ENTRY INFORMATION

Division # 10 – Social Media
Category # 10d – Best Blog
Title of Entry* ADOT Blog – azdot.gov/blog

*This is the name to appear on the award if selected

CONTACT INFORMATION

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ENTRY PROFILE

1) Situation, goals and objectives of public relations activity
Whether we’re educating readers about the state’s transportation system, providing an important project update, or explaining the details of a historic bridge restoration, our goal for the ADOT Blog (azdot.gov/blog) always is to educate and inform our audience by helping them to understand that transportation is personal.

With more than 500 blog posts in its archives, the ADOT Blog meets that goal by accomplishing several objectives, including:
* Explain transportation from a user’s perspective and give readers a better understanding of how their transportation system is planned, built, maintained and financed.
* Provide customer service by answering questions and responding to comments submitted by readers.
* Communicate project and department updates.
* Be an entertaining, compelling source of information that drivers will seek out.

Overall, our aim is to make clear not just what ADOT does, but how and why we do it…

The blog attempts to answer questions that people may already have – How do I get from here to there? What is that ADOT truck used for? How are highway signs built and installed? Why was I sitting in traffic yesterday? – along with the questions they didn’t even know to ask – How does ADOT test paint? How do you keep birds away from project sites near an airport? How does a 520-ton load safely move along the state’s highways?
The blog, which is updated with 3-4 new posts a week, is constantly evolving. In the past year, we introduced two new blog series: Vehicles of ADOT (short posts that highlight the vehicles and machinery used by ADOT crews) and The Science of Transportation (posts that explain the importance of the work done off the project site, inside a lab). These new series join our established “Transportation Defined” and “From the Archives” series.

Besides series and regular posts, blog posts that promote various ADOT safety campaigns have proved to be a valuable way to get important messages out – including ones that have focused on driving in snow and dust storms.

The blog is also an ideal platform for many videos. We always introduce our videos on the blog – this gives us the opportunity to provide additional information and greater explanation and context through with the blog post text.

2) Target audience
The target audience is the general public, the media, ADOT employees, and all local and national stakeholders who use or rely on transportation in Arizona.

3) Measurable results
In August 2013, we moved the ADOT Blog from the Blogger platform to our own newly revamped website. The integration of the blog into the main ADOT website has allowed us to capture a larger audience. People who visit ADOT’s website to complete an MVD transaction now see suggested links to a related blog post and are able to easily click over to the blog for more information.

We keep track of this audience with Google Analytics, which provides several useful statistics pertaining to the ADOT Blog.

We average about 15,000 page views a month, but beyond statistics we know that audience involvement has continually increased because we are seeing more and more questions and comments in response to many of our blog posts. This is encouraging and lets us know that the blog’s popularity is on the rise. It also confirms that our readers are finding value in connecting with ADOT through the blog. We attempt to respond to each comment or question and often are able to link back to previous blog posts in our replies.

Another encouraging indication of the blog’s status is the fact that many news media websites and other transportation-related sites link to the ADOT Blog from their own sites (something else we are able to track through Google Analytics).

One of those online transportation-related sites, Geosynthetics online magazine, reached out to us earlier this year, seeking permission to use the information contained in a recent blog post about how ADOT crews were using Geogrid to reinforce the soil on a road-building project.

The ADOT Blog also supports our community relations efforts to inform people about transportation projects and work activities that may impact or be of interest to the public. It has supported growth in ADOT’s communication services through email subscriptions and social media followers through Twitter (35,000+) and Facebook (5,700+)

Entry form may not exceed two pages
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