ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MESSAGE

We recently conducted an employee satisfaction survey in the Transportation Systems Division. Overall, the results of the survey were very positive. However, if there were not room for improvement, there would have been no reason to conduct the survey. I believe there are two issues that merit our attention.

The program managers in the Transportation Systems Division have been concerned about employee workload, and the survey confirms that this is an issue that merits further attention. Due to the fact that we are a contract research agency, we will always be faced with the likelihood of more work than staff as the alternative is undesirable for all of us. However, in recent times the Institute has been very successful in generating work which has led to less than desirable workload. We have been adding new staff to address the size of our program. More importantly, we have also been working on ways to better manage our proposal efforts on a division wide basis to avoid serious over commitments. Any additional ideas to address the workload issue can be forwarded to your program manager or me.

A second concern identified in the survey is that some of the support staff feel that their opinions only counted sometimes. This is certainly an area for improvement. We should always value the opinions of all our staff. I hope to see a significant improvement in this area over the next year!

The detailed results are available on TOG.TAMU.EDU, our new intranet home page discussed elsewhere in this newsletter. TOG is the new nickname for Transportation Operations Group.

Tom Urbanik

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

Gene Hawkins, Ana Vizcarra, and Dale Picha recently traveled to Laredo, Texas. While there, they were accompanied by Terry Carson of the TxDOT Laredo District and had an opportunity to view traffic operations and traffic control devices at Laredo’s two international port crossings (and you thought congestion in Houston was bad!). As part of Project 0-1274, field studies will be conducted in Laredo in April at these port crossings. The group also traveled into Nuevo Laredo, Tamulipas (Mexico) to see a very different perspective on traffic control (e.g., stop signs at signalized intersections). The primary objective of the trip, however, was to attend an Advisory Panel Meeting at the Laredo District Office. Attending the meeting were representatives from the TxDOT border districts, TxDOT Traffic Operations Division, and UT-Pan American, as well as representatives from US Customs, City of Laredo, City of Nuevo Laredo, and other state and federal government representatives from Ciudad de Victoria, Reynosa, and Mexico City. Many thanks to Ana for her translation abilities.

Gene Hawkins and Ivan Lorenz traveled to Paris, Texas on March 24-26 to teach a course on the design and placement of rural guide signs to TxDOT engineers and sign crew technicians. The course is part of project 0-1373, in which TTI is developing a field manual on rural guide signs.

Dan and Michelle Walker have built a house in Steep Hollow, and they will be moving in this Easter. Congratulations on your new home and welcome to the wonderful world of do-it-yourself maintenance.

CALENDAR MARKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 1</td>
<td>Proposals due to TxDOT</td>
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<td>Apr 1-2</td>
<td>TTI Council, College Station</td>
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<td>Apr 6</td>
<td>Daylight Savings Time Begins</td>
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<td>Apr 7-8</td>
<td>Highway-Rail Traffic Signal Integration Training Course, Rm 217</td>
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<td>May 2-7</td>
<td>Finals</td>
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<td>May 9-10</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
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<td>May 11</td>
<td>Mothers Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 16</td>
<td>Transportation Systems Division Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun 2</td>
<td>Summer Semester Begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun 2-6</td>
<td>RMC Spring Meeting, Arlington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun 2-5</td>
<td>ITS America, 7th Annual Meeting</td>
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<td>Jun 15</td>
<td>Washington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun 17</td>
<td>Fathers Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Video for Traffic Management Workshop, ITEC Conference Room, 707 Texas Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul 4</td>
<td>Independence Day (Holiday)</td>
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<td>Aug 3-6</td>
<td>ITE Annual Meeting, Boston</td>
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<td>Oct 13-15</td>
<td>TxDOT Transportation Conference, Rudder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 14-18</td>
<td>AASHTO Annual Meeting, Salt Lake</td>
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<td>Nov 27-28</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 11-15</td>
<td>TRB Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.</td>
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GREAT DISCOVERIES

One of the great discoveries that a man makes, one of his great surprises, is to find he can do what he was afraid he couldn’t do.

Henry Ford
TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS GROUP
INTRANET SITE

You see him in the office next to you. You know he is a new student worker, or, at least you think he is a new student worker. How to find out without embarrassing yourself.

You have to make a presentation, but, you don't trust the sponsoring organization to provide you a working slide projector. So your solution is to borrow a slide projector from TTI. Surely, someone within TTI has a slide projector that you could borrow.

Answers to both of these questions and more can be found on the Transportation Operations Group (TOG) INTRANET Site (address: http://tog.tamu.edu). The information contained on these pages has been developed for the internal use of members of the Transportation Systems Division and the Traffic Operations Division. A concentrated effort has been occurring in the past few months to update and expand our INTRANET site. The team responsible for the site has been identifying the types of information that is appropriate for the site, gathering the information (including taking pictures of each member of the Transportation Systems Division personnel), examining how best to organize the data, and developing a new style to achieve consistency across all pages included within the site. A summary of the information contained on the web site follows:

What's New:- Gives you information about the latest updates to the TOG web pages, and announces new information that is available and where it can be found.

Calendar:- Provides a list of dates. A regular look at the TOG calendar should help you keep abreast of events at TTI, and other transportation-related happenings.

Who's Who:- Contains a comprehensive personnel directory for all members of the Transportation Systems Division — picture, title, phone number, professional affiliations, areas of expertise, and more. Take a look around and see just who that smiling face in the next office really is!

