



Kansas LTAP Fact Sheet

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Taking Charge of the Process

Miami County has developed a manageable way to manage signs.

By Lisa Harris

Miami County's sign supervisor, Barb Coddington, heard from her sign crews that they were feeling overwhelmed with the new regulations about making sure signs meet minimum retroreflectivity levels. "The guys were stressing out, thinking about having to replace signs all over the county," she said. And with good reason. Miami County has almost 11,000 signs. So Coddington came up with a plan to efficiently meet the regulations in a way that is manageable for the crews.

The county already has sign inventory software by Cartegraph, so they have all their signs cataloged by location, grade of sheeting, age..."whatever you'd want to know about the signs," said Coddington. They also purchased sign-making software and equipment from TAPCO, called Flexi, that includes a plotter, squeeze roller, and electronic MUTCD sign library. The county purchases 3M high intensity sheeting and makes their own signs using this software and equipment.

The next step is getting those signs on the road. Here's how it works (the county has already started): The county is replacing signs township by township. [Miami County is a county unit.] They will replace all engineering grade signs with high intensity signs in a particular township, then will move onto the next township. Those signs are supposed to last 8-10 years per 3M, said Coddington. After that time period, the signs will

receive new high intensity sheeting. Replacement will also be done township by township.

Organizing the sign replacement program by township is what makes it manageable for the crews. "They know they can focus on just that one area," said Coddington.

Miami County is also using a retroreflectometer to add extra assurance their signs meet the retroreflectivity standards. All new signs will receive an initial reading within a few months of being installed, and that reading will be entered into the sign inventory. "This will document that the sign meets the standard," said Coddington. "It will help protect the county in the case of litigation." Summer employees will conduct the sign readings.

The county will be on the lookout for any signs that will need early replacement. Signs are inspected a minimum of once per year, and are also seen by crews in the course of their work around the county. If a particular sign looks like it needs replacing sooner than scheduled, staff will take another reading of the sign with a retroreflectometer to see if it is near or at the minimum standard. If yes, the sign will be replaced.

Some of the signs that the county is replacing are high intensity signs that were installed 10 years ago. The retroreflectivity on many of those signs is still above the standard. "That gives us confidence that our signs won't fade out before they are

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replaced, said Coddington.

While the extra work with the retroreflectometer readings and inspections may seem a little over the top, Coddington sees it as an extra measure of protection for the county.

"We are crossing our fingers three times here," she said. "We're doing everything we can to make sure we comply with the standards, and to make sure we're carefully documenting our work—to protect the county."

For more information on Miami County's sign management and retroreflectivity maintenance program, contact Barb Coddington, sign supervisor, at (913) 294-4377.

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