1. **TTI Day 2007**

In honor of his first TTI Day as director of the Institute, **Dennis Christiansen** wore the shirt given to him 16 months earlier by plaid-adoring, outgoing director **Herb Richardson** during last year’s TTI Day. “This is the first time this shirt has been worn,” Christiansen announced, prompting laughs from the nearly 400 employees who were able to attend the thirteenth annual event.

Although the atmosphere was jovial, there were some thoughtful discussions about TTI’s status and the efforts underway to make it stronger. During his ‘State of TTI’ presentation, Christiansen focused on the three areas that scored the lowest following a late-2005 Institute-wide survey of employees: leadership development, management training and internal communications. He then outlined initiatives to improve the low-ranking categories including committees formed to address those concerns. Christiansen emphasized that the results of the employee survey put TTI at the top of other state agencies.

TTI Day Chair **Sue Chrysler** helped guide the 5-hour event, which included a Mr. Roger’s ‘TTI story time’ by **Gary Thomas**, employee award presentations and a series of new facility reports. Door prizes
won by a handful of employees ranged from a car wash detail pack (Associate Transportation Researcher Tina Collier) to an I-POD with a $50 download certificate (Student Worker III Irene Alanis).

After a lunch of lasagna and chicken parmesan, Texas A&M University System Chancellor and avid reader Mike McKinney congratulated TTI for its Half Pint Library Book Drive. Employees raised $1,047 and a total of 475 books that will be distributed to Half Pint Libraries in each city where TTI maintains an office. McKinney quoted a line from *Horton the Elephant*, a Dr. Seuss book he credited with changing his life. “I meant what I said, and I said what I meant. An elephant’s faithful, one hundred per cent!” he recalled. “I learned to love to read. I read everything I could get my hands on. I encourage you to learn something you don’t have any need for.”

Near the end of the event, Chrysler informed the group that next year’s chair will be Research Engineer Lance Bullard. “So, if you don’t want to be on a committee, you might want to avoid eye contact with him the rest of the day,” she said.

This year’s TTI Day attendance was the largest in its 13-year history.

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2. Employees Honored During TTI Day

Although absent from TTI Day, crowd-savvy Mobility Researcher Tim Lomax made perhaps his biggest impression yet. His life-sized cut out was charming and humorous.

Lomax was one of 10 individuals cited for their work ethic and contribution to TTI. The award winners were:

- **Kwaku Obeng-Boampong**— New Researcher Award
- **Shawn Turner**— Researcher Award
- **Jim Benson**— Senior Researcher Award
- **Gerry Harrison**— Division Technical Support Award
- **Cynthia Lowery**— Division Administrative Support Award
- **Clyde Hance**— Administrative Technical Support Award
- **Karen Smith**— Administrative Professional Staff Award
- **Tanya Swisher**— Administrative Support Staff Award
- **Greg Richmond**— Charles J. “Jack” Keese Career Achievement for Agency Support
- **Tim Lomax**— Charley V. Wootan Career Achievement for Research

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Tim Lomax’s absence was appreciated by all at TTI Day.

Employee award winners posing with Director Christiansen.
3. ‘Teens’ Wins Herbert H. Richardson Team Award

The Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) program was recognized with the second annual TTI Team Award, named in honor of Director Emeritus Herb Richardson, during the TTI Day employee award presentations May 3.

TDS Program Director Russell Henk and 24 TTI employees were presented with citations for their work, which read in part: “The Teens in the Driver Seat team is recognized with this award and commended on their efforts to save one of our most precious resources – the youth of America. The TDS program is an awareness campaign built around research on the key risk factors to teen drivers. Throughout planning and execution of the project, the team has remained focused and driven by the sincere desire to save young lives.”

TDS team members are: Russell Henk, Bernie Fette, Kandis Salazar, Krizia Martinez, Andrew Ballard, Gary Barricklow, Tina Collier, Ken Giusti, Lu Ann Theiss, Jeff Shelton, Rafael Aldrete, Kathy Montemayor, Katie Womack, Val Pezoldt, Brad Hoover, Tobey Lindsey, Rose Matejka, Brandon Webb, Clyde Hance, David Martin, Rick Davenport, John Henry, Mark Coppock, Khyle Dietz and Vicky Nelson.

4. TTI Explores International Research Opportunities

TTI’s reach could soon spread to the Middle East, South America and Asia as talks are underway to establish new offices and centers. For example, a memorandum of agreement has been signed with the Indian Institute of Technology in Madras, India, to establish a research partnership. Discussions are underway with government officials in Qatar to create a TTI office in Doha.

