Welcome!

Welcome to the inaugural edition of TTI’s new electronic newsletter, CenterLine! This newsletter, which will be emailed to you every other week, is designed to keep everyone in TTI informed about all the latest news from across the institute. The newsletter will include new TTI initiatives, updates about ongoing activities, and news about our sponsors and legislative developments. It will also help us stay connected to each other by sharing information about our many cooperative endeavors taking place around TTI.

We’re going to need your help in making CenterLine the kind of informative and useful news vehicle we need it to be. I know you’ll want to help by submitting story ideas and information about what’s going on in your area. Items that will be considered for the newsletter include: noteworthy accomplishments like employee awards and TTI anniversaries, research projects, student activities and projects, new facilities or capabilities, and anything that will help us all feel more connected even though we’re spread across the state. We also want you to nominate TTI employees you think should be profiled either because of their significant accomplishments or their interesting jobs, hobbies or backgrounds. Your input is essential to the success of CenterLine, so please send suggestions to news@ttimail.tamu.edu or call Rick Davenport in TTI Communications at (979) 862-3763. Your comments are always helpful.

Welcome to CenterLine!
Herb

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2. Head of EPA Awards TTI $3 Million

The administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) came to Texas A&M Oct.11 awarding TTI a $3 million project in an effort to reduce emissions and fuel consumption from idling truck engines. In a news conference, Administrator Stephen Johnson announced the award, telling the crowd that more than half a million long haul trucks idle for extended periods every day, consuming over 2 billion gallons of fuel every year, wasting money and emitting airborne contaminants. “As a result of the project we will be able to reduce 125,000 tons of carbon dioxide, 3,000 tons of nitrogen oxides and 70 tons of particulate matter — helping us all to breathe a little easier,” Johnson said.

Associate Research Engineer Joe Zietsman is the Principal Investigator on the project. Senior Research Engineer Brian Bochner and Juan Villa, Associate Research Scientist are responsible for major tasks.

TTI’s project is one of five selected in the first round of the EPA’s SmartWay Transport Partnership. It is also the largest of the total $5 million package earmarked by Congress. TTI will use the funding to find locations to deploy engine idle reduction technology. The relatively new technology allows truckers to turn off their engines and hook up to systems that will operate the truck’s air conditioning, heating system and other comforts. More than 300 “truck stop electrification units” will be installed throughout the state.

The program is expected to increase the development and commercialization of idle reduction technology resulting in further fuel conservation and reduced emissions as use becomes more widespread.

Learn more about engine idle reduction technology:
http://tti.tamu.edu/cfaqs/projects/truck_idling_reduction/

Read EPA’s News Release:
http://yosemite.epa.gov/r6/press.nsf/name/SmartWayGrant
3. 79th Short Course Wraps Up

The 79th Annual Transportation Short Course was held on the Texas A&M University campus Oct. 11-12. The conference sponsored by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and TTI, offers transportation professionals from the public and private sectors opportunities to learn about the latest developments in transportation tools, techniques, technologies, policies and programs.

One of the central themes of this year’s opening session was the response of TxDOT employees in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. “More than 2.5 million people evacuated the Gulf Coast region,” said TxDOT Executive Director Michael Behrens. “Contra-flow (a one-way vehicle evacuation using northbound and southbound roads) was implemented in this area for the first time, and overall it was a success. We had TxDOT employees assisting in many ways, even providing gas out of portable containers on evacuation routes. I am very proud of the way TxDOT responded.”

TTI Director Herb Richardson spoke of the importance of a healthy transportation system during times of distress. “The past few weeks have vividly demonstrated how important our transportation infrastructure is to our well-being as we watched our citizens along the Gulf Coast evacuate.”

