

DOTD Customer Satisfaction Survey

by
Lawrence S. "Buster" McKenzie, III
Applied Technology Research Corporation
727 Spain Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

State Project Number: 736-99-1158
LTRC Project No. 03-3SS

conducted for
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
Louisiana Transportation Research Center

The contents of this report reflect the views of the author/principal investigator who is responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development or the Louisiana Transportation Research Center. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

November 2003

Technical Report Standard Page

ABSTRACT

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development conducted this customer satisfaction survey to determine levels of satisfaction overall and with select components of the state maintained highway system. An A, B, C, D and F letter grading scale was used to determine level of satisfaction. The proportion of customers considered as being satisfied was calculated by summing the percent responding A, B and C. In addition to the level of satisfaction, a numeric score and overall letter grade were tabulated for the system overall and for each system component.

Interviews were completed with 1,600 DOTD customers between May 19 and June 9, 2003. Customers were defined as Louisiana registered voters who hold a valid Louisiana driver's license and have driven on the state highway system within the past year.

Overall, DOTD received a C+ grade based on an 84% satisfactory rating among customers. Customer satisfaction levels ranged from a high of 89% on major bridges (B-) and safety (C+) to a low of 69% (C) on pavement conditions. Communications, congestion (traffic flow), and maintenance were the other components receiving a letter grade of C+ based on respective satisfaction ratings of 84%, 86% and 82% respectively. An overall grade of C was given to the work zone component (satisfaction rating of 76%) and to the state highway system overall (64% satisfaction rating).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author extends his sincere thanks and appreciation to Dr. Kam K. Movassaghi, Secretary, and the DOTD Project Team: Deidre Adams, Joe Baker, John Basilica, Marie Brewer, Blaise Carriere, and Harold “Skip” Paul, for their guidance and support throughout this project.

Lawrence S. "Buster" McKenzie, III

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Objective	2
Scope	3
Methodology	5
Discussion of Results	8
Conclusions	27
Appendix A. Survey instrument	
Appendix B. Facsimile of survey instrument with frequency responses.	

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Satisfaction with the state highway system overall and with select components of the state highway system	8
Table 2. Satisfaction with select components of safety and safety of the state highway system overall.	16
Table 3. Satisfaction with select components of traffic flow (congestion) and traffic flow on the state highway system overall.	18
Table 4. Satisfaction with select components of road surfaces and road surfaces of the state highway system overall.	19
Table 5. Satisfaction with select components of bridges and bridges on the state highway system overall.	20
Table 6. Satisfaction with select components of maintenance and maintenance of the state highway system overall.	21
Table 7. Satisfaction with select components of work zones and work zones on the state highway system overall.	22
Table 8. Satisfaction with select components of communications and communications by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development overall.	23
Table 9. Willingness to pay more if the money was dedicated to highways by rating of job being done by DOTD.	26

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The four geographic areas and the DOTD districts comprising those areas.	7
Figure 2. DOTD customers' ratings of the state highway system and components of the system.	9
Figure 3. Grade given to the state highway system overall by number of miles driven per year.	10
Figure 4. Responses to the question: "Have you ever had an unsatisfactory experience with conditions on the state highway system?" by miles driven per year.	10
Figure 5. Description of the unsatisfactory experience(s); n=938, multiple responses accepted.	11
Figure 6. Perceived condition of the state highway system in comparison to five years ago.	11
Figure 7. Responses to the question: "Have you ever had an unsatisfactory experience with a DOTD employee?" by miles driven per year.	13
Figure 8. Description of the unsatisfactory experience(s) with a DOTD employee; n=38.	13
Figure 9. Perceived importance for DOTD attention and resources.	14
Figure 10. Which one is most important to you personally?	14
Figure 11. Perception of job being done by DOTD over the past five years.	15
Figure 12. Grade given to job being done by DOTD on the state highway system by miles driven per year.	15
Figure 13. Grades given to safety topics and safety overall.	17
Figure 14. Perceived greatest threat to safety when driving on the state highways	17
Figure 15. Grades given to traffic flow topics and traffic flow overall.	18
Figure 16. Grades given to road surface topics and pavement conditions overall.	19
Figure 17. Grades given to bridge topics and bridges overall.	20

Figure 18. Grades given to maintenance topics and maintenance overall. 21

Figure 19. Grades given to work zone topics and work zones overall. 22

Figure 20. Grades given to communication topics and communications overall. 24

Figure 21. What is the best way for DOTD to get road information to you? 24

Figure 22. Willing to pay more if money dedicated to highway improvements. 26

INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction surveys provide data which can help an agency, such as the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), determine the level of satisfaction with services and products provided and insight into the basis for dissatisfaction, e.g. problem identification. The findings from a customer satisfaction survey can be used to develop communication messages and strategies intended to improve an agency's standing with its customer base. The findings can also be assessed by the agency to identify internal and operational practices that need to be revised in order to improve customer satisfaction.

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development undertook this project to determine a measure of customer satisfaction and, more importantly, the basis for both positive and negative impressions customers may have toward the department. By learning why the department's customers feel they way they do, the department can take action to address customers' concerns.

OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the project is to collect and analyze primary data from a statistically representative sample of Louisiana citizens who are defined as Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) customers for the purposes of addressing Objective 2.3 of the DOTD Strategic Plan which is to "improve DOTD image and credibility by exceeding responding to customer expectations and attaining a 60% customer satisfaction by FY 05". Specifically, the survey will be conducted to assist DOTD assess customer satisfaction overall and for the following components of the state maintained highway system: 1) bridges; 2) pavement conditions); 3) safety; 4) congestion (traffic flow); 5) maintenance; 6) work zones; and 7) communications.

SCOPE

The project was undertaken to meet DOTD's need of services to develop, conduct and analyze a customer satisfaction survey.

The project involved the development of a survey instrument (questionnaire) which could be used to obtain data necessary to assess customer satisfaction with system preservation, safety, congestion, maintenance, and operations, and communications. The survey instrument was to be based, in part, on other relevant surveys developed for DOTD's Customer Service Manual, federal and other state DOTs, private organizations such as American Automobile Association, American Road and Transportation Builders Association and the contractor's experience.

A draft survey instrument was prepared for DOTD's review and comment. The draft survey instrument contained both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Although more complex to deliver, code and analyze than close-ended questions, open-ended questions provide a means of allowing respondents to state their views or basis for opinions in their own words. In this regard, open-ended questions provide an excellent means of capturing information which helps explain why people feel the way they do. Comments on the draft survey instrument were reviewed, and a revised survey instrument prepared. The survey instrument review and modification cycle continued until both DOTD and the consultant were in agreement as to the length and content of the instrument. A pretest of the final draft questionnaire was conducted among a small group of respondents. Several recommended changes to improve the questionnaire were made upon completion of the pretest and subsequently incorporated into the final questionnaire.

The final questionnaire contained appropriate queries for obtaining measures of satisfaction of select highway system components and elements using a grading scale of A representing excellent, B for good, C for fair, D for poor, and F for failing (Appendix A). The questionnaire also contained queries to determine customers' experiences with highway conditions and DOTD employees, customers' perception of priorities for DOTD attention and resources, perceived trends in the job being done by DOTD, and opinions on willingness to pay more for highway improvements and reasons for those opinions.

Asking people to make distinctions between the state maintained highway system and locally maintained streets and roads was an issue of concern. One of the screening questions (question 3) contained language describing the state highway system as including interstate highways, four-lane highways, two-lane highways and many major thoroughfares.

The survey was to be administered to a statistically representative sample of DOTD customers. Identifying the population of concern, or customers in this case, is one of the first steps in the survey research development process. DOTD has set forth an objective intended to "improve DOTD image and credibility by exceeding responding to customer expectations and attaining a 60% customer satisfaction by FY 05". Implicit in this objective and with relevance to this project is the need to identify the DOTD customer population. To have a customer, an entity must have a product. The state maintained highway system was proposed

as a simple but operational definition of DOTD's product. It is at least one of DOTD's major products--DOTD also provides products in the areas of intermodal transportation, public transportation, aviation, ports and water resources. The state maintained highway system was accepted as the product of interest and, the customer was described, in the most general context, as the people who use or otherwise avail themselves to the state maintained highway system. For purposes of the survey, DOTD customers were defined as Louisiana voters who hold a valid Louisiana driver's license and have driven on the state highway system within the past year.

A sample plan was developed to provide an unbiased, statistical representation of DOTD customers. The sample plan was designed to provide appropriate geographic and demographic stratification consistent with DOTD's interest and within the fiscal parameters of the project. At a minimum, DOTD needed data to establish customer satisfaction at a generally acceptable degree of precision for the statewide customer base. Optimally, the project will have a sample size sufficient to provide for subpopulation analysis based on geography, e.g. regions of the state.

A sample size of 1,600 was used on the project. The design provided for a random start, interval sample to select 1,600 primary households from a sample frame of telephone numbers for registered voter households. The selected households formed the basis for the creation of 1,600 clusters based on sequential geographic address each respective selected household.

Data were collected through telephone interviews and processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. The SPSS analytical software was employed to generate frequencies, crosstabulations and tables.

An A, B, C, D and F grading scale was used to determine level of satisfaction. Respondents were told that the letter grades represented varying degrees of satisfaction as follows: A representing excellent, B for good, C for fair, D for poor, and F for failing. Prior to the collection of data, it was determined that customers would be considered "satisfied" if they gave the highway system component being rated a grade of A, B or C. Using this approach, the percent of customers considered as being satisfied would be calculated by summing the percent responding A, B and C.

The grading scale was used to calculate an overall numeric grade based on a ten point scale where A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, and F=59 or below. Point values were then assigned to the grading scale responses as follows: A representing excellent=95 points, B for good=85 points, C for fair=75 points, D for poor=65 point, and F for failing=55 points. Respondents who did not provide a response on a particular question were excluded from the calculation of the numeric grade for that question. The overall numeric score was calculated by summing the products of points times number of responses associated with an alphabetic grade corresponding to that point value and dividing the sum by the number of respondents. Letter grades were then assigned from the numeric grades using the following scale: A+=97-100, A=93-96, A-=90-92, B+=87-89, B=83-86, B-=80-82, C+=77-79, C=73-76, C-=70-72, D+=67-69, D=63-66, D-=60-62, F=59 or lower.

