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1. Herb Richardson Announces Retirement

On Dec. 12, Herb Richardson made public his plans to retire as director of TTI, a position he’s held for 12 years. “I had intended to make this announcement at TTI Day. However, since the event was postponed, I am sending this memo by e-mail as I wanted you all to know before the holidays. I have informed Vice Chancellor Bennett and Chancellor McTeer, and I anticipate a Search Advisory Committee will be formed and charged shortly after the New Year,” he wrote.

Many who associate TTI with Richardson’s leadership were sorry to hear the news. Soon after the announcement, the phones in the TTI administration office started ringing with words of encouragement, congratulations and disappointment.

Richardson’s tenure has achieved numerous accomplishments including the doubling of TTI’s research budget, which led to the institute outgrowing its building space. Richardson was instrumental in acquiring both the Gibb Gilchrist Building in 2000 and a new building which will be completed in 2008. Deputy Director Dennis Christiansen calls Richardson a caring leader and the right man for the director’s job. “TTI has been fortunate to have had the right leaders at the right time. Dr. Richardson has continued this tradition.” Christiansen credits Richardson with the progress at the Riverside facility and A&M’s Research Park. “Herb’s leadership and the respect he has within the A&M System are the reason these improvements have gone forward.”

The long list of accomplishments during Richardson’s tenure includes the enhancement of regional offices, strengthening the institute’s affiliation with other universities, the development of the TTI Award Program and the Research Champion Awards and TTI’s association with Trinity Industries.

Richardson plans to retire effective September 1, 2006, or earlier if his successor is named before the beginning of next fiscal year. He ended his retirement announcement with the following: “It is now time to hand over this superb organization to a new leader with the vision and fresh ideas to carry TTI to the next level of excellence and service to society. Thank you all for the support you have provided to me personally, as well as to the organization.”
2. Futuristic Freight Shuttle Closer to Reality

A licensing agreement has been signed with TTI bringing the space-age-appearing freight shuttle a step closer to reality. The newly formed Freight Shuttle Development Corporation (FSDC) now has exclusive rights to develop and commercialize technology that could revolutionize the way freight containers are transported from overcrowded ports to nearby terminals. Once operational, the freight shuttle is expected to decrease congestion by eliminating bottlenecks at ports, decrease pollution, increase and simplify container inspections, and increase safety on nearby roadways. The cost savings associated with the project is estimated to be in the billions of dollars.

The freight shuttle is the brainchild of Steve Roop, assistant agency director of TTI and head of the Multimodal Freight Transportation Division. The idea was developed beginning in 1999 when Roop and his team were working on a project exploring the feasibility of underground freight transportation. “We determined the project was not cost effective. That was about the time the Trans-Texas Corridor venture was coming to light,” Roop said. “We borrowed some of those concepts, and the freight shuttle idea was born.” The licensing agreement with FSDC means a prototype of the freight shuttle can be built. Roop hopes the freight shuttle will be operational by 2009.

The freight shuttle consists of electrically powered vehicles that run on a specialized, derailment-proof guideway. The guideway rails transport containers from ports to terminals with the use of an automated control system that requires no onboard drivers. There are few moving parts to the freight shuttle.

Visit FSDC website:
http://www.freightshuttle.com/

3. A&M System Creates Office of Technology Commercialization

Efforts to work with the private sector in creating products developed from the Texas A&M University System researchers may soon be enhanced thanks to action by the Board of Regents Dec. 2. The Regents authorized the creation of a system-level Office of Technology Commercialization, effectively transferring the Technology Commercialization Center and the Technology Licensing Office from the university level to the system level. “Moving this to the system level under a vice chancellor will bring together the intellectual products of the entire A&M System to help drive the state’s economy,” according to John D. White, chairman of
As far as TTI researchers are concerned, very little will change regarding intellectual property reporting or negotiating practices, according to Executive Associate Agency Director Don Bugh. “In accordance with system policy, TTI has historically worked with the Technology Licensing Office for the filing of invention disclosures and the negotiation of license agreements with potential licensees,” he said.


4. TTI Scores with Asphalt

TTI, and more specifically, Associate Transportation Researcher Carlos Chang-Albitres, was selected as the U.S. delegate for the Ibero Latin-American Asphalt Congress (CILA), which was held in Costa Rica Nov. 20-25. Since 1979, when Jorge Agnusdei, Helio Farah and other researchers founded CILA, assemblies have been held every two years in an effort to share technology advances in the field of bituminous materials and flexible pavements among Latin American countries, Spain, Portugal and the U.S.

The 13th CILA was attended by researchers from more than 23 countries with several hundred papers presented, including three from TTI. Chang-Albitres presented the papers which had various co-authors including Joe Button, Tom Freeman, and Paul Krugler, all from TTI’s Materials and Pavements Division. Other co-authors included Ahmed Eltahan from TxDOT, Fernando Orduz from the Inter American Bank and Juan Dioverti from the Ministry of Public Works in Paraguay. As the U.S. delegate to CILA, Chang-Albitres helped promote the Congress among his colleagues and represent U.S. involvement at the event.

Visit CILA website: http://www.cilacr.com/

5. Pipeline Safety Research Can Begin

Several years ago when the Center for Pipeline Safety was established through a memorandum of agreement between TTI and New Mexico State University, there
was hope of beginning much-needed research in making pipelines safer. However, that goal was placed on hold because of a lack of funding. Last month, with the help of Congressman Joe Barton, the Transportation Appropriations Committee dedicated $500,000 to the center.

“This money means a great deal for enhancing safety and productivity,” says Steve Roop, head of TTI’s Multimodal Freight Transportation Division and director of the Center for Pipeline Safety. “There’s a lot of product that moves through petroleum pipelines, and because of age and other factors, the pipelines can become quite dangerous.” Roop says the center will be working closely with pipeline companies and regulatory entities to decide what work needs to be done. Research may include the study of pipeline materials, decreasing fatigue factors on pipelines and the prevention of third-party damage.

6. Making Your “Power” Point

The PowerPoint® presentation has become an essential element in nearly every project. However, PowerPoint presentations can be time consuming, confusing and difficult to produce. The stress in getting them ready can be dramatic for project managers with little or no PowerPoint experience.

That’s where TTI Communications can help. The Visual Media group has recently hired Graphic Designer Vicky Nelson, who has plenty of PowerPoint experience. “The PowerPoint presentation needs to be visually appealing. Otherwise, you run the risk of losing your audience,” she said.

Nelson can offer advice on the effective use of graphics, font style, photo selection and other tips to help you make your point with PowerPoint. Email Vicky Nelsen or you can call TTI Communications at (979) 845-1734 to find out about this and other communications services available.

Visit TTI Communications webpage: 
http://ttinet.tamu.edu/communications/
8. Texas Ports Association Website

The Texas Ports Association is sporting a new website. Members of TTI Communications and Network and Information systems contributed to its debut last month.

Here are some facts found on the website:

Texas ports move an average of 317 million metric tons of cargo annually. This is about 17 percent of the total U.S. port tonnage and over 50 percent of U.S. foreign imports and exports. This wealth of commerce means:

- Nearly 1 million jobs for Texans
- Over $30 billion in personal income for Texans
- Business sales over $178 billion

Visit Texas Ports website:
http://www.texasports.org/

A portion of the Texas Ports Association website.
9. TTI Day Rescheduled

TTI Day 2005 will not be held until 2006, thanks to the threat of inclement weather on the originally scheduled date of Dec. 7. The possibility of icy road conditions in north Texas prompted the Management Team to suggest TTI Day be postponed. Director Herb Richardson agreed and made the announcement by email the day before. “I regret the need to take this step at the last minute but as an agency dedicated to highway safety we do not wish to put any of our employees in jeopardy,” Richardson wrote.

TTI Day will be held Jan. 10, 2006.

Visit TTI Day webpage:
http://ttinet.tamu.edu/mgmt_org/ttiday/

10. Editor’s Corner: Reports that Get Read, Not Red

(Note: This is the first in a series of articles dealing with topics that may simplify your projects with TTI Communications)

While color can be an effective way to convey information in technical reports, there are reasons to limit its use. To best showcase your research, here are a few ideas to help you decide when your report needs color.

Advantages:
- Communicates complex information
- Allows flexibility in presenting photos or figures
- Responds to sponsor request for color
- Emphasizes findings
- Enhances visual appeal and presents a professional image

Disadvantages:
- Increases printing cost
- Might slow down print process
- Causes some readers difficulty in distinguishing colors
- May not meet sponsor requirement (including accessibility)
- Can be distracting
Considerations for black-and-white printing:

- In graphs, use symbols or patterns instead of color to denote data.
- Avoid light colors, such as yellow and pale blue, that fade away when printed in black and white.
- When using a software program that creates graphics in color, review default color choices and change them if you see a light color.
- Use black and white printing for graphics unless color elements are critical to content or the graphic doesn’t display clearly.
- Preview how color items will print without color by selecting a monotone screen view or by printing the page on a non-color printer.

When you send a file to TTI Communications for reproduction, specify exactly which items need color. If you have sponsor approval, let communications staff know. They will be glad to help you decide which items will benefit from color reproduction.

For more information on topics covered in the Editor’s Corner, contact Rhonda Brinkmann in TTI Communications.

CenterLine is a production of TTI Communications. We encourage your comments and suggestions. Please send email to news@ttimail.tamu.edu or call Rick Davenport at (979) 862-3763.