Success in Recognizing Public Works as First Responders — The passage of SB325

By Marilee Enus, Director, UNH Technology Transfer Center

Every day, public works employees show up to do their jobs on behalf of our communities, even on days that may bring bitter cold and snow, drenching rains, or scorching heat. They put on their reflective vests and safety gear and respond to the day’s planned tasks and whatever unknowns the day may hold. The men and women of our local public works teams sign up for a job that requires a commitment to be First, and a promise to Respond regardless the weather, staffing shortages, or other factors. However, in New Hampshire, as in every state in the nation, except Mississippi, it was not until just this month that New Hampshire public works employees were formally and directly recognized by their state legislation as First Responders. On June 7, 2022, the culmination of many months and years of hard work, advocacy, and commitment was rewarded as New Hampshire became only the second state in our nation to codify the definition of public works employees as First Responders.

When SB325 takes effect August 6, 2022, it will be a show of much deserved recognition for public servants and their families. Public works professionals and their loves ones are all too familiar with the hazards of working in the highway or along the roadside. Work zone fatalities reached a 16-year high in 2020, climbing during the pandemic despite lower traffic volumes. Speak with the family of your community’s plow operators or water department, and you’ll likely hear a story or two about a birthday celebration cut short by a water main break, or a Thanksgiving meal reheated after a long afternoon fighting an early-season snowstorm. Telling the public works story and recognizing the sacrifices these incredible individuals and their families make is important.

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Public works has a long history of “being there” when duty calls, a commitment evidenced time and time again in the early weeks of the pandemic. When communities needed to make quick pivots to ensure access to critical public infrastructure, it was often public works that led retrofitting and other COVID responses to install shields, air filters, and enact enhanced sanitizing protocol to make buildings safe for government business, to protect team members, government officials, and the public, and to ensure resiliency in municipal operations. As highway teams collaborated and strategized with neighboring communities to plan for COVID impacts to their winter operations, to face winter storms with the potential of reduced staff and driver shortages due to illness, they did so with full expectation that come what may, the job that was needed to keep their communities moving would get done. They recognized that when the snow fell, if the water main broke, or the tree fell across the travel lane, the men and women of public works would remain committed to being frontline in the response, to being the first ones there and the last ones home, to ensure roadways remained open, water remained flowing, and our communities and quality of life in New Hampshire stayed strong. During the pandemic, public works employees were designated as Essential Workers, those who were essential to maintaining effective communities.
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Table of Contents
Success in Recognizing Public Works as First Responders – The passage of SB325, cover, pg. 3
About UNH T2 & Road Business
Table of Contents, pg. 2
Hello from the T2 Team!, pg. 3
Targeted Overlay Pavement Solutions (TOPS), pg. 4-5
Fostering and Encouraging Leadership Potential, pg. 6
Working in Summer's Heat, pg. 7-8
Caution! Logging Trucks Ahead, pg. 9-10
Celebrating this year's Build a Better Mousetrap Innovation Program winners! pg. 11-13
UNH T2 Team News and Upcoming Events, pg. 14-18
Word Scramble, pg. 17

About UNH T2 and NHLTAP
The UNH Technology Transfer Center fosters a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound surface transportation system by improving skills and increasing knowledge of the transportation workforce and decision makers. As the site of the state's Local Technical Assistance Program, it works to enable local counties, cities and towns to improve their roads and bridges by supplying them with a variety of training programs, an information clearinghouse, new and existing technology updates, personalized technical assistance, training videos and materials, and newsletters. LTAP Centers nationally are able to provide local road departments with workforce development services; resources to enhance safety and security; solutions to environmental, congestion, capacity and other issues.
But why do these two little words First Responder matter so much to the public works community? What motivated countless supporters, both in the industry and from within elected government, to provide testimony, to lobby, and to offer their support throughout this long process? Although New Hampshire’s police officers, firefighters, EMTs, corrections officers and other first-responders of New Hampshire received a $300 weekly benefit to help ease the burden the pandemic had on them in their critical roles to public safety and well-being, public works employees were not included in the definition of First Responders and were unable to access the benefits, despite their critical work and commitment during unprecedented times. Through SB325, going forward public works employees will have greater recognition in the important roles they serve our towns and cities.

