

GROWING OUR OWN

cultivating tomorrow's workforce today

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Faced with an aging work force, what are you doing to attract new employees? Once you have them, what are you doing to retain your employees? This session focused on several programs utilized by Mississippi DOT.

LEAD Program

The reason people leave is for a better opportunity. Mississippi DOT created the Leadership Enhancement Assessment Development (LEAD) Program in 2001 as its employee retention program. The goal of the program is to create a pool of potential leaders prepared to face the challenges of the changing workplace, to have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. The program is based on 13 core competencies. The audience: a cross section of MDOT employees with senior leadership potential. Starting with an assessment of each person's abilities, strategic plans are developed that will lead the employee toward his or her professional goals. Over 150 managers have gone through the program, including four of the current district engineers. LEAD has resulted in enhanced core competencies, promotions, employee retention, leadership roles beyond MDOT,

awards and recognition for the employees and the program, continuing education and certification. Building on the success of LEAD, MDOT is creating a similar program for maintenance supervisors.

TRAC and RIDES Programs

Mississippi was the first state in the country to implement the Transportation and Civil Engineering (TRAC) Program, developed by AASHTO. TRAC is now in every 7th grade in the state. By investing in students we are able to pique their interest in transportation, introduce them to and prepare them for transportation careers and improve math and science scores. Based on the success of TRAC, MDOT created its own program aimed at elementary school students. Launched in 2001, its Roadways Into Developing Elementary Student (RIDES) program is now in 800 elementary schools throughout the state. MDOT provides an activity manual and trunks equipped with materials that are used for a variety of hands on activities designed to teach students science and math. They also teach the teachers to teach the activities. Session attendees participated in two, lively activities: Energy and ship building.

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