

FOCUS ON

Our DOT Road Condition Assessment Team: Inspecting the county mile by mile

— June 2, 2014

There are roughly 2,700 miles of county-maintained roadway in Gwinnett. That's almost the distance between Savannah, Georgia, and San Francisco, California. Maintaining this entire infrastructure is one of our Department of Transportation's major responsibilities. While many DOT employees are dedicated to construction, customer service, maintenance, and inspection, Contract Inspection Associates **Cristina Anusca** and **Dana Hadade** make up the two-person road condition assessment team. They are responsible for monitoring the pavement conditions on every single mile of Gwinnett's roadways. The job is out of the ordinary but an important step in road maintenance and construction. The two women are well-qualified. Both worked as engineers in their home country of Romania before coming to the United States.



Dana Hadade enters her findings

"I drive about 50 miles per day on the job," said Cristina. "Even when I'm not on the road inspecting, I sometimes find myself 'working' as I drive along in my own car."

Driving a territory nearly 3,000 miles long takes time. The team carries out their inspections on a two-to three-year cycle, which means that both Dana and Cristina have the unique distinction of having driven



Cristina Anusca demonstrates the on-board equipment that takes road measurements for future repairs

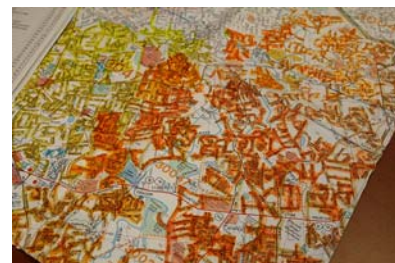
every single road in Gwinnett. "I don't think the maintenance crews can even say they've been on every road in the county," said Cristina. "I have learned many ways to get around Gwinnett now that I'm familiar with all of our roads."

Dana and Cristina's work achieves two objectives: helping the DOT save money on repairs and ensuring our roadways are safe. Both women have the skills and the right equipment to do the job without getting out of their fleet vehicles. These vehicles are outfitted with specialty equipment that lets them measure sections that need attention whenever they find areas of distressed pavement.

The job can sometimes be dangerous, too. In addition to driving, they have to keep an eye out for other motorists, operate equipment, and scan the pavement conditions in front of them. They normally split up to inspect secondary roads but will ride together on major arteries.

Their findings make it possible to prioritize the most needed repairs first and keep a close watch on those that need to wait. "There are 20 different types of distress," says Dana. "We measure the extent of the distress and log the information so the damage can be patched, replaced, or milled."

The team brings the information they gather back to the DOT Central Facility where they log measurements and details into a database called MicroPaver. Based on this information, the system calculates a pavement condition index. This number is used to sort the roadways by the severity of the pavement distress. From this list, the budget is allocated to repair or replace existing roadways. The pair is also responsible for logging new roads into the system for future tracking purposes.



A map shows which roads have been inspected during this inspection cycle and which are due for inspection

By using a scientific approach, the DOT remains impartial to which projects need the most attention. Another advantage of using this approach is the amount of money it saves. By continually monitoring our roadways, the road condition assessment team can help prevent roads from falling into severe disrepair that would cost significantly more to fix.