METHODOLOGY

A series of meetings were held between the DOTD project team and the consultant to develop the survey design and survey instrument. The survey instrument pretests were performed on May 8 and May 10, 2003.

Interviews for the statewide poll were completed by telephone with 1,600 DOTD customers between May 19, 2003, and June 9, 2003.

The overall margin of error for the statewide statistics obtained from the survey of 1,600 DOTD customers is not greater than plus or minus 2.5% at the 95% level of confidence. In other words, there is a 95% certainty that the statistics presented from the results obtained on this survey of 1,600 DOTD customers statewide will not be more than 32.5% above or below the figure that would be obtained if all of the DOTD customers in the state would have been interviewed. DOTD customers were defined as Louisiana voters who hold a valid Louisiana driver's license and have driven on the state highway system within the past year.

The sample error is larger for subgroup responses, such as those based on respondents by geographic area, and other demographic and attitudinal variables. The sample errors associated with the statistics by geographic area are: Southeast Louisiana (n=380), 5.0%; Florida-River Parishes (n=447), 4.6%; Southwest-Acadiana (n=330), 5.4%; and North Louisiana (n=443), 4.7%. There are other sources of potential error which cannot be calculated including question wording and order of question presentation.

Respondents were assigned to one of four geographic areas based on their parish of residence. The four geographic areas along with the DOTD districts and parishes comprising those areas are (Figure 1):

Southeast Louisiana: District 2 - Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, and St. Charles Parishes and Terrebonne Parishes;

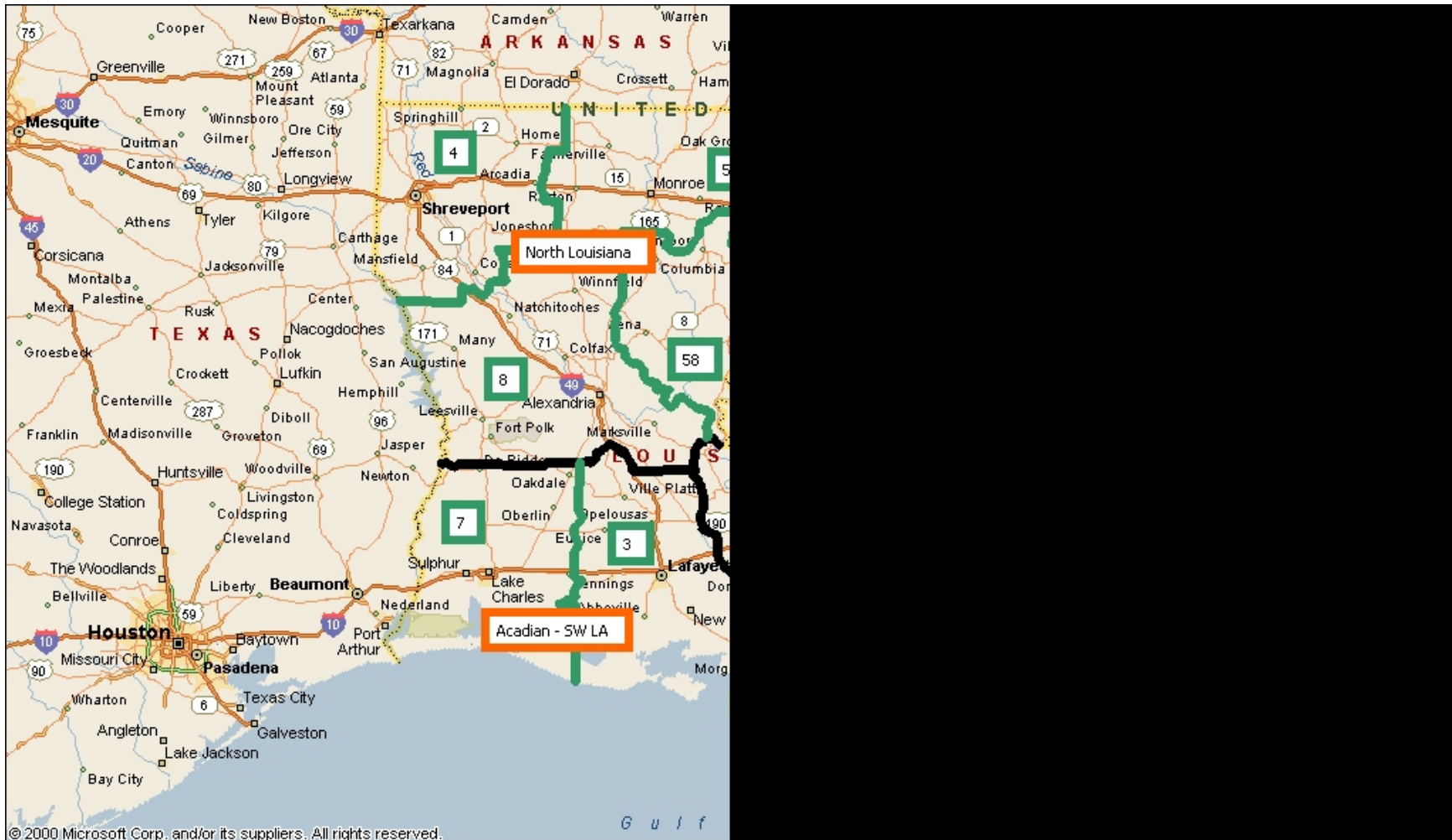
Florida-River Parishes: District 61 - Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, St. James, West Baton Rouge and West Feliciana Parishes; and **District 62** - Livingston, St. Helena, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington Parishes;

Acadiana-Southwest: District 3 - Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, , Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, and Vermilion Parishes; and **District 7** - Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jefferson Davis Parishes;

North Louisiana: District 4 - Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Red River and Webster Parishes; **District 5** - East Carroll, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Union and West Carroll Parishes; **District 8** - Avoyelles, Grant, Natchitoches, Rapides, Sabine and Vernon Parishes; **District 58** - Caldwell, Catahoula, Concordia, Franklin, LaSalle and Tensas Parishes.

A random start, interval sample design was used to select 1,600 primary households from a sample frame of telephone numbers for registered voter households. The primary numbers selected formed the basis for the creation of 1,600 clusters based on sequential geographic address from the primary number. The clusters were proportionate to voter household by race. A quota ensuring nominal male voter participation in the study was imposed.

Figure 1. The four geographic areas and the DOTD districts comprising those areas.



DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings from the survey are presented in this section. The presentation of findings, for the most part, is chronological with the order of questions posed to the respondents. A facsimile of the questionnaire with frequency responses is presented in Appendix B.

State Highway System Overall

In an early measure of customer satisfaction, slightly more than six in ten (64%) of DOTD customers gave the state highway system a grade of C or better (Table 1 and Figure 2). This early measure is viewed as something of a curiosity. Of interest is the fact that the lowest grade given was to the first general item, question 6 on the survey, which was in reference to the state highway system overall, but none of the individual system components rated after that received any lower grade. In other words, the components of the state highway system included in the survey were all graded higher than the initial assessment of the overall system.

Table 1. Satisfaction with the state highway system overall and with select components of the state highway system.

DOTD Customer Satisfaction Survey, 2003					
Report Card					
Question	Component	Description	Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	Sum (%A+%B+%C)
23	major bridges	overall grade for (major) bridges	B-	80	89
16	safety	overall grade for safety of state highway system	C+	79	89
29	communications	overall grade for communications	C+	79	84
19	traffic flow	overall grade for traffic flow	C+	78	86
31	overall system	overall grade for job done by DOTD on the state system	C+	78	84
25	maintenance	overall grade for maintenance	C+	77	82
27	work zones	overall grade for work zones	C	76	76
21	road surfaces	overall grade for pavement conditions	C	74	69
6	overall system	state highway system	C	73	64

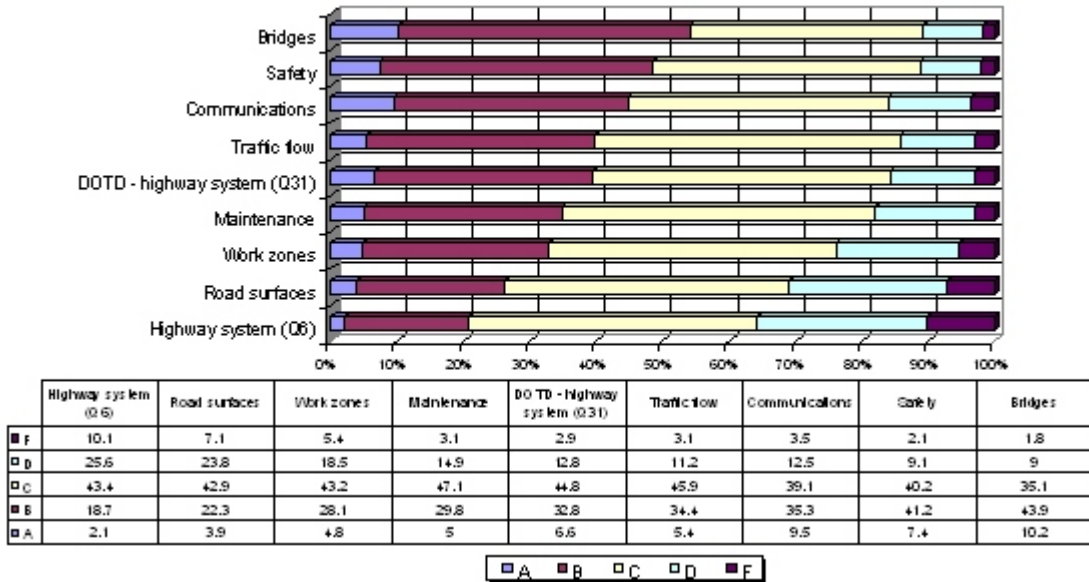
A plurality of respondents gave the state highway system a grade of C (Figure 3). The percentage of customers giving the state highway system a grade of C or better decreases with number of miles driven per year.

