1. Emission Testing Puts TTI in the Spotlight

A new wave of leading-edge research is about to get underway for TTI thanks to a portable, accurate emission testing device acquired by the Institute’s Air Quality and Transportation Modeling programs. The device allows researchers to get an accurate assessment of emissions from any type of internal combustion engine in real-life settings. Up until recently, testing had to be performed only in the laboratory.

“The portability of this emission testing equipment means we can test a whole range of vehicles, anytime, anyplace,” says Dennis Perkinson, manager of the Transportation Modeling Program. “It will give us answers to numerous questions that we couldn’t really answer until now.”

Those questions include: What’s safer for the environment and our children, bio-diesel or low-sulfur diesel school busses? With suggested higher speed limits for the proposed Trans-Texas Corridor, are engine emissions better or worse at speeds above 70 miles per hour? Are Mexican company-owned trucks emitting more pollutants than U.S-owned trucks?

“We already have numerous research projects coming up because of this device and our track record in this field,” says Associate Research Engineer Joe Zietsman. “And we think it has the potential of opening the doors for a lot more research.”

TTI's Dennis Perkinson (left) and Ed Brackin talk to a company representative who stands over portable testing equipment.
At least one of the projects will include the use of the banked 9-mile oval track at the Pecos Research and Testing Center, which will accommodate vehicles at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour.

View local media coverage of portable emission testing equipment:
http://www.kbtx.com/home/headlines/2772851.html

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2. TTI Officially Opens El Paso Office

TTI has taken its long-standing commitment to the El Paso region to a higher level with the official opening of its newest full-time office in that city. Local and state leaders joined TTI officials on April 13 to welcome more than 60 guests to the Institute’s newest outpost, which also houses the Center for International Intelligent Transportation Research. State Senator Eliot Shapleigh of El Paso, who secured the funding to establish the new center, noted during the open house ceremony that TTI’s presence would help improve transportation not only for the West Texas region, but for cities all along the U.S.-Mexico border, as well.

“Free trade depends on the safe, smart and fast movement of people and products around the world, but especially across borders,” Shapleigh said. “Our new center will be a world leader in critical new technologies on how to make that happen.”

For more than a decade, TTI has performed a wide array of research and implementation tasks for TxDOT and other agencies, often in collaboration with faculty from The University of Texas at El Paso. TTI Director Herb Richardson noted that the new office and center would result in an even stronger commitment to efficient transportation in the region, along with training the next generation of transportation leaders. TTI will focus its El Paso-based efforts in three areas: transportation operations directed by Russell Henk, border crossing issues directed by Bill Stockton, and air quality issues led by Brian Bochner.

Joining Richardson and Shapleigh in marking the occasion were: Leo Sayavedra, A&M System Vice Chancellor; Barry Benedict, UT-El Paso
Dean of Engineering; and Ted Houghton, Texas Transportation Commission member.

Research Scientist Rafael Aldrete-Sanchez heads TTI’s El Paso office, located at 4050 Rio Bravo, Suite 151. The staff can be contacted at 915-532-3759.

Other’s from TTI who attended included Juan Villa, Ed Seymour, Brian Long, Kandis Salazar, Becca Simons, Steve Roop and Bernie Fette.

3. 2006 Hall of Honor Inductees

The names of the newest members of the Texas Transportation Hall of Honor have been announced. They are Gordon Bethune, former president and CEO of Continental Airlines; Thomas L. Johnson, Sr., executive vice president of The Associated General Contractors of Texas; Cyrus Smith, aviation pioneer and secretary of commerce under the Johnson Administration; and Texas railroad pioneer, John F. Strickland.

Times and locations of the four separate induction ceremonies will be announced at a later date.

To learn more about the Texas Transportation Hall of Honor and this year’s inductees, go to:
http://tti.tamu.edu/hall_of_honor/inductees.stm

4. Doin’ the Cross Town Shuffle

The process began last week with five TTI departments in the CE/TTI Building in College Station relocating off-campus to the Wells Fargo Plaza. Most of the groups will call the third floor of the bank building home until the new TTI transportation research building near the Gilchrist building is complete in a few years. TTI Administration will be located on the fifth floor of the Wells Fargo Plaza.
The relocation schedule is as follows:

- May 5-9       Business Office
- May 10-11   Director’s Office and Administration Office
- May 15-16   Human Resources
- May 17-18   Research Development
- May 22       Event Management and Planning

Please continue to send all mail for these departments to the official TTI campus mail stop 3135.

5. TTI Anniversaries

5 Years

Todd Hausman, Associate Research Specialist (FRD)
Jamie Rothe, Conference Coordinator (KGE)
John Wikander, Assistant Transportation Researcher (AUS)

15 Years

Darryl Puckett, Associate Research Scientist (HSP)

20 Years

Roger Bligh, Associate Research Engineer (CHS)

35 Years

Dennis Christiansen, Agency Deputy Director (ADM)

6. Bravo for Communicators

The TTI Communications employees responsible for the Texas Transportation Researcher magazine/newsletter and the Pecos Research and
Testing Center (RTC) brochure were recipients of Awards of Merit from the Brazos Valley Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). The annual honors are called Brazos Bravo Awards. The competition is judged by other IABC chapters from around the country. The Brazos Bravo awards gala, held April 27, recognized the best communicators in the Brazos Valley.

