

Signs of Success- Managing Traffic Sign Inventory with Barcodes

LaSalle County Highway Department- Ottawa, IL deploys barcode system to track their sign inventory

We all know how easy it is now days to get caught up in a mess of litigation where everyone is pointing fingers and looking for someone else to blame. This scenario can easily happen when it comes to traffic accidents caused by poor visibility of traffic signs with inadequate sheeting reflectivity.

That's why the FHWA has implemented a requirement for state and local agencies to implement the use of an assessment or management method that is designed to maintain regulatory and warning sign retroreflectivity at or above the minimum retroreflectivity levels by the compliance data of June 13, 2014. Agencies will need to implement one of the five methods listed in the MUTCD, or a combination of the methods, to assess signs for nighttime visibility. These methods, as described in FHWA's publication [Maintaining Traffic Sign Retroreflectivity](#), and the associated procedures tie the methods to the minimum required levels.



To help them meet these requirements, LaSalle County contracted with Cloudpoint Geographics, Inc. of Roanoke, IL to complete an inventory of all signs maintained by their agency and provide an adequate sign inventory management tool that could allow them to assess retroreflectivity levels on a regular basis. With over 6,000 signs on 370 miles of roadways, the County needed an efficient, user-friendly solution.

"Barcodes are key part of documentation. Once setup, it simplifies sign replacement documentation."

-Vic Washelesky
Assistant County Engineer

The first step in this process involved locating the signs with GPS, collecting information on type, size, sheeting, and condition, and tagging each sign with a numeric barcode with an ID number associated with it. For this project it was determined that photo anodized aluminum barcodes with tabs by [Metalcraft](#) would provide the durability and longevity to stand up to the harsh environmental conditions.

Once the inventory and tagging work was complete, the County purchased [SignOps](#), a web-based sign inventory maintenance application to help keep track of all maintenance activities and performing routine inspections. The software runs on any mobile device or desktop browser and allows the user to easily track and update inspection and maintenance activities with ease.

"We were able to learn the program very quickly and had an easy transition to the software"

-Doug Kurkowski
Sign Manager

Now the County can now perform routine night time inspections using the SignOps program to easily 'flag' signs with poor reflectivity and print out a report of failed signs to easily order new replacement signs. The software will then provide them quick access to the failed signs for locating their position when starting their replacement work. In addition, all sign manufacture dates are logged in the system when they are purchased so the agency can track when a sign reaches the end of its expected sign life.