



Technical Certification Program: 2025-2026 Update



TECHNICAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

M-TRAC 2026 Presentation

John Micheau | Program Director

Rachel Brown | Program Coordinator

Khoua Lee | Communications and Marketing

John's Retirement

- Concludes MnDOT career on August 3, 2026, after 29 years of service
- In 1997, started in District 6 (Rochester, MN) as a highway designer; later spent five years in construction
- In 2002, became District 6 Independent Assurance Inspector, working across MN, IA, and WI
- In 2011, took on role as Supervisor of the State's Technical Certification Program
- Grateful for colleagues, experiences, and partnerships built over 29 years
- Looking forward to more time with family, friends, and classic cars



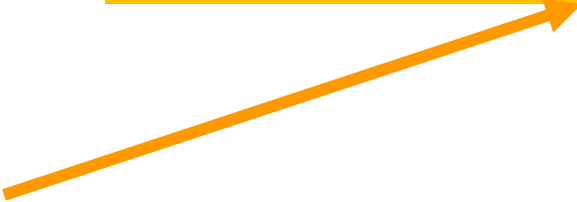
History & Current Structure

Evolution

- Program began being shaped in the 1980s with industry partnerships and solidified in 1995 when the CFR mandated materials sampling and testing certification programs nationwide
- Ongoing, organic development for ~20 years
- 2012: shift from ARM to Lake Superior College for administration and from MnDOT Construction to **Materials and Road Research** for program leadership, oversight, and content
- 2019: industry partners proposed replacing MnDOT's TCP with a program led by industry organization
- 2020: MMB staff did a program evaluation and identified “next steps” needed to address issues raised and to help transition to a more formal program

Next Step #2:

Develop an organization structure that meets the needs of the program today and supports the changes necessary in the future.



MnDOT's TCP Organization Structure

Next Step #2: Develop an organization structure that meets the needs of the program today and supports the changes necessary in the future.



MnDOT staff with focused expertise and roles:

- **Program Administration** (John Micheau)
- **Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Program Evaluation (+ Administration)** (Rachel Brown)
- **Communications and Marketing** (Khousa Lee)
- **Materials Testing and Inspecting** (Karl Sinclair)
- **Administrative Support** (Jay Spratling – 0.50 FTE))

Lake Superior College: Services for registration, invoicing, and instructor contracts (Suzanne Johnsrud & Iris Hiemenz)

Technical Certification Program: 2025-2030 Goals

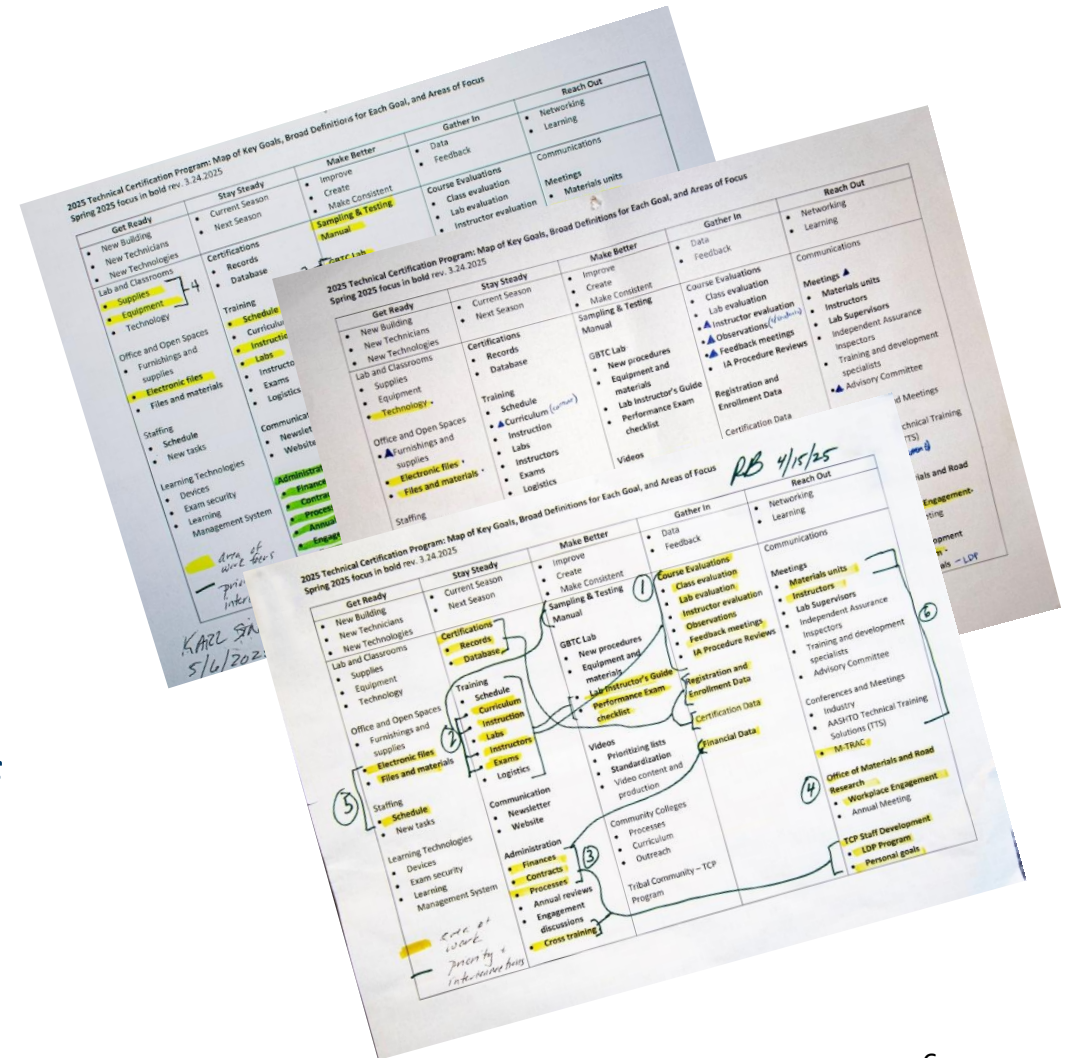
Goals established by the MnDOT program staff based on history, current data, and identified needs for program

