemental, GMSS): VL**

Jason Newcomb distributed a Quarterly Activity Report for the four signing programs under the IDSP. This report contains information such as number of signs displayed, new signing requests, contract renewals and cancellations. Jason reminded members this report is prepared specifically for these meetings.

### **b. I-81 Truck Services Study Survey - VDOT**

Phil explained that a bill, introduced in the 2006 General Assembly (SB) 148 by Senator Creigh R. Deeds, has been carried over to the 2007 session. The bill basically relates to providing signs for tractor truck trailer service companies which do not sell food or gas. Phil told members a truck business had previously requested a logo sign on Interstate Route 81, but did not meet criteria established by the Commonwealth Transportation Board for that service type; therefore the request had been denied.

In discussions with Senator Williams, VDOT had been requested to conduct a survey of companies that provide services to trucks along I-81, what signing programs other states have for such services and what is allowed by the Federal Highway Administration with regard to such services. Using the services of Virginia Logos, the survey has been completed and data has been compiled regarding interstate signing pertaining to tractor trailer truck service facilities.

Two handouts were provided to members:

- September 25 letter to The Honorable Martin E. Williams, Members of the Senate Transportation Committee from VDOT Commissioner David S. Ekern, P.E.
- Executive Summary

### **c. OASIS Signing Update: VDOT**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has issued an approved final Interstate Oasis Program policy document. A copy was given to each member. As a minimum, in order to be designated as an Interstate Oasis, a facility should offer products and services to the public, provide 24 hour access to restrooms and parking for automobiles and heavy trucks. FHWA will design a logo to be displayed by designated Interstate Oasis facilities.

Phil stated each state would be required to develop its own specific criteria. Once Virginia's draft criteria are prepared it will be presented to this committee for comments.

One handout was provided to members:

- Federal Register, FHWA Docket No. FHWA – 2006-23350, Interstate Oasis Program

**d. IDSP - Criteria and Fee Modifications: VDOT**

Phil provided background information regarding the 2005 Acts of the General Assembly, Chapter 491 which required VDOT to establish reasonable fees associated with the IDSP. There had been concern that VDOT was generating excess revenue. The fees are to be used solely to defray the actual costs of administering the signing programs with a reasonable margin, not to exceed ten percent.

**i. Seafood Markets – TODS (Agribusiness)**

The topic for discussion was whether Agribusiness includes seafood related products? This topic has been postponed until the representative from Virginia Agribusiness Council attends the next meeting.

**ii. Revenue/Expenses FY06**

Phil distributed handouts which provided the following information for the four signing programs:

- Table 2 – IDSP FY06 Revenue and Expense
- Table 3 – IDSP FY07 Projected Revenue and Expenses

Table 2 reveals there was a 6% deficit for FY06. Phil explained this was primarily from the one time credits issued to those businesses who had paid the higher fee the year before. The credits totaled approximately \$700,000.

Since Table 3 forecasts the revenue and expenses for the programs to break even, VDOT is not recommending any changes to the fee structure for FY07.

This information will be reviewed annually and if revenue exceeds 10%, fees will be reduced or credits issued.

**e. Full Service Food MUTCD Experiment - Update: VDOT**

Phil told members that Virginia had received approval in 2004 from FHWA to experiment with the logo food background signs in situations where there were more than six eligible food businesses at an interchange. VDOT was allowed to use the empty spaces on the camping sign or in cases where no camping sign existed, VDOT erected a

second food sign in the normal location of the camping sign. Results from surveys and crash data showed displaying additional food panels on a second sign did not create additional safety risks and there was a benefit to having additional information on food availability for motorists.

Based on Virginia's experimentation results, the FHWA issued an interim approval to give States more flexibility of the selection of businesses and expressed that this flexibility could be extended to other logo service types as long as the maximum of four background signs was not exceeded. Approval for the option of displaying up to 12 logos for one service type would be granted to any State who submits a written request. Virginia has requested and received approval to implement this option in accordance with FHWA requirements.

