

Can't wait for statewide urban design and specification standards?

IN THE NEXT couple of years, Iowa will become the first state to implement statewide urban design and specifications manuals for public infrastructure improvements.

In the meantime, agencies can use central Iowa's *Standard Design and Specification Manuals*, which were developed by 34 central Iowa jurisdictions and will form the framework for the statewide manuals.

Order the central Iowa manuals

The current central Iowa manuals (printed in December 2000) are being maintained by Snyder & Associates and are available for any government entity to purchase and use. A detailed order form is online, www.ctre.iastate.edu/bulletin/urbanspecs.pdf. Or call Brent Bean or Melissa Leopold at Snyder & Associates, Inc., Ankeny, Iowa, 515-964-2020.

What's the progress on statewide standards?

The development effort is anticipated to take two to three years. The following organizations and groups are working together to create and implement statewide manuals:

- city and county engineers
- Iowa DOT
- contractors

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Some data may already exist on a paper inventory, but very likely staff will have to collect additional data. Where no written inventory exists, the price tag for information gathering can run from three to five dollars a sign. Many counties have between 5,000 and 8,000 signs; cities, upwards of 25,000 signs or more.

Collecting data, therefore, can be the most costly part of establishing an electronic sign management system.

Between purchasing software and collecting and entering data into the system, getting an electronic system up and running can be expensive. However, the ability to update data quickly and track and manage the inventory proactively can make the investment worthwhile.

- Iowa chapter of the American Public Works Association
- Statewide Urban Standard Design and Specification Manuals Steering Committee
- CTRE

Steering committee members include engineer representatives of the Iowa DOT, metropolitan planning organizations, transportation management agencies, regional associations of local governments, as well as city and county engineers, contractors, and other stakeholders throughout the state.

In addition to standard designs and specifications, the statewide manuals will include design and construction details unique to specific jurisdictions across the state. They will address considerations like materials availability and soil conditions, which may vary among the six state districts.

CTRE is staffing and coordinating the development of the manuals. District subcommittees will identify design and specification particulars unique to specific jurisdictions for inclusion in the manuals.

For more information

If you have questions about the statewide standards, contact Dale Harrington, associate director for pavements at CTRE, 515-294-8103, pcconc@iastate.edu. •

The ultimate purpose for using electronic sign management systems, of course, is to improve traffic control signage and thereby increase road user convenience, reduce crashes, and limit agency exposure to tort liability. Sign management staff must evaluate the benefit/cost of implementing such a system in their own jurisdiction.

For more information

To find out more about sign management systems, or to obtain a copy of the free FHWA software, contact Tom McDonald, Iowa's Safety Circuit Rider, 515-294-6384, tmcdonal@iastate.edu. Tom can also provide sign management training.

For information about his county's experience with electronic sign management, contact Mark Nahra, Delaware County engineer, 319-927-3505, mark_nahra@hotmail.com. •

LTAP Advisory Board

The people listed below help direct the policies and activities of Iowa's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). Contact any of the advisory committee members to comment, make suggestions, or ask questions about LTAP.

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