In addition, a research contract has been signed with the government of Paraguay, discussions are being held to establish a TTI office in Mexico City and a memorandum of agreement has been signed in Beijing, China.

“Diversifying our research portfolio to be less dependent on a single
sponsor simply makes sense,” Director Dennis Christiansen wrote in an Institute-wide email March 10. “It is similar to our own personal investment portfolios, where we are encouraged to diversify to minimize risk.”

Meanwhile, TTI’s Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) program received international attention during the first-ever Global Road Safety Week April 23-29. It could lead to TDS programs being established in Central America.

Associate Agency Director Ed Seymour is leading TTI’s international research efforts.

Read News Release on Global Road Safety Week:

5. Christiansen Initiates Employee Meetings

The first in a series of quarterly group meetings between Director Dennis Christiansen and TTI employees began April 9 at the Gibb Gilchrist Building as a “way of helping to keep you informed on what activities are going on within TTI.”

Christiansen highlighted some of the transportation issues considered by the Texas Legislature, a possible new option for TTI’s medical insurance and details regarding TTI’s new building planned for summer 2009 occupancy. (Details of that update are located on the TTI intranet: http://ttinet.tamu.edu/facilities_parking/headquarters.stm). Information about possible international research opportunities with India, Qatar and Mexico were also discussed.

Christiansen hopes to conduct the meetings at least quarterly and more often when special events occur, such as the conclusion of the legislative session. The director asked for feedback regarding the usefulness of the meetings and any modifications needed to make them more effective.

For a synopsis of the meeting and other information from Christiansen, a new page has been created on the intranet site, entitled From the Director:
6. TTI Study Uncovers Safety Issues with Parent-Taught Drivers

A study conducted for the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) found that young Texas drivers taught by their parents are more likely to be involved in serious and fatal accidents than those taught by professional instructors.

“In a review of driving records of novice drivers, we discovered a higher rate of serious crashes involving teenagers who were taught by someone other than professional driving instructors,” said Val Pezoldt, research scientist with the Center for Transportation Safety. “In the six months after the learners’ permit phase, parent-taught drivers were more than one and a half times more likely to be in crashes in which someone sustained a serious injury. And in the next six-month period, crashes in which at least one person was killed were almost three times more likely among parent-taught than public or commercial school-trained young drivers.”

Read TTI news release:
http://tti.tamu.edu/infofor/media/archive.htm?news_id=4290

See media coverage:

http://www.star-telegram.com/189/story/82884.html
7. A&M Graduate Engineering School Gets High Marks
   *from Aggie Engineering Weekly

In the latest *U.S. News & World Report* rankings of the country’s graduate universities and programs, Texas A&M Engineering’s graduate program ranked 14th among engineering schools (8th among public institutions) offering a doctorate. The rankings were released March 30.

Engineering specialties ranked were: aerospace, 9th (5th among public institutions); biomedical, 30th (14th public); chemical, 30th (19th public); civil, 13th (8th public); computer engineering, 25th (15th public); industrial, 8th (6th public); mechanical, 21st (12th public); nuclear, 4th (3rd public); and petroleum 3rd (2nd public). Agricultural engineering, last ranked in 2003, was ranked 1st. Last ranked in 2006, electrical engineering was 25th (15th public) and computer science, 51st (32nd public).

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8. TTI Hosts Visibility Symposium

For only the third time since it began in 1968, the Transportation Research Board Visibility Symposium was hosted outside Washington, D.C. Because of the unique facilities for visibility research at Riverside, TTI played host to the 18th biennial event attracting 75 attendees from across the U.S., Korea, Japan, Canada and England.

Researchers, government agency officials, consultants and some vendors took part in the two-day event April 17-18 which highlighted the latest technology and research surrounding visual communication in transportation.

Organizing the event for TTI were Susan Chrysler, Paul Carlson and Mary Cearley.
9. Hudson Named to Bicycle Task Force

Assistant Research Engineer **Joan Hudson** has been named to Austin’s Street Smarts Task Force, a panel of experts in various fields brought together by the mayor to address safety and awareness issues about bicycling.

“I am honored to be asked to participate in this task force and am excited about the work that lies ahead of us,” said Hudson. “There are many challenging issues that need addressing.”

The 30-member Street Smarts Task Force will come up with recommendations that will be presented to the Austin City Council early next year.

