



## **Economic Impact of Specific Information Signs**

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*Transportation Literature Searches are prepared for WisDOT staff and investigators to identify completed research and other authoritative information in an area of interest. The citations below are representative, rather than exhaustive, of available English-language studies on the topic. Primary online resources for the literature searches are OCLC's [WorldCat](#) and [TLCat](#), U.S. DOT's [TRIS Online](#), the National Transportation Library ([NTL](#)), TRB's Research in Progress ([RiP](#)) database, and other academic, engineering and scientific databases as appropriate.*

*To request a literature search, contact the WisDOT Library at [library@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:library@dot.state.wi.us) or (608) 264-8142, or WisDOT Research at [research@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:research@dot.state.wi.us) or (608) 261-8198.*

**Topic/Problem Statement:** Economic impact of Specific Information Signs (SIS).

**Keywords:** Specific information signs, tourist oriented directional signs (TODS), highway logo signs, logo signs, service signs, blue guide signs, business signs, blue boards, logos.

**Library of Congress Descriptors/Transportation Research Thesaurus Terms:** Guide signs, direction signs.

### **Summary**

We were unable to locate any studies that fit this topic precisely. The two citations and one Research in Progress entry below discuss similar subjects, while the two entries under Related Studies touch on broadly related topics—the economic impacts of Wyoming's loop tour program, which includes highway signage, and a study of dual-logo sign panels.

### **Citations**

*Links to online copies of cited literature are provided when available. Contact the WisDOT Library to obtain hard copies of citations.*

**Title:** Should I Advertise on the Interstate?

**Author(s):** Jacci L. Rodgers and Tara Blackburn

**Date:** November-December 2005

**Source/URL:** *Business Horizons*, Vol. 48, Issue 6, November-December 2005, pages 477-482,

[http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?\\_ob=ArticleURL&\\_udi=B6W45-4H3XWKB-5&\\_user=10&\\_coverDate=12%2F31%2F2005&\\_rdoc=1&\\_fmt=&\\_orig=search&\\_sort=d&view=c&\\_acct=C000050221&\\_version=1&\\_urlVersion=0&\\_userid=10&md5=e64455d413f53a677dbc7b90f0edbae5](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6W45-4H3XWKB-5&_user=10&_coverDate=12%2F31%2F2005&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&view=c&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=e64455d413f53a677dbc7b90f0edbae5)

**OCLC Number:** 99243053

**Description:** 6 pages

**Contents:** The highway logo signing program has existed for over 20 years. Since its inception, most motorists have become accustomed to relying on these blue signs to provide information on services available at each highway exit.

However, there is little, if any, literature that examines the program as an advertising source, and no formal literature that addresses the signing program from the perspective of the independent business owner. This paper provides service business owners with information about the highway logo signing program, and is directed toward independent owners who are considering the signing program as an advertising source. A five step process is described that owners can follow to first determine if the venue is viable, and then if the investment is value-added for them.

**Title: Tourist Oriented Directional Signs: A Self-Supporting Program to Promote Rural Business and Economic Development**

**Author(s):** David M. Dornbusch, Claudia J. Kawczynska

**Date:** 1992

**Source/URL:** Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 31, No. 1: 3-9, <http://jtr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/31/1/3>

**Description:** 7 pages

**Contents:** Benefits, costs, and procedures. were evaluated in Oregon and Washington for promoting rural tourist-oriented businesses by administering the erection of uniform roadway signs which identify rural small businesses and indicate their direction and distance. The programs in Oregon and Washington were studied because their heavily subscribed Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) programs are among the earliest programs developed. Both TODS programs are supported entirely from nominal business subscriber fees (of a few hundred dollars per year), with the total economic benefits estimated to be nearly 2,500 times their cost in Oregon and over 1,000 times their cost in Washington. This article suggests methods for implementing a TODS program; indicates appropriate subscriber fees that will cover program costs and meet state objectives of making the program self-supporting; addresses alternative organizational structures that can be used within existing state administrative constraints and opportunities; and identifies key implementation issues for states to address in developing their programs.

## **Research in Progress**

**Title: Evaluation of Adding Distance Information to Mainline Specific Service (Logo) Signs**

**Principal Investigator(s):** Benjamin H. Cottrell, (434) 293-1932; Praveen Edara

**Start Date:** 3/1/2007

**RIP URL:** <http://rip.trb.org/browse/dproject.asp?n=12913>

**Sponsor Organization:** Virginia Transportation Research Council

**Contents:** Specific Service (or logo) signs provide information on attractions, camping, lodging, food, and gas services. Presently, to determine the distance to a particular establishment, motorists depart from the mainline and read the distance on the logo signs on the ramps. Recently, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has been asked to consider adding distance information to the mainline logo signs. The contention is that providing drivers with distance information on the mainline could help them decide to take the exit. The purpose of the experiment is to determine the effectiveness/usefulness of adding distance information on mainline logo signs. The scope of this study is limited to piloting this addition on mainline logo signs at selected interchanges in Virginia. Permission to experiment with these signs has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This study will fulfill VDOT's obligation to document the results of the MUTCD experiment.

## **Related Studies**

**Title: Determining Economic Effects of Wyoming's Loop Tours**

**Author(s):** Donald S. Warder, Khaled Ksaibati, Eugene M. Wilson, Gene Bryan

**Date:** March 1994

**Source/URL:** University of Wyoming, Wyoming Department of Commerce;

<http://www.mountain-plains.org/pubs/pdf/MPC94-29A.pdf>

**Description:** 37 pages

**Contents:** This report discusses the economic impacts of travel/tourism on two specific destinations in Wyoming. See the section entitled "Local Economic Impacts" beginning on page 11 of the PDF. Signage is mentioned at the bottom of page 12 of the PDF.

**Title: Effects of Adding Dual-Logo Panels to Specific Service Signs: A Human Factors Study**

**Authors:** H. Gene Hawkins, Jr., and Elisabeth R. Rose

**Date:** 2005

**Source/URL:** Transportation Research Record 1918: 108-115,

<http://pubsindex.trb.org/document/view/default.asp?lbid=772254>

**OCLC Number:** 99641340

**Description:** 8 pages

**Contents:** Currently, FHWA's "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways" allows only one business logo to be placed on a logo panel. Dual-logo panels were proposed by business owners as a solution to the complaint that single locations operating two or more business brands are ignored and unduly restricted to limited highway signing. Business owners are concerned that separate logos do not convey to the public that two brands are available at the same location; they believe that dual logos provide a means of linking services that are combined under the same roof. However, the use of dual logos raises concerns related to category placement, dual-logo recognition and legibility, and information overload. This research effort addressed several of these issues through the use of a timed survey in which subjects were asked to indicate whether various business logos were present in a series of photographs that included both single- and dual-logo panels. The objective was to gain some understanding of whether the use of dual logos would reduce the effectiveness of the logo signs. The results of the survey indicate that dual logos have lower recognition levels at shorter response times, but that, in general, the difference in recognition levels between single and dual logos decreases as both exposure time and driver familiarity with the business increases. The research results did not indicate a need to prohibit the use of dual-logo panels.