1. Henk Named to Governor's Task Force

TTI Research Engineer Russell Henk has been named to the Governor’s Task Force on Evacuation Transportation and Logistics, joining 13 other prominent business and professional leaders from across Texas to tackle one of the most urgent needs facing the state. When Hurricane Rita threatened Texas soon after her devastating cousin Katrina hit New Orleans, Houstonians fled the city en masse. Every route out of the city was backed up as millions of people tried to leave at the same time. In response to these and other challenges, Governor Rick Perry, along with Houston Mayor Bill White and Harris County Judge Robert Eckels, announced his task force. It is chaired by Jack Little, the former CEO and president of Shell Oil Company.

“Being added to the Governor’s Task Force is a very pleasant surprise and privilege,” Henk says. “I'm really looking forward to being part of such a distinguished group of minds and talent, and contributing solutions for addressing this important issue for our state.” Henk, head of the Research and Implementation Division in TTI’s Traffic Operations Group, has extensive experience in traffic management and is responsible for the first hurricane contraflow evacuation plan adopted in TxDOT’s Corpus Christi District over five years ago.

Henk joins an impressive list of members on the evacuation task force, which includes several former mayors and CEOs. The committee has already conducted two public hearings and will hold four more in the coming weeks. The group will
2. Mark Stiles Honored

TTI Council Member Mark Stiles was this year’s recipient of the “Friend of TTI” award, presented Oct. 26. Stiles is senior vice president of Trinity Industries, a diversified industrial company. He’s also a former State Representative from Beaumont. As well as serving on the TTI Council, Stiles has been a huge supporter of TTI. The “Friend of TTI” honor was given to Stiles on the same day that numerous Trinity officials were touring various departments and meeting with research staff to get ideas about their own projects. (See Trinity Industries Comes to TTI, TAMU)

The wording on the 2005 “Friend of TTI” plaque reads, “In appreciation of longstanding support for transportation research and in recognition of outstanding leadership and significant contributions to transportation in Texas.”

Read Stiles’ bio: http://tti.tamu.edu/inside/tti%5Fcouncil/stiles.stm

3. TTI Goes West

The search is underway for office space, the paperwork is being prepared for hiring staff, and a number of TTI researchers are strengthening their ties with colleagues at the campus of the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). With these and other plans progressing on several fronts, TTI is a step closer to opening its newest urban office slated for El Paso.

The establishment of TTI-El Paso is the result of years of effort by a wide range of individuals. On the outside, State Senator Eliot Shapleigh has maintained for years that TTI should have a permanent place in his home city, and eventually he convinced his fellow legislators of that need. On the inside, it was TTI Associate Director Bill Stockton who laid much of the groundwork, along with Texas A&M University Assistant Vice Chancellor Cathy Reiley.
Initially, TTI’s research will focus on border crossing issues, air quality concerns, and traffic management strategies. Heading the research teams in these areas are Stockton, Senior Research Engineer Brian Bochner and Research Engineer Russell Henk. Henk, head of TTI’s Research and Implementation Division in the Traffic Operations Group, will also be responsible for overall leadership of the El Paso office.

4. DalTrans Groundbreaking

Staff members in TTI’s Dallas office reached another milestone of service in October when a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the future location of the DalTrans traffic management center. TTI has operated an office in Dallas to serve that rapidly growing area of the state since 1968, when the Federal Highway Administration selected TTI to develop one of the first integrated freeway and surface street control and management systems in the United States. After years of expansion and improvement, that system has become DalTrans, which now includes nearly 130 closed-circuit TV cameras, 32 dynamic message signs, a county-wide vehicle detection system, high-speed fiber optic communications and roving courtesy patrols.

Once finished, the new home for DalTrans on the grounds of the TxDOT Dallas District Office will house traffic management equipment that could help reduce travel delay and crashes by as much as 15 to 40 percent, based on TTI’s experience with other systems deployed around the country.

