



**Introduction**

The purpose of this peer exchange was to discuss the North/West Passage states’ interests in citizen reporting and to review the approaches to and experiences with citizen reporting in Wyoming and Idaho. This summary highlights key information that was exchanged during the webinar conducted on October 27, 2014. Additional information is available in the presentations posted to the North/West Passage web site under [Project 8.5: Member Outreach Support](#).

North/West Passage sponsored earlier projects which supported the development of citizen reporting in Idaho. The first, [Project 5.1: Citizen Assisted Reporting](#), allowed Wyoming to share details of their Enhanced Citizen Assisted Reporting (ECAR) program with other states, to explore ways in which Wyoming's program could be improved upon for maximized success in future implementations, and to explore the feasibility of the citizen reporting system expanding to additional states. The second effort, [Project 6.3: Citizen Assisted Reporting – Phase 2](#), was sponsored by North/West Passage to further explore a set of common messages that could be used by citizen reporters in both Idaho and Wyoming.

**North Dakota and Minnesota Interests**

This peer exchange was prompted by further interest in citizen reporting from North Dakota and Minnesota. Both states described what has prompted their recent interest in pursuing citizen reporting and in some cases their interests were similar. Table 1 highlights key points from each state.

**Table 1 Interests in Citizen Reporting**

North Dakota	Minnesota
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges with providing information 24/7 when agency is not staffed 24/7</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting <a href="#">23 CFR 511</a> requirements for the Real-Time System Management Information Program</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leveraging public and law enforcement staff being on the road when DOT staff is not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Struggle with getting information about rural parts of the state</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public expectations for increased information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many schools, hospitals, ambulance services and truckers rely on traveler information</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploring ways to automate and improve reporting processes for traveler information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received funding to develop citizen reporting and plan to launch first phase with DOT staff in November 2014</li> </ul>

Minnesota further explained that their launch of citizen reporting will expand from DOT staff to truckers in early 2015. The phased approach is expected to allow beta testing and modifications to be made before presenting the new reporting option directly to citizens.

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## Citizen Reporting Peer Exchange Summary

### Wyoming and Idaho Experiences

Both states described their overall approach to citizen reporting. Wyoming also emphasized the multiple years of experience they have had and the benefits they have recognized through their ECAR program. Idaho noted how their program differs from Wyoming, recapped their first year of operation and shared their thoughts on the future operation of citizen reporting. Table 2 highlights features of the citizen reporting programs operated by each state.

Table 2 Citizen Reporting Features

Wyoming	Idaho
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Operational since 2005</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Launched in winter 2013-14</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>400+ citizen reporters; primarily truckers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recruited citizen reporters from “Your 511” feature and area bus service</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide citizen reporter training to recognize conditions and consistently report them</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Encourage reports on all roadway impacts (e.g. weather, debris, crashes, etc.)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reports are initially limited to road conditions to gain confidence in system and reporting</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reports are made by telephone calls to the Transportation Management Center</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reports are made through a web-based user interface</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engage citizen reporters on HAR, DMS and VSL operations and seasonal snow plan</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engage citizen reporters on 511 traveler information services and operation</li></ul>

Wyoming and Idaho both cited benefits associated with increased coverage and frequency of reporting for road conditions which is helping the agencies meet Real-Time System Management Information Program requirements. Both also recognized improved consistency with reporting among internal staff and additional benefits from their ability to constructively engage citizens in other agency activities.

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### Other Items of Interest

There were other items of interest noted during the peer exchange as additional information and resources for the states to further explore following the webinar.

The Utah Department of Transportation is operating a mobile application for their citizen reporting program. After completing a brief online training course, citizen reporters are assigned a login and PIN that allow them to report road conditions. Additional information about the [UDOT Citizen Reporting Program](#) is available online and by contacting Lisa Miller, Utah DOT, [lisamiller@utah.gov](mailto:lisamiller@utah.gov), 801-887-3761.

[Waze](#), a mobile application recently acquired by Google, provides free real-time traffic and navigation gathered through crowdsourcing. In early October, Waze announced on [CBS News](#) that it is now integrating data from its 50 million subscribers with data from transportation agencies around the world. Later in October, [The Washington Post](#) described how Waze is also being used to improve street mapping, particularly in less developed countries.

Lastly, the [TMC Pooled Fund](#) is also studying how crowdsourced data from social media are being applied at Transportation Management Centers. The study will determine measures of effectiveness that express the value for applying crowdsourced data.