

# Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

*Spring 1997*

**NORTH CENTRAL SUPERPAVE CENTER**  
**Steering Committee Meeting**  
April 3, 1997  
*Madison, Wisconsin*

## WELCOME

Chairman Laird Weishahn opened the meeting by introducing himself and outlining the status of hot mix asphalt in Nebraska. The members and guests present then introduced themselves. The list of attendees is attached as Appendix A.

## REVIEW OF NCSC VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Weishahn distributed a handout (Appendix B) showing the mission, vision and goals of the Steering Committee, as established at the first meeting of the group in November 1995. He asked for comments from the floor regarding whether any revisions were necessary. Wayne Muri moved and Gene Skok seconded a motion to continue with the mission, vision and goals as written. Motion passed.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Director Jan Olek summarized the financial status of the Center. Copies of the overheads from his presentation are attached as Appendix C. Policies outlined at the last meeting regarding overhead, training and other charges have not changed. Funding for Year 2 of operation is coming from the FHWA, but the status of any third year funding is uncertain. If any funding is provided, it will be in exchange for performing certain activities on behalf of FHWA (i.e., providing training for National Highway Institute (NHI) courses, etc.).

Training generated a significant amount of income for the NCSC and increased our visibility. Olek discussed some training issues in general, such as the amount of time that training takes. He mentioned that in the future, we may need to look at adding some staff for training or may need to intensify efforts to partner with other organizations to do training. For the 1997-98 training season, we will increase efforts to market our training capabilities.

For the next two years the financial picture looks pretty secure. Beyond that it is hard to predict. As we approach the end of Year 2, we hope to have a better idea of our income from training and research, as well as a better feel for the need for our services.

Lee Gallivan emphasized that the original funding for the centers from regional pooled funds was for two years only. He has been assured that, now that we have the regional pooled fund project set up, it would be a simple matter to extend that beyond two years. We need to start looking at what the Steering Committee wants to do when the current pooled fund agreement runs out. Olek suggested giving the procedure a chance and seeing how it works. Then we can discuss in the future and decide if we want to continue the process or make revisions. Weishahn added that a year from now we will have a better idea too of how effective our marketing efforts are.

## STATUS OF REGIONAL POOLED FUND STUDIES

Technical Director Rebecca McDaniel presented the status of the regional pooled fund projects (Appendix D). The FHWA recently granted approval to set up a regional pooled fund study for Base Funding for the NCSC. Letters to each participating state are being prepared that will include the PR-2 forms needed to obligate SP&R funds. Approval to establish a regional pooled fund study on Reclaimed Asphalt Pavement is still pending, but is expected soon. When that approval has been received, PR-2 forms will be sent to those states that agreed to participate in that study. The third proposed regional pooled fund project had to do with Fine Aggregate Angularity (FAA). McDaniel asked for input on the need for regional research on FAA as originally outlined. She suggested that a change in the focus of the study might be appropriate in light of other work on the topic and growing information on what FAA values are available. Lloyd Bandy commented that aggregate issues are a major concern around the region and should be addressed. Doug Coleman expressed his belief that we should be looking at whether 45 is the right number for a given traffic level, etc. He does not support research to justify changing the number to allow the use of natural materials, but he does support doing research to relate FAA to performance. Fred Frecker commented that Dave Holt said earlier today that the intent of FAA was to rule out natural sands. If that is true, the number 45 may not be appropriate since it may also eliminate some manufactured sands. Coleman responded that low specific gravity materials may not be able to meet a 45; you want a hard, angular sand. Gerry Huber commented further that it is true that SHRP did not do any research on aggregate, but that does not mean the decisions were made capriciously. The expert panel looked at existing research including the national rutting study. The two factors that were significant when field air voids were above 2.5% were two faces crushed and fine aggregate angularity. Weishahn summarized that this topic is something we need to pursue. Larry Michael mentioned that Maryland's concern is the repeatability of the test, especially with respect to determining bulk specific gravity. Any study of FAA needs to include a consideration of repeatability. Coleman suggested working with a geologist who may be able to suggest another method of measuring specific gravity using a standard volume of material and pumping a gas through; the method is very repeatable and not expensive. Bandy suggested we also look at what work is going on in the states and document. The NCSC staff will revise objectives accordingly, write proposal and send out for review.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NCSC AND LEAD STATE TEAM

