

WESTERN ROAD USAGE CHARGE CONSORTIUM STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT KICKOFF MEETING

January 13, 2016

PRR Attendees: Colleen Gants, Denise Walz, Katherine Schomer, Joe Martin, Sari Rybar

- Joe – on website development
- Sari – note taker, RUC, ODOT, WSDOT
- Denise – PRR Co-President, marketing, RUC
- Kathy – research dept., focus groups, surveys (all types)
- Colleen – PRR Co-President, public affairs, RUC, national DOTs

WRUCC Administrator: Randal Thomas

State Attendees and Updates

WSDOT (Washington): Tonia Buell

- Studying and monitoring what other states are doing with RUC
- Requested funding to plan the pilot project, on-hold, continue to study

HDOT (Hawaii): Jade Butay

- Consultant kickoff meeting next week
- Leg prep

Idaho Transportation Department (Idaho): Matt Moore

Caltrans (California): Norma Ortega, Brady Tacdol, Tamie McGowen, Matt Rocco

- Moving forward at rapid pace
- In the process of reporting to the legislature
- Phase 2 of project: In the process of developing a pilot program, types of vehicles included (light-duty passenger vehicles and commercial trucks)
- Trying to hit all parts of state to get to 5,000 volunteers, currently at 3,500
- Transitioning website – www.CaliforniaRoadChargePilot.com
- Trying to get influencers to participate in the 9-month pilot
- Launch in July 2016
- Report to legislature by Summer 2017

CDOT (Colorado): Amy Ford & Debra Perkins-Smith

- Getting ready to start RUC study

NDOT (Nevada): Meg Ragonese and Jocene Yang

- May – observers, looking forward to moving ahead and further education on need for funding

ODOT (Oregon): Michelle Godfrey

- Experienced RUC communicator

TXDOT (Texas): Becky Ozuna

- Monitoring media relations

MDT (Montana): Nicole Pallister

- Observers at this point
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CONFIRM AGENDA AND MEETING GOALS

1. Define success for the WRUCC

2. Create consensus on who and what will get us there
3. Determine immediate next steps for branding and web deliverables
4. Other Goals?

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR WRUCC?

- Understanding what a road charge is. Fact vs Fiction
- Firm understanding of what RUC is, especially by the public. Eliminate fear.
- The “what” about Western RUC Consortium.
 - THE reliable resources for states and federal examples.
 - Resource for the media
 - THE resource
- Participating states contribute to a growth in understanding. With projects underway, states can speak to what each state is doing.
 - Consortium mission vs. Communications mission
- Careful about what the “right model” might be
- What does success look like in tangible metrics?
 - Perception of being the reliable RUC practitioner: national and statewide
 - Gaining acceptance for the collective WRUCC goals
- WRUCC is not advocating or working to gain acceptance, but rather we want to further the understanding as a viable alternative
- Promote public understanding of RUC as an alternative
 - Measures of success:
 - Increase people’s understanding of RUC, clear up misperceptions
 - Create a baseline across the Western states of where people are at in understanding
- *Why* are we looking at road charge? Education on why road charge solutions are what we are looking at.
 - Deficit of funding and understanding
- Help people understand the shortcomings while bearing in mind the limitations of funding and resources
- Need assistance with these goals to influence understanding

VALIDATE WRUCC MISSION AND GOAL

The Mission: Advance road usage charging as a viable transportation funding model for the western citizenry.

Communications Mission:

- Committed to RUC research and development
- Communications perspective: establish WRUCC as a resource clearing house and position as a national Go-To presence and resource for stakeholders, media, etc.
- Success is being factual, comprehensive, and building a wider circle of understanding from the inside, out.
- Accurately and clearly educating people.
- Proof by performance.
 - Communication with internal audience (consortium)
 - Communication with external audience (other states)
 - If each of those were met, jobs were done, where will we arrive?

Goal: Gain understanding for the collective consortium’s work to inform and advance road usage charge policy where it is politically viable in the west.

WHO WILL GET US THERE?