New Building New Technicians New Technologies	Current Season Next Season	Improve Create Make Consistent	Data Feedback	Networking Learning
Get Ready	Stay Steady	Make Better	Gather In	Reach Out
• Lab and Classrooms • Offices and Lobby • TCC Staffing • Learning Technologies	• Certifications • Training • Communication • Administration • Staff Development	• Curriculum & Instruction • Labs • Videos • Community Colleges	• Course Evaluations • Registration and Enrollment Data • Certification Data • Financial Data	• Communications • Meetings • Conferences • Office of Materials and Road Research • Outreach

Shared Values and Mission

TCP Staff collaborate **strategically** to manage MnDOT's materials testing and inspecting certification program, centering our work to:

1. **Support the current and new technicians** who sample, test, and inspect materials
2. **Manage public funds** with fiscal transparency, clarity, accuracy, and care
3. **Create community** within the wide range of people and groups involved in materials testing and inspecting

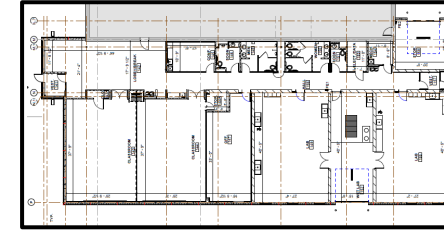


Get Ready	Stay Steady	Make Better	Gather In	Reach Out
New Building New Technicians New Technologies	Current Season Next Season	Improve Create Make Consistent	Data Feedback	Networking Learning

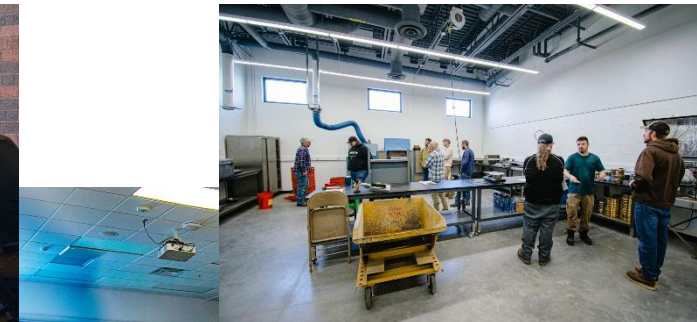
Get Ready: TCC (1)

Highlights of 2025-2026

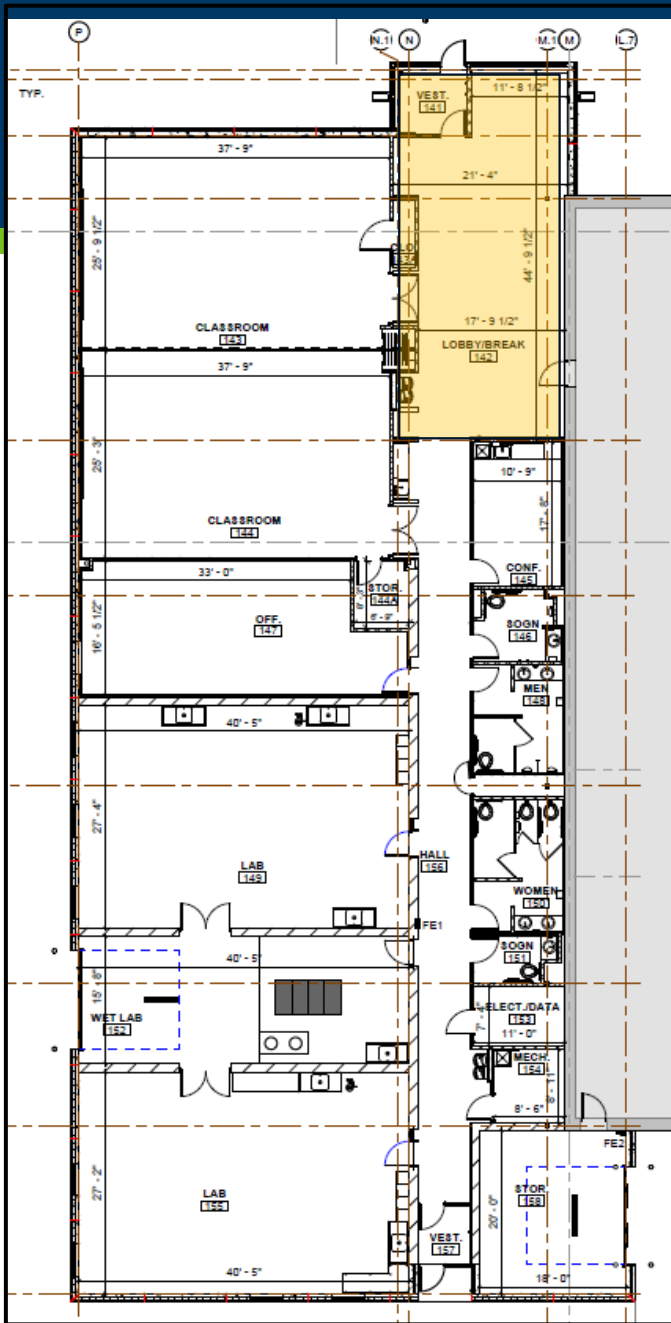
- What: punch list, logistics, staffing, schedule, AV set up, etc., ...
- Who: OMRR staff, MNIT, contractors, 22 classroom instructors, 5 IA Inspectors in labs, 5 ACI exam proctors, 300+ students
- Impact: **Up and running in all spaces!**
 - 31 classes (of 149 program wide)
 - 84 instructional days (1, 2, 3 or 4-day classes), 24 of them in the labs
 - 599 enrollments (of 3,256)
 - 6 other OMRR meetings