Larry Michael, of the Maryland DOT and Superpave Lead State Team, spoke on what the relationship should be between lead states and centers. When SHRP ended, it was very confusing because there were so many groups getting into Superpave implementation. A question at a recent lead state meeting was "who is the authority on Superpave?" Michael suggested that the role of the centers is becoming more critical. There is a desperate need for the states and industry to have a center with credibility. The five centers are going to be somewhat different depending on personnel. States and industry need to be able to go somewhere to ask questions and be confident in the answers. What Michael heard today indicates that this region is apparently doing a good job on education and training, and reminded the committee that the training needs to be geared to the audience. Uniformity is critical. Michael cited a part of his state where a contractor may work in four states, each with different specs. Hopefully the centers can help to achieve some measure of uniformity in training and certification. He sees a need for good binder training and some round robin testing. An area that desperately needs attention is material approval. We need a procedure to test new materials and a facility to do some testing that can be trusted to indicate whether the material is good or not. Equipment testing is needed too, for example, the new gyratories need to be tested. The same is true of the binder equipment where new devices and brands are being promoted. One reason he thinks the role of the Superpave centers is greater is that, as a lead state, he committed to implementing Superpave as written. If Michael has a problem today and writes a research need to NCHRP, it will be after the year 2000 or 2002 before there are any answers. A mechanism is needed to get help quickly -- the Superpave Center can be that mechanism. In fact, the Center could take the lead in writing problem statements for the whole region. DOT people are often asked to write these things but need help. There needs to be a funding mechanism set up for that too.

Tom Bryan asked if there was a way to disseminate information from lead states through the centers. Michael said as a result of the recent meeting, they had developed a very good action plan. Information is simultaneously going to FHWA. Rick Smutzer commented that each lead state is responsible for distributing information to other states in their regions. Lee Gallivan asked about the results of the first Lead State Team meeting in St. Louis that said centers would do various things for the Lead State team -- has that been formalized a little more? Michael said yes and no. Roles are being clarified, but further discussion is needed.

## INDIANA LEAD STATE ACTIVITIES

Smutzer then commented on INDOT's lead state activities. He sees the lead states as helping to share information so that every state does not have to learn things on its own. Another effort would be to develop a trouble shooting form. A form was developed, but now there may be other efforts to collect some of that information. The group discussed the myriad of questionnaires and whether they met the region's needs. Coleman suggested putting the responses on the Internet so that there is quick, easy access to solutions and shared experiences. Tom Deddens mentioned that AI engineers have been directed to go to their states to collect information and asked if they should hold off on that. McDaniel noted that her understanding was that Asphalt Institute engineers are to

collect data on all 1996 Superpave projects, and FHWA Divisions are to collect information on projects in 1997 and 98. The Lead State Team form is for troubleshooting problems on Superpave jobs and may not be needed on all projects. Coleman stated that those forms will not get filled out until the end of the season, which is too late to help. Smutzer noted that the Lead State Team's goal was to get information on problems quarterly and to put it in a search system so you could get information quickly and to share information between the centers so you could access nationally. John Volker added that the states need to feed information to the Center so that the staff can answer questions. Ray Hogrefe commented that we need to tie the goals and activities of Management Committee to what the center can do. For example, the Management Committee set a goal of collecting information on the benefits of Superpave. Bandy noted that any information gathering needs to include the contractor. Michael commented that there are a lot of rumors going around. He cautioned that you need to consider the speaker and his agenda – did they tell you the whole story? Gene Skok added that we need to record not only problems, but also successes.

## TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Weishahn distributed reimbursement forms to state people. A short discussion regarding whether travel expenses of industry representatives were reimbursed followed. Only state representatives' expenses are to be reimbursed by the Center, according to the policy adopted at the April 1996 meeting. (Copy attached as Appendix E.)

## NEW INITIATIVES IN THE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTER

Olek discussed new initiatives in communication/information activities of the Center (Appendix E). What we do right now includes the newsletter and the web page. Other activities we would like to go into include:

- bulletins
- brochures
- news releases
- web discussion summaries (electronic form or mailing)

Olek outlined what Julie Smith, a half-time employee, does including designing the newsletter, financial accounting, coordinating training courses, basic clerical activities, and more. If we want to improve our communication efforts, we cannot do it at the current staffing level. That is one reason our web site has been under construction for so long. Maintaining any kind of web site requires hard drive space and fast access. We have exceeded our capacity allotted by Purdue and must add hardware if we want to do more. This would still be cheaper than using an Internet service provider. We need to put some resources into communication.

Olek also outlined the Center staff's ideas about *News in Brief* news flashes to get updates and news out quickly. These could be distributed by e-mail to most people and fax or mail to those who want hard copy.

In the area of information transfer, we have thought about the creation and maintenance of a searchable data base and serving as a project information liaison (local and national).

Our training efforts were very successful this year. If we expect to generate income from training, we need to intensify our marketing efforts and take training on tour. We could also coordinate training schedules with other centers, share instructors, etc.

Resources that are needed to move in some of these directions include:

- hiring a communication specialist (1/2 time) who would be responsible for writing news releases, working on web page, maintaining data base, etc. Cost: \$25,000
- purchasing a projection system to hook up to computer to use on training efforts. Cost: \$4500
- purchasing a hard drive for the web site and a faster computer- Total hardware cost \$10,000 including the projector.
- Incurring additional mailing and printing costs for expanded mailing list. Cost \$6000/yr.

Olek outlined a proposed funding process for these expenditures that would be funded primarily by industry in the form of cost reimbursement (mailing, computer upgrades) and voluntary support (communication specialist). The changes described could be funded by each state association contributing \$5000. Olek asked for support of these concepts. A motion was made by Tom Pickford, and seconded by Ray Hogrefe to go forward with these concepts. Leonnie Kavanagh suggested putting time frames on these goals and added that a searchable data base would be very helpful. Bruce Peebles asked which industries we would target. Olek said we need to be careful about that. We would work with industry people on our Steering Committee, then they could work that out individually. John Becsey asked that we provide some specific examples of questions and answers that we can provide, such as the example *News in Brief* flyer. This will help him when he goes to executive committee.

## UPDATE ON CONSTRUCTION

McDaniel provided an update on the construction status by showing slides of the Center. All of the equipment is installed and functioning. The remodeling is largely complete with only some final connections to make and details to wrap up. The fume hoods do not yet work pending final connections to the air handler, but they are not holding up any work at this point. The remaining work is mostly outside, so Steve Bowman, the new technician, has been able to get the lab back in shape.

## NCSC—BEYOND THE SECOND YEAR OF OPERATION

Lee discussed future funding from FHWA. Second year funding has been provided. After that there will be no routine funding. There will, however, be additional funding for specific activities, such as evaluation of the new direct tension device, other testing, etc.

FHWA will pay as they go when using our services. The Windows version of the software is due out in the relatively near future. NATC II training is being phased out at the Asphalt Institute and being turned over to the centers, except for SST and IDT training which will continue in Lexington for now. The FHWA trailers are available; for any training in association with trailers, people should contact their regional centers. The FHWA will not abandon centers, but there will be no more \$115,000 checks. Even though the states have not contributed any funding yet, you may want to look ahead beyond the two year agreement. Do we want to roll over the \$20,000 per year for more years or do we want to do something different? Larry Michael indicated that there will be a continuing need for the centers. Muri asked about NexTEA. He thinks there may be more research funding and asked if any of that would be available to support the centers. Ramon Bonaquist indicated to Gallivan that they are having to fight for funding to implement Superpave. Rodney Slater, new secretary, is really behind ITS, which is taking up a large share of available funding. The apportionment issue is a big one. The Step 21 program is being put forward next week to provide a minimum of 95 cents returned to each state for every dollar they send to DC. Another proposal from New England is to keep the status quo. Another calls for the devolution of FHWA entirely. FHWA still plans to keep ETG's and TWG's going and fund other Superpave related things as they can.

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Weishahn raised the issue of membership on the committee. The Asphalt Institute has formally requested that they be allowed to be a member. Weishahn does not see that this will increase the size of the committee significantly, nor does he see other groups coming and wanting to join. In addition, the industry representatives could change over time and could include aggregate association, academia, whoever, as chosen by state. Gallivan asked what the role of AI is in other centers. Deddens indicated that several field engineers have roles with other user-producer groups, but does not know if they have any role on Steering Committees. Volker asked if they could be ex officio members, attend meetings but not vote. Bandy thinks Weishahn's motion to admit the Institute as a member has merit because it covers borders like no other group. McDaniel commented on the excellent support the Asphalt Institute has provided for all the centers – competition is not an issue. Muri has no problem with them joining, but commented that ex officio status has worked well in TRB and other organizations. Hogrefe moved that the Asphalt Institute be allowed to have one full member on NCSC Steering Committee, Muri seconded. Smutzer asked, if they are to be a full member, would they contribute to funding? The response was that funding support would be voluntary, as with other industry groups. The motion was easily carried with only two negative votes.

## NCSC AND NCAUPG GOALS

Weishahn raised the issue of how NSCS could work towards meeting UPG goals. Weishahn said many of the things we talked about today went towards meeting the goals established by the NCAUPG Management Committee. He also noted that many members

of the Steering Committee are also on the Management Committee. The group agreed that we need to keep the UPG goals in mind as we look at center activities.

## OTHER CENTERS

Kavanagh asked where we stand relative to other centers. McDaniel commented that while each of the centers has a slightly different area of emphasis, there are also some remarkable similarities. All of the centers are now working on the ruggedness testing. Most are doing some amount of training; the North East and North Center centers have done a lot and the South Central Superpave Center just announced a schedule of classes. We published the first newsletter, which was very well received, and other centers are now getting their newsletters going. Getting the centers set up has taken longer than anyone thought originally. We are working together well and are roughly comparable in terms of what we are doing although there are some differences in where we are putting our initial efforts.

## ADJOURNMENT

Weishahn adjourned the meeting at 4:00 as promised.