Over half (58.7%) of the respondents profess to having had an unsatisfactory experience with conditions on the state highway system (Figure 4). The proportion of customers having experienced an unsatisfactory highway condition increases with greater exposure on the highway as measured by miles driven per year. When asked to describe the unsatisfactory condition experienced, slightly less than half (42.4%) of the customers responded "pot holes" (Figure 5). The other unsatisfactory experiences in the top five mentioned included: rough roads (36.1%), damage to vehicle (19.0%), traffic congestion (13.3%), and construction activity (7.8%).

Many customers (45.3%) are of the opinion that the condition of state highways today is better than five years ago (Table 6). Only 11.8% hold the opinion that the condition of state highways has gotten worse over the past five years.

Figure 2.

DOTD Customers' ratings of the state highway system and components of the system.



Grade given to the state highway system overall by number of miles driven per year.

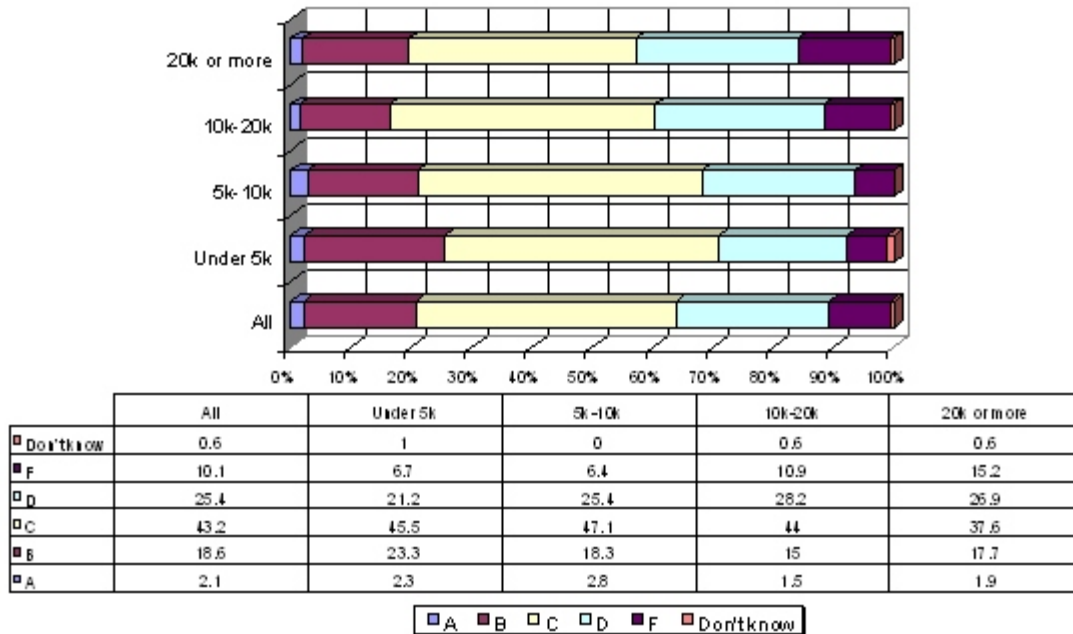


Figure 3.

Responses to the question: "Have you ever had an unsatisfactory experience with conditions on the state highway system?" by miles driven per year.

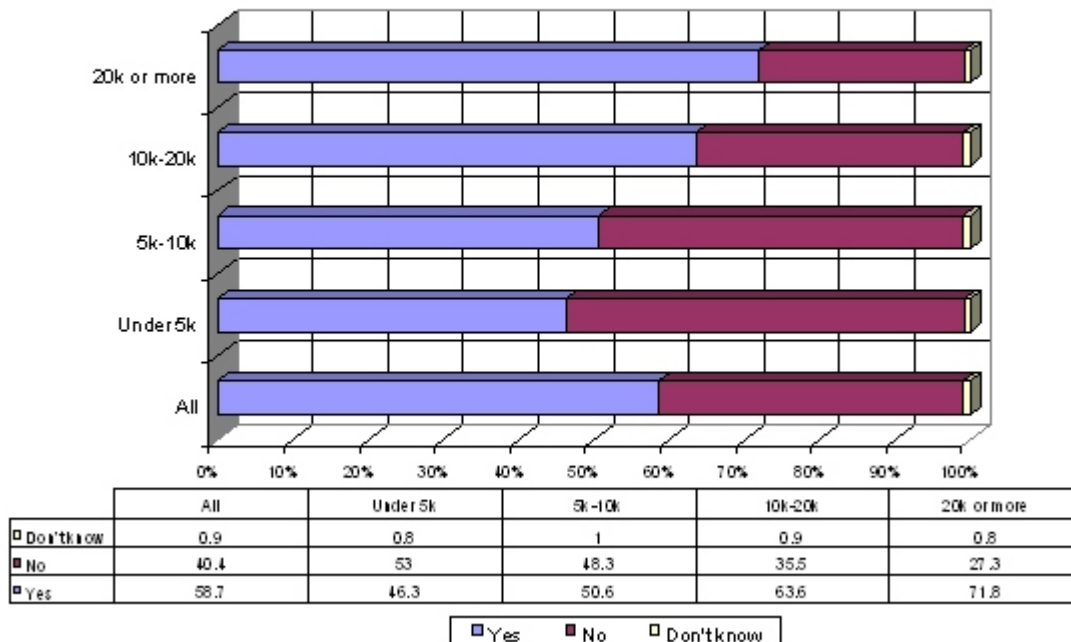


Figure 4.

Figure 5.

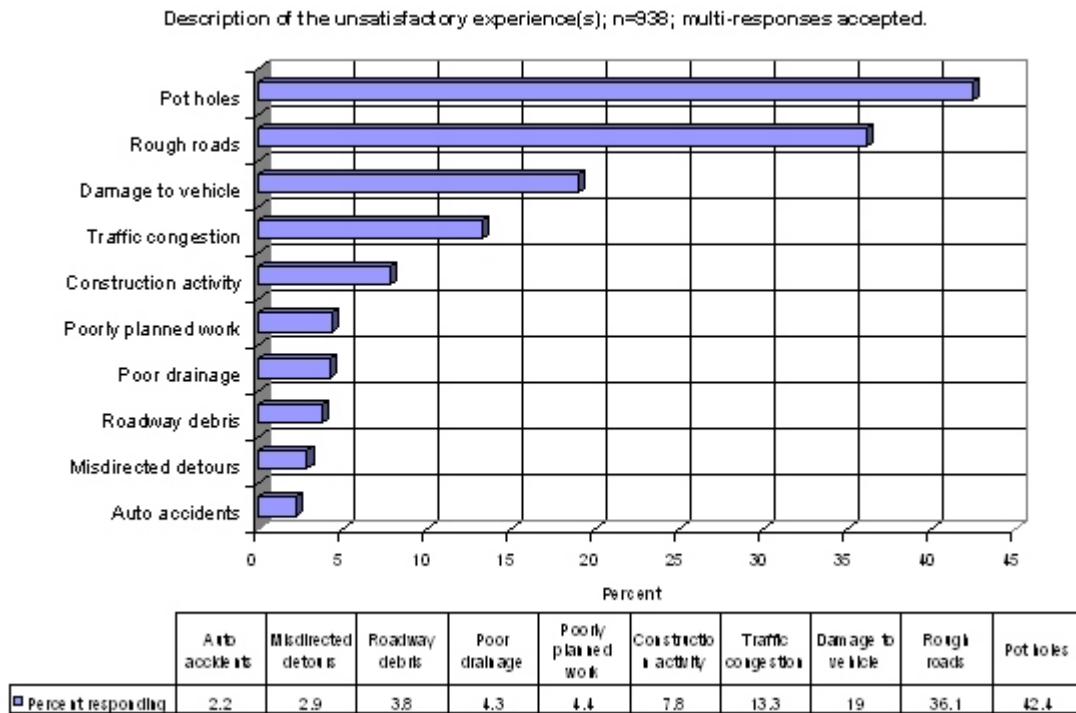
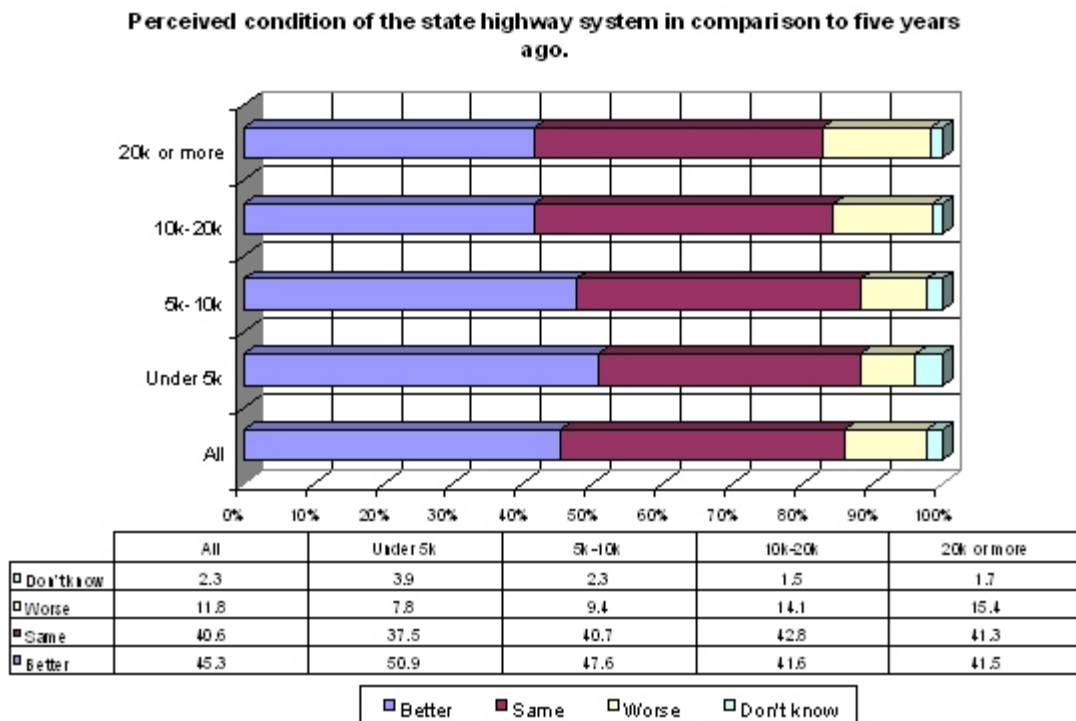


Figure 6.



