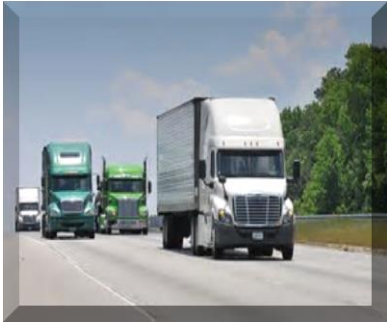




Georgia DOT Moves Forward on Commercial Vehicle Only Lanes Project



The Georgia Department of Transportation has decided to move forward on a project that would create commercial vehicle only lanes on Interstate 75 between McDonough and Macon, according to a report in the Macon Telegraph.

The project would add two non-tolled northbound commercial vehicle lanes to a 40-mile stretch of Interstate 75, starting from Interstate 475 in Macon, Ga. The commercial vehicle only lanes would be the first in the nation and the project cost is estimated at \$1.8 billion. The lanes would be limited to commercial trucks and other large vehicles carrying goods.

Construction is set to begin in 2025 with completion estimated in 2029. The new lanes would reduce commercial vehicle volumes in the general purpose lanes in order to improve trip times and safety for motorists. The Georgia DOT expects the lanes to reduce delay on Interstate 75 by 40% in 2030, based on a study conducted by Cambridge Systematics in 2016.

The project is part of the Georgia DOT's Major Mobility Program that includes 11 projects aimed at improving mobility and safety, fueling economic growth, and improving quality of life for Georgians.

Read Excerpt: <http://www.truckinginfo.com/channel/fleet-management/news/story/2017/11/georgia-dot-moves-forward-on-commercial-vehicle-only-lanes-project.aspx>

What Area of Risk Has Most Affected the Industry this Year?

As an EHS guy, I believe the biggest risk in construction continues to be people and their safety.

1. Are there enough of them? Last year the National Association of Home Builders estimated about 200,000 construction jobs were unfilled in the United States. And while a slight decline in the number of unfilled job openings was reported in May 2017, the situation remains serious.

2. Do they have the right skills? Many workers who left the industry during the 2008 recession never returned, and as baby boomers look toward retirement, there aren't enough skilled young workers in construction to replace them. As a result, many companies try to fill gaps with temporary and contract workers who don't have the requisite skills. Often, skill shortages lead to project delays, poor workmanship, and safety and liability issues.

3. Is enough training being done to protect them? Safety training is an important first step in managing the skilled-labor deficit. More people means more training. New hires mean more training. More temps and contractors mean more training. Staying in compliance means more training. For contractors, avoiding project delays and the steep costs associated with injuries and illnesses starts with training.

Read Excerpt: <http://www.constructionbusinessowner.com/insurance/risk-management/october-2017-what-area-risk-has-most-affected-industry-year>

About the GDOT

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About the Program

The Construction Estimating Institute (CEI) works with GDOT as the statewide provider of the federally fund Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Supportive Services Program.

We want to increase the number of certified DBEs participating in highway and bridge construction, as well as assist DBEs in growing and eventually becoming self-sufficient.

Additionally, CEI provides supportive services by assisting prime contractors and consultants with identifying DBEs for subcontracting opportunities on priority projects.

Farming in the Highway Shoulder: New Pilot Project on The Ray Presents Opportunity for Erosion Mitigation, Economic Opportunity and Carbon Reduction



On The Ray's 18-mile stretch of roadway, maximizing all assets is a key strategy to creating a cleaner, safer highway. One of our largest assets is the land around the interstate, called the right-of-way. This space, designed to be a refuge of safe harbor for drivers in distress, can multi-task and fully utilize the land without threatening its primary purpose to drivers. This month, the Georgia Department of Transportation, the Kansas-based Land Institute, and The Ray implemented our newest pilot demonstration on the right-of-way: perennial wheat farming. For the next three years, the pilot project, which uses Kernza® perennial grain, will be monitored by UGA's Bachelor of Landscape Architecture Program Director and Associate Professor, Brad Davis, as well as a Master of Landscape Architecture student Matthew Quirey.

"The College of Environment and Design is proud to partner with The Ray, GDOT, and the Land Institute on this first trial of Kernza® in a southern locale," said Professor Davis, "We are keenly aware of the potential for perennial grains to transform agriculture and fiber farming, and to improve the way we manage millions of acres of land across the nation and around the world. As landscape architects, planners, and historic preservationists, we have long advocated for more sustainable land management practices and we are enthusiastic in our support of the research goals and mission of the Land Institute. We hope this first small trial will prove successful and pave the way for adoption and expansion across the region and to other innovative perennial seed crops in the future."

This 1,000 square foot pilot project uses Kernza® seed from The Land Institute.

Kernza® plants are a breakthrough from traditional annual wheat grasses and have deep, 10-foot roots that helps to enrich the soil, retain clean water, and sequester carbon. The Kernza® pilot on The Ray is the first in the southeast and the first to be located in a highway roadside.

"Georgia DOT is always improving the management of our roadsides, which are acres of valuable land assets," said Chris DeGrace, Landscape Architect at Georgia DOT. "Over the past two years on The Ray, we have installed pollinator meadows, bioswales of native grasses, and now a pilot of fiber farming. The opportunity to conduct research on a working roadside with the Land Institute and The Ray is unique and unlike anything in the country."

"Wheat straw is increasing used as an alternative to trees and a more sustainable fiber source for making many of the highly disposable products we use every day – diapers, paper towels, toilet paper," said The Ray Founder and President, Harriet Langford. "By growing and harvesting wheat in the right-of-way, we're creating a new economic opportunity, all while drawing down carbon. I think my dad would say this is 'so right, so smart.'"

"This Kernza® perennial grain collaboration will help establish Kernza's® productive geographic range as demand for the grain continues to grow. We look forward to data from this project and are excited to collaborate with The Ray, Georgia DOT and other partners," said Tim Crews, Director of Research and Lead Ecologist at The Land Institute.

To Read More See Excerpt: <http://theray.org/2017/11/16/farming-highway-shoulder-new-pilot-project-ray-presents-opportunity-erosion-mitigation-economic-opportunity-carbon-reduction/>

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