

Sioux Falls, South Dakota Conducts Roundabout Rodeo

Location

Sioux Falls, South Dakota
(Central United States)

Implementation Stage

- ✓ Construction

Roundabout Type/Setting

Single-lane roundabout in a
suburban setting

Target Audience

- ✓ General Public
- ✓ Emergency Responders
- ✓ Elected Officials/Managers

Strategies Employed

- ✓ Mock driveable roundabout/
roundabout rodeo event
- ✓ Website
- ✓ Radio broadcast

Background

In 2008, the City of Sioux Falls, South Dakota was nearing completion of construction of one of the first roundabouts in the State, near a newly constructed local university campus. The City recognized that helping local residents feel comfortable with the new intersection design and confident in navigating it would be important to a successful launch. Fortunately, City engineering staff had recently attended the Transportation Research Board's 2nd International Roundabout Conference in the spring of 2008, where they heard presentations from other agencies about the importance of outreach and education. Inspired by similar experiences from other jurisdictions, the City decided to set up a mock, driveable roundabout in a local parking lot and host South Dakota's first "roundabout rodeo." This event would provide local residents and other interested parties the opportunity to experience the new intersection design first-hand in a non-threatening environment before construction on the new roundabout was complete.

Approach

Using traffic cones, City engineers laid out the mock roundabout according to the same specifications as the one under construction (see Figure 1). Various efforts to publicize the event were used—announcements in newspapers and on television, at community meetings, and through the City website. Local residents were invited to drive, ride their bikes, or walk through the mock roundabout. City engineers also individually invited emergency responder organizations (fire, emergency medical services, and police) and elected officials/managers to come learn about and try the new roundabout design. Engineers made themselves available to event participants, answering questions and clarifying misconceptions as drivers navigated the mock roundabout.

The City also invited local television and newspaper journalists to come to the event and report on the rodeo. Four media organizations took pictures of the



Figure 1: A view of Sioux Falls' mock driveable roundabout set up in a nearby parking lot.



Figure 2: A view of Sioux Falls' mock driveable roundabout set up in a nearby parking lot.



Figure 3: A wide-load tractor-trailer configuration vehicle navigating the mock driveable roundabout.



Figure 4: A view of Sioux Falls' mock driveable roundabout set up in a nearby parking lot.

event, interviewed participants, and featured stories that described the benefits of roundabouts and the success of the roundabout rodeo. As a follow-up activity, city engineers participated in a local radio broadcast on roundabouts, and fielded questions from the listening audience about the new roundabout.

Results

More than 130 people attended the roundabout rodeo, driving all types of vehicles including semi-trucks, tractor-trailers, fire trucks, minivans, and bicycles (see Sioux Falls Engineering News under *Related Products*). According to city engineers, all participants navigated the mock roundabout with ease and reported positive feedback about the experience. Elected officials and emergency responders reported being much more comfortable with the roundabout construction after this outreach activity.

Lessons Learned

- Designing the mock roundabout to actual specifications increases the realism of the experience and helps to dispel concerns when stakeholders can experience the actual intersection in advance.
- If a jurisdiction is planning a roundabout rodeo, it is best to set up the mock roundabout near the roundabout construction to increase participation in the event.

Outreach Investment

The City of Sioux Falls staff report that the outreach investment for a mock driveable roundabout was relatively low. Costs incurred included \$800 to rent equipment (extra cones, signs, etc.) and staff hours to plan, publicize and staff the event. In terms of promoting the event and reporting on the results of the event, three local television stations and a newspaper featured content on the event, thus providing additional public outreach at no cost to the City.

Related Products

General Information Website

Sioux Falls Roundabout

<https://www.siouxfalls.org/public-works/engineering/roundabouts>

Learn More

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