TTI’s long-term service to TxDOT was symbolized by the groundbreaking ceremony itself, in which TTI Senior Research Engineer Jim Carvell was one of only two featured speakers from outside the TxDOT ranks. Carvell was TTI’s on-site project engineer during implementation of the first Dallas freeway management system in early 1970s. Joining Carvell at the microphone that day were Mo Moabed, TxDOT Dallas District Director of Transportation Operations; Al Kosik, Director of TxDOT’s Traffic Management Section; Bill Hale, Dallas District Engineer, and Gary Thomas, President and Executive Director of Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART).

Posing for a photo at the DalTrans groundbreaking ceremony are (from L to R) TxDOT’s Mo Moabed, Bill Hale, State Representative Teri Hodge, Gary Thomas of DART, Al Kosik and TTI’s Jim Carvell.
5. Pecos RTC Gearing Up

Making a success out of a rattlesnake-and javelina-infested desert, located miles from civilization, would seem to be a lofty goal. In a meeting held in the Gilchrist Building Oct. 6, TTI researchers and staff heard plenty of ideas about just how to market the newly established Pecos Research and Testing Center (Pecos RTC) located 20 miles from its namesake town. Although the location is remote, it could be exactly what many sponsors need: plenty of room, secluded settings, no noise complaints and the ability of doing research year round.

TTI, Applied Research Associates (ARA) and the Pecos Economic Development Corporation (PEDC) recently wrapped up a two-year effort to form a unique collaboration establishing the center. The former tire-testing facility comes with 5,800 acres that include numerous tracks, oversized buildings with multiple vehicle bays and other facilities attractive for sponsors interested in research. According to Associate Research Engineer Lance Bullard, who will head the Pecos RTC, the success of the center depends on the efforts within TTI. “Having access to a facility of this type is truly unique and I hope our staff will give serious consideration to how the facility may be integrated into their respective fields of interest,” he said.

Deputy Director Dennis Christiansen told those attending the meeting that because of the unique relationship with a private company, the Texas Transportation Research Foundation (T2RF) was formed. Christiansen said that TTI has the opportunity to maximize use of the facility and acquire new research sponsors. He encouraged those attending the meeting to spread the word about the promising site now available in the desert of west Texas.

6. TTI Day

All Roads Lead to TTI. That’s the theme of this year’s TTI Day celebration, and you’re invited! Sue James is this year’s TTI Day Chairperson, and her illustrious team from all across TTI has put together a wonderful day of fun, information-sharing and camaraderie. You can find out more about TTI Day 2005 online on TTINet (http://ttinet.tamu.edu/mgmt_org/httiday/). There, you’ll also find news about the wonderful charitable project for this year, as well as TTI Day fliers that you can post at your location to let everyone save the date and plan to attend. Don’t forget to mark your calendar for Wednesday, Dec. 7th. Registration will close on Dec. 1, so be sure and register today!

And don’t forget to check out information on the web site about the TTI Day charitable project, which this year has a distinct transportation theme. With your help, TTI will be able to donate 40 new child safety seats for needy families. You
can join in this worthwhile effort by making a donation by check (payable to the Texas Transportation Institute) and sending it to Marie Ethridge in the TTI Business Office (808 CE/TTI), or you can submit donations by credit card online while registering for TTI Day. Credit card payments will not be accepted onsite. If you wish to donate at TTI Day, only checks/money orders will be accepted.

Registration:
https://ticc.tamu.edu/conferences/ttiday05/registration.stm

Learn more about this year’s TTI Day charitable project:
http://ttinet.tamu.edu/Mgmt_org/TTIDay/TTIDay2005_child_seat_project.stmtop

View TTI Day animation:
http://ttinet.tamu.edu/mgmt_org/ntiday/ntiday05_01_audio.html

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7. TTI Employment Anniversaries

15 YEARS

Jason Crawford, Associate Research Engineer (HUA), Oct. 18, 1993*

10 Years

Carol Coker, Technical Assistant II (TSR), Sept. 18, 1995
Dudley May, Construction Technician III (CEF), Dec. 4, 1995

5 Years

Robin Rabinowitz, Assistant Transportation Researcher (HAQ), Sept. 1, 2000

* combined with previous TTI service

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8. Trinity Industries Comes to TTI, TAMU

Continuing a venerable relationship with TTI, executives with Dallas-based Trinity Industries spent the entire day Oct. 26 touring our facilities and visiting with staff from both TTI and Texas A&M University. The Trinity officials, including nine presidents of various departments, described the company’s different product lines and outlined issues that would benefit from further research.

