**2010-2011-2012 Nebraska Motorist Assist Patrols Summary and 3-Year Funding Plan**

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**Nebraska’s Freeway Service Patrol Business Model**

In the late 1990s, transportation stakeholders in the Omaha metro area identified a “freeway service patrol” as a high priority for metro area motorists. In a survey conducted as part of the Omaha ITS Early Deployment Planning Study, 85% of the respondents identified a freeway service patrol as the single transportation service that would improve the quality of life for motorists using Omaha’s increasingly busy 150 lane mile freeway system.

At the time, no funds were available. Key stakeholders went to work with the NSP Troop A in the lead and the Metro Area Motorist Assist Patrol Partnership was created to develop a volunteer-based freeway patrol that would solicit sponsorships to purchase the vehicles.

Nebraska’s motorist assist patrol business model is unique in the United States. It is the **only** freeway service patrol that is staffed by volunteers and funded using sponsorships that pay for the purchase of service patrol vehicles. It is estimated that the Nebraska service patrols provide both the Nebraska State Patrol and the Nebraska Department of Roads considerable staff relief (about 8,000 NSP and DOR staff hours) during each fiscal year in the course of providing 16,000 assists and other services. 52% of all assists are on the I-80 Corridor.

There are **three** Motorist Assist Patrols in Nebraska. The oldest and largest is the Metro Area Motorist Assist Patrol that is operated by NSP Troop A in Omaha. The Metro Area Motorist Assist Patrol will probably function in its present form for the next 4-5 years. After that, NDOR and NSP will have to contemplate developing a full-service freeway patrol in the Omaha Metro. The others are the Nebraska Motorist Assist Patrol (Lincoln) and the Central Nebraska Motorist Assist Patrol (Grand Island.) Each service patrol is administered by the respective NSP Troop Areas and is dependent upon volunteers and sponsorship revenue. Sponsorships are used to purchase motorist assist vehicles and equipment. Nebraska motorist assist vehicles accumulate about 200,000 miles before replacement. NDOR is among the original program sponsors.

The three patrols aggregate about 16,000 assists each year, with the Omaha segment providing 10,000 assists, the Lincoln segment 4,000 assists and the GI segment 2,500. A modest value of $30 for each assist can be extrapolated to a total annual value of $480,000. Additional value can be found in the staff savings to both NDOR and NSP of about 8,000 staff hours annually. That figure is based in an assumed 30 minutes per assist.

“Tagging abandoned vehicles” is the most frequently provided service. Tagging by motorist assist volunteers starts the clock running on the removal of abandoned vehicles and enables towing operators to remove them from the roadside. This activity relieves NSP and other law enforcement agencies from this duty and reduces the probability of secondary crashes.

**Motorist Assist Patrol Services**

* Fuel service
* Tire service
* Pick up road debris
* Tag abandoned vehicles
* Cellular phone
* Jump start
* Mechanical assistance
* Directions
* Welfare check
* Traffic control

**Most Frequently Provided Services**

The overall cost-benefit ratio for freeway service patrols has been estimated at 11:1 by the FHWA. The services that are most frequently provided are:

* Tag abandoned vehicles (40.5%)
* Welfare check (21%)
* Tire service (12.7%)
* Mechanical assistance (6.9%)
* Fuel service (4%)

**NDOR Motorist Assist Patrol Sponsorships**

1. 2010: Central Nebraska Motorist Assist Patrol (Grand Island), $15,000
2. 2011: Nebraska Motorist Assist Patrol (Lincoln), $15,000
3. 2012: Metro Area Motorist Assist Patrol (Omaha), $15,000

**Private Sector and Other Motorist Assist Patrol Sponsorships**

* AAA Nebraska
* Werner Enterprises
* Lee Saap Ford
* City of Omaha
* Iowa DOT
* NDOR

**Motorist Assist Patrol Administration**

1. **Central Nebraska Motorist Assist Patrol**: Lieutenant Jeff Pelowsky
2. **Nebraska Motorist Assist Patrol**: Lieutenant Randy Bybee
3. **Metro Area Motorists Assist Patrol**: Lieutenant Kevin Bridges

Volunteer recruitment, training and program administration is performed by the specified lieutenant in the Troop Areas that have patrols. The time commitment is considerable and includes volunteer recruitment, screening, training and administration, sponsorships, etc.

1. Central Nebraska Motorist Assist Patrol funds are administered by the NSP and the **NSP Foundation.**
2. Nebraska Motorists Assist Patrol funds are administered by the NSP and the **NSP Foundation.**
3. Metro Area Motorist Assist Patrol funds are administered by the NSP, MAPA and the **MAPA Foundation.**

**Awards**

* Safe World Award, Safety and Health Council
* Milestone Recognition Award, Safety and Health Council
* Metro Chiefs Award for Sacrifice, dedication, and Leadership
* Heartland Women of Today Volunteer Recognition Award
* Friends of Tourism Award
* MAPA Regional Service Award
* United Way Outstanding Group Volunteer Award

**Timeline**

The Metro Area Motorist Assist Patrol (MAMAP) will remain operational in its present business model **for the next 4-5 years**. At some point, the difficulty in the recruitment of volunteers will make the present business model impossible to sustain in the Metro area. Sustaining sponsorships is another issue for all three patrols. The patrols that service the two westerly segments (NEMAP and CEMAP) will probably continue using the present volunteer-sponsored business models beyond 4-5 years.

At some point, the Nebraska Department of Roads will need to consider deploying a professional, full-service Metropolitan Area freeway patrol using NDOR assets and employees. Difficulties in recruitment of volunteers for the Metro area patrol and the safety of volunteers are the primary reasons. Details on full-service patrols operated by other DOTs are available upon request. Some states use “sponsored” freeway patrols, but the attractiveness of “sponsored” patrols must be weighed against the modest contribution of sponsors (which is only about 4% of total cost) versus the goodwill provided to DOTs by the patrols.

**Cost Estimate for Year 1 Full Service Metro Service Patrol**

A rough estimate of the cost of initiating a twice daily, peak time full-service freeway patrol in the metro area:

* 6 light-duty vehicles@$80,000 each (as in Gateway Guide photo below): $480,000
* 6 FTE freeway service patrol technicians: $200,000
* 20% Operations and Maintenance Cost: $136,000

**Total Year 1 Cost: $816,000**

Freeway service patrol business models, position descriptions and other details about freeway service patrols from across the country are available on request.

**2010-2011-2012 Agreement**

An agreement between the Nebraska Department of Roads and the Nebraska State Patrol was signed during May, 2010. Under the terms of that agreement, NDOR will provide funding in the annual amount of $15,000 for one patrol segment each year in 2010-2011-2012.

**JIM MCGEE MPA**

**May 25, 2010**