**See media coverage:**
http://www.statesman.com/life/content/life/stories/health/04/16/16fitness.html

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10. TTI Anniversaries

**10 years**

**Glenda Evans**, Financial Accountant II (BUS)
**Ken Giusti**, Research Technician (GSA)
**Sue James**, Federal Research and Policy Coordinator (ADM)
**Jim Lyle**, Video Production Associate (KAC)

**15 years**

**Montie Wade**, Program Manager (HUA)

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11. You Are the Reporter

In an effort to have the best and most current content for TTI’s internet site, CenterLine and Researcher, a new system encourages your input. Several forms are now available on the TTI intranet that automatically send your projects, publications, research outcomes and news tips submissions to the webmaster.

“We feel that the strength of TTI can be significantly improved with the participation of everyone at the Institute,” said Kassandra Agee-Letton, chief information officer and director of information systems. “This new system will ensure that we stay on top of current events and make sure our research is highlighted. I encourage everyone to use this important tool.”

To send your story ideas, research and project submissions to the webmaster, go to http://ttinet.tamu.edu/communications/update_tti.stm and click on the proper category. After filling out the short form, click send.

12. Harris Honored with SCA Award

Associate Research Scientist Pat Harris of the Materials and Pavements Division has been honored for his work on the George Bush Turnpike/Hwy 183 intersection near Irving. The Slag Cement Association presented Harris with the Best Use of Slag Cement for Innovation award at the association’s annual meeting in Atlanta March 21.

Harris’s research on the project involves the use of slag cement as a way of stabilizing sulfate-rich subgrade soil which prevents problems with the asphalt or concrete pavement. “So far, the slag cement is holding up well. We will soon analyze samples from the site for reevaluation,” Harris said.

Visit the Slag Cement Association website: http://www.slagcement.org/
13. TTI in the News

There have been numerous mentions of TTI and our experts in recent articles. Here are links to some of the stories.

Parent-taught drivers study (KWTX-TV) April 27
http://www.kwtx.com/home/headlines/7212511.html

Austin’s Managed Lanes (Austin American-Statesman) Apr. 23

Wrong-way drivers (WAVE-TV) Apr. 16

On-ramp safety (Amarillo Globe) Apr. 15

Houston port growth (World Net Daily) Apr. 5

Railroads to ease congestion (Delaware News Journal) Apr. 5

Radar for traffic (Associated Press) Apr. 4
http://www.examiner.com/a-656729~Company_deloys_radar_to_track_real_time_traffic_conditions.html

Truck congestion and safety (Tucson Citizen) March 31

Speed and safety (Florida Today) March 30

Digital sign regulations (The Tennessean) March 12
http://www.dicksonherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070312/NEWS05/703120337

Mass transit use hits record (News-Leader) March 12
14. Editor's Corner: One Space or Two?
   by Rhonda Brinkmann

A wild and woolly debate rages among the normally sedate group made up of editors and proofreaders. It’s a debate that brings powerful feelings to the forefront, that pits proofer against proofer in a virtual wilderness, that has wide-ranging impact across disciplines and personnel functions – what is this cataclysmic question, you ask? Well, it’s the debate over whether to place one space or two after sentences. What side do you take?

In one corner of the ring, two spaces stand tall and wide. Their supporters rally to their defense, saying that two spaces after a sentence help you read more quickly, dividing text and providing a visual clue when scanning material. Some contend that putting two spaces after end punctuation makes isolating sentences easier, and therefore facilitates automated text editing. For many typists, myself included, inserting two spaces after a period is as much a reflex as sneezing.

Supporters of a single space often use technology to bolster their arguments. In today’s computerized environment, two spaces can cause wide white “channels” of text in fully justified paragraphs or cause alignment and line-wrap problems. Most proportionately spaced fonts used today will automatically put additional space following periods when the software determines (rightly or wrongly) that a sentence is ending, and most programming languages “know”
to display correct spacing after a period, regardless of how many actual spaces are there.

When the major editorial style organizations – including the Modern Language Association, American Psychological Association, Associated Press, and others – all call for only one space following a period, you know it’s become the standard. Even the Chicago Manual of Style, a mainstay of conservative editorial usage, offers an online opinion that the two-period rule is no longer the preferred option. While I contend that putting two spaces following a period isn’t wrong, I will concede that one space has become standard choice.

Personally, I like having two spaces after the end of a sentence. It helps me read quickly through material, differentiating ends of sentences from internal punctuation. Plus, I don’t believe I can get my thumbs to stop hitting that space bar twice. In the end, however, I think it’s all immaterial anyway since these days we’re lucky just to get words spelled without numbers substituting for letters or vowels missing: how r u 2da?

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