Receiving the award for their work on the RTC brochure were Rob Robideau, Chris Sasser, Vicky Nelson, Richard Cole and Jim Lyle. The Researcher staff award winners were Kelly West, Chris Sasser, Stacy Schnettler and Jim Lyle. “We have an exceptionally talented staff in our communications department,” TTI Deputy Director Dennis Christiansen told the winners. “You do a lot of things to make TTI look good on a regular basis. It is nice to see you get this kind of recognition for your hard work.”

7. TTI in the News

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

Outdated traffic lights (Kansas City Star) April 30

Public transit benefiting from high gas prices (WCVB-TV, Boston) April 27
http://www.thebostonchannel.com/consumer/9051987/detail.html

Synchronizing traffic (Orange County Register) April 27

Towing ordinance considered to clear roads (Austin American-Statesman) April 27

Congestion getting worse (The [Virginia] Free Lance Star) April 17
http://fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2006/042006/04172006/182939

Wrong-way drivers (Charlotte Observer) April 17

Congestion relief plan (Arizona Daily Star) April 16
http://www.azstarnet.com/metro/124819
8. Smooth Sailing for TxDOT Deliverables

Researchers and support staff who work on TxDOT Research Management Committee (RMC) projects have an opportunity to learn how to get written deliverables to TxDOT smoothly. The seminar titled Smooth Sailing: Getting Your TxDOT Deliverable Efficiently through Processing is scheduled for Tuesday, May 23, 2006.

For more information or to register for the seminar, email Rhonda Brinkmann.

9. “We Walked Across Texas, Now Let’s Eat”

They are resting comfortably now, and no serious injuries were reported as about 50 TTI employees completed their goals in the “Walk Across Texas!” exercise campaign. Whether individual members imagined they were prancing past Palestine or hopping over Helotes to accumulate their miles, many were rumored to have indulged in some sort of four-layered chocolate concoction at a local restaurant in a self-congratulatory culinary outing to gear up for next year’s event.

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

TTI team captains included Michelle Wright, Liz Holick, Linda Chatham, Carol Court, Heather Ford, Maria Medrano and Jeff Warner.
10. Support Staff Luncheon

The tradition of honoring TTI support staff across the Institute continued this year as about 50 employees attended a luncheon at Oxford Street Restaurant in Bryan. The celebration coincides with Administrative Professionals Day, formerly Secretary’s Day, occurring the last week of April.

At TTI, the support staff is honored every year alternating between luncheons and retreats. This year, support staff employees had no trouble choosing among three different entrees. The dilemma occurred at dessert time when a choice had to be made between the French Silk pie and cheesecake.

11. Engineer's Last Wish to Benefit A&M

The estate of a 40-year veteran of the Texas Highway Department (now TxDOT) has gifted $750,000 in multiple endowments for Texas A&M Engineering. Charles H. Barclay Jr., A&M class of 1945, was a civil engineer who retired in 1982 after 40 years with the Texas Highway Department.

Full story:
http://engineeringnews.tamu.edu/news/1324
12. Editor's Corner:
Share the drive – disc space, that is

You have options when it comes to transferring files to TTI Communications for editing, processing, or printing. Your choice of transfer method will depend on a variety of factors such as convenience, location, file size, and services requested. For example you can transfer files:

- by attaching them to email messages,
- sending them to COM on media such as CD, DVD, or thumb drive, or
- by storing them on TTI shared network drives and sending the location to COM.

For your convenience, and to avoid mailbox congestion, usually the most effective way to transfer files is via TTI shared network drives. To take advantage of this method most effectively, use the following practices.

Create a separate folder. Create a folder on your shared drive that contains only files for COM use. COM can access most folders in read-only mode, so your files are safe from accidental changes. We will copy the files we need to our own space and work with them there, leaving your files in their original condition.

Name your files clearly. Use a naming system that will be clear to others using the files. If the file contains a TxDOT RMC deliverable, we recommend that you include the deliverable number plus information to distinguish the file. Workable file names might be:

- 0-4160-1-apps.doc
- 0-4160-1-resubmittal.pdf
- 0-4160-1-foredit.doc
- 0-4160-1-Apr15-2006.pdf

Use correct file format. Make sure file formats match the services you need. Send a Word file for electronic edit or for project summary reports at all stages. Files for hardcopy edit or printing should be in portable document format (PDF). Remember to review your document for proper layout after producing your PDF.

Send an email message. Send an email message to TTI Reports (TTI_Reports@ttimail.tamu.edu) giving the exact location on your shared drive and instructions for the services you need. Include any special conditions, such as figures that need color or descriptions of multiple files.

NOTE: You can create a link to your folder by starting at TTI-SERVERS, working your way to the folder, and then copying/pasting the full pathname into your email message. If it doesn’t show up as a link, try this trick: add < before the filename and > with a space after the filename, and see if it converts to a...
Leave the folder in place. To ensure that we use the correct files for processing, please leave the folder and files intact until your request is complete.

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