Perhaps just as important in the passage of SB325 is that it offers us a new opportunity to tell the public works story, to elevate awareness to the critical roles, and selfless dedication of the men and women in our local highway, water, and public works agencies. It may inspire new conversations or offer renewed hope for those shepherding First Responder bills through their own state governing bodies. This recognition didn’t happen overnight in New Hampshire; it took countless hours of conversation, testimony, support, and advocacy from a community of dedicated supporters. Importantly, the success of SB325 in New Hampshire affords all of us a chance to share this important moment with others in our communities, to highlight the positive impact and importance of First Responder designation to public works teams. This is the story of New Hampshire’s path to First Responder designation, and with continued persistence, outreach, and engagement, we hope it can become the story of other states across America, too.

Thank you to the many state and local highway team members that gathered May 20th to maintain the landscaping at the NH Public Works Memorial. Your ongoing dedication to remembering the public works friends and family members memorialized is appreciated.

And just like that, summer is here! I hope this issue finds you and your team members well. It’s been wonderful getting back out in-person the past few months to see many of you in workshops. And although our training calendar is a little quieter than it was in Spring, we’ve been busy with several other projects, including adding new features to our Learnforlife.unh.edu registration system to allow you to access workshop completion certificates, building out a new website, gathering Build a Better Mousetrap innovation submissions, and publishing the 2022 NH Roads Scholar Directory! It’s been an exciting few months!

Take care of yourselves and each other in this summer’s heat... be sure to review the Tailgate Talk on heat illness in this issue, and check out the video we shared to our Facebook page recently from Nevada LTAP on working in hot conditions.

We’re already thinking ahead to 2023 programming, designing new workshops, and creating new resources. If you’ve got a suggestion for us to help your team, or would like to host a specific workshop, reach out.

Wishing you a safe, wonderful summer of memories and fun... thanks for all you do!

Marilee
Improved pavements that last longer

Many of the pavements in the Nation’s highway system have reached or are approaching the end of their design life. These roadways still carry daily traffic that often far exceeds their initial design criteria. Overlays are now available for both asphalt and concrete pavements that enable agencies to provide long-life performance under a wide range of traffic, environmental, and existing pavement conditions.

Concrete overlays now benefit from performance-engineered mixtures, including thinner-bonded and unbonded overlays with fiber reinforcement, interlayer materials, and new design procedures that improve durability and performance. Curing of a fiber-reinforced concrete overlay should follow the same practices as implemented for conventional concrete pavement. Asphalt overlay mixtures have also advanced significantly with the use of stone-matrix asphalt (SMA), polymer-modified asphalt (PMA), and other materials, designs, and agents that can increase rutting and/or cracking resistance, increase structural capacity, preserve the underlying structure, improve friction, and extend pavement life.

Benefits

- **Safety.** Thousands of miles of rural and urban pavements need structural enhancement and improved surface characteristics, such as smoothness, friction, and noise. Targeted overlay pavement solutions can improve the condition of highways significantly in a relatively short time.

- **Cost Savings.** Timely and well-designed overlay applications are consistently cost-effective because less subsurface work is required. In urban areas, impacts to utilities and pedestrian facilities are minimized.

- **Performance.** Targeting overlay solutions to high-priority highways and high-maintenance areas (which could include limited locations such as intersections, bus lanes, ramps, and curved alignments) can pay immediate dividends in terms of reduced maintenance needs, fewer work zones, and improved safety as well as longer service lives.

Source: NAPA
State of the Practice

Recent improvements to design methods, interlayer technology, slab geometry, and concrete mixtures have broadened concrete overlay surface treatment applicability, reliability, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness. A joint effort by eight States (Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, and Oklahoma) resulted in the development of an improved design procedure for jointed unbonded concrete overlays on either concrete or composite pavements.

For asphalt overlays, several State departments of transportation (DOTs) have adopted SMA due to increased service life and performance. The Maryland, Alabama, and Utah DOTs each used over 1 million tons of SMA during a 5-year period. DOTs in Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, New York City, Tennessee, and Virginia found highly modified asphalt in thin overlays is more resistant to reflective cracking and rutting. It has increased pavement life by two to four times for DOTs in Alabama and Oklahoma. New Jersey and Texas DOTs have successfully implemented alternative mixture design procedures for high-performance thin overlays and overlay mixtures to minimize reflective cracking.

