

CASE STUDY



Traffic Sign Management 101

Tabbed Metal Barcode Nameplates deliver durability for City of Ames, Iowa

Ames, Iowa is home to nearly 60,000 residents, and about half are students at Iowa State University. The City's 250 miles of transportation infrastructure and 9,500 street signs include much of the public university's campus. For years, the city maintained an Access database with street sign locations, but these were relative to intersections and did not associate specific assets with the locations. The generalized data made it difficult when reacting to vandalism, accidents and other issues brought to their attention.

"A citizen or police officer would bring a downed sign into our office, and we'd have no way to really know where it belonged," said Ames' traffic department foreman Brad Becker. "Students like to keep signs as souvenirs, so we get a flush of returns from the University at the end of the academic year." Additionally, the City needed to comply with a new federal requirement to maintain minimum levels of nighttime visibility known as sign retroreflectivity.

The retroreflectivity mandate requires an assessment of all signs, replacement of non-compliant signs and a management method to keep signs above minimum reflective levels. In short, Ames needed better data to manage their traffic signs.

Improving the management centers on giving each sign a unique ID number associated with a GPS location. From there, the work would get easier. "We bought a device that combines a retroreflectometer and bar code scanner for our inventory work," said Becker. Becker also worked with an in-house team to develop a custom iPad app that associates a sign's type, location, history and retroreflectivity with a unique ID. Each ID is produced as a bar code label attached to the sign to facilitate accurate data collection. Metalcraft's [tabbed barcode nameplates](#) were selected for the backs of new and existing street signage.

The metal nameplates deliver durability with reliable barcode clarity and numbering, and the tabs cut the time of applying labels to signage in half. "Metalcraft had exactly what we needed," said Becker. "And the tab is a lot easier to deploy." The City's iPad can scan these bar codes and associate photos with each sign, too.

Becker says the improvement to traffic sign data management saves money and time. Knowing retroreflectivity and life spans across the inventory helps budgeting; they don't need to do blanket replacement of signs driven by age alone. Also, it is much faster to ID an incoming sign for replacement. "Because our data includes a photo of each sign, we know how each one is mounted," said Becker. "This saves a lot of time when going out to remount them."

For more information about using Metalcraft tags for your application visit idplate.com or call 800-437-5283 or 641-423-9460.

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**BRAD
BECKER**
City of Ames

CHALLENGE

SOLUTION

RESULT