- Validate priority/target audiences
- Rank and prioritize

Target Audiences

- Internal Key stakeholders (key targets in priority order)
 1. Member DOTs
 2. Non-Member DOTs
 3. Steering committee
 4. Executive committee, directors
 5. Other organizations within our government: agencies, Legislature, policy-makers
- External Stakeholders
 - Other agencies – every state is different
 - Cities, Counties (recipients of gas tax revenue_
 - MPOs
 - Legislators
 - Chambers
 - Media – in-state and national
 - Academics
 - Related industries (trucking, AAA, privacy, security, business, equity) – could de-rail
 - Transportation organizations
 - State Highway Patrol
- Phase 2 or 3 General Public

Goal is to provide broad enough messages for organizations, stakeholders and states to adopt and use for their own educational materials. Consistency in message, statewide will require creation of template messages and graphics for the consortium states to follow and implement. States can refer people to WRUCC as a resource.

“MUSTS” and “WANTS”

Challenges

- WRUCC acronym discussion – brand guidelines

Musts: What are we conveying? Brand necessities

- Road Usage Charge over VMT
- WRUCC is the same as RUC (Western RUC is shorter version)
- Consortium is a mouthful
- Easy to understand
- Western (18 WASHTO states; 14 are members)
- User-based
- Road-use
- Solutions
- RUC is possible with what technology allows
- Respectful of what states have accomplished

Wants

- Respectful of real-world purpose
- Supportive of what states are already doing

CREATIVE BRIEF

- Speaking to different tiers – DOTs have different experiences, expectations
- External: speaking to other audiences

Tone of Communications/VisualsInternal

- Simple, clear, useful, concise, credible, reliable
- Knowledgeable
- Plausible – good, bad and ugly
- United front
- Accurate

External

- Who, what, where, when why
- Useful materials
- Cautious Momentum
- Buzz, educational
- Engaging – make that connection
- Acknowledge the scary
- Transparent
- Minimalist in design
- Timely, current, up-to-speed
- Progressive, evolutionary – look what's coming – forward-thinking
- Not too slick or marketing-focused (closer to CA and less like OR)

Internal Perception

- Access to everything states need to tell the RUC story – all in one place = RELIEF
- Understanding of why this is useful
- Able to explain FUC to their co-workers
- Easy access to RUC research (i.e.: rural study)
- Valuable, value-added
- Empowered – excited about same baseline story told across all states
- Active – What's currently happening and what is going to happen?
- Solution that raises problems – umbrella solutions
- Consider joining WRUCC
- Not so scary

Current perception? Gaps that exist?

- OR is the only one doing something, CA very close – Consortium is much larger and many states are working actively on these solutions
- State and local lawmakers are not always as knowledgeable as they could be on RUC
- Misunderstanding what RUC is
- Incubator of sorts
- Feeding curiosity? How can I contribute?
 - Provide the range of things that are happening that feed that curiosity
 - Example: Colorado research projects
- Not feeling judgmental of the tier each state is in

External Perception

- Very similar to internal audience perception
- Consistent messaging
- Have a sense of where their state is in this process
- Educated, base understanding

Current perception?

- Mixed feelings on RUC, could be confused with WRUCC
- We are launching WRUCC – why should I care, they don't care about us, they are seeking US out
- Define solving the problem
- They find us, we don't find them

Hierarchy of Brand: Is our story more about the Consortium or RUC?

- Requires seal of approval
- Don't care what jersey you're wearing, I care what you're talking about
- Credibility at the core
 - Internal: consortium is at forefront
 - External: RUC, backed by consortium

Where do we start?

- How to brand this for the public – easier and simpler
 - User-based approach to replacing the gas tax
 - Western states
 - User-based
 - 'Transportation Communications' group
 - See 'Musts' above
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NEXT STEPS

1. Meeting Summary Distributed by 2/5
2. Responsibilities Defined and Delegated by 2/12
3. Timeline & Due Dates Defined and Distributed by 2/12

Action Items

- AMY/COLLEEN: Set meeting to review progress and have more in-depth web conversation (tone, messaging, etc.)
- JOE: Domain names, website wireframe; send Creative Brief and set web meeting by 2/12

February (end of month)

Communications Task Force meeting (need to set a date)

- PRR: Present base framework for branding concept
- PRR: Accomplishments since our January mtg.
- PRR: Affirm mission and key messaging

March (end of month)

Second Communications Task Force meeting (need to set a date)

- PRR: Draft one-pager with takeaways

April

Steering Committee Meeting: April 26th-27th, Nevada

June

Presentation to Board: June launch target

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