Open-graded friction course is being used successfully by Florida, Georgia, and Massachusetts to reduce noise and stormwater spray while increasing friction. Ultra-thin bonded wearing course (UTBWC) is used by several agencies in the northeast to restore ride quality while sealing and protecting the underlying pavement. Associated tools include improvements and focus on mixture design, thickness design, project selection, and advanced scoping /forensics.

Resources

FHWA EDC-6 Targeted Overlay Pavement Solutions (TOPS)
FHWA Tech Brief: The Use of Thin Asphalt Overlays for Pavement Preservation
National Asphalt Pavement Association (NAPA): Stone-Matrix Asphalt
National Center for Asphalt Technology: Highly Modified Asphalt
Rutgers University: High Performance Thin Overlays
Texas A&M Transportation Institute: Thin Overlay Guidelines
National Concrete Pavement Technology Center: Guide to Concrete Overlays
American Concrete Pavement Association (ACPA): National Concrete Overlay Explorer
Technology Transfer Concrete Consortium Pooled Fund TPF-5(313): Fiber-Reinforced Concrete for Pavement Overlays: Technical Overview
Fostering and Encouraging Leadership Potential

How YOU can support and develop Public Works' future leaders in everyday actions

Having a succession plan in place supports a smooth transition for your public works team if a team member resigns or retires. While every position on your team is critical to ensuring an effective, efficient team, the role of a leader is critical in setting the tone for the team, building culture, and fostering team success. Leadership and Management aren’t the same... having strong technical expertise, skilled experience, and being an excellent performer don’t necessarily translate to being a strong leader. Is there someone on your team who has expressed interest in growing into a leadership role? Here are a few quick ways to support individuals in developing leadership potential.

Invite an employee to lead a Tailgate Talk session with the team.
It’s often times much easier to "present" a topic of a familiar nature, to familiar faces. UNH T2, through NLTAPA, is pleased to offer a large collection of almost-ready-to-go Tailgate Talks, for local agencies to download and use to host a 5 minute safety discussion within their team.

Encourage an employee to join an industry Board! NHPWMA, NHPWA, NEAPWA, and many other industry associations are always seeking new work group and Board members. Board participation is an excellent way for a future leader to develop a professional network, build confidence, and gain knowledge.

Encourage an employee to join an industry Board! Invite a guest employee to a general management or municipal government officials meeting, to see what happens behind those conference room doors. Offer an opportunity to take on a "stretch project" by working on something with an elevated level of visibility - and provide the support - and tolerance of risk - to promote success in the project.

Join us for a Leadership Exchange Group (LEG) meeting - and bring a team member!
New, aspiring, and experienced leaders alike are encouraged to join us for a monthly Leadership Exchange Group meeting. We discuss a leadership topic over breakfast or lunch, and build a network of peers over collaboration, dialogue, sharing experiences and insight. LEG meetings are a great way to get to know public works leaders - and future leaders - throughout New Hampshire and build a strong network of support.

Enjoy teaching others or explaining new concepts to someone? Consider participating as an instructor! UNH T2 hires adjunct instructors for a variety of workshop topics for classroom and hands-on instruction. You don’t need to have formal public speaking experience to be a fantastic instructor. Real-life experience, enthusiasm for learning, and a pleasant disposition are all key components to an instructor that people remember!

"Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others."

- Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric
You know you’re stressed out from the heat when you sweat a lot, have muscle spasms, get a headache, get tiny red bumps on your skin, or feel dizzy, weak, or sick to your stomach. If this describes you on a hot work day, drink plenty of water throughout the day. Take your rest breaks in a cool or shady area. Massage muscle cramps. Use a mild drying lotion to get rid of heat rash. Taking salt tablets is likely NOT necessary... there’s usually enough salt in our normal diets!

If a fellow worker passes out from the heat, get them into shade, loosen clothing to cool them down, and give water only when they’re conscious.

What signs do you notice when your body is too hot?
First, you may notice that you are tired and less mentally alert. This increases the danger of accidents. You may sweat. The body produces sweat so the evaporation will cool you off. Sweating isn’t as effective if the air is very humid, because not as much sweat evaporates. Heat rash is possible. You get it when your sweat glands swell and get plugged up. You can get sunburn if you’re in direct sunlight too long without using a sunscreen to protect your skin. Sunburn can be painful and may even lead to skin cancer.

