

## **OHIO HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH CENTER WILL BE PARTIALLY OPERATIONAL BY END OF YEAR**

An 8,100-acre tract at East Liberty, 40 miles northwest of Columbus, Ohio, is expected to become one of the nation's outstanding centers for research and testing of motor vehicles and components and of ground transportation facilities.

Under construction and scheduled to be partially operational by the end of 1971 is the Ohio Highway Transportation Research Center (TRC). It will be joined by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Motor Vehicle Compliance Test Facility, to be operated by the federal government on TRC acreage.

Both will have a common goal—motor safety and convenience and the up-grading of ground transportation to better serve people and industry.

The \$9.6 million federal facility will be operated by DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. A variety of tests will be conducted on motor vehicles, tires, and other motor vehicle equipment. The federal facility, subject to approval by Congress, is scheduled to be operational by the winter of 1974.

It will include testing laboratories and an administration and technical support building, a straight test roadway with crash barrier and skid pad, a warehouse, and a service station.

Construction of the Ohio Center's varied facilities has continued steadily since the groundbreaking in April 1970. Roger F. Dreyer, TRC board chairman, said the Ohio facility has under construction a 7½-mile track that accommodates speeds up to 150 mph, single axle loadings of 36,000 pounds, tandem axle loads of 48,000 pounds, and 100,000 pound G.C.W.

Also under construction is a skid pad 1,800 by 1,700 feet, large enough to accommodate tests of all types of passenger cars, trucks, and buses.

An impact sled will be housed in a multipurpose building, now partially completed. The sled will have the greatest capability of any such facility in the nation and will be used to measure the effects of driver and passenger restraint systems and safety devices in the event of a collision.

The multipurpose building will house engineers, administrative offices, facilities for structural testing of vehicles, driver performance, traffic flow characteristics, traffic controls, lighting, and roadway materials. Other testing and research facilities are planned and will be constructed according to schedules prepared by personnel charged with operations and facilities.

The federal installation will

- Verify compliance with federal motor safety standards;
- Evaluate the technical sufficiency of corrective actions specified by manufacturers in their safety-related recall campaigns;
- Investigate consumer reports and other indications of serious safety defects; and
- Evaluate test procedures and requirements specified for proposed federal motor vehicle safety standards.

James F. Asmus has been named acting executive director of the center, following the retirement of Frank W. Sheldon, Jr.

Asmus joined the TRC as staff engineer in March 1970, a month before ground was broken for the center. Prior to his new appointment, Asmus held the position of manager of operations and facilities. He has been responsible for the planning of the center in its present physical layout.

Asmus was born in Maumee, Ohio, and later attended Bowling Green University and Northrop Institute of Technology. He is a registered professional

engineer in Ohio and holds a B.S. degree in aero engineering. Before joining the TRC, Asmus was employed as a senior project engineer at North American Rockwell Corporation.

In choosing Ohio as the site for the compliance center, Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe said that existing testing laboratories throughout the nation are heavily engaged with commercial contracts and also cannot conduct a full range of compliance tests. The Secretary further said that all standards cannot be tested at a central location, that vehicles and equipment must be transported between different testing laboratories, resulting in added costs and potential damage to the test item, and that commercial laboratories do business with segments of the automotive industry.

The Ohio operation will conduct tests and do research for private and governmental agencies alike and will work closely with universities and colleges engaged in research allied with the automotive and transportation industries.

## California Explores Methods of Fighting Continuing Problem of Wrong-Way Driving

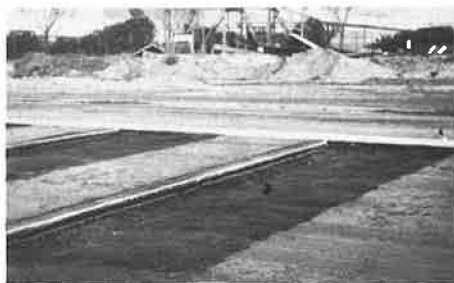
Wrong-way driving represents one of the most serious problems connected with limited-access highways. Whether the wrong-way driver enters via an off-ramp or merely makes a U-turn and drives back down a one-way traffic stream against the flow of traffic, the consequences can be extremely severe.

In California, a rash of wrong-way accidents in the summer of 1970 aroused public interest, and legislators demanded immediate action. Although it later transpired that the high concentration of wrong-way accidents during this period was a random phenomenon, final figures for 1970 showed that 53 people died in wrong-way accidents on the state's freeway system, representing 6.2 percent of the total freeway fatalities.

As a result of the problem, a 5-point program was initiated by the California Division of Highways. All of the Division's work in the prevention of wrong-way driving to date falls into three categories: research and evaluation, surveillance, and operational improvements.

Point 1 of the 5-point program was to reexamine the past 9 years of research and operational improvements carried out by the department to determine if any previously considered concepts were worthy of further consideration. This has now been expanded to include the evaluation of new concepts, with special emphasis on the night performance of any preventive measures, because 80 percent of wrong-way accidents occur at night.

Among the devices reviewed is a series of small bumps in the off-ramp, designed to attract the attention of the wrong-way driver. Experimentation has led to a design that it is hoped



Small bumps in the off-ramp are designed to alert wrong-way drivers without creating a hazard for the driver using the ramp properly.