DOTD's Job on the State Highway System

Few customers (2.4%) profess to every having had an unsatisfactory experience with a DOTD employee (Figure 7). Based on responses to a follow-up question administered to those customers who say they had an unsatisfactory experience, many (57.9%) of the encounters were with non-DOTD personnel including law enforcement personnel or Department of Motor Vehicles personnel. Of the unsatisfactory encounters with DOTD employees, most involved flagmen or construction workers (Figure 8).

Respondents were asked their opinion on how important it was to them for DOTD to give attention and resources to projects for specified purposes. Performing routine maintenance received the highest proportion (93.0%) of "very important" responses (Figure 9). Projects for improving safety ranked second (90.6%), and making road surfaces last longer ranked third (89.8%).

When asked which of the projects was most important to them personally, a strong plurality (41.4%) responded improving safety (Figure 10). Performing routine maintenance was second and reducing congestion third.

Slightly less than half (44.6%) are of the opinion that the job being done by DOTD has improved over the past five years (Figure 11). Fewer than one in ten (9.2%) feel the work being done by DOTD has gotten worse. The percentage of customers who feel DOTD has gotten worse increases with miles traveled.

When asked to grade the job being done by DOTD on the state highway system, over eight in ten customers gave the department a grade of A, B or C (Table 12)

Figure 7.

Responses to the question: "Have you ever had an unsatisfactory experience with a DOTD employee?" by miles driven per year.

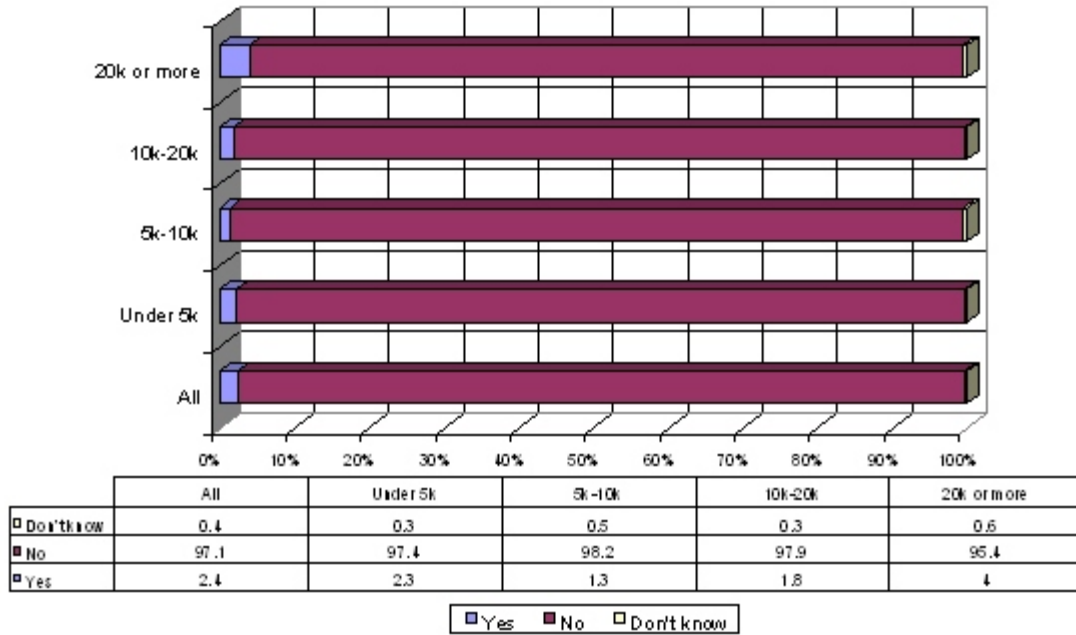


Figure 8.

Description of the unsatisfactory experience(s) with a DOTD employee; n=38.

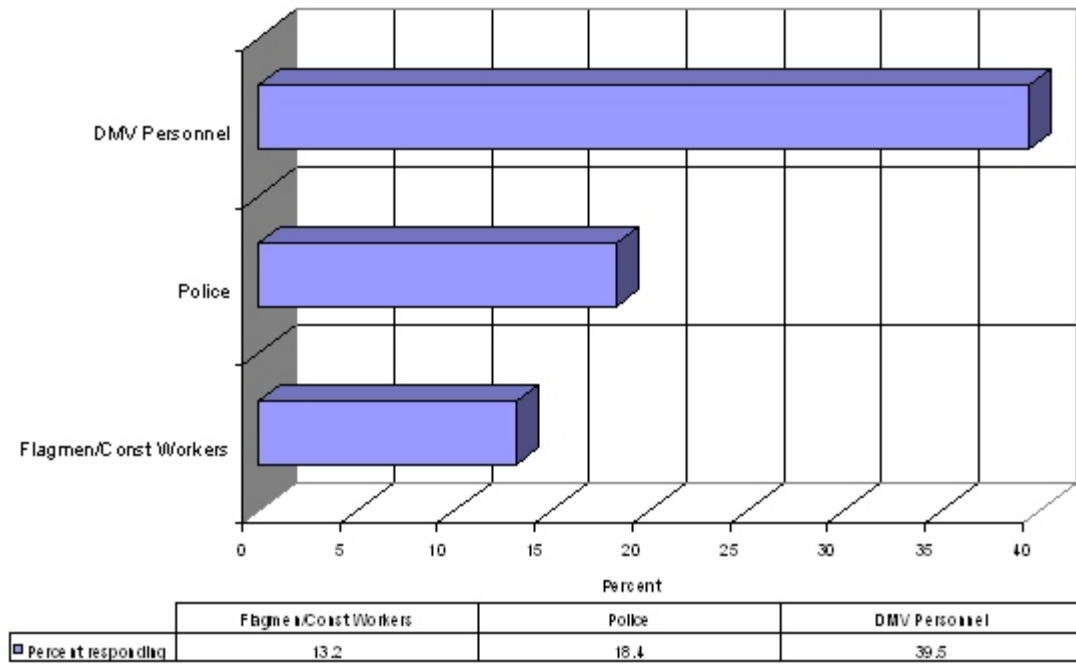


Figure 9.

Perceived importance for DOTD attention and resources.

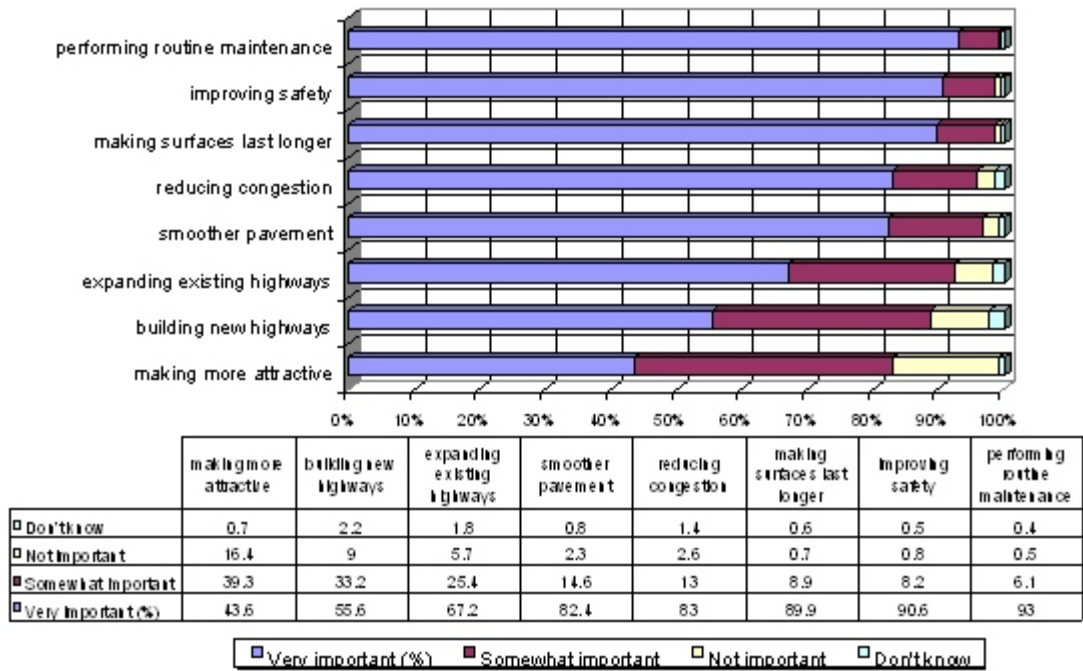
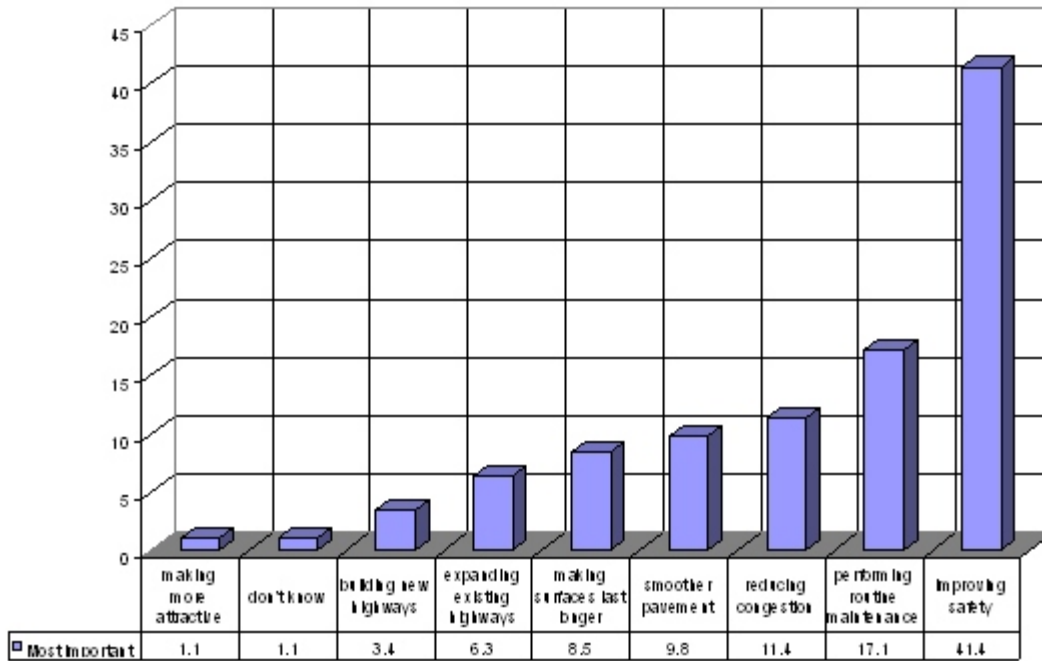


Figure 10.

