National Partnership for Highway Quality

by Doug Rose
Co-Chair of NPHQ
Chief Engineer for Operations
Maryland SHA
As you know, the mature highway movement has lofted roadways to a new level of relevance and service for our customers, transforming the public’s needs and expectations. No longer just a means to move goods to market and troops to their stations, today’s roadways are as fundamental to our daily lives as the roof over our heads and the wheels under our chassis.

The quality of America’s roadways helps define our quality of life. NPHQ brings together the expertise of state and federal highway agencies and private industry to advance the quality, service, safety, efficiency and environmental viability of America’s highways.
NPHQ Members

- AASHTO
- FHWA
- AGC of America
- American Highway Users Alliance
- Foundation For Pavement Preservation
- Granite Construction Co.
- Kiewit Corp.
- NICET
- NRMCA
- RedVector.com
- Texas Transportation Institute
- URS Corp.
- Williams Bros. Const. Co
You may recall the bumper sticker that said, “In fact, I do own the road!” It’s true. We’re all wise to remember that the taxpayer—the highway user—owns the road. We’re also wise to remember another message the customer sends us on a daily basis: “My way is the highway.”

Americans don’t want to suffer for their mobility. We in the state DOT and FHWA communities, with our colleagues in industry, form the team that champions the hope, dreams and expectations now riding on our roads. Mobility means access to the jobs, education, homes and other resources that deliver on the promise of the American dream. Mobility also means we are continually challenged to deliver the highest quality, performance and value that our roadway infrastructure can possibly supply.

NPHQ helps us meet those challenges. NPHQ brings together visionary public and private sector leaders for one purpose: to give the customers what they want:

Ever-improving practices that ensure highways operate at peak performance now and in the future;
Leadership in introducing and disseminating cutting-edge developments, with clear explanations of their value;
Encouragement of innovation and trial, where the risk is warranted;
And advancement of the arsenal of tools, technology, skills and organizations required to meet any and all 21st century challenges.
This is a dynamic time for NPHQ. We’re experiencing a good deal of growth as the highway community tackles its current challenges and as milestones like the 50th Anniversary of the Interstate system cause all of us to sharpen our focus on the solutions we must find on the road ahead.

NPHQ is attracting new partners like URS, Kiewit, TTI, RedVector.com, Granite Construction Company, Williams Brothers Construction Company, and the American Highway Users Alliance; expanding its footprint among stakeholders; and escalating the momentum to reach long-range goals, including its top priority: a State Quality Partnership – or SQP – in every state by 2008.

I’ll outline the nuts and bolts of SQPs, touch on NPHQ’s “How To” guide for starting and growing one, and describe the new SQP two-tier accreditation process.
NPHQ and State Quality Partnerships

What is a State Quality Partnership (SQP)?

A voluntary, active group of transportation professionals who pool expertise and resources to continually improve the way highways are delivered and maintained.

Here’s the crux of our presentation:

What NPHQ does at the national level, State Quality Partnerships do at the State and local levels. Some states have long benefited from formally-chartered SQPs, creating frameworks that drive quality goals and management operations, and a steering committee that unifies stakeholders around a mission statement and guides strategic thinking on a day-to-day basis.

SQPs hold regularly scheduled meetings, serve as the organizing resource for projects that embrace quality management practices, establish membership criteria, and scan the environment for better, faster, cheaper ways of delivering improved mobility to customers.

Many SQP’s have elements in common. The Maryland Quality Initiative, Georgia Partnership for Transportation Quality, and New Jersey Quality Initiative are a few examples of these teams (some multimodal) that share information and experiences, open channels for technology transfer, boost workforce development, sustain awards programs, and work toward a host of shared, and mutually-beneficial, goals.
Why SQPs?

Top 10 Reasons for an SQP

10. Top quality, award-winning projects
9. Design/construction interaction and integration
8. A culture of innovation
7. Reduction in total project delivery time
6. Improved efficiency
5. Longer lasting products/improved life cycle
4. Improved job site and agency morale
3. Shared resources
2. Project ownership from beginning to end

An SQP is a tool for improving communication, cooperation, collaboration, trust and understanding that dramatically improve outcomes for the roadway customer. SQP synergy can generate improvements ranging from a decrease in change orders and claims to more rapid project delivery. It can spark better contract specifications, system preservation, and asset management. It can prompt cost savings and solid profits. It can open communications pipelines that serve the community for decades to come. It can encourage environmental stewardship. Most importantly, it can focus significant energies on reducing fatalities and accidents.
Why SQPs?

And the #1 Reason for an SQP...

Partnering at the program level, with benefits to each partner.

Just a few snapshots of benefits to partners:

**State DOTs**: leading/championing innovations; partnering goals and measurements

**Cities/Counties**: share resources

**U.S. DOT/FHWA**: improved life cycle for nation’s highways, accelerated construction technology transfer, enhanced mobility for economic prosperity

**State Legislators**: source of information—the ability to contact SQP directly instead of each partner individually

**Public**: accident/fatality reduction and less congestion

**Communities and companies** affected by construction: involvement in planning, continual updates on work zones

**Contractors**: increased profits, awards that recognize value and price, better job site morale

**Suppliers**: reasonable and fair materials specifications and budgets

**Associations**: forums for addressing late-breaking ideas and proposals
Summary

SQP in Every State by 2008

• For customers
• For communication
• For innovation
• For commitment to quality
• For America’s precious asset: mobility.

For more information:
Bob Templeton, NPHQ Executive Director
btemplenphq@aol.com & (512) 301-9899

Coach Vince Lombardi said, “Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”

A commitment to quality makes the highway program work best. The State Quality Partnership makes that commitment easy to achieve.

Many thanks. Your questions, feedback and suggestions are welcome.