

[Johnson County General News] Johnson County Secondary Roads Department receives national award for innovative survey equipment

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----- Johnson County Secondary Roads Department receives national
award
for innovative survey equipment -----

The Johnson County Secondary Roads Department received a national

award from
the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for developing an innovative
tool
that saves time and improves employee safety when surveying roads.

The department received the national SMART Transformation Award
through the
FHWA's Build a Better Mousetrap competition for its Roadway Mobile
Survey
Rig, a custom-built device that allows employees to collect roadway
measurements while driving instead of walking alongside traffic.

The Roadway Mobile Survey Rig was developed to address the
time-consuming and
potentially dangerous process of surveying miles of roadway on foot.
The
device attaches to a hitch and holds GPS surveying equipment, allowing
employees to collect roadway data safely from inside the vehicle.

Using the rig, employees can survey approximately eight miles of
roadway in
35 minutes while traveling at 25 mph. The equipment collects
measurements at
100-foot intervals, providing information that engineers use to
evaluate road
conditions and plan future improvements.

Secondary Roads employees designed and built the rig using repurposed
materials, including undamaged sections of road signposts. The
adjustable
design allows the equipment to serve different surveying needs.

The department initially submitted the Roadway Mobile Survey Rig to
the Iowa
Local Technical Assistance Program's (LTAP) Build a Better Mousetrap
competition, where it earned first place at the state level. The
project then
advanced to the national competition, where judges evaluated more than
100
submissions.

The Build a Better Mousetrap competition recognizes innovative
solutions

developed by local transportation agencies that improve efficiency, enhance safety, and reduce costs. The program also encourages agencies to share their ideas so other communities can adopt or improve upon them. For more information about the competition, visit https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/clas/babm/babm_winners_2026.aspx https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/clas/babm/babm_winners_2026.aspx.

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