Which one is most important to you personally?



Perception of job being done by DOTD over the past five years.

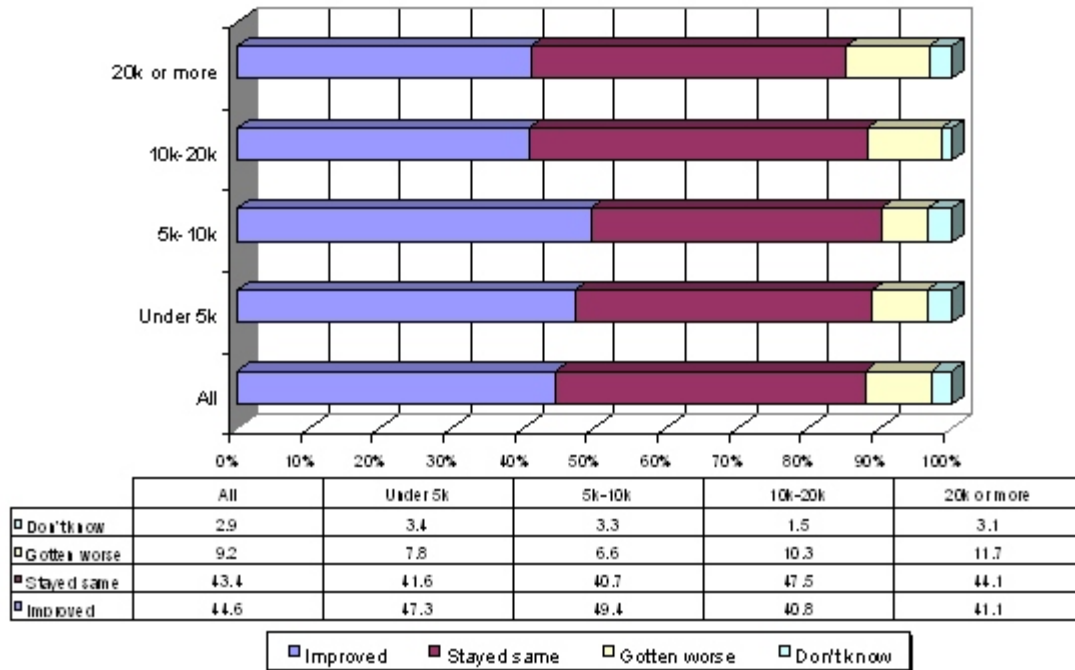


Figure 11.

Grade given to job being done by DOTD on the state highway system by miles driven per year.

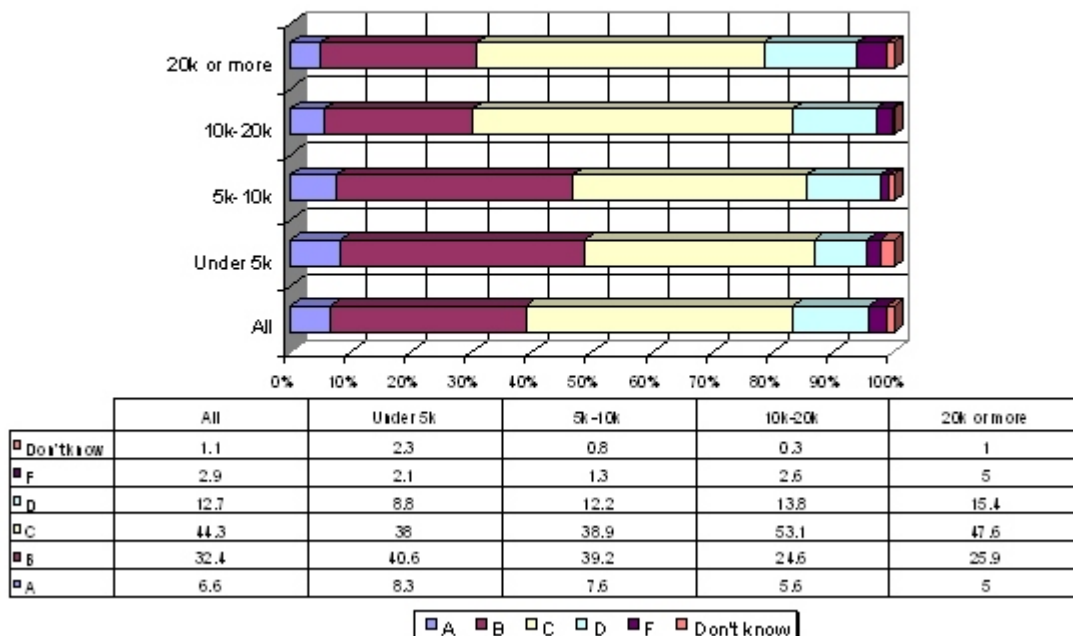


Figure 12.

Safety

Each of the safety components measured for satisfaction had a higher letter grade than did safety overall (Table 2 and Figure 13). It appears that this inconsistency is due to customers' concerns about the threat posed by other drivers on the state highways. Over half of the customers think other drivers pose the greatest threat to their safety (Figure 14). Fewer than one in three think that highway conditions, which includes inclement weather, poses the greatest threat to their safety.

Table 2. Satisfaction with select components of safety and safety of the state highway system overall.

DOTD Customer Satisfaction Survey, 2003					
Report Card					
Question	Component	Description	Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	Sum (%A+%B+%C)
15d	safety	traffic signs	B	84	92
15f	safety	guardrails and crash cushions	B-	82	88
15b	safety	traffic signals	B-	81	90
15c	safety	width of lanes	B-	81	87
15e	safety	pavement markings, striping, and reflectors	B-	81	86
15g	safety	road curviness or curves in the road	B-	80	89
16	safety	overall grade for safety of state highway system	C+	79	89
15a	safety	roadway lighting	C+	77	80

Figure 13.

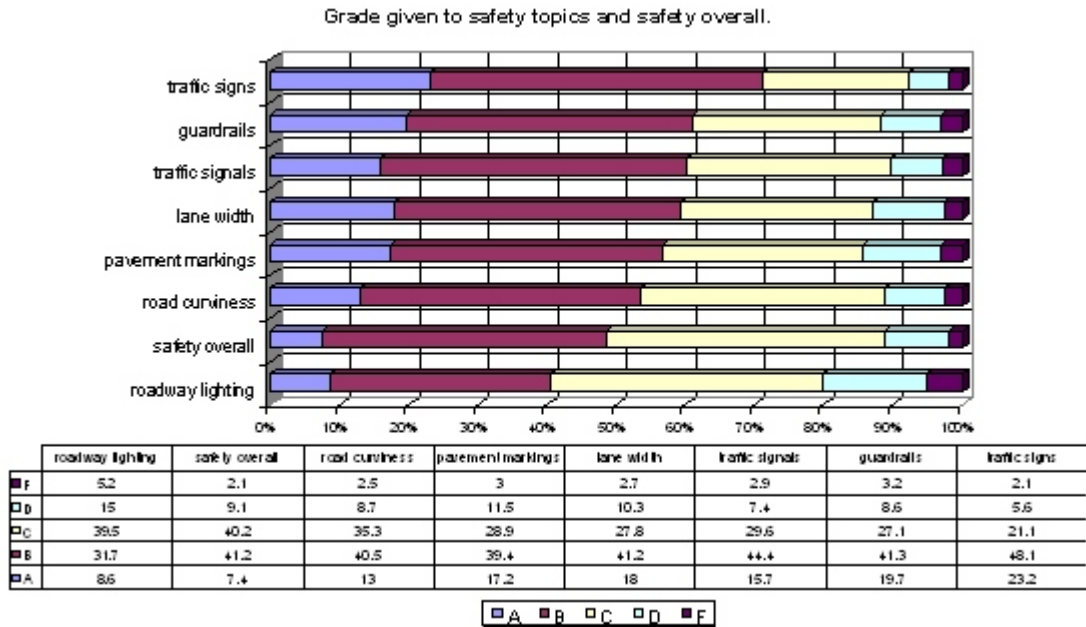
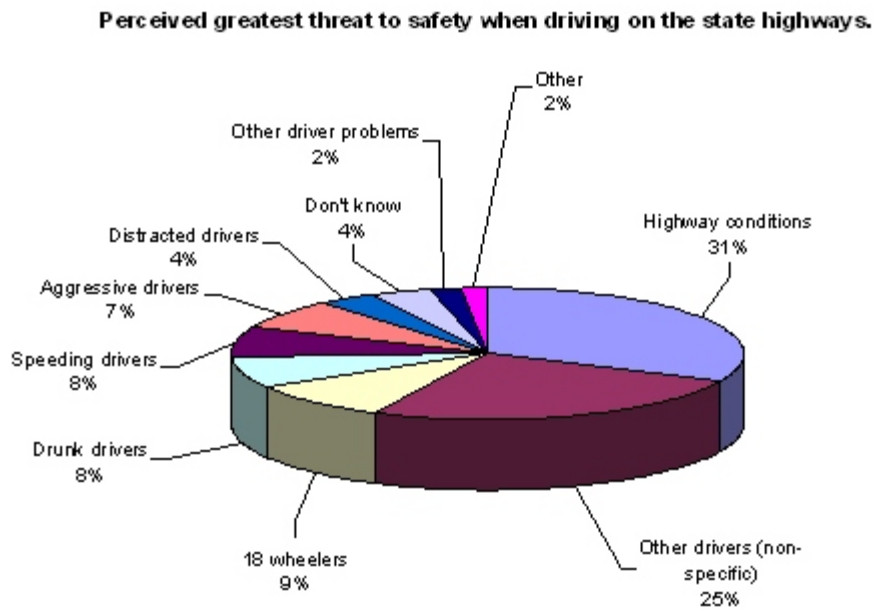


Figure 14.