Three handouts were provided to members:

- September 15, 2005 - FHWA Memorandum issuing interim approval.
- October 4, 2006 – VDOT letter to FHWA requesting interim approval to implement the option of displaying up to 12 logos for one service type.
- October 25, 2006 – FHWA letter granting VDOT interim approval.

**f. Wayfinding – Historic Triangle MUTCD Experiment – Update: VDOT**

Phil provided a brief update on the Historic Triangle Wayfinding signs. Signs are in place on I-64 at the boundary of the geographical area defined as the Historic Triangle, with variations off the interstate leading to particular destinations in the area. The study is to last three years and there will be an evaluation of the impact of these signs, a survey to the traveling public and before and after crash data analysis. This experiment is being conducted by the Research Council with funding provided by VDOT. Williamsburg, Jamestown and Yorktown are paying for sign fabrication, installation and maintenance. Phil pointed out that VDOT does not have statewide policies and procedures for wayfinding but it was anticipated a consultant will be hired in the next couple months to develop them.

**g. Logo Mileage MUTCD Experiment: VDOT**

Phil explained the purpose of the proposed experiment is to determine the effectiveness of adding mileage figures below mainline background logo signs. Currently motorists exit the mainline and read distances to the businesses on the logo ramp signs. VDOT has been asked to consider adding distance figures on the mainline logo signs.

A scope of work has been prepared by the Research Council and VDOT has submitted the request to experiment to FHWA. If approved the experiment will last for two years and be limited to three select sites, one in Northern Virginia, one in Hampton Roads with a third site yet to be determined.

The Research Council will conduct several studies during the experimentation process such as a motorist study, a legibility study, as well as perform a crash analysis study to

determine if the addition of distance on the mainline signs affects safety. All findings will be included in a final report.

#### **h. Wayfinding (Statewide Policy/Procedures): VDOT**

Phil told members that currently VDOT does not have criteria and operational procedures in place for a Statewide Wayfinding program.

VDOT is in the process of issuing an RFP (Request For Proposal) for a Professional Services Contract. As part of this contract, the consultant will be required to develop wayfinding signing policies and procedures.

#### **4. Open Discussion**

Ms. Janet Appel and Mr. Randy Carter from Shirley Plantation expressed concern regarding Shirley Plantation's status within the IDSP's category. They have supplemental signs, have been classified as a commercial or for-profit business and are required to pay an annual fee.

They told members they are in the process of working on a non-profit classified status for the tourism aspect of their operation. They would like to attend our next meeting in May 2007 to provide an update on their efforts. It was agreed that the payment of their bills would be deferred until the next meeting. Other commercial plantations will be encouraged to speak with Shirley Plantation staff to see whether they can pursue the same direction as Shirley in obtaining non-profit classified status.

Phil stated there are two IDSP bills from the 2006 General Assembly Session which are still active. Handouts were provided to members:

- *HB1574 Integrated Directional Sign Program; allows localities to opt out of Program administered by VDOT.*  
VDOT opposed this bill. Phil explained that before VDOT installs any signs on VDOT right of way, the County Administrator is notified of the installation. This provides an opportunity for Virginia Logos to work closely with the localities in the placement of the signs.
- *SB 148 Integrated Directional Signing Program; VDOT to provide that certain businesses be included as eligible*  
VDOT opposed this bill. Phil explained that basically this bill provides for businesses that do not provide public restroom facilities, food, lodging, fuel or destination recreational opportunities to be included under the IDSP. The Commonwealth Transportation Board has adopted specific criteria to be used in the selection of eligible businesses under the IDSP

**5. Next Meeting Agenda Items**

Shirley Plantation – Update on non-profit classified status.

A complete Agenda will be sent to members shortly before the May 8 meeting.

**6. Next Meetings**

May 8, 2007, November 7, 2007

**7. Adjourn**

With no further questions, Phil adjourned the meeting.