The 1966 General Assembly, through Kentucky Revised Statutes Section 189.337(2), directed the Department of Highways to promulgate and adopt a "Manual of Standards and Specifications" for a uniform system of official traffic control devices for use upon all roads and streets. This mandate of the General Assembly was completed and approved on October 3, 1967. Copies of the Manual were mailed to all cities and counties within the State.

The Statutes define "Official Traffic Control Devices" as:
"All signs, signals, markings, and devices placed or erected by authority of a public body or official having jurisdiction, for the purpose of regulating, warning, or dividing traffic." The Statutes further state that all supplements shall be applicable to all roads and streets under the control of the Department of Highways or any county or incorporated city. In addition, they state that all traffic control devices installed on any road or street after adoption of the Manual shall conform to the provisions thereof. Satisfactorily operating traffic devices in use on the date of the adoption of the Manual may continue in use; however, if such devices are replaced or revised, they must be replaced or revised in conformance with the provisions of the Manual.

The Kentucky Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices is relatively new; however, the background material from which it was primarily developed is not. Some of our predecessors, belonging to the Mississippi Valley Highway Officials, recognized the need for uniformity of signing of rural highways. This group appointed a committee to develop a system of general traffic-sign guides which might be used by all member States. As a result of this, the AASHO Sign Manual for Rural Highways was published in 1927. During the same period, city officials were also at work on this subject, and, in 1929, the National Conference on Street and Highway Safety published a Manual on Traffic Signs, Signals and Markings for Urban Streets.

The obvious desirability of a single manual covering both rural and urban conditions led to the formation of a Joint Committee of AASHO and the National Conference. As a result, the original edition of the National Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices was published in 1935.
In 1942, the Institute of Traffic Engineers joined the two original sponsoring or "parent" organizations. During the 1940's, the National Conference on Street and Highway Safety ceased to exist but one very important committee of the Conference lived on as the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances. In 1948, it replaced the National Conference on the National Joint Committee.

In 1960, the National Joint Committee added two more important co-sponsors, the American Municipal Association and the National Association of County Officials. Thus, it now consists of State Officials, county officials, municipal officials, traffic engineers and officials from the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances. It also has the support of the many members belonging to each of the sponsoring organizations.

Many States, recognizing the need for uniformity, have adopted a State manual for use throughout all levels of government within the State. These manuals follow the "National Uniform Manual" very closely; however, some deviation may be necessary because of particular State laws.

The mere adoption of a uniform manual will not, in itself, produce the desired results of one set of laws, one set of directions, and one set of controls. We have reached an era in which we recognize that, notwithstanding all of our other problems, we must stop needless killing on our streets and highways. We want to get into our automobiles and go about our business and pleasure in safety. The practice of permitting non-uniform and non-standard traffic control devices is a danger to you and every other citizen.

It is not uniformity for uniformity's sake nor is it a magic wand. It is not blind, routine adherence to rigid, never progressing standards. Rather, what is wanted is application of the manual provisions on the basis of sound engineering judgment. We want progressiveness, too, but through an orderly procedure, involving proof through research and field verification of significantly superior value before a new idea or design becomes eligible for later manual adoption.

Returning again to uniformity the fact is we have a far greater basic objective than mere uniformity. What we really strive for is greatly improved traffic management, or if you prefer, a greatly advanced level of traffic service. Any reasonable person who will face up to a 50-percent growth in vehicle-miles of travel within a decade, without the slightest possibility of providing enough new highway facilities to match this growth, must agree that it is essential to attain optimum orderliness, efficiency and safety in traffic operations, top-quality traffic management, and very high levels of traffic safety. Indeed, to those of you from urban or metropolitan areas, the challenge will be much greater as the trend toward urban and metropolitan
living continues. Highly important in attaining the traffic operational objective will be the intelligent application of the standards, principles and guides of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Now a few words concerning Traffic Control Agreements. As most of you are aware, the Highway Department furnishes and installs traffic signals of the State-maintained system where warranted. The Traffic Control Agreement recognizes that both the State and local government have some responsibility at various signalized intersections. Toward this shared responsibility, it was felt that the State should furnish and install the signal equipment and that the local government should pay the power bill and maintain such equipment, including repairs from accidents. This Agreement has been very satisfactory in the past. The decision on how to share this responsibility was based upon the following:

1. The local government normally has its own signal equipment, and its repairman could maintain all signal equipment.

2. The State would provide specialized training to repair personnel at the local government's request.

3. The State, because of distance, might not be able to provide the desired level of maintenance service.

4. The ability of the State to obtain sufficient qualified personnel to perform the necessary maintenance is limited.

As most of you are aware, the salary required to obtain qualified personnel is rather high. Consequently, we are continuously training and then losing personnel to higher paying industrial jobs. In addition, it is necessary that our personnel travel and sometimes be away from home four or more nights a week. This job is not very desirable for a young family man, the man you would hope to train and keep for a number of years. The same condition prevails for our installation crews. We have been unable to train and retain qualified installation personnel at our district level in general. This is particularly true around our larger urban areas. Consequently, the Frankfort-based crews travel State-wide and are, in general, out-of-town four nights a week. Again, this is not a desirable job for a man with a young family.

Due to the above factors and the frequent need of special equipment, we are unable to make signal installations as quickly as we would like. I would ask that each of you bear the above in mind and consider that we will make every effort to install that signal just as soon as possible. Remember, one installer lost to a maintenance job delays one signal installation that much longer.
We still have citizens who think a signal can be installed for $100-$200. You, here, as governing officials know better. Signal installations may cost as little as $1000 or as much as $40,000 depending upon their complexity and the type of equipment required.

Regardless of their cost, however, their ability to control traffic is no better than the maintenance they receive. This applies to the simplest device, a traffic signal lamp, as well as to the most complex, an electronic controller. I ask each of you here to consider the question: Am I providing the level of maintenance required to obtain the maximum level of traffic service within the capability of this traffic control device?