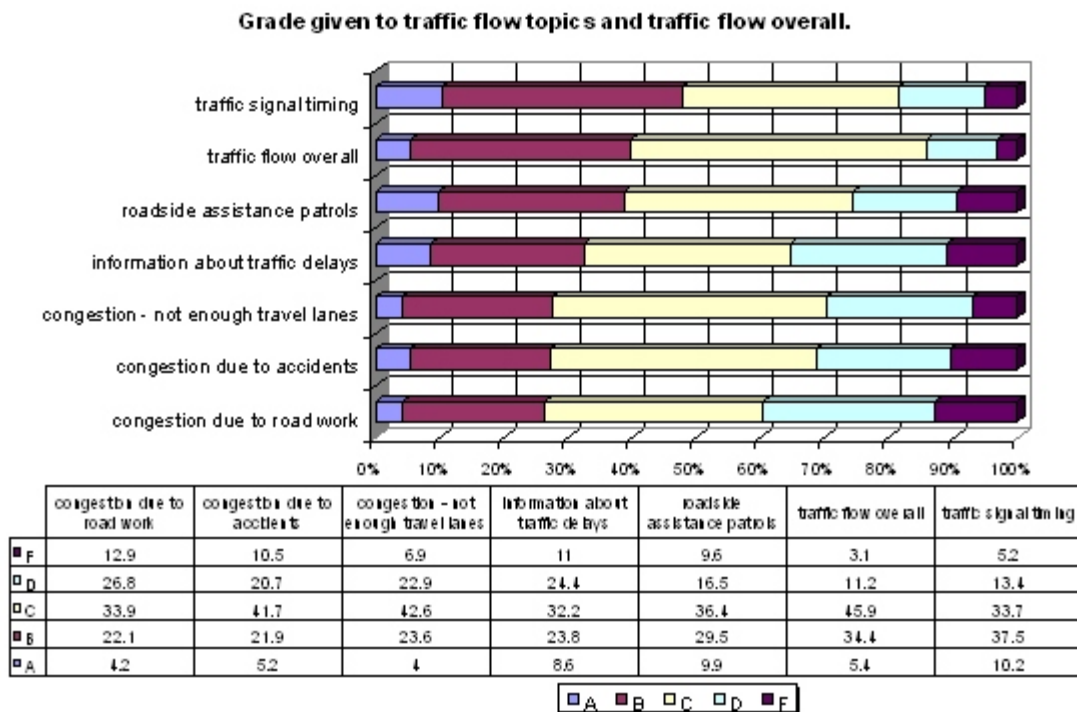
Traffic Flow (Congestion)

All components of traffic flow received a letter grade of C or C+ (Table 3). Several components (congestion due to road work, availability of information about traffic delays, and congestion due to accidents) had relatively low satisfaction scores (sum of percent A, B and C). These relatively low satisfaction scores were due in part to a comparatively high amount of F letter grades (Figure 15).

Table 3. Satisfaction with select components of traffic flow (congestion) and traffic flow on the state highway system overall.

DOTD Customer Satisfaction Survey, 2003					
Report Card					
Question	Component	Description	Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	Sum (%A+%B+%C)
18c	traffic flow	traffic signal timing	C+	78	81
19	traffic flow	overall grade for traffic flow	C+	78	86
18f	traffic flow	patrols for roadside assistance	C	76	76
18b	traffic flow	availability of information about traffic delays	C	75	65
18e	traffic flow	congestion due to not having enough travel lanes	C	75	70
18a	traffic flow	congestion due to accidents	C	74	69
18d	traffic flow	congestion due to road work	C	73	60

Figure 15.



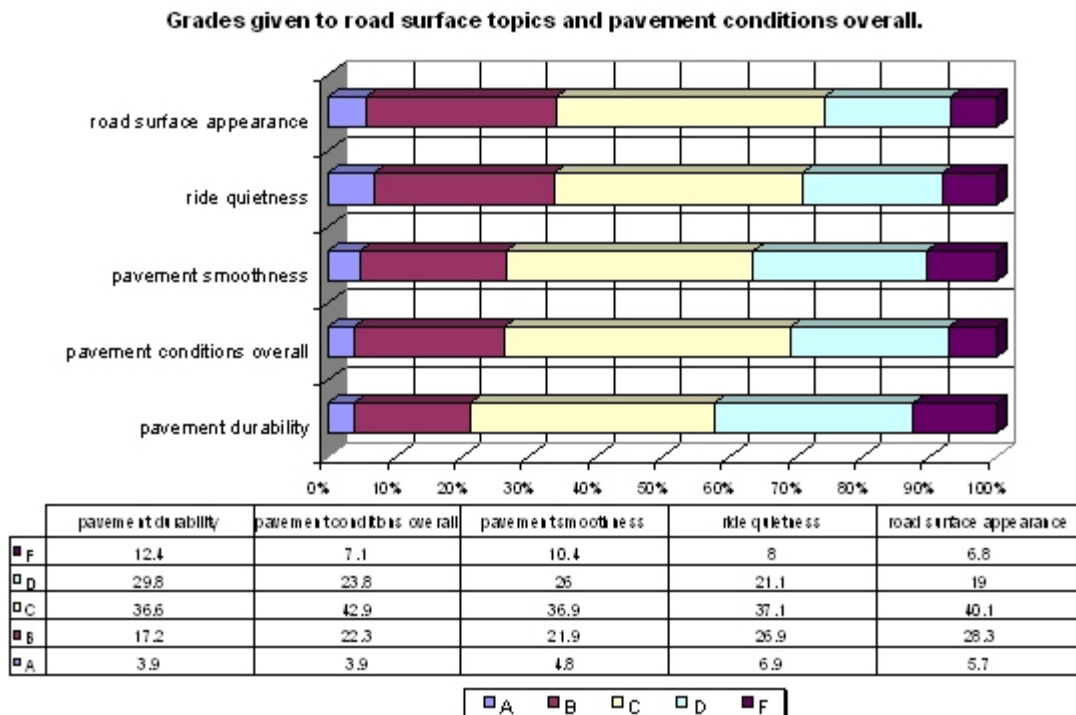
Pavement Conditions

With the exception of the component durability of the pavement which received a C- grade, the other pavement condition components received grades of C. Road surface appearance and ride quietness received satisfaction ratings over 70% (Table 4 and Figure 16).

Table 4. Satisfaction with select components of road surfaces and road surfaces of the state highway system overall.

DOTD Customer Satisfaction Survey, 2003					
Report Card					
Question	Component	Description	Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	Sum (%A+%B+%C)
20d	road surfaces	appearance of the road surface	C	76	74
20c	road surfaces	quietness of the ride	C	75	71
21	road surfaces	overall grade for pavement conditions	C	74	69
20a	road surfaces	smoothness of the pavement	C	74	64
20b	road surfaces	durability of the pavement (how well it holds up over time)	C-	72	58

Figure 16.



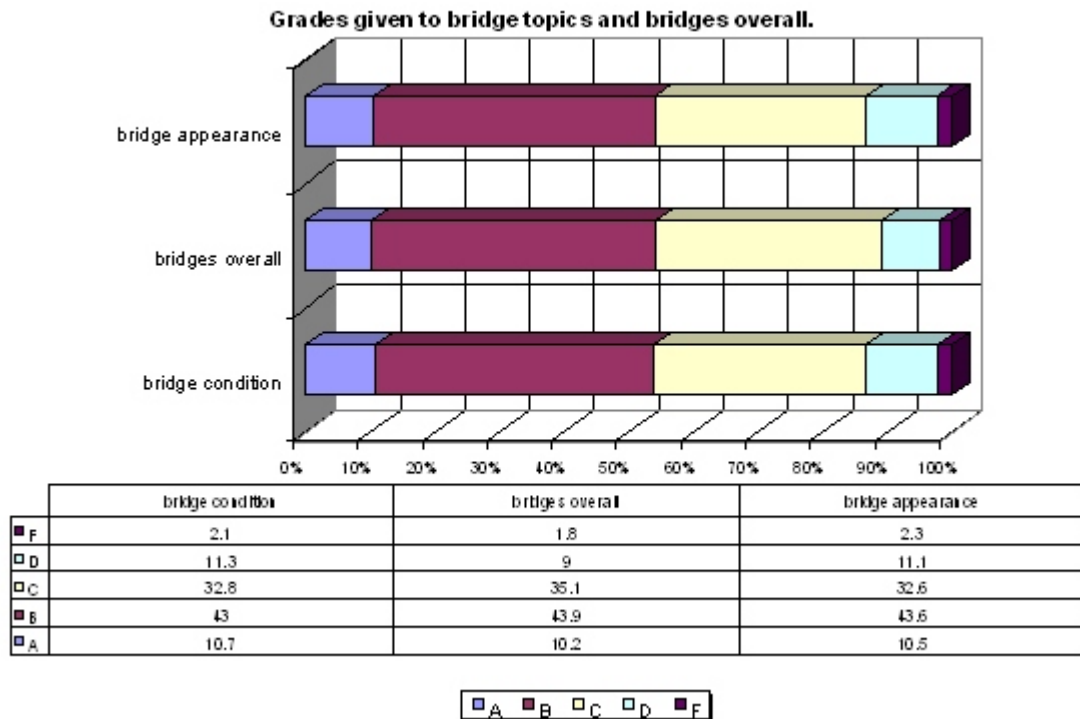
Bridges

All of the components for major bridges received the same letter grade, B- (Table 5). The ratings give for each component were highly consistent (Figure 17).