Several roadside safety devices developed by TTI are licensed and manufactured by Trinity. The company has supported the TTI Employee Awards Program for a number of years and recently made a $50,000 per-year commitment to sponsor the annual Research Champion Award Program.

The visit included meetings as well as the viewing of a crash test on the Riverside Campus, a reception in their honor and a dinner.

9. TTI Teams Up with U.S. Maritime Administration

TTI has teamed up with the U.S. Maritime Administration for the first time. A project designed to gather current figures that reflect the environmental impact of barge transportation versus other modes of transportation will be conducted through TTI’s Center for Ports & Waterways (CPW) in Houston. The project will be headed up by the director of the CPW, Jim Kruse.


Jim Kruse
TTI-CPW Director
10. Website Recognized

The Texas Department of Transportation’s Houston TranStar website, designed by Mike Vickich, Darrell Borchardt and Kathy Tran of TTI’s Houston office, has earned the prestigious Accenture and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Government Award. The TranStar website applies intelligent transportation systems technologies to provide real-time traffic information to thousands of Houston motorists each day. Now in its sixth year, the award is presented by Accenture, a global management consulting and technology services company, and the MIT Media Laboratory.

The award is designed to recognize exemplary performers in government innovation, honoring agencies and individuals who find new and better ways to apply technology. It was presented to the TranStar web team at Federal Office System Expo’s E-Town Awards Luncheon in Washington, D.C.

The Houston team's award adds to an already impressive list of honors for the TranStar website, including: the Top Traveler Information Website Award from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in 2001, 2002 and 2004; the Pathfinder Award for Quality Team Achievement from AASHTO in 2002; and the Award for Pioneering Mobile Access to Real-Time Traffic Information from the Intelligent Transportation Society of Texas in 2002. On a side note, Houston TranStar and TTI were highlighted in a prominent article in a recent issue of ITS International.

See website: http://www.houstontranstar.org

11. Research Champion Awards

For the second year, TTI is beginning the process of naming its Research Champion Award winner. The nomination process by TTI staff is now underway. Research Champion Awards are reserved for someone outside TTI, recognizing up to three individuals who provide significant contributions to advancing transportation research, technology transfer, implementation and professional development. The nominations are due to Associate Agency Director Katie Turnbull by Dec. 1.

Kirby Pickett, retired TxDOT deputy executive director, was the sole winner of the inaugural Research Champion Award last year. Pickett was recognized for enhancing and streamlining the TxDOT research program, establishing the Research Implementation Program and helping acquire TxDOT’s first U.S. Patent,
which covers the use of waste photocopier toner in asphalt cement.

As part of the award program, TTI will also recognize a Director’s Research Champion to be announced at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) conference in January. The Director’s Research Champion Award is not selected by nomination, but picked by TTI administrators.

Learn more about the award, nomination process:
http://ttinet.tamu.edu/mgmt_org/awards/research_sponsor_award.stm

date

12. Saving Lives at Work

Forty-four pints of blood were collected Oct. 27 as TTI conducted its fifth blood drive since 2002. Nine of those pints of blood came from first-time donors. Many people at TTI have given blood as a result of their relationship with researcher Roelof Engelbrecht, who was diagnosed with a rare disease that required a liver transplant. That’s when fellow employees organized the first blood drive.

TTI employees organizing the event were Mary Cearley, Nancy Stratta, Linda Chatham and Lance Bullard. An official with the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center says well over 200 lives have been saved as a result of TTI’s blood drives.

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TTI Mobility Analyst David Schrank is all smiles giving blood while Administrative Assistant Pam Rowe calmly waits her turn.

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