

Maintenance Memorandum

Date: April 19, 1989

Subject: **White Shoulder Policy**

I would like to review some of the reasons for the white shoulder policy and to restate in writing this long-time practice.

Some of the damage to shoulders is caused by winter maintenance. Excess pressure on the underbody blade along with high plowing speed can throw surface material into ditch areas from which it cannot be recovered. Shoulder damage is common in the fall and spring when no frost is in the soil. Plowing during an early or late snow fall with a fully loaded truck can cause damage to the soft shoulder. This shoulder plowing can destroy the shoulder surface and the excess bladed material can create a secondary ditch. Water can then flow along this secondary ditch to a weak spot, break through, and cause erosion and possible washouts in the spring of the year.

The alternative to this potential maintenance waste is strict adherence to the white shoulder policy. This policy's goal is to apply good judgement to shoulder blading. Reduce the truck load before blading shoulders. Apply only enough blade pressure so that the plowed shoulder behind the blade will remain lightly snow covered or "white" rather than exposing a bare shoulder surface.

Following this policy allows the shoulder to carry on its function as a recovery area for errant vehicles or for emergency parking. In addition, the surface water from the road can flow evenly into the ditch as intended in the original design.