Table 5. Satisfaction with select components of bridges and bridges of the state highway system overall.

DOTD Customer Satisfaction Survey, 2003					
Report Card					
Question	Component	Description	Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	Sum (%A+%B+%C)
23	major bridges	overall grade for (major) bridges	B-	80	89
22a	major bridges	condition of (major) bridges	B-	80	87
22b	major bridges	appearance of (major) bridges	B-	80	87

Figure 17.



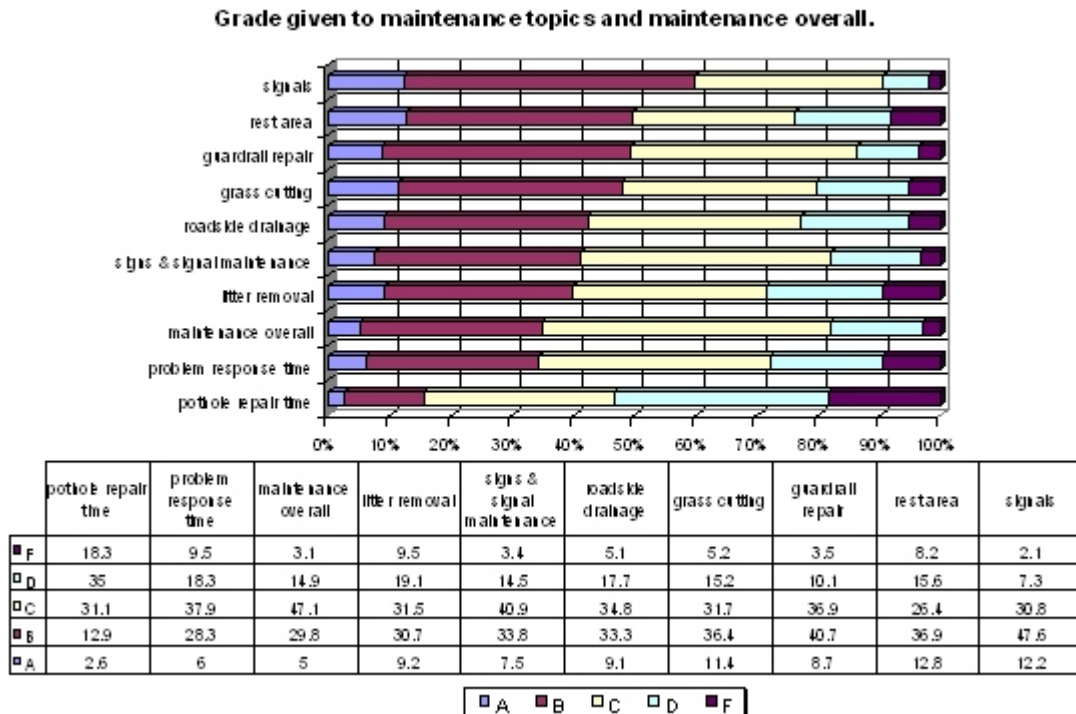
Maintenance

Signals received the highest letter grade of the maintenance components tested and time it takes to repair potholes received the lowest (Table 6). The relatively low grades received on litter removal, time it takes to respond to a problem and time it takes to repair potholes is due to relatively high F grades (Figure 18).

Table 6. Satisfaction with select components of maintenance and maintenance of the state highway system overall.

DOTD Customer Satisfaction Survey, 2003					
Report Card					
Question	Component	Description	Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	Sum (%A+%B+%C)
24i	maintenance	signals	B-	81	91
24h	maintenance	guardrail repair	C+	79	86
24f	maintenance	grass cutting	C+	78	80
24e	maintenance	rest areas	C+	78	76
24d	maintenance	maintenance of signs and striping	C+	78	82
24b	maintenance	roadside drainage	C+	77	77
25	maintenance	overall grade for maintenance	C+	77	82
24a	maintenance	litter removal	C	76	71
24g	maintenance	time it takes to respond to a problem	C	75	72
24c	maintenance	time it takes to repair potholes	C-	70	47

Figure 18.



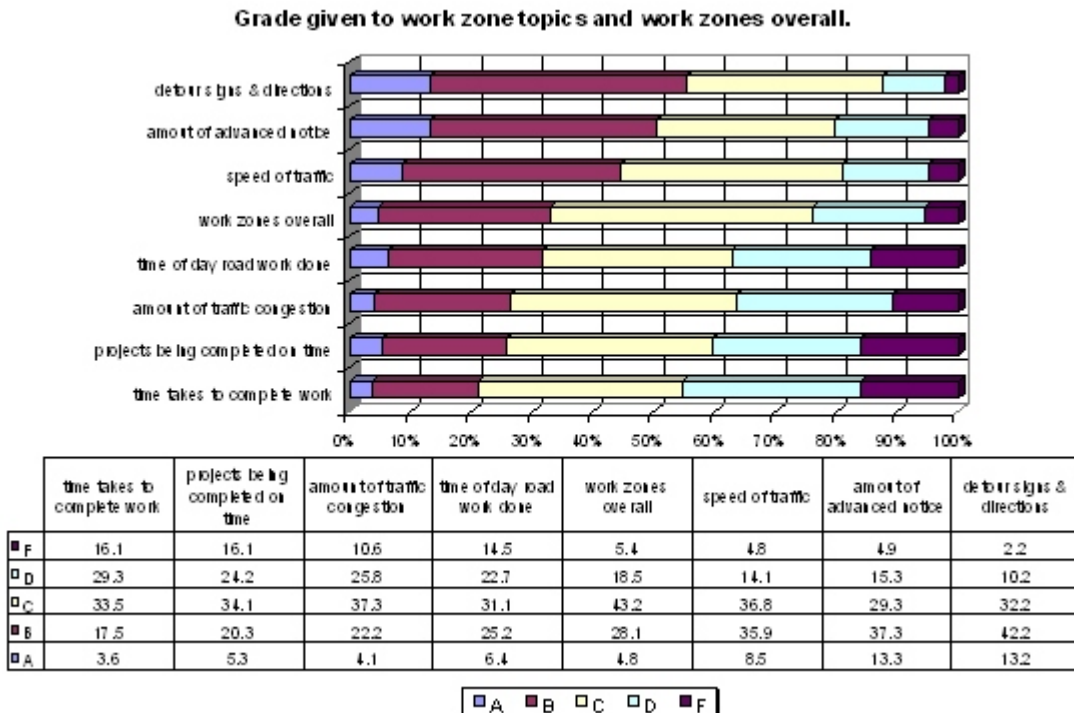
Work Zones

When it comes to work zones, customers appear most concerned about time issues: time it takes to complete work, projects being completed on time and time of day road work is done (Table 7). Three work zone components (detour signs and directions, amount of advanced notice and speed of traffic) ranked above the work zone overall rating (Figure 19).

Table 7. Satisfaction with select components of work zones and work zones on the state highway system overall.

DOTD Customer Satisfaction Survey, 2003					
Report Card					
Question	Component	Description	Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	Sum (%A+%B+%C)
26a	work zones	detour signs and directions	B-	80	88
26c	work zones	amount of advanced notice	C+	79	80
26b	work zones	speed of traffic	C+	78	81
27	work zones	overall grade for work zones	C	76	76
26g	work zones	time of day road work is done	C	74	63
26d	work zones	amount of traffic congestion in work zones	C	73	64
26f	work zones	projects being completed on time	C-	72	60
26e	work zones	time it takes to complete work	C-	71	55

Figure 19.



Communications

Customers acknowledge DOTD communications as being courteous to the people who contact them (Table 8). Communicating on when and where public hearings will be held received the lowest ratings among communication components. Other components ranked below communications overall included: providing enough information about road projects, providing information needed to make travel plans and keeping people informed about upcoming construction projects and lane closures (Figure 20).

According to customers, television is by far the preferred medium for getting road information. When asked to identify the best way for DOTD to get road information to you, nearly half (47%) of the respondents responded television. Radio came in second at 24%, and newspaper was third at 21%. Only 4% of the customers indicated posting the information on the Internet would, in their opinion, be the best way to get information to them.

Table 8. Satisfaction with select components of communications and communications by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development overall.

DOTD Customer Satisfaction Survey, 2003					
Report Card					
Question	Component	Description	Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	Sum (%A+%B+%C)
28e	communications	being courteous to people who contact them	B-	82	91
28f	communications	trying to provide useful information to the public (trying to communicate with the public)	C+	79	86
29	communications	overall grade for communications	C+	79	84
28b	communications	keeping people informed about upcoming construction projects and lane closures	C+	78	77
28d	communications	providing information that you need to make travel plans	C+	77	78
28c	communications	providing enough information about road projects	C+	77	75
28a	communications	letting people know when and where public hearings will be held	C	74	65

Figure 20.

Grade given to communication topics and communications overall.