Other highlights of the opening session were speeches from the Texas Transportation Commissioners: Ted Houghton, Jr., Hope Andrade, John Johnson and Commission Chairman Ric Williamson. More than 2,500 attendees visited Short Course this year.
4. TTI Donates Computers and Hot Meals

The TTI TransLink Lab became “information central” for the Bryan Red Cross office, helping the organization keep track of the hundreds of Katrina evacuees who had applied for aide vouchers. Because the local Red Cross only has two computers, inputting data would have been difficult. TTI supplied the computers and most of the volunteers who wanted to lend a helping hand. **Shanna Yates** of TTI Administration was one of many from the institute glad to help. “I know that this database will help these families reconnect, and I’m thankful for that,” she said. The data will be used to track the evacuees to local addresses and phone numbers, determine how many of the children will be attending local schools, and help others find their missing relatives and friends.

Special thanks go out to TTI Chief Information Officer of Network Information Systems **Kassandra Agee-Letton** and Manager of Research Development **Susan Adams**. TTI volunteers from Riverside, Houston and San Antonio also played valuable roles.

Also, TTI joined the Texas Engineering Experiment Station (TEES) and Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) in donating three supper meals to the evacuees who stayed in the Reed Arena shelter. The evacuees were fed three meals per day, but the supper meal was often cold sandwiches. The agencies answered requests to have hot, quality meals delivered to the New Orleans evacuees. The meals came from local restaurants including Outback Steakhouse and Sloppy Joes, often at special rates.

Full Story: [http://ttinet.tamu.edu/news/#news3569](http://ttinet.tamu.edu/news/#news3569)

5. Edwards Helps to Bring Money Home

For 1974 Texas A&M University graduate and “Earl Rudder Outstanding Student” award winner U.S. Rep. Chet Edwards (D), a trip from Washington D.C. to Aggieland is very much a trip back home. Edwards, who lives in Waco, represents the 17th Congressional District in central Texas, which encompasses parts of Fort Worth, Waco and Bryan/College Station. Edwards spoke at a meeting of the Brazos Valley Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (BVITE) during his late August visit to TTI. He detailed the congressional mechanisms to fund highways and explained aspects of the nearly $10 million in earmarks he helped to secure for the Brazos Valley.

Full Story: [http://ttinet.tamu.edu/news/#news3569](http://ttinet.tamu.edu/news/#news3569)
6. TTI Gets a Share of $286 Billion Transportation Bill

After a record 11 extensions and years of wrangling with highway legislation, Congress has awarded TTI millions of dollars for various transportation-related projects, including public transportation research, an innovative rail shuttle project and improvements to a testing facility in West Texas. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) has earmarked funds for numerous projects associated with TTI.

Full Story: http://ttinet.tamu.edu/news/#news3571

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7. All Lanes Open at Pecos Testing Site

A unique public-private collaboration was born the last week of August when the final papers were signed creating the Southwest Center for Transportation Research and Testing. The 5,800 acre complex near Pecos in west Texas is an academic-industry-public collaboration among TTI, Applied Research Associates (ARA) and the Pecos Economic Development Corporation (PEDC).

TTI Deputy Director Dennis Christiansen said the innovative collaboration will create a first-class testing facility. “The Southwest Center provides us with an opportunity for developing work with new sponsors as well as being able to do more kinds of research and testing for traditional sponsors,” he said. Improvements have been made to the facility to accommodate researchers and on-site staff are available to assist with projects.


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8. 50-Year History Celebrated at Summit

Build it and they will come! Hundreds did come to the Eighth Annual Texas Transportation Summit for four days beginning Aug. 9 in Irving. Attendees work for cities, counties and chambers of commerce — and they wanted to know more about highways, mass transit, high-speed rail and a host of other key transportation topics vital to their areas. TTI Deputy Director Dennis Christiansen was a speaker for the opening session, helping to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Interstate Highway Act. Other TTI employees represented the institute at the summit and
provided information for other groups in attendance, including the Tex-21 organization and the Texas High Speed Rail Corporation. TTI serves as a major source of credible, objective information for such organizations. Others from TTI playing significant roles were Ed Seymour, Ginger Goodin, Tim Lomax, Katie Turnbull, Phillip Reeder, and Gary Thomas. Numerous politicians, transportation officials and other dignitaries were also guest speakers for the summit. The underlying focus was on the Interstate Highway Act anniversary and how the act transformed the nation. Here’s to the next 50 years!