Technical Certification Center



TCC photo tour - Lobby



9/18/2026



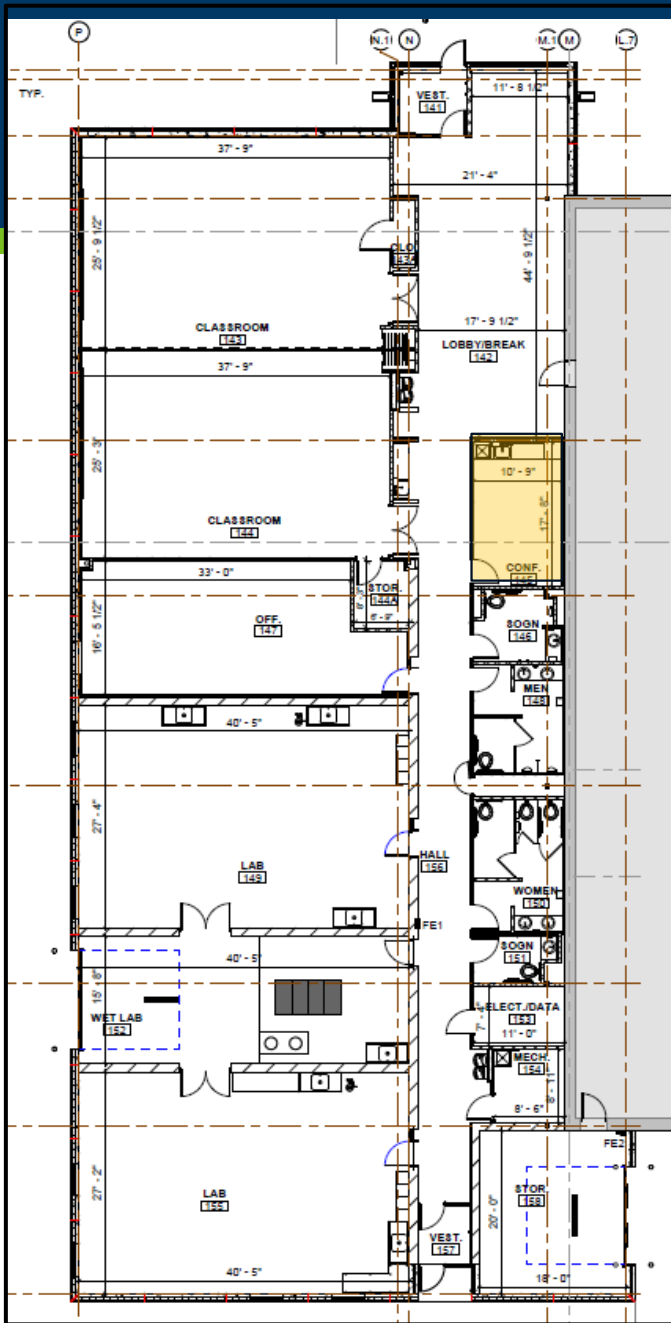
Floor Plan Details:

- Classrooms:** Classroom 143 (37' - 9" x 25' - 9 1/2"), Classroom 144 (37' - 9" x 25' - 3").
- Common Areas:** LOBBY/BREAK (142), OFF (141), CONF (145), MEN (133), WOMEN (130), SELECT/DATA (132), MECH (124).
- Laboratories:** LAB (143), LAB (144), LAB (142), LAB (133), LAB (132), LAB (131), WET LAB (132).
- Other Rooms:** VEST (141), VEST (137), STOR (144), STOR (143), STOR (132), STOR (131), SOGN (145), SOGN (146), SOGN (147), SOGN (148), SOGN (149), SOGN (150), SOGN (151), SOGN (152), SOGN (153), SOGN (154), SOGN (155), SOGN (156), SOGN (157), SOGN (158), SOGN (159), SOGN (160), SOGN (161), SOGN (162), SOGN (163), SOGN (164), SOGN (165), SOGN (166), SOGN (167), SOGN (168), SOGN (169), SOGN (170), SOGN (171), SOGN (172), SOGN (173), SOGN (174), SOGN (175), SOGN (176), SOGN (177), SOGN (178), SOGN (179), SOGN (180), SOGN (181), SOGN (182), SOGN (183), SOGN (184), SOGN (185), SOGN (186), SOGN (187), SOGN (188), SOGN (189), SOGN (190), SOGN (191), SOGN (192), SOGN (193), SOGN (194), SOGN (195), SOGN (196), SOGN (197), SOGN (198), SOGN (199), SOGN (200).



- Two classrooms holding 35 students each in classroom style.
- A removable wall that can be opened for groups of about 90 people.
- Tables in each room equipped with power outlets.
- Equipped with AV to host virtual at the same time as in person.