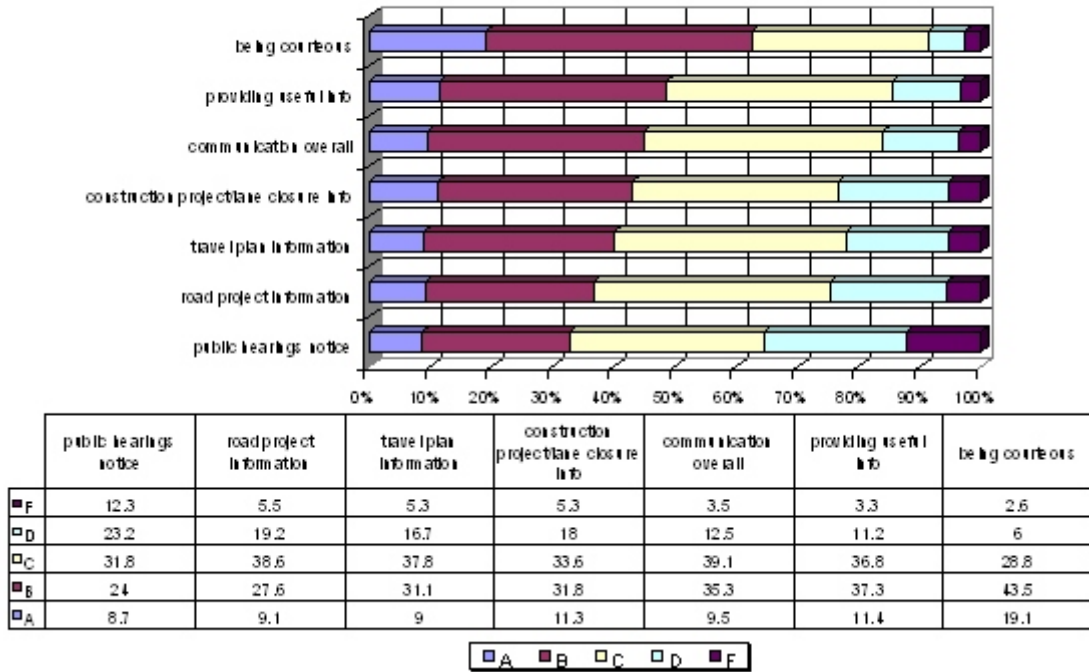
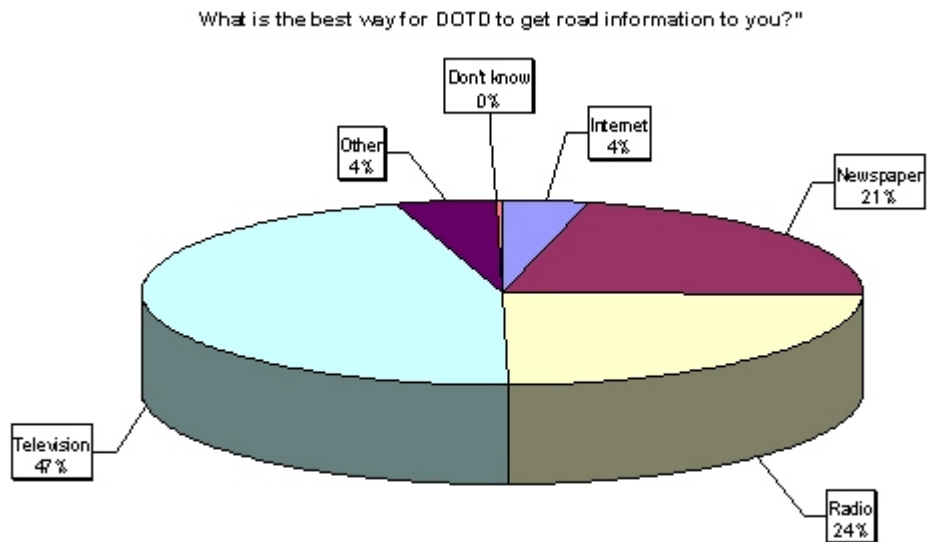


Figure 21.



Willingness to pay more money for highway improvements

Although no mention was made of amount or means, a majority (59.3%) of customers say they would be willing to pay more if the money was dedicated to highways (Figure 22). The proportion expressing a willingness to pay more was rather consistent across annual miles traveled categories and among females and males.

Customers who expressed an opinion on the willingness to pay more question were asked why they held that opinion. Of those who stated they were willing to pay more, the highest proportion (29.4%) indicated they held that opinion because they felt there was a need to improve the roads and to repair potholes. As one respondent stated "The roads need to be fixed." Safety was second in frequency of mention (25.1%) by those willing to pay more. Concern for safety was expressed in terms of the customer and the customers' family; "I use the roads often and want my family to be safe on the roads." Some of those professing to be willing to pay more (15.2%) have conditional support: "Only if they're honest and spend the money where it is supposed to be spent." Other reasons given by those willing to pay more:

- travel daily/would improve travel (14.3%)--"It's a resource that I need to travel everyday."
- provide necessary funding (9.3%)--"I don't mind paying for things that are being taken care of."
- reduce wear and tear on vehicles (7.4%)--".....would save me money in the long run."
- ease traffic conditions (4.7%)--"....relieve traffic congestion, I get real aggravated at traffic."
- make it better/benefit all (4.7%)--"So we could have better roads."
- improve the quality of our state (3.0%)--"I want the roads to be a source of pride for my state."

Of those who stated they were not willing to pay more, the highest proportion (30.3%) indicated they held that opinion because they felt funds had been misused and they do not see results. Comments related to the misuse/no results rationale included: "They have enough money that they waste." and "I haven't seen much improvement." Another 27.7% of those who say they would not pay more felt that way because they feel they pay enough taxes now or that taxes are too high; simply stated: "Already paying enough taxes." Other reasons given by those not willing to pay more:

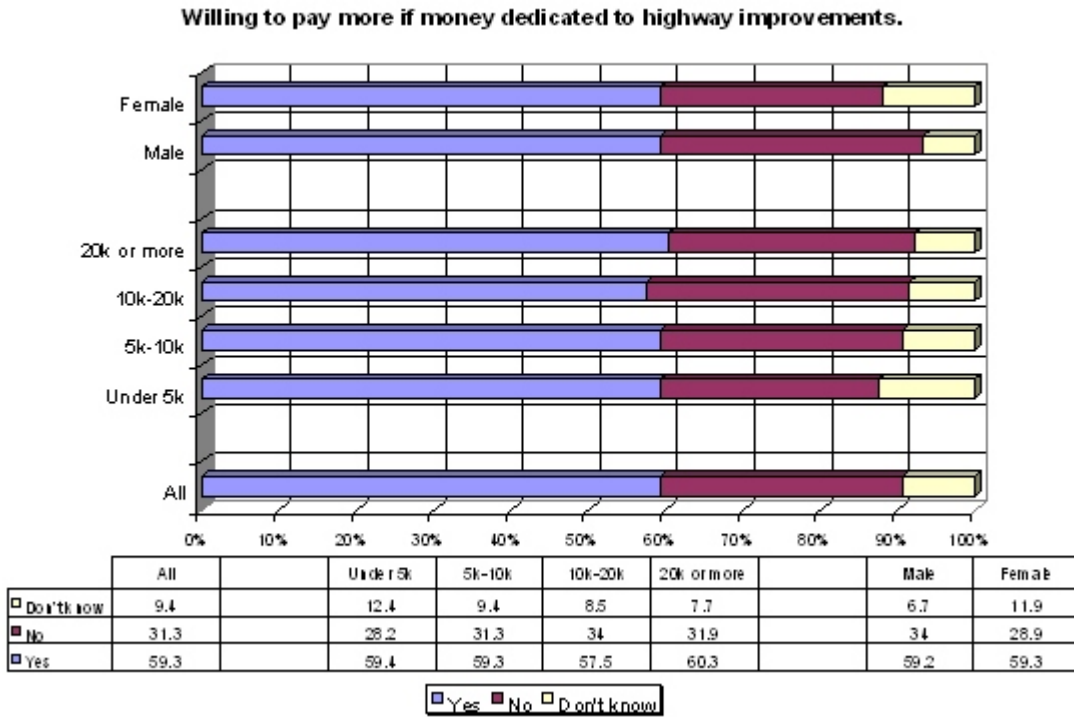
- funds go to administration (12.2%)--"....DOTD is very top heavy on administration and management financing compared to other states."
- have sufficient funds now (10.4%)
- poor and/or on fixed income (9.6%)--"I cannot afford it due to retirement." "We are retired and on a fixed income."
- projects not done timely or work is substandard (5.8%)
- distrust (4.0%)--"I've heard dedications before and they just don't do what they say they will."
- other priorities (3.2%)--"Highways are not the first thing I'd give money to improving."
- no personal gain (2.6%).

There is a correlation between customers rating of the job being done by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development on the state highway system (question 31) and the willingness to pay more money (Table 9).

Table 9. Willingness to pay more if the money was dedicated to highways by rating of the job being done by DOTD.

Rating of the job being done by DOTD	Percent willing to pay more if the money was dedicated to highways
A (Excellent)	70.5%
B (Good)	66.3%
C (Fair)	56.7%
D (Poor)	51.7%
F (Failing)	41.3%

Figure 22.



CONCLUSIONS

DOTD's customers make distinctions when expressing satisfaction with various components of the state maintained highway system. Overall, DOTD received a C+ grade based on an 84% satisfactory rating among customers. Customer satisfaction levels ranged from a high of 89% on major bridges (B-) and safety (C+) to a low of 69% (C) on pavement conditions. Communications, congestion (traffic flow), and maintenance were the other components receiving a letter grade of C+ based on respective satisfaction ratings of 84%, 86% and 82% respectively. An overall grade of C was given to the work zone component (satisfaction rating of 76%) and to the state highway system overall (64% satisfaction rating).

Improving safety ranks high among DOTD customers as a priority and as a personal concern. The implications of improving safety on the highways extend beyond DOTD's traditional realm of responsibility. When asked what poses the greatest threat to safety when driving on state highways, 63% of DOTD customers responded other drivers in one way or another while only 31% identified a highway condition. The identification of driver behavior as the main perceived threat to safety indicates the need for improvements in driver training, education and re-education and traffic law enforcement.

DOTD customers acknowledge improvement in both the condition of state highways and DOTD job performance. Many, 45%, say the state highway system is better now than it was five years ago; 12% say it is worse. Nearly half (45%) say the job being done by DOTD has improved over the past five years while 9% say it has not.