Did you know?

- Twenty-two percent of all highway miles driven in the United States are in Texas even though the Lone Star State represents only 2 percent of the interstate system.
- An estimated 18,000 lives have been saved and 1.1 million injuries avoided in Texas since the inception of the interstate highway system.
- Frontage roads are called “feeder” roads in Houston, “service” roads in Dallas-Fort Worth, “access” roads in San Antonio and “gateway” roads in El Paso.

Learn more about the 50th highway anniversary:
http://tti.tamu.edu/interstate_anniversary/

Dennis Christiansen’s presentation:
http://tti.tamu.edu/interstate_anniversary/presentation/

9. Future TTI Researchers

Eight civil engineering students wrapped up 10 weeks of research work with their final student presentations July 27, in room 102 of the Gilchrist Building. All eight students were part of this year’s Undergraduate Transportation Engineering Fellows Program and were selected from 21 applicants from across the country who desired a chance to advance their education. In May, the students were paired with TTI researchers and were assigned duties on projects that included “Analysis of Noise Concerns Regarding Rumble Strips” and “Managed Lanes Traffic and Toll Revenue Study.” Steven Schrock, program coordinator and TTI assistant research engineer, says the program is in its 15th year and allows the undergraduates their first hands-on research duties. “It gives them a taste of what graduate life will be like,” he said. Four of the eight program participants were Texas A&M civil engineering students. The others came from universities across the country.
10. 38-Year Career Celebrated

After nearly four decades with TTI, transportation planning computer pioneer Charles Bell is going fishing…or whatever else suits his fancy. Bell started with TTI Feb. 1, 1967, after first being employed by Texas A&M. Speakers for Bell’s recent retirement party included Associate Agency Director Katie Turnbull and TTI Deputy Director Dennis Christiansen. Bell was instrumental in the design and implementation of computer programs used in travel demand modeling and air quality analysis. His last day with TTI is undetermined because the “Bell touch” is needed on one last project.

11. TTI Employment Anniversaries

10 Years

Omar Mata, Research Technician (GHO), Aug. 7, 1995
Paul Carlson, Operations and Design Division Head (FDV), Aug. 7, 1995
Jody Beckham, Gilchrist Building Assistant Proctor (SUP), July 17, 1995
Gary Lobaugh, Assistant Research Editor (HMP), July 19, 1995

5 Years

L.D. White, Assistant Research Specialist (HMP), Aug. 14, 2000
Curtis Morgan, Associate Transportation Researcher (HMP), Aug. 8, 2000
Edward Supulveda (HUA), Aug. 8, 2000
Rebecca Haug, Assistant Research Specialist (CEF), Aug. 7, 2000

12. Awards

Connie Dudek received the Transportation Education Council Best Innovation in Education Award from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). Dr. Dudek was recognized for his mentoring program called "Mentoring Activity Integrated into a Graduate Course."

Brian Bochner received the 2005 ITE Coordinating Council Special Award. Brian was recognized for his significant and sustained volunteer contributions to ITE
technical activities. He serves on various ITE technical committees and has authored several books, including *Smart Growth Transportation Guidelines: An ITE Proposed Recommended Practice*. The ITE Coordinating Council Special Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the ITE Coordinating Council Program. Selection for this special award is based primarily on the significance of the contributions made to the transportation engineering profession.

13. Pre-Short Course on the Golf Course

It was a perfect day for golf as 36 teams took to the links at Briarcrest Country Club in Bryan, Oct. 11 for the 38th Annual Gallaway Invitational. The event is named after Professor Bob Gallaway, a pioneer in the field of transportation research.

The team of TxDOT Executive Director Mike Behrens, Wayne Ramert, Steve Simmons and Dennis Warren shot the lowest net score of 46.75. Scott Marr, Hiten Parshottambhai, Kevin Schmuhl and Mike Taylor took top honors for lowest gross score with a 55.

The tournament organizers wish to extend thanks to all the sponsors who helped provide a generous sample of gifts, door prizes, and lunch and dinner for all golfers.