1. Employees Honored at Luncheon, Team Award Re-named

Those singled out at TTI Day as 2005 Employee Award recipients were honored March 2 at the Bush Conference Center during a luncheon. The individual award winners received a plaque and a check.

Based on the recommendation of the TTI Awards Staff Committee and approval from Trinity Industries, Inc. representatives, the new TTI Team Award has been named for retiring TTI Director Herb Richardson. The award, which was presented for the first time in 2005, is now the Herbert H. Richardson TTI/Trinity Team Award. “Naming the award for Herb reflects his commitment to teamwork at the Institute and highlights the significant role he played in establishing the staff awards program at TTI and obtaining financial support from Trinity Industries,” says TTI Associate Director Katie Turnbull.

Members of the first Team Award will be honored again April 11.

Revisit the 2005 award winners:
http://ttinet.tamu.edu/ttipeople/employee_awards/2005_awards.stm
2. Child Seat Program Arrives in El Paso

TTI employee donations made their way to El Paso on Feb. 15 in the form of 24 child safety seats as part of National Child Passenger Safety Week. Families in need were given the free seats along with instruction on proper installation procedures to ensure maximum safety for their children. The El Paso event followed the Dec. 15 “check-up” in College Station. A total of 46 seats were purchased and distributed as a result of donations to this year’s TTI charity event.

“The El Paso ‘check-up’ was well-organized and well-attended,” said Research Engineer Russell Henk, chair of TTI’s Charity Committee. “Numerous comments centered on how smoothly everything went including the spirit of unity among all the different organizations and volunteers assembled for this worthwhile, heart-warming cause.”

TTI employees who traveled to El Paso included Henk and Research Associate Sandra Schoeneman. Assistant Research Scientist Rajat Rajbhandari, of the newly formed El Paso office, also attended. Agencies that helped with the event were Texas Department of Transportation, Department of Public Safety, El Paso Police Department Safe Communities Program and the El Paso Sheriff’s Department.

Read local coverage:

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3. Louise Students Inspired to End Teen Deaths

After two sophomores from Louise High School in Wharton County died in separate accidents this school year, teenagers from the small school district decided to launch a TTI-developed program called “Teens in the Driver Seat” in an effort to prevent similar tragedies. In a news conference/student assembly held Feb. 24, 12 team members announced the program to the rest of the student body. “We are trying to stop the number one killer of teenagers in America, and we are starting right here in Louise, Texas,” said 17-year-old Haley McNeill.

“Teens in the Driver Seat” is a peer-to-peer program, delivered by students who work to inform their classmates of the numerous distractions teenagers face behind the wheel. Research shows that driving at night, too many kids in the car and cell phone use are among the major causes of car crashes involving teen drivers.
Wharton County has had five teenagers die in car wrecks in recent months. The two crashes involving Louise students occurred with at least one of the major distraction factors—night-time driving and lots of teenaged passengers. Based on population, Wharton County’s teen death rate is 12 times the statewide average. In Louise, it’s 100 times the statewide average.

Read local coverage:

Visit Teens in the Driver Seat website:
http://www.t-driver.com/

4. TTI Hosts First Motorcycle Forum

Approximately 30 traffic safety professionals, including citizen motorcycle advocates, law enforcement educators and Federal and state motorcycle safety representatives attended the first Motorcycle Safety Forum at TTI on Feb. 16.

The meeting, hosted by the Center for Transportation Safety, encouraged participants to share expertise regarding the significance of the motorcycle safety problem and to discuss opportunities for improving motorcycle safety in Texas.

The event was organized by Associate Research Scientist Patricia Turner.

Full story:
http://ttinet.tamu.edu/news/docs/CTS_news.pdf

5. 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.

Traffic congestion in Florida (Miami Herald) Feb. 27
http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/living/13966042.htm

Highway anniversary (Star-Telegram) Feb. 27
Collins Visits TTI

TxDOT’s Research and Technology Implementation Office Director Rick Collins visited TTI on March 1. Collins oversees Research Management Committee (RMC) projects, and therefore works closely with TTI. One discussion focused on the need for the timely delivery of TTI materials. Collins reminded TTI leadership that researchers who submit required work on time will be eligible for future RMC projects.

At the close of his visit, Collins reviewed project materials produced by TTI Communications staff as examples of research implementation products.

Read Rick Collins bio:
http://tti.tamu.edu/inside/tti_council/collins.stm
7. Blood Drive

Generous TTI employees, who took part in the first blood drive of the year and the sixth since 2002, donated 33 pints of blood. Officials with the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center were thankful for the donations, especially since the region is experiencing a blood shortage.

Most of the people who attended the event are repeat donors. TTI organizers of the blood drive include Mary Cearley, Nancy Stratta, Linda Chatham and Lance Bullard.

Visit Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center website:
http://www.giveblood.org/index.htm


If you see fellow TTI employees donning sneakers and taking to the streets during their lunch hours, don’t offer them rides. They are on an 830 mile journey as they “Walk Across Texas!” About 50 employees are taking part in the program aimed at promoting physical activity.

“Walk Across Texas!” was started in 1996 by Texas Cooperative Extension. Eight-member teams try to accumulate 830 miles during the 8 week program, the distance from one end of Texas to another.

TTI team captains include Michelle Wright, Liz Holick, Linda Chatham, Carol Court, Heather Ford, Maria Medrona and Jeff Warner.

All attempts to reach the captains by phone failed. Office aides say they were not available as they were…. (See title).

Visit Walk Across Texas! Websites:
http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu/
http://www.brazoswat.com/
9. TTI Anniversaries

5 Years

Marty Boardman, Assistant Research Specialist (HMP)
Eun Sug Park, Assistant Research Scientist (AMA)

10 Years

Lisa Palmer, Senior Office Associate (GTS)

15 Years

Hassan Charara, Research Scientist (DTL)

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10. Editor’s Corner: What’s a Section 508?

You may have heard terms such as Section 508, electronic accessibility and Section 206 in relation to reports and other contract deliverables — and wondered what they meant. These terms refer to making electronic information available to the widest possible audience.

Electronic information generated through federal funds must be accessible to all users, whether hearing impaired, vision impaired or mobility impaired. State contracts may begin requiring electronic accessibility for deliverables soon. Many aspects of making electronic information compatible with assistive devices and accessible to disabled users benefit all users.

TTI Communications personnel maintain working knowledge of accessibility requirements set forth by Texas Administrative Code Section 206, the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508 of the federal Rehabilitation Act. For more information, go to:
http://ttinet.tamu.edu/training/web_development/508_standards/.
First steps to take regarding accessibility of deliverables include:

- During project concept and proposal, make sure you understand sponsor requirements and preferences. For documents, as an example, some sponsors accept accessible portable document file (PDF) formats, but others require hypertext markup language (HTML) coding.
- Determine how your project will incorporate accessibility tasks and allow appropriate funding and timelines to cover the tasks.
- If you include electronic accessibility in your proposal, explain related budget and timeline requirements.
- During the project, keep accessibility in mind from concept to ongoing maintenance when designing electronic deliverables of any kind.

For a brief discussion of accessibility related to report development, see TTI’s editorial guidelines (page 24) at http://ttinet.tamu.edu/communications/editing/TTIGuidelines.pdf. Contact Rhonda Brinkmann or Tobey Lindsey in TTI Communications for help with electronic accessibility of deliverables.