Heat stress, exhaustion, and stroke
If you don’t pay attention to these early symptoms and get out of the heat, you can get heat stress. What does this do to your body?

The first symptom is usually heat cramps. If you don’t replace the fluids and salts (called electrolytes) that you lost by sweating, you may get muscle pain or muscle spasms. These are most common in the arms, legs, back, and stomach.

Heat exhaustion can follow. Your whole body (especially your circulatory system) is extremely stressed out. Some possible symptoms are a pale and flushed face and neck, clammy skin, heavy sweating, fatigue, shortness of breath, headache, dizziness, or fainting, nausea, vomiting, rapid heartbeat and breathing.

Heat stroke is the most serious stage of heat stress. Your body temperature shoots up. 50% of people with heat stroke die. Symptoms are: dizziness and confusion; red, hot, dry skin; nausea and vomiting; very little sweating; rapid pulse, high body temperature around 105 degrees; convulsions; fainting. Anyone with heat stroke must be taken to a doctor or hospital immediately.

What’s the best treatment for different stages of heat stress?
Heat cramps - Stop work, drink fluids, and rest in a cool area. Drinking Gatorade or other electrolyte replacement fluids may also help.

Heat exhaustion - Give first aid by moving the person to a cool place to rest. Remove as much clothing as possible. Give the person water. Drinking electrolyte solutions may also help. Don’t allow the person to get chilled, and treat for shock if necessary. Get medical help.
HEAT STROKE - Call 911 to get medics immediately. Immerse the person in cool water or ice.

**What to do when working in the heat**

- Drink a lot of cool water or an electrolyte replacement drink like Gatorade. You may need a quart or more depending on conditions. Drink even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Take frequent breaks in an air-conditioned or shaded area.
- Wear appropriate clothing when you’re in the sun. The best clothing is a loose, lightweight cotton shirt and pants in a light color.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat in the sun. Wear a lightweight long-sleeve shirt and long pants if it’s over 95 degrees.
- Use a sunscreen product to protect your skin from ultraviolet rays in sunlight. It should have a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 or more. Check the label.
- Limit your use of alcohol. Ask your doctor about prescription drugs you’re taking.

Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.
Timber harvesting and logging can create a unique set of issues for municipalities due to the logistics involved in executing such a large operation and the potential for increased damage to town owner property or abutting private property. Luckily, the statutes provide some guidance and guidelines to help towns establish good policies for handling these situations. This article will outline some of the procedures and rules when it comes to logging and a basic overview of the purpose and process of bonding.

Logging
Whenever the owner of a piece of property intends to undertake a timber cutting operation, they must first file a form PA-7 Notice of Intent to Cut with the proper assessing officials in town, usually the select board or board of assessors. Local officials are fairly limited on their ability to deny a Notice to Cut which has been properly filled out and filed as the courts have ruled that when SB 104 was enacted in 2011, it intended to remove regulation of timber harvesting from municipal control because forestry activity is already highly regulated at the state level. Under RSA 674:1, VI the planning board can only regulate timber harvesting operations where the proposed timber cutting is part of a subdivision or site plan application. However, towns do have significant discretion and ability to regulate the requirements for the road access loggers need to access their timberlands. Any time someone is going to undertake a logging operation within a municipality, there are many considerations that need to be accounted for. For instance, eventually any road allowing access to the timber will need to

However, towns do have significant discretion and ability to regulate the requirements for the road access loggers need to access their timberlands.
meet up with a town or state owned highway and it can be assumed that large, heavy vehicles will be using that road frequently. Because of this, towns have the ability to regulate the use of these “access roads” to mitigate the potential damage to town property.

Using the authority under RSA 236:13, municipalities can require a temporary driveway permit for logging operations. That driveway permit could ensure safe sight distances and temporary signage warning of trucks entering and exiting. The permit could also require installation of an apron at the edge of the driveway to protect the adjacent road surface. It is recommended municipalities provide notice to those who submit a Notice of Intent to Cut that where there is no existing driveway giving access to a Class IV or Class V road, that a new driveway permit would be required, or, a modified driveway permit where the change in the use of the driveway for timber hauling necessitates a modification of the permit conditions. Even if an existing driveway had not been permitted by the municipality, under RSA 236:13,VI the municipality can require driveway improvements to eliminate any potential threat to the integrity of the local highway that might be caused by a timber harvesting operation due to siltation, flooding, erosion, frost action, vegetative growth, improper grade, or the failure of any culvert.

**Bonding**

One of the tools available to municipalities for regulating logging operations is the ability to require a bond before issuing a driveway permit. However, although bonding requirements are most often used in relation to logging, requiring a bond can also be used as a condition for a weight limit exception or other situations where a private entity is requesting use of a town road for an activity that could cause damage to the property and impose a cost on the taxpayer for repairs.

RSA 236:9 and :10 authorize municipalities to require a bond for any person to disturb the traveled way, ditches, or other areas of a highway. Such bonds may be imposed to provide for the satisfactory restoration of the highway but must “be equitably and reasonably applied to other bonded vehicles using the highway”.

The type of commodity being transported shall not be the determining factor for requiring a bond or the dollar amount of the bond. The person or entity providing the bond shall determine the type of bond furnished and it may be in the form of cash, letter of credit from a bank or lending institution licensed in New Hampshire and acceptable to the person giving written permission, or a bond furnished by an insurance company. The person or entity granting permission shall not arbitrarily withhold funds from any cash bond or letter of credit, but shall first make a good faith effort to resolve any differences with the contractor doing the excavation or restoration.

While bonding requirements are most often associated with logging and timber harvesting operations, there are other circumstances where bonding requirements can come into play. As mentioned above, municipalities may consider requiring a company to secure a bond before being granted an exemption for a weight limit requirement on a town road. This doesn’t just apply to logging trucks, but any truck seeking to use a road subject to a seasonal or permanent weight limit. There are some instances where municipalities are required to secure a bond. RSA 231:61 provides that a municipality may contract out highway work. For any work worth over $125,000, a town is required to obtain a payment bond “conditioned upon the payment by the contractors and subcontractors for all “labor and materials furnished in carrying out the contract. RSA 447:16. The purpose of a payment bond is two-fold. First, it protects subcontractors furnishing labor and materials. Second, it holds municipalities, as project owners, harmless from any liability arising out of non-payments. Unlike payment bonds, a performance bond provides security to a municipality that the work will be performed per the contract. The law does not require a town or city to obtain a performance bond. Nevertheless, whenever a municipality engages in public contraction works in excess of $125,000, it should generally obtain both types of bonds to minimize risk.

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Join us for the remaining Hot Topics in Highway Regulations! Check the calendar for details!
Congratulations to this year's winning entries!

Thank you to everyone who shared their innovations with us as part of this year's 2022 UNH T2 NH Build a Better Mousetrap innovation program! It was a RECORD YEAR for entries, with several great problem-solving creations shared with us.

This year's winning entry was from Ted Wadleigh, Bruce Therrien, and Warren Mordenti at Claremont DPW. They solved the challenges and risks of refilling the sidewalk salt spreader manually by constructing a hopper to funnel salt from the pickup truck to the bobcat sidewalk spreader.

Using scrap materials from the DPW yard consisting of an old damaged v-box salt spreader and other scrap metal, the team installed a new chain to the v-box, replumbed the hydraulics, and from the scrap metal fabricated a chute for the back as well as fabricated new locks for the dump body.

Using the new funnel machine, the operator can now top off a sidewalk hopper in about 30 seconds without either driver having to get out of their vehicles, without using a ladder and climbing into the truck, and without shoveling.

Congratulations to Ted, Bruce, and Warren on an innovative solution that greatly improves safety and efficiency to winter operations!
**PIPE MEASURING TOOL IMPROVES SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY FOR LACONIA PUBLIC WORKS**

**Participants: Craig Borgeson**

Someone previously had to enter a confined space catch to measure the pipe sizes in catch basins for design build applications. Craig constructed a simple tool from one piece of wood strapping (1"x2") with a flat wedge attach at the end with predefined measurements (6", 8" 10" 12" and 15") hash marks. This tool is inserted through the grate to complete the measurement - eliminating the need for an employee to enter the confined space. This reduces the amount of time an employee is in the roadway, and greatly improves safety and productivity!

**USING FREE TECHNOLOGY TO STREAMLINE AND TRACK WORK - BEDFORD DPW'S CALL LOG**

**Participants: Brandon Boisvert, Kevin Hodgdon, Denise Nobert, and Jess Reade**

Brandon developed a call log with an integrated ticket-submission system to allow office staff to quickly enter citizen calls, and field staff to access ticket information and update the ticket, all using Google Forms and Google Sheets. Quick access to work, ability to track and report on work, and improved organization- winning!
Several team members at Durham DPW worked together to leverage ESRI's ArcGIS Online Story Map tool to create an informative platform geared at sharing information with the general public on snow removal and ice control measures. This user-friendly and visually-engaging tool builds engagement and outreach within the Town's multi-modal transportation network for the safety and benefit of Town's residents, stakeholders, and the general public, including the UNH community members that live, study, and work in town. The partnership included support and participation from town officials including the Town Administrator.

Great work Sam Hewitt, Craig Stevens, Rich Reine, Janice Richard, Dwight Richard, and Shane Bickford, to ensure ongoing, timely access to helpful information for your community!

Congratulations to all of this year's winners- and thank you to every public works team that submitted an innovation to the program!

Click the image below to watch the highlight reel of this year's program.
APWA'S 2022 DONALD C. STONE EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION Individual Award

Congratulations!

MARILEE ENUS
Director, UNH Technology Transfer Center

Welcome aboard!

KRISTEN PARENTEAU!

We're thrilled to have Kristen join us as our part-time Program Coordinator, supporting training, events, and communication & outreach.
An NHDES-approved Green Snowpro Salt Applicator Certification initial training!

SNOWFIGHTERS' SEMINAR

Preparing your teams & equipment for winter. Best practices & innovations in winter operations. Understanding how salt works - and doesn’t.

EQUIPMENT CALIBRATION - PRESEASON PREP
INNOVATIONS IN DE-ICING & ANTI-ICING
SAFETY - DEFENSIVE DRIVING - DRIVER WELLNESS

2022 DATES & LOCATIONS FILLING QUICKLY!

6.5 Technical +1 Safety NH Roads Scholar hours
$60/pp Municipal, $200/pp Private/Contractor
4+ municipal team members? Contact UNH T2 for discount details

REGISTER AT T2.UNH.EDU

IT'S CAPSTONE TIME!

Do you have a project you would like graduating CEE Seniors to assist you with?

This year-long class presents UNH CEE students with an opportunity to work as part of a team to apply engineering, communication, and management skills. Projects that include multiple engineering disciplines (structural, geotechnical, environmental, water resources) are strongly encouraged.

If you have a project that entails investigation of potential alternatives for a project being considered, CEE can help!

Complete the on-line form - https://forms.gle/4RdSRdpguiPFWwkK6
For more info., Email: Anthony.Puntin@unh.edu
NEW T2.UNH.EDU WEBSITE

Coming Soon
STAY TUNED...

Last call for 2022!
7/19 Derry and 7/20 Concord

Lines, Levels, & Layouts
July 2022 UNH T2 Picture Drive

Every qualifying photo submitted earns one entry to August 1st drawing for an Ice Cream Break for your team!

https://t2.unh.edu/PhotoDrive
For details and submission

UNH T2 is hiring!

Part-Time Program Coordinator
Flexible home-based location in northern or western New Hampshire.

Summer Road Business Word Scramble
Unscramble the following words from this issue, and submit your results to T2.Center@ unh.edu by 8/15/2022 to be entered to win a free workshop seat!

Scrambled Words
1. SB532
2. ORRDESPNE
3. SOTP
4. ECTCENRO
5. NTE ASIHSELL
6. INOGLGG
7. ONBD
8. OTVNNINIAO
9. NTALARCOIIIB
10. RNTNEOOTOIAI
11. TPMTRUJIAS
VIRTUAL NEW HIRE ORIENTATION

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FREE FOR LOCAL AGENCIES

11.5 hours
Live & On-Demand Instruction
From AASHTO TC3 & LTAPs
Optional team activities to reinforce learning

OFFERED OVER TWO MORNINGS EVERY MONTH

Scan for the video!
marilee.enus@unh.edu