

RMC Came Back to Rehoboth Beach

This year's Roadway Management Conference (RMC) was held again in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware and the 250 or so attendees praised the three-day event that benefited from surprising, exceptional weather, great technical speakers, outdoor demonstrations, and lots of in-person social networking.

The Mid-Atlantic Region (PA, WV, MD, VA, DE) LTAP and T2 Centers hosted this year's RMC October 23-25. The annual conference, optimized to operations and maintenance personnel, has been to Gettysburg, PA, Ellicott City, MD, Wheeling, WV, and Seven Springs, PA in recent years, and we took the opportunity to return to Rehoboth Beach this time around. Matt was worried sick about being later in October and, much like Eeyore, he was sure that cold, wet weather would stick it to us. My, was he wrong. We apologize for how warm and sunny it was; we should have handed out sunscreen!

The Regional team heard many compliments during the conference (blush), so we are assuming a success. Oh, we know we'll get dinged here and there in evaluations and that only helps us target better for future years. But overall, we saw a lot of satisfied faces.

Our three-day conference was attended this time by about 250 folks from each of the five region states and a handful from farther away. As usual, we had a diverse array of technical and other speakers dealing with pavement management, pipe lining, inspection, winter maintenance, bridge preservation, ethics, community engagement, MUTCD issues, concrete durability, occupational injury, a bunch of management and personnel topics, and a series of safety elements.

For our general sessions, we heard from FHWA's Ryan O'Donoghue, as well as local leaders, such as Shanté Hastings, DelDOT's Deputy Secretary and Chief Engineer. And because a lot of our attendees haven't gotten to see it, Mark Luszcz gave an entertaining talk on The Clankers. In our breakout sessions, we benefited from a collection of subject matter experts from across the region; with 21 breakouts and even more speakers, they are too numerous to list here. But for most of our speakers, you can find a copy of their slides at the [2024 website](#); find them under Agenda and click on More Info.

We also tried two new items this year. As pre-conference events that first morning, the earliest registrants we able to sign up for either the Rehoboth Bike Experience or the Accessibility Walkabout. For the bike tour, we sponsored bike rentals and DelDOT's Anthony Aglio led the group around the area to look at best practices and challenges. Similarly, Dr. Ron Eck



(West Virginia LTAP) led a walking tour to examine good practices and barriers; their discussions along the way were so robust that Ron didn't get nearly as far as he intended, but the feedback was great. We are anxious to see how these experiments fared when the conference evaluations come in!



Of course, Wally the Work Zone Warrior was on hand, and more than a dozen highly relevant vendors gave attendees an ability to grill representatives and kick the tires. But another cornerstone of the RMC is our demonstrations and this year we were treated by Crafcro to crack routing (a first), crack sealing, and mastic application. Aquaphalt demonstrated their unusual pothole material, we saw the debut of JCB's Pothole Pro, JR Sheds displayed and demonstrated an array of small equipment, and GVM displayed winter maintenance anti-icing equipment. FHWA's Mobile Concrete Technology Center was on-hand for tours and demonstrations. Stihl provided chainsaw safety



demonstrations. We also got to see some Build a Better Mousetrap innovations from the Delaware River and Bay Authority and the City of Newark, as well as a demonstration of the City of Lewes's curb striping machine. We were able to film some of the demonstrations and the first edited videos will be up soon on Delaware T2 Center's YouTube [channel](#). More will follow so feel free to subscribe to see more in coming weeks.

The Atlantic Sands Hotel and Conference Center in Rehoboth Beach proved to be a superior location once again for the RMC, providing lots of opportunities in the evening for attendees to stroll around town, see live entertainment, and enjoy seafood and other local delights (such as Delaware-famous Dolles salt water taffy and perhaps the best hot-fudge sundae on the east coast at the Double Dipper). These after-hours activities, including a fantastic reception (thanks to wonderful sponsors), organized or free-form, prove to be an effective way to link up folks from across the region. Lasting relationships are born that can be beneficial for years for local personnel looking to see how others solve problems they experience themselves.

We owe a huge thanks to a host of folks that helped us deliver a great conference this year. The Atlantic Sands and the City of Rehoboth Beach were excellent hosts and helped make a lot of things easy. DelDOT's team provided a VMS and ensured that Wally made it to the conference. Nearly thirty speakers attended from all over the region and brought thought-provoking ideas for our attendees. More than a dozen vendors answered endless tough questions from our attendees. Several of them provided demonstrations outside to further illustrate how their products work and how they could best be





used. Slurry Pavers and APWA Mid-Atlantic Chapter sponsored our reception and Pennoni provided the conference bags. Finally, some attendees drove a long way to be at the conference, immersed themselves in the technical issues, met new colleagues, and joked and carried on with us for three days. Our goal was a casual conference where we can all learn new things to take back home with us and all these stakeholders banded together to make it happen.

The poet said, “everything is awesome; everything is cool when you're part of a team.” The Mid-Atlantic Region Centers work as a pretty cool team all year long to put together the RMC. As anyone who has organized a conference knows, there are 3,357 details to attend to, but when you truly act as a team, which we do, it is a lot easier to do and much harder to make mistakes (which we do). We hope our attendees think that everything was awesome. We love the camaraderie among all the attendees, speakers, demonstrators, vendors, and sponsors. There’s a lot of serious work at the conference and we still get to share some laughs.

With Rehoboth Beach in the books, the Mid-Atlantic Region staff are exhausted, but it is time to start planning 2025, when we look to return to Maryland. Exact venue and dates are still in development, but watch this space for details because we would love to see a strong Delaware contingent at next year’s RMC.