Resources:- Includes information on data collection equipment in TOG, multimedia resources in the Transportation Systems Division (including who has a slide projector you can borrow), and information on the professional development library.

Research:- Includes information on previous and current project information, proposals, etc. Browsing this area of the site can help you write smarter proposals!

Interchange:- Stores all of TOG's newsletter. Not only can you browse the latest edition, but we've also stored all those back issues so that you don't have to!

Other Sites:- Provides links to other web-sites with transportation-related info or just plain interesting stuff on the Net.

Contents:- Navigate your way around the site with a listing of what's available in each section.

If you have any comments concerning the web site, please contact Kay Fitzpatrick (suggestions on material to add (or remove) from the site) and Bob Brydia (format, structure, and maintenance). Other members of the team include Beth Neilson, Lyla Pallan, Renu Isaac, and Kwok-Yam Tam.

Kay Fitzpatrick

VIDEO TRAILERS

The Division has two identical video trailers available for use by researchers. Each trailer has a camera with a pan/tilt mounted atop a 30 foot telescoping mast which raises from the center of the trailer. The trailers can be towed by any full-size vehicle with a 2 inch ball hitch, but it must also have a four pin connector for lights and signals. The availability of the trailers is posted in Ontime.

Scheduling may be made through Dan Walker at 845-1718. If he is unavailable, please contact Dwayne Morris at 845-7539. Each user will be responsible for maintenance while in possession of a trailer. The trailers may only be used by TTI employees.

ONTIME CONVENIENCE

OnTime is not just for personal schedules! It also includes current reservation status for conference rooms and some equipment. Before making your plans, check out OnTime to see if your choice is available, and then contact the appropriate person that is in charge of scheduling that item for reservations. Most of the schedules currently appear at the bottom of the user list for OnTime. If you do not have OnTime on your computer and would like it added, please E-mail Support.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>Video Trailers</td>
<td>Dan Walker, Dwayne Morris</td>
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<td>217</td>
<td>Becca Simons</td>
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<tr>
<td>304F</td>
<td>Sandra Schoeneman</td>
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<td>405Q</td>
<td>Bonnie Duke</td>
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<td>411C</td>
<td>Natilie Johnson, Beth Neilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>801C</td>
<td>Becca Simons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DEFINITIONS

Bore: Someone who's wasting valuable meeting time that you had intended to waste yourself.

Concept: An idea presented to 3 or more people.

Advanced Concept: An idea presented to 3 or more people using overheads.

Federal Express: The company that made it unnecessary to do anything before 3 o'clock.
TRANSPORTATION TRIVIA
Here are the answers to last month's trivia:

English colonists build Jamestown, their first permanent settlement in the New World, along the James River.

The two cities where the Great Lakes link with the Mississippi River system are Chicago, Illinois and Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Grand Coulee Dam, the largest hydroelectric power plant in the U.S., is located on the Columbia River in Washington.

How did you do? This month’s trivia is name that state:
Name the Empire State
Name the Beaver State
Name the Volunteer State
Name the Evergreen State
Name the Keystone State

Good luck. Look for the answers next month.

Look for the answers in next month’s interchange.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!
Apr 3       Michael Dixon
Apr 4       Carroll Messer
Apr 6       Kelly Quy
Apr 10      Hassan Charara
Apr 12      Marc Hustad
Apr 14      Keith Knapp
Apr 17      Marc Jacobson
Apr 20      Rhett Gordon
Apr 25      Kerry Williams
Apr 26      Beth Neilson
Apr 26      Kevin Balke
Apr 30      Danny Morris
May 1       Monye Brookover
May 6       Michael Thomadakis
May 8       Wesley McClure
May 10      Bob Brydia
May 15      Dwayne Morris
May 15      Kelly Blume
May 15      Jim Carvell
May 16      Steve Venglar
May 18      Terry Ogle
May 19      Joseph Koothrappally

TIP OF THE MONTH
If you have problems with long Windows 95 filenames in copying to the network drive or floppies, try first compressing the files using WINZIP. Make sure that the zip file is named with a short (8.3) filename. Then copy just the zipped file. Where have you been lately?

Type about:global in the web-browser Location edit-box. A complete record of all the visits you made before you cleared your History links will be given to you by the browser.

INTERESTING WEB-SITES
www.windows95.com: Download a great collection of Windows-95 software.

QUESTIONS
What is a cookie?

Some web-browsers provide requested information *to* the sites you visit *without your intervention*. For example, when you visit www.yahoo.com, that site may record a 'cookie' on a file called cookies.txt in your hard-drive. On a later visit, this information can later be send back to the site to inform them about your previous visit (or some other information). If you feel this is a privacy intrusion, you can always opt to be warned before a record or transfer of a cookie using the Preferences option in your browser. Cookies are not necessarily a bad idea since it can help some sites customize the information that is presented to you based on your interests and browsing patterns. Try to view the cookies.txt (to find it, use the Search Files option available in your file manager) in your hard-drive to get a feel for the type of information that is exchanged with the sites you visit.

QUIZ-TIME
This month's questions:

1. What does the term VRML stand for?

Last month's question(s):
1. HTML is a subset of which language? (The answer is not English :-)). SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language).

2. What does MIME stand for?

(Questions, comments, and answers should be sent to DeborahJasek@TRA@TTI )

PREVIOUS INFOBYTE ISSUES
If you are interested in previous issues of InfoBytes, they and the current issue can be found at http://herman.tamu.edu/~josephk/infobytes.html.

JOSEPH KOOTHRAPPALLY@TRA@TTI