

REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE
ON
EDUCATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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The principles set forth in previous reports of this committee still obtain: that good work, technically trained personnel, and an informed public are the most effective means with which to bring about the objectives of safer and more beautiful roadside landscapes.

The committee this year has endeavored to take a preliminary census of the progress along these lines, with the following results in 26 States.

Publications Printed or in Preparation:

- Arizona - Lookouts and Planting for Traffic Control by F. M. Guirey, Landscape Engineer.
- Maine - A Broadened Concept of Roadside Improvement by Kenneth Brown, Landscape Engineer.
- Maryland- Proper Methods for Pruning, Selective Cutting, Saving Trees, Erosion Control, Etc.
- Nevada - Article on Roadside Improvement in Highway Biennial Report, January, 1939.
- Oklahoma- Revision of "Roadside Improvement Specifications".
Preparing "Maintenance Manual for Highway Employees".
- Texas - "American Highways and Roadsides" by Jac L. Gubbels. (Houghton-Mifflin Co.) This is undoubtedly the best work on the subject yet printed and should be in the hands of every worker in field or office.
"Types of Motorways", "Accomplishment since 1933" (booklets by L. A. division).

In addition to the above, several States have independently published handbooks of instruction for their supervisory and foremen staffs. A notable example of this is the Indiana Supervisors Handbook. This is a sixty-page booklet containing sketches and plans with detailed notes and instructions.

It should be borne in mind that our census covered only the official landscape engineers in the State highway departments. Many other printed or mimeographed documents on the subject have been widely distributed by other agencies. The extension services of several of the State colleges have taken unusual interest in this subject. The University of Wisconsin has issued an interesting mimeographed study outline emphasizing the natural landscape aspects and the importance and value of native plants for practical use in roadside development projects.

Use of Newspapers, Magazines, Radio and Motion Pictures

The more progressive States or those with the longest experience in this work, during the past year have made unusual use of these most effective means of forming public opinion and support for their programs. In Indiana, for example, four magazine articles had a circulation of over 100,000, and a series of articles emphasizing the menace of the billboards both to safety and scenic beauty of the highways of Maine was published by the Portland Sunday Telegram.

Perhaps the most outstanding use of motion pictures is the sound production of "Michigan Highway Adventures". This film sponsored by the Highway Department in cooperation with the conservation and recreation groups, has been seen by more than 150,000 people during the first 9 months of 1938, at over 300 showings.

Exhibits

Again in Michigan we note unusual use of exhibits for public educational purposes. These exhibits consist of large colored photographs showing the processes in developing roadside projects and models of specific improvement areas. In some cases these models were made at a scale large enough for visitors to walk through, obtaining very authentic impressions.

For several years the "dioramas" at the Missouri State Fair have been one of the greatest drawing features of that famous show. Hundreds of thousands of Missourians have obtained their first realistic impression of modern roadside development in this very dramatic way.

Garden Club Cooperation

One of the most articulate of all the interested groups is the Garden Club. We found unusual and evidently very productive activity in Ohio where the organized garden clubs have done outstanding work. The State has been organized into 12 districts, each with a committee in charge, and a local landscape architect as advisor or consultant working with the garden clubs. Two simple direct booklets have been published outlining methods and procedures for initiating and carrying on helpful cooperation with the highway landscape engineers. These booklets are now being revised by the Garden Club of America for national distribution.

The garden clubs of Arizona have assisted greatly in the program of the State highway department nursery by contacting property owners, distributing application blanks and otherwise pushing the distribution of over 10,000 trees and shrubs which were furnished free of charge to rural landowners outside incorporated cities and villages. The highway department operates the nursery and provides free transportation of the planting stock.

For several years the garden clubs of Virginia and the home demonstration agents of the State Agricultural Extension Service have been working actively and successfully with the Virginia highway landscape engineer. These groups including more than 40,000 women have had an important part in the passage of an enlightened outdoor advertising act. They have published several valuable educational handbooks and pamphlets. Two of these excellent publications "Signs or Scenes" and a Workers and Speakers Handbook would be an inspiration to any group of citizens interested in preserving the American scene.

In North Carolina a special Government Committee with all interested groups represented is very active. Two-day field trips of an educational nature are conducted over parks and roadside projects in Massachusetts with excellent results. In Wisconsin the garden clubs actively encourage the use and protection of native plants along the roadsides of that State.

Regional and Local Schools

Many States held local schools of instruction for their entire roadside personnel. There seems to have been a more general use of this method of education during the past year than ever before.

The National Shade Tree Conference in St. Louis emphasized the need for better trained personnel on roadside tree work.

