INTERCHANGE
Transportation Operations Group Texas Transportation Institute
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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MESSAGE

I would like to emphasize some important points about the new TOG organizational structure. The structure is largely administrative in nature. It does not really define who we are, but facilitates making our group work as a team. The number of programs has been reduced slightly to hopefully streamline the administrative process. The addition of a third division is to improve the overall group leadership by involving more individuals in the overall administration and leadership of the group.

More important than the administrative structure, is the technical leadership of our group. We will be adding another dimension, technical leadership, to how we think about who we are. We are an organization of technical experts which vastly exceeds our ability to recognize them by creating a new program. Instead, we will streamline our administrative structure and put more emphasis on our technical expertise and leadership. We will recognize and reward those who become leaders in their technical specialty. It is important to realize that although this message focuses on our researchers, it is also important that our support staff seek technical expