1. TTI-Sponsored Child Safety Seat “Check-Up” a Success

The biggest health risk to children today is not the measles or the flu, but rather death or injuries from automobile crashes*. That’s why TTI chose child safety seats as this year’s charitable activity in association with TTI Day. Generous employee donations provided enough money to purchase 22 seats to give to needy families in the Bryan-College Station area.

The first event was held Dec.13 at the Bossier car dealership, where 16 seats were distributed. Six additional seats were distributed later that same week to families in need who were unable to attend the Dec.13 event. Several TTI employees who are certified car safety seat inspectors spent nearly an hour with each family to make sure the seats were properly installed. “It’s rare to find a seat that has been installed properly. They are confusing and complicated, and in some cases mis-use can result in injuries instead of the protection the seats are designed for,” says Senior Research Scientist Katie Womack, who is also a child passenger safety technician.

The TTI employees who were on this year’s charitable contribution committee were Russell Henk (Chair), Pam Rowe, Toni Monroe, Katie Womack and Becca Simons. TTI child passenger safety technicians were Carol Mendez-Coker, Sandra Schoeneman, and Nada Trout. Helping with the event were TTI volunteers Helen Olivarez, Beatrice Martinez, Abbe Saenz, Colleen Dau, Karen Parker, Nora Martinez, Barbara Hein, Beth Roach, Bill Eisele, David Schrank, Juan Villa and Rachael Stensrud.

Beverly Kellner of Texas Cooperative Extension was a vital element in the Dec.13 event’s success. She supplied the following statistics from the “check-up”:

Number of children checked - 23
Number of children found correctly restrained - 0
Number of old/unsafe seats collected - 6
Number of new seats distributed - 16
Number of children arriving totally unrestrained or inappropriately restrained in safety belts - 6

Another child safety seat event will be held soon in El Paso, the location of TTI's newest regional office. That “check up” will be held in conjunction with National Child Safety Week in February.

Anyone interested in helping to purchase seats for the program can bring their donations to TTI Day Jan. 10.

*According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death in children. The center has determined that of the children aged 0-4 who were killed in crashes in 2003, only 35 percent were in car safety seats. And in a 1999 survey, only 15 percent of children were shown to be properly restrained.

Visit CDC website:
http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/childpas.htm

2. El Paso News Conference Marks Opening of New TTI Center

State Senator Eliot Shapleigh hosted a news conference on Dec. 13 to formally announce the establishment of TTI's Center for International Intelligent Transportation Research in El Paso. With TTI Director Herb Richardson and Transportation Commissioner Ted Houghton at his side, Shapleigh welcomed TTI to its newest location and stressed the important role that researchers would play in ensuring the safe movement of people and products in the border region, along with the advancement of free trade issues.

The effort to establish a TTI presence in El Paso began six years ago, as Shapleigh explained to the media, when he and TTI Associate Director Bill Stockton first began discussions on the subject. The December announcement represents the culmination of those discussions and efforts. During the media briefing, Richardson noted that TTI's three main focus areas in El Paso will be traffic management, border security and air quality. A freight shuttle prototype developed by TTI Assistant Director Steve Roop, which Richardson demonstrated during the news conference, is one example of a research effort
that would address all three of TTI's El Paso priorities. TTI officials hope to make the west Texas city a test site for Roop's prototype in the coming months.

Joining Richardson at Shapleigh's announcement were: Stockton, TTI Research and Implementation Division Head Russell Henk (who currently serves as interim manager for the TTI El Paso office), TTI Public Affairs Manager Bernie Fette (who coordinated the media event), TTI Videographer Clyde Hance and TTI researchers Leonard Ruback and Rajat Rajbhandari.

3. Mexican PhD Student Delegation Visits TTI

The System Management Division at TTI recently hosted a delegation of PhD students from the University of Tamaulipas in Mexico.

The students, whose specialization is in the field of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), spent the day touring the TransLink® Laboratory and the driving simulator. Topics discussed included application of integration activities, corridor integration, wireless communications and human factors.

“We are traveling around Texas to study ITS applications and how they improve traffic flow,” said Eugenia Villarreal, a PhD student. “We are very excited about our stop in College Station and to learn more about TTI’s research in this field.”

4. TTI In the News

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

Fatal crashes for Aggies in 2005 (The Eagle)

HOV lanes in Canada (The Toronto Star)

TTI research center (El Paso Times)

Teen deaths increase (The Eagle)
5. Rural ITS Can Be Lifesaver

When we hear about ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems), we often think about dozens of cameras and high tech devices spread across large metropolitan areas like Dallas, Houston and San Antonio. The main function of those systems is to monitor traffic performance and to better manage congestion on the roadways. But some smaller Texas cities, like Del Rio, are now looking to ITS to help with their traffic issues. That city’s system will consist of just four cameras, some flood sensors and a handful of flashing warning signs. Even so, the new Del Rio ITS demonstrated it can save lives.

TxDOT is in the final stages of implementing the Del Rio ITS system to monitor roadway flooding problems in and around the city. Recently, TTI Research Scientist Leonard Ruback was in Del Rio to help optimize the newly installed system. As luck would have it, the area received one of its famous downpours: eight inches of rain in three hours. “One of the cameras showed a car entering a high water area and the driver getting trapped. Eventually, the floodwaters engulfed the car, but not before TxDOT employees notified police and the driver was rescued,” Ruback said. “It’s nice to see a rural ITS do what it was designed to do.”

6. TTI Anniversaries

5 Years

Gary Barricklow, Traffic Surveyor (GSA)
Mary Cearley, Conference Coordinator (KGE)
Ed Hard, Associate Research Scientist (HTP)

10 Years

Lee Gustavus, Research Technician (BDV)
Rose Matejka, Communications Project Manager (KPA)

15 Years

Cliff Franklin, Senior Research Engineer (GTS)
7. With New TTI Program, SA Teens Are in Driver’s Seat

San Antonio community leaders and young drivers traded places during a Dec.20 news conference to make an important point - that a new TTI-initiated program is working to stop the number-one killer of teenagers in America, and it's starting in San Antonio. Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS), TTI's unique peer-to-peer teen driver safety program, directly involves teenage drivers in shaping and delivering safety messages to the target audience -- other young drivers. That direct involvement was evident in the Dec. 20 event, in which teen project leaders Krizia Martinez and Justin Krupalla held center stage with nearly all San Antonio news outlets represented in the audience.

An assortment of elected and appointed officials - including Transportation Commissioner Hope Andrade, Bexar County District Attorney Susan Reed, Municipal Judge Catherine Stahl and Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolfe - stood behind the teens in support of the new program, which will be expanded to include several San Antonio schools this spring.

TTI first began work on the project three years ago, and earlier this year picked up the enthusiastic support of Andrade, Reed and Stahl, who announced the formation of the Teens in the Driver Seat Coalition in San Antonio in May 2005. The TDS Coalition has provided program guidance and fundraising support, recently securing a contribution of $25,000 from AT&T. During the past year, TDS has generated growing interest and funding support from several TxDOT districts across the state, where TTI staff will launch the program in 2006.

TTI Research and Implementation Division Head Russell Henk serves as the project manager for TDS, with assistance from TTI Public Affairs Manager Bernie Fette. Henk and Fette arranged and attended the event, along with TTI Communications Director Rob Robideau and TTI Videographer David Martin.

Visit Teens in the Driver Seat website:

http://www.t-driver.com/
8. TTI Day Next Week

All roads will finally lead to TTI Day Tuesday, Jan. 10, following a detour because of icy conditions in early December. The weather forecast calls for spring-like temperatures, which would be much different than the wintry mix of sleet and snow flurries that postponed the event a month ago.

We’ll see you there!

See the new TTI Day schedule:
http://ttinet.tamu.edu/mgmt_org/ttiday

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9. Editor’s Corner: Editing – It’s Not Just for Reports Anymore

(Note: This is the second in a series of articles dealing with topics intended to simplify preparation of research project deliverables)

Editorial services at TTI Communications address more than technical reports. Experts are available to edit a variety of written materials on request. Materials developed as deliverables for TxDOT Research Management Committee (RMC) projects are processed differently from materials developed for other projects, so check with Rhonda Brinkman or Kelly West in TTI Communications to find out how to proceed with non-RMC editing.

What is a product? TxDOT RMC projects define required deliverables in the contract deliverables table as either reports or products. You might think of a product as a non-written deliverable – such as software, equipment, and workshops – and you’d be right. Part of the time. A product can also be a document – such as a manual, handbook, specification, or web page.

Why edit products? Most written products for TxDOT RMC projects require editing just like reports. At your request, TTI Communications is happy to edit all deliverables – including workshop materials, software screens, web pages, and PowerPoint® presentations.

How are products marked as complete? Whether written or non-written, deliverables require documentation through TTI Communications to receive official acknowledgment by TxDOT’s Research and Technology Implementation Office. Even if you keep your project director informed along the way, deliverables need to be officially documented. Products require
different types of documentation to prove completion, so send notice of completion to the Outlook® mailbox called TTI Reports and we will let you know if we need more information. Be sure to include the full deliverable number in your message.

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

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