TCC photo tour – Conference Room

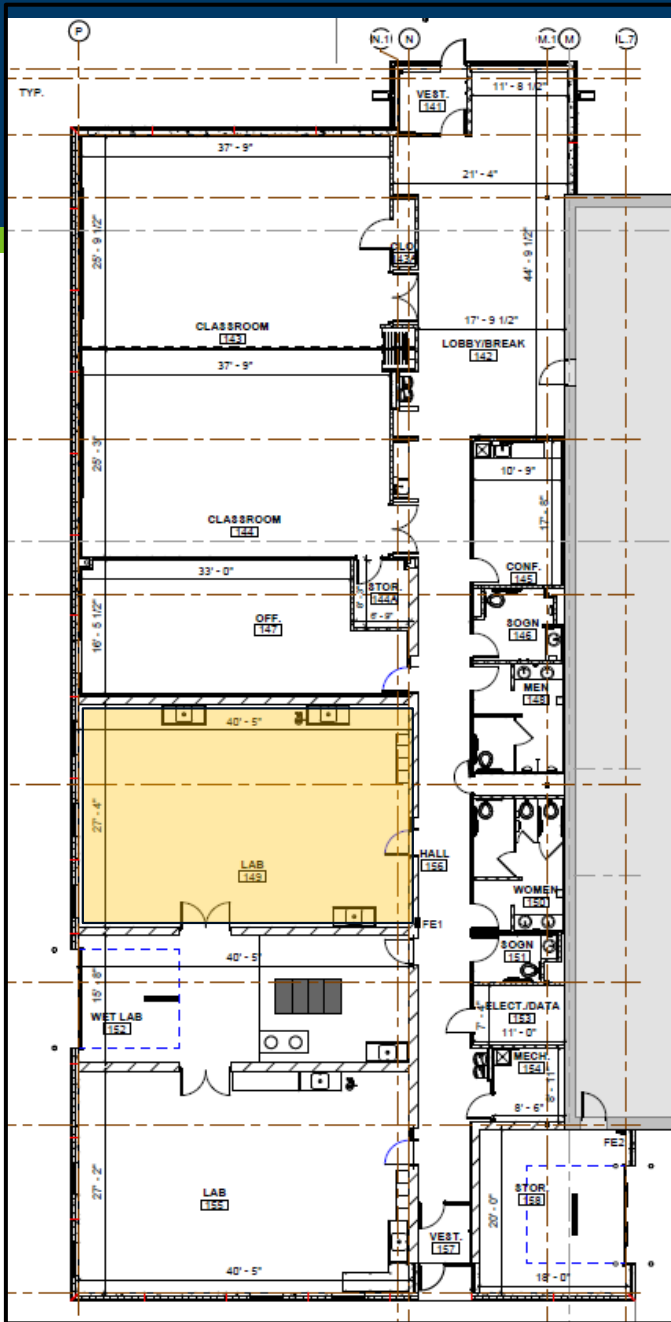


9/18/2026



- Small conference for up to 6-8 people.
- Cabinets with sink; space for those needing a quiet space.
- Other uses: small group meetings, exams, class instruction station

TCC photo tour – Lab #1 (Grading and Base)



9/18/2026



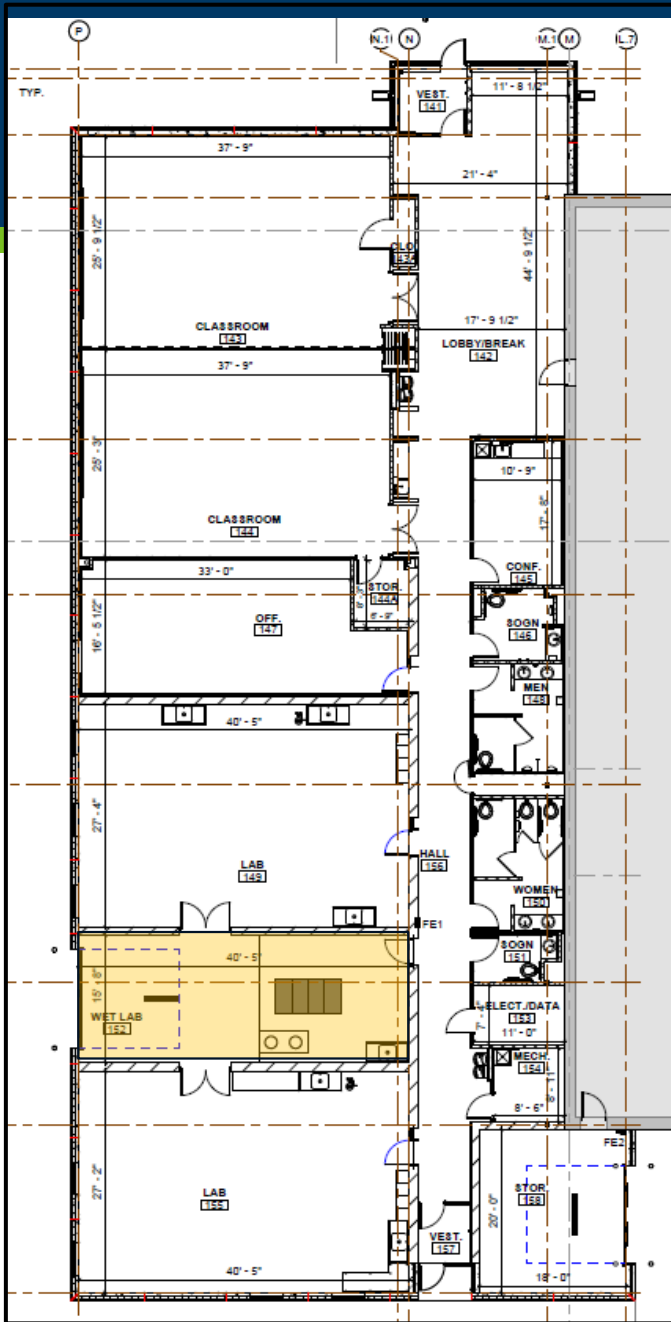
- Set up for aggregate and Grading and base testing
- Space is basically 20'x40'



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TCC photo tour – Lab #2 (Concrete)



9/18/2026



- For concrete field practical testing, and overflow for aggregate and grading & base testing.
- It has a pit in the floor for doing sand cone, nuke, DCP, and LWD testing.
- Equipped with an overhead door for equipment access and deliveries.



Architectural floor plan of the second floor, showing various rooms and their dimensions:

- Classrooms:** Two classrooms (153 and 154) measuring 37'-9" x 29'-9 1/2".
- Office:** An office (154) measuring 33'-0" x 16'-5 1/2".
- Labs:** Two labs (155 and 156) measuring 40'-5" x 27'-2" and 40'-5" x 27'-4" respectively.
- Storage:** A storage room (152) measuring 8'-2" x 10'-9".
- Conference Room:** A conference room (155) measuring 10'-9" x 17'-9 1/2".
- Restrooms:** Men's (153) and Women's (153) restrooms.
- Sign Room:** A sign room (155) measuring 10'-9" x 17'-9 1/2".
- Mechanical Room:** A mechanical room (153) measuring 8'-6" x 20'-0".
- Vest Room:** A vest room (157) measuring 18'-0" x 20'-0".
- Corridor:** A long corridor on the left side of the plan, measuring 27'-4" x 29'-9 1/2".
- Other Rooms:** A lobby/break area (152) measuring 21'-4" x 44'-9 1/2", a storage room (152) measuring 8'-2" x 10'-9", and a select data room (153) measuring 11'-0" x 11'-0".

The plan also includes dimensions for various corridors and rooms, as well as door swings and furniture placement.



Get Ready	Stay Steady	Make Better	Gather In	Reach Out
New Building New Technicians New Technologies	Current Season Next Season	Improve Create Make Consistent	Data Feedback	Networking Learning

Get Ready: TCC (2)

I've been testing materials for a long time. Coming into this space, for the first time I felt like I was a professional. That someone created such a good space for us, made me feel like my work matters. - Student

Community Impact from TCP Perspective

- Learn about students, their work, and their career paths
- Deepen connections with classroom and lab instructors
- Get immediate feedback from students and instructors
- Become the Center for students who return for multiple classes (“welcome back!”)

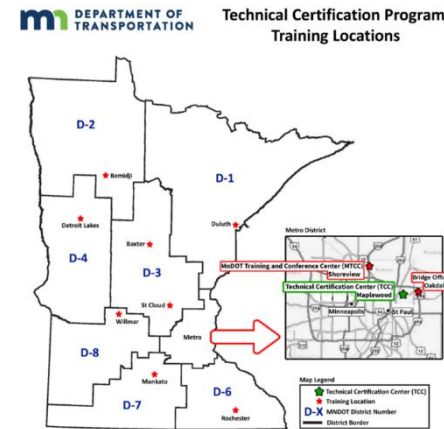


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Stay Steady: Summary

Highlights of 2025-2026

- 3,296 enrollments
- 20 courses, 132 classes, 320 class days
- 11 MnDOT locations and 3 community colleges
- Over 100 program and lab staff, and classroom instructors
- 1 direct contract (LSC), 2 subcontracts (WSB, ARM)
- 4 budgets with course and program costs

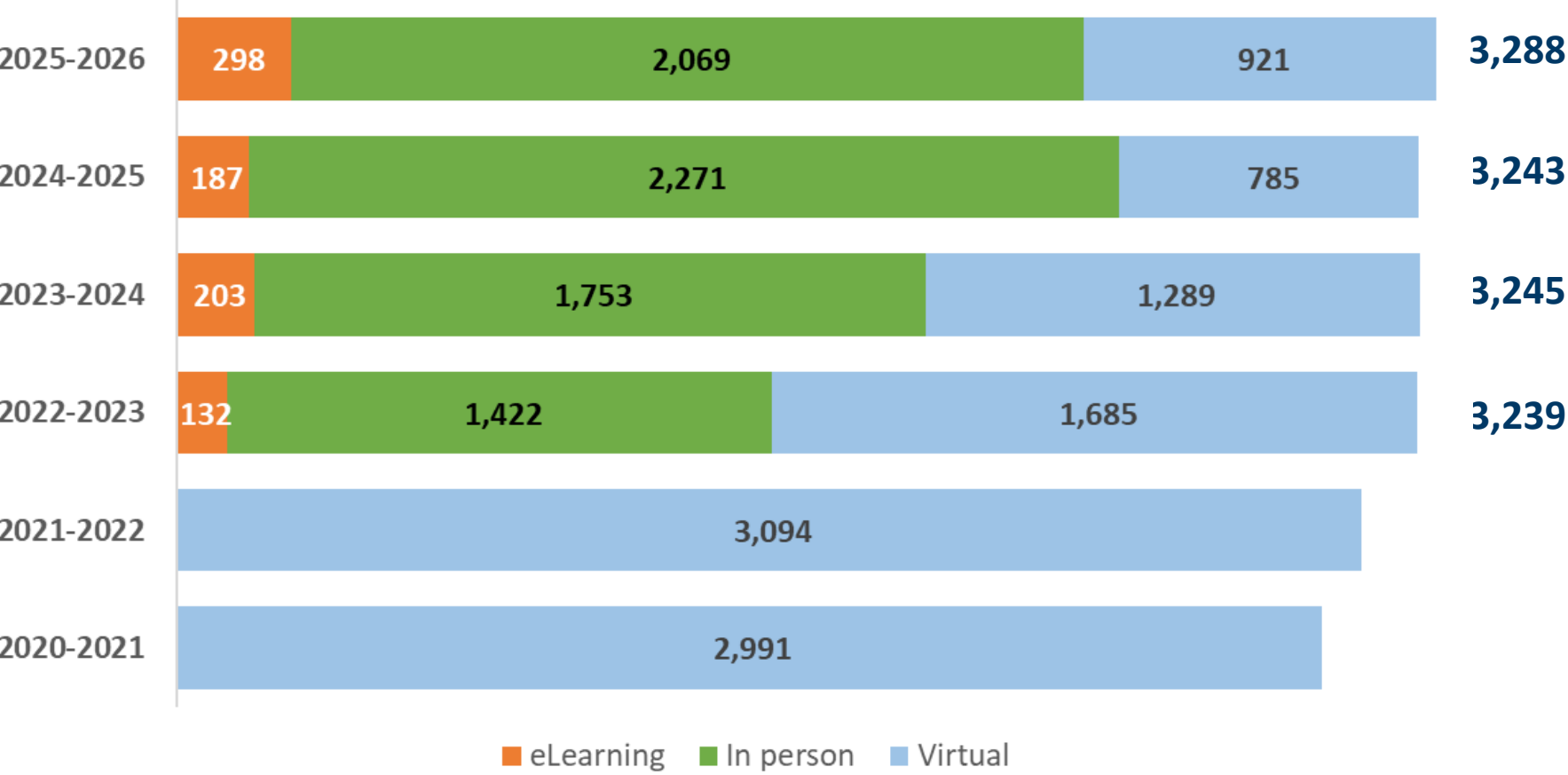


2026-2027 Work Started

- Create schedule (classes, locations, instructors)
- Develop budgets
- Reflect with instructors and specialty units to make improvement plans
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - Evaluation and assessment
 - Schedule and staffing

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Stay Steady: Enrollment (1)

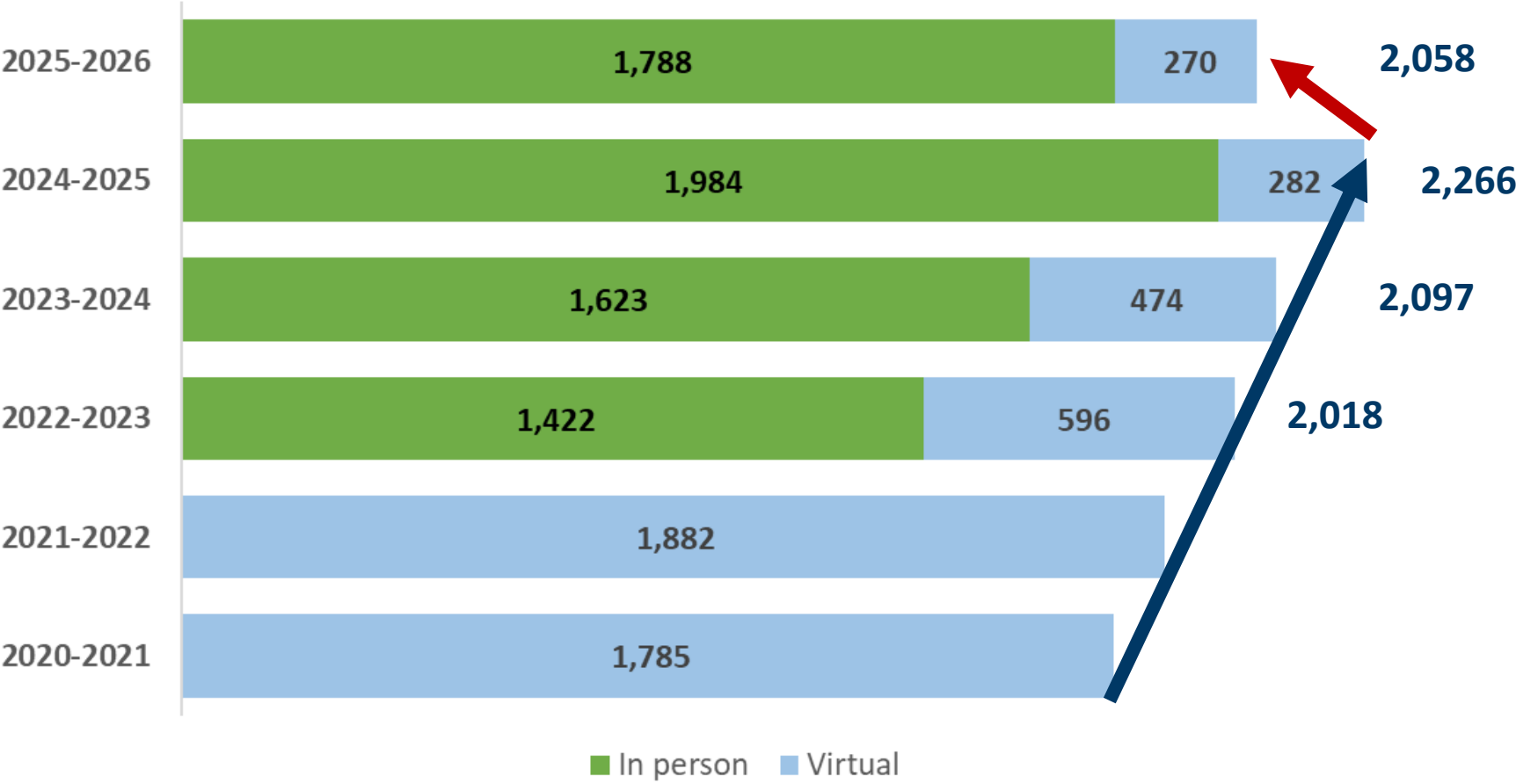


Key Takeaways

- Enrollment consistent and stable the past four years
- Shift from all virtual during pandemic to a mix of modes
- Mode choice can be done for “best fit”
- eLearning spike in CPTR may indicate interest; new LMS will allow for better delivery

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Stay Steady: Initial Certs

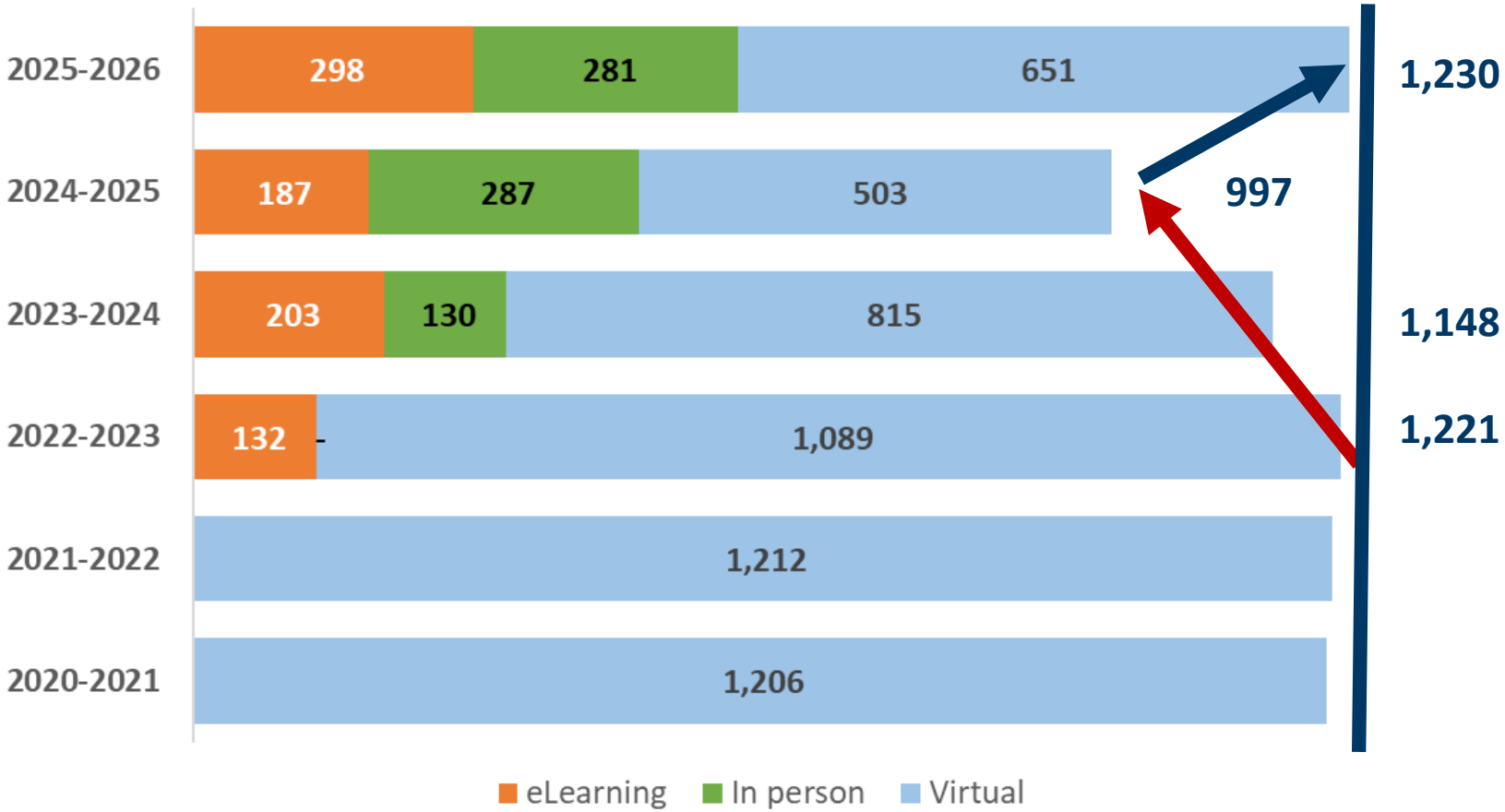


Key Takeaways

- Had been a steady rise in number of initial certifications with slight drop (208) this year
- All initial Inspectors increased
- All initial Testers decreased
- Bituminous Street the only remaining virtual class for initial certification

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Stay Steady: Recerts



Key Takeaways

- We thought the large dip last season was pandemic impact, increased retirements, or both
- As expected, saw an increase in recertifications this season
- Will know next season if back to the stable trend
- Mix of mode choice well increasingly used; eager for new LMS to support more

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Make Better: Summary

Highlights of 2025-2026

1. TCP staff development

- honing skills
- standardizing tasks
- cross training

2. Instructor support

3. Building set up



Grading and Base Tester			
ID#	DATES	LOCATION	PREREQUISITES:
GBTC-084	11/18/25 - 11/20/25	TCC - Maplewood	• Aggregate Production Tester (APT)
GBTC-085	11/18/25 - 11/21/25	TCC - Maplewood	DATES: 3
GBTC-086	12/08/25 - 12/11/25	TCC - Maplewood	COST: \$500
GBTC-087	12/10/25 - 12/11/25	D-6 Rochester	LAB: Yes
GBTC-088	01/06/26 - 01/09/26	TCC - Maplewood	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
GBTC-089	01/07/26 - 01/09/26	TCC - Maplewood	• Steel-toed shoes REQUIRED
GBTC-090	01/20/26 - 01/22/26	D-7 Marquette	EXAMS:
GBTC-091	01/21/26 - 01/23/26	D-7 Marquette	• Written
GBTC-092	01/23/26 - 01/25/26	D-7 Marquette	• Performance (handwritten)
GBTC-093	02/04/26 - 02/06/26	D-1 Duluth	Professional Development Hours (PDH): 15
GBTC-094	02/04/26 - 02/06/26	TCC - Maplewood	Minnesota State College Credits: 1
GBTC-095	02/24/26 - 02/26/26	TCC - Maplewood	
GBTC-096	02/25/26 - 02/27/26	TCC - Maplewood	
GBTC-097	03/02/26 - 03/12/26	D-3 Baxter	
GBTC-098	03/12/26 - 03/13/26	D-3 Baxter	
GBTC-099	03/17/26 - 03/20/26	TCC - Maplewood	
GBTC-100	03/18/26 - 03/20/26	TCC - Maplewood	
GBTC-101	03/31/26 - 04/02/26	D-4 Willmar	
GBTC-102	04/01/26 - 04/03/26	D-4 Willmar	
GBTC-103	04/14/26 - 04/16/26	TCC - Maplewood	
GBTC-104	04/15/26 - 04/17/26	TCC - Maplewood	

Grading and Base Tester Recertification (GBTR)			
ID#	DATES	LOCATION	PREREQUISITES:
GBTR-020	01/15/26	Virtual	DATES: Current GBTC
GBTR-021	03/03/26	Virtual	LAB: No

Take this class if you only need to recertify in Grading and Base Tester. If you need to recertify in Tester and Inspector, please take the Grading and Base Inspector Recertification (GBIR). You do not need to take both classes.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):
• None
EXAMS:
• Written



Obtain 2000 – 2050 grams of mixture and spread in a large pan.

4. Finances

5. Registration Processes

6. Curriculum and Instruction

- Grading and Base Inspector
- Concrete Strength Tester
- Aggregate Production Tester

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Make Better: Finances

For fiscal transparency created systems to track **all revenue and expenses** for the program from four financial systems (TCP, LSC, ARM, WSB)

- Use of standard terms, codes, methods of reporting
- Per each class expense vs. per class budgeting
- More frequent reporting and precise invoicing
- Reasserted MnDOT control of expense choices, pulling as much in-house as possible to avoid overhead and markups



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Gather In: Summary

2025-2026 Data Highlights

1. Gathered more complete **financial data**
2. Used **evaluation data** to better understand student needs
3. Took notes and reflected on **registration data** to improve processes
4. “Cleaned” database records of **certifications**
5. Collaborated with **Independent Assurance Inspectors on Field Review** results to identify procedures that technicians struggle with

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Reach Out: Newsletter

- Monthly email to 9,200+, ~ 43% open rate
- Program reminders and logistics
- Safety articles
- Profiles of community
 - 15 instructors
 - 5 IAs
 - 3 labs
 - 5 specialty unit staff
 - 2 students



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Website Behavior

Why This Report Is Important

- It helps us understand what visitors need most.
- It helps us improve the pages people use the most; like Course Materials and Exams.
- It shows when traffic is high so we can plan staffing and communication.
- It helps our team make better decisions based on real data, not guesses.

October: Strong start (2,058 visits)

November: Dip during holidays (1,626)

December: Major surge (3,138)

January: Highest point of the season (4,798)

February: Stable (4,148)

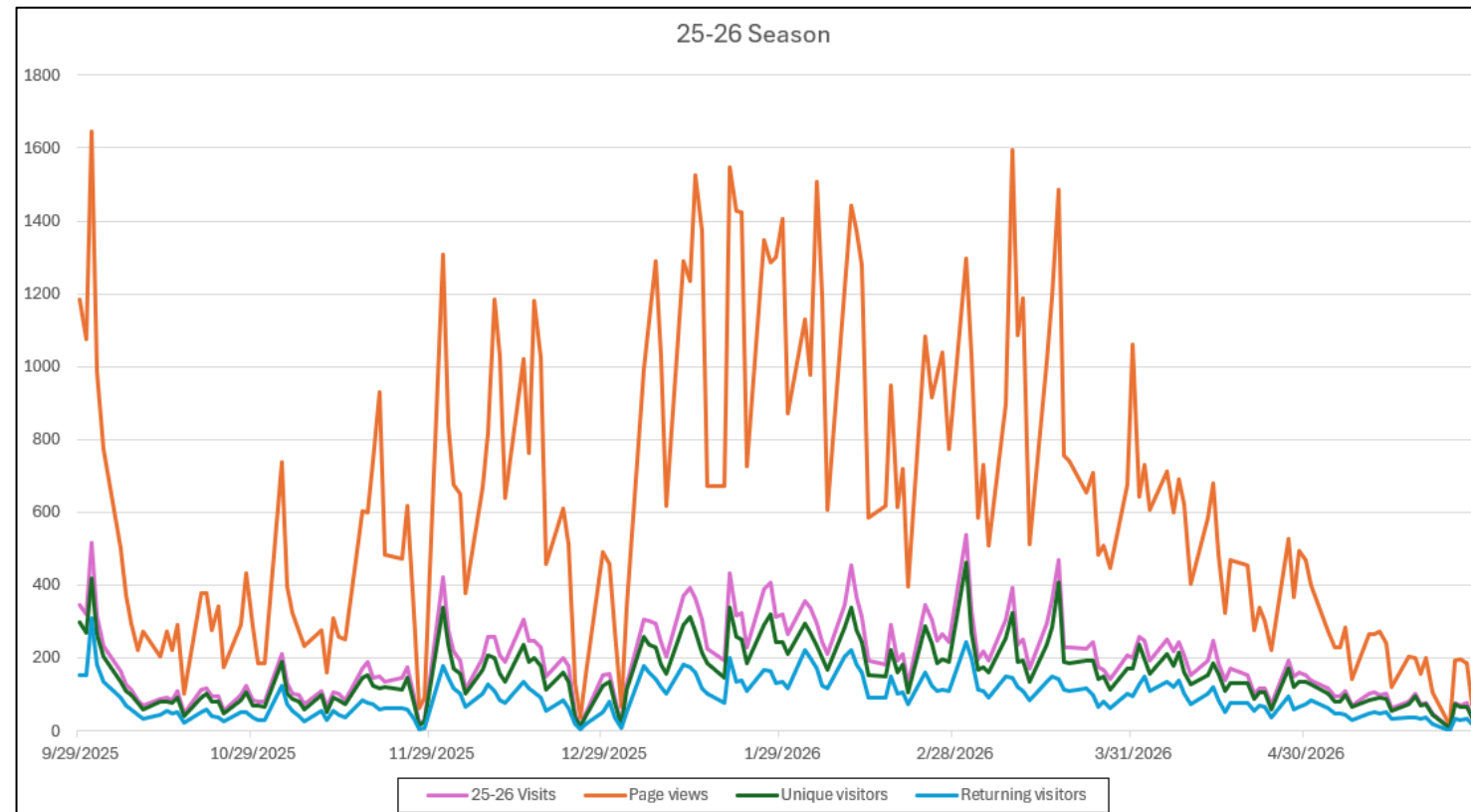
March: Stable (4,094)

April: Near end of season (2,781)

May: Last month of season (1,117)

June: End of season (660)

October 2025 – June 2026



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Reach Out: Other Ways

Highlights of 2025-2026

1. Presentations at **MnDOT meetings** (Lab Supervisors, TDS, IAs, etc.) including Round Table at the Construction Inspectors Workshop
2. **M-TRAC annual** attendance and hosting at the TCC in 2027
3. Working with **instructors from many companies** (Braun, WSB, AET, etc.) and MnDOT (current and retired) and connecting with **students** from wide range of organizations
4. Participating fully in the **Office of Materials and Road Research**