At the Purdue University four-day Road School, with 1,000 in attendance, an important paper was devoted to cooperation in saving roadside trees.

In Indiana and elsewhere there seems to be a recognition on the part of the landscape engineer in charge, of the importance of presenting the realistic and practical phases of roadside development before various citizen organizations and engineering groups.

At Iowa State College the second Regional Roadside and Shade Tree Short Course was held in February with addresses and discussions on such subjects as: "Feeding and Care of Park and Lawn Trees", "Tree Problems with Utility Lines", "The Ecological Approach to Roadside Planting", "The Wayside Park in its Many Aspects", and "Soil Conservation and Its Application in Roadside Improvement". Copies of the complete minutes of this school, including all the principal speeches, are available upon request to the Department of Landscape Architecture, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa.

Professional Standards and Educational Needs

In a number of States there is evidence of a decided upswing toward the employment of professionally trained landscape engineers for this highly specialized type of work. Perhaps no State has shown more progress during the past year in this field than Ohio, where now all the divisional supervisors of roadside work have received college training in landscape architecture. Among the important educational needs suggested by the committee and others are the following:

(1) More interstate exchange of ideas, methods and techniques through a central clearing agency. Steps already have been taken to establish a roadside progress report or interstate news service.

(2) More contacts and inspections from representatives of the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads.

(3) More instruction in landscape engineering to civil engineers and foresters at the universities and colleges. This should include lectures on general landscape understanding.

(4) A booklet or syllabus on the latest and most approved techniques.

(5) A study manual or service of loose leaf instruction sheets. Some of these suggestions have been under consideration by this committee for some time, and will be mentioned later in this report.

Photographic Contest and Travelling Exhibit

The committee has conducted its first photographic contest, the results of which are very encouraging. Selected material from this contest will be assembled for a travelling educational exhibit in charge of the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads. The excellent strip films and sound motion pictures prepared under the direction of the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads on the history and development of this important aspect of highway building are being received with enthusiasm throughout the country. More copies are urgently needed to gain a more widespread audience through clubs, institutions and other agencies.

The Syllabus and a Pictorial News Service

The encouraging results of our contacts during the past year indicate that an exchange of ideas and experiences is needed. Furthermore, it seems that there would be ample material and a willingness to contribute both to a syllabus and an information news service. The most obvious deficiency is time on the part of any individual or agency to take charge of the assembling and distribution of the material.

Activities of Other Agencies

The State Planning Board of Indiana has in preparation aerial and location surveys of nearly 3,000 miles of highways, including abutting properties. These surveys are in preparation for submission to the State Legislature this winter in connection with proposed strip zoning legislation.

The American Planning and Civic Association is cooperating with the National Roadside Council in a thorough study of roadside and strip zoning laws and regulations in all countries. The last named agency held an important conference in November in New York City, with reports of progress from all States and several valuable papers on special aspects of the roadside problem. Organizations represented included the Conservation Committee of the Garden Club of America, the Roadside Development Committee of the National Council of State Garden Clubs, and the American Planning and Civic Association.

Several other State Planning Boards are taking an active interest in Roadside Development. For example, in New Hampshire an advisory committee with inclusive representation is studying the many phases of the roadside problem preparatory to making recommendations to the State Planning and Development Commission. Likewise, an advisory committee on roadside protection has submitted an excellent analysis to the Oregon State Planning Board. Similar subcommittees of state planning boards throughout the country might well assist the State highway planning survey engineers in their difficult task of making the best use of the tremendous amount of information and maps they have prepared.

The Mississippi River Parkway

Of special interest to this committee because of its demonstrable educational value throughout the heart of the nation is the proposed Mississippi River Scenic Parkway from Lake Itaska and the famous Lake Superior Arrowhead recreational region to the Gulf of Mexico. The idea has been approved by the Secretary of the Interior and committees are active in all ten States bordering the Mississippi River.

A bill is in preparation for presentation to the 76th Congress this winter. This will provide for the survey and planning of the project which when finally approved will be constructed by the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads according to plans by the States and the National Park Service. Maintenance and operation will be by the National Park Service.

Objectives for 1939

It is evident from the progress of educational activity during the past year and the recommendations and requests received from various sources that previous analyses of this committee are now generally recognized. True, many of our main objectives have not yet been reached, but much encouraging progress has been made. Still among our needs is a manual or syllabus, a more or less regular exchange of information and experience, a more complete current bibliography, and continuing attention to photographic contests and traveling exhibits.

Furthermore, it is necessary that every existing and possible opportunity be extended for raising technical standards in the field and better informing the public of the importance and value of Better Road-sides in America.