



Road Business

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On the Road in New Hampshire

The City of Berlin uses student intern to complete important work.

The Berlin City Council asked Jim Wheeler, the Director of Public Works, for a list of signs that required replacement. Jim realized this was an opportunity to inventory all of the city's signs. He decided to use Sign Inventory Management Systems (SIMS) and have Mike Blanchette, a Civil Engineering student at UNH, do the inventory.

Mike worked for the city for the past two summers and the most recent winter break. His work has ranged from updating city retaining wall and guard rail conditions to updating city plow-routes and other projects with using AutoCAD.

Mike took 5 weeks to inventory the 2,170 signs on Berlin's 60 miles of road. In the field he also determined which signs need to be replaced and repaired. SIMS reports showed that 50 signs needed replacement. The city approved all of them.

Mike believes that having a "sign inventory is a good for a municipality. The most important thing after inputting all the signs is keeping the data up to

date. A sign rated as replace needs the condition changed after the sign is replaced." He adds that, "the city is putting forward its best efforts to stay ahead of the game."

A unique feature of SIMS allows users to indicate when obstructions block the sign. Mike says, "we had quite a few circumstances where brush or tree branches were overgrowing signs or where a sign wasn't covered but would be in the near future. This is a handy because most obstructions are easy to fix. The city can query all the obstructed signs, print a list, and send it to a road crew. They can take a day to focus on just those signs and improve a great number of them rather quickly. Before SIMS, a sign may have only been cleared up if a foreman noticed it was obstructed or if it were reported by the public."

Jim said that it is "valuable to have an inventory of the city's signs." His goal is to link it to it GIS and he can do a graphical query on signs that need replacement. After the signs are replaced he will run a SIMS report of signs to be repaired. In time he envisions having the signs at a higher service level.

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