

USE OF HIGHWAY PLANNING SURVEY DATA BY THE BUTCHER, THE BAKER, AND THE CANDLE STICK MAKER

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What becomes of all the facts and figures, maps, charts, tabulations, memoranda and 'what have you' that the State Highway Planning Surveys accumulate and produce? The many uses by the Public Roads Administration and the State Highway Departments are familiar, but what of the butcher, and the baker, and the candle stick maker? Have they profited as a result of our efforts?

The very first request I had for a county map started me to thinking about the diversified uses to which they could be put. A jolly, rather corpulent clergyman wa'ked in one day and said that he wanted to see one of those maps that showed where all the houses and churches were, and after I explained the symbols, he grinned and said, "Just what I want! Brother Blank has been assigned to First Church, and I want to mark all the places where he can get some good chicken dinners, so that he can plan his calls in order to arrive at those places before dinner."

Had that thinking prompted action, what an interesting record of uses we might have accumulated by now! But lacking that, I have shuffled through our files and called on our memories in my endeavor to list some of those uses that have developed in Arkansas.

Unquestionably the most popular records that the Planning Surveys have produced are maps, especially the county maps.

At the start of our survey, we found that the U.S. Post Office Department was without adequate maps showing the location of rural mail routes. In order to obtain that information, our men had to go into the field and talk to the rural carriers to determine what roads the routes followed. Now we have given the Post Office Inspectors the maps they so much needed, and they are

able to record all the changes and additions in the routes for us.

Rural Electric Cooperative Corporations found our maps indispensable in laying out lines, planning extensions and developing areas, and nowhere else could they have obtained the necessary information. The same statement applies to the power and light corporations, and to the telephone companies. Two of these utilities use tracing reproductions for their mapping needs.

The State Health Department uses maps in many phases of their work. The Game and Fish Commission assert that they would be unable to function effectively if they did not have these maps to use as bases for their cover maps. The Forestry Commission uses them as bases to show the wooded areas, the protected areas, and the location of fire towers. Had these Departments not used our maps, the cost of necessary surveys would have made much of their work prohibitive.

The State Department of Education uses the maps in planning school consolidations, integrated systems of school bus routes, and for other purposes; and the local authorities make extensive use, not only for their own planning, but also in sending in information to the State Department.

Aerial surveys, oil surveys, sales territories, service routes, checking travel mileage, are only a few of the unofficial uses.

We find special interest in the use of the maps by those engaged in work in the rural areas. We have received many expressions of appreciation from the Agricultural Extension, the Library Extension, Church Extension, and Rural Health workers

because the efficiency of their work is markedly increased when they have the maps. One of the most inspiring and interesting men who comes into my office is the Director of Town and Country Work for the North Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Church. He approaches his work from the same angle that a business man would approach a sales problem, except he tries to select only those communities where church work is needed but where other denominations are not serving the field.

The users of our traffic data are not so numerous as are the users of our maps, yet I believe that the benefits derived from these data are greater. In fact, I sometimes am impelled to think that these data are used to far greater extent by other agencies than by the ones for whom they were designed in the original conception of the survey. About the first users that I recall were the bill poster companies -- the men who erect bill boards -- for advertising men are keenly conscious of the number who will see their advertisements. Service station companies also began asking for traffic volume data during the early stages of the survey. We find that they use the information not only for locating new stations, but also in checking comparative sales at existing stations. A sales manager came in to ask why the sales at certain stations, where the traffic flow was comparatively light, were much greater than the sales at a station which they had located along a road with high traffic volume, and it was found that the traffic at the latter station was so heavy and moved so fast that the vehicles did not have an opportunity to pull into the service station.

We have frequent requests for commodity classification data, which we can supply from our loadometer surveys. Many users want to know the proportion of trucks in the total volume, and the requests for the ratio of out-of-state passenger vehicles in the traffic pattern are numerous.

Some bankers will not loan money for the development of hotels and tourist courts until the applicant furnishes traffic data which he obtained from us.

Each month we prepare a summary statement of Monthly and Cumulative State

Highway Income, Motor Fuel Taxes, and Motor Vehicle Registrations. These are mailed to a comprehensive list of users: to banks, to the associations of motor vehicle manufacturers and dealers, to oil dealers' associations, to oil companies, and others; and we know that they are being used because of the number of inquiries we get when our mailing is late, and because of the questions if there is an error. It seems that this information is pretty good, because during the last year's legislative sessions both the advocates and the opponents of several measures cited our reports as a basis for their contentions.

The Arkansas Public Expenditure Council, the Arkansas Economic Council, and the Arkansas Public Service Commission have all made extensive use of our data, and we have, at their request, prepared special analyses.

We furnish mileage figures to the many agencies who pay mileage rates for transportation, and to bus and trucking companies for use in making their schedules.

We scratch our heads many times in our endeavor to answer the inquiries which come from students: from the grade student whose teacher has told him to write a paper about Arkansas; from the high school student who is making some special study and wants information (he often doesn't know just what he wants); and from the college student who is engaged in the development of a serious thesis. We take pleasure in answering these inquiries, and in giving the questioner the information we think will be most useful.

Individuals in other states who are considering settling in Arkansas are given planning survey data if it is helpful, although generally this type of inquiry is referred to other agencies.

This partial list of the many uses of Planning Survey Data tends to show that the money expended for the planning surveys has been justified, even if the Agencies for which the data were originally prepared do not use them as fully as they could, and in the light of our experience we are led to believe that if more people only knew what we had, we would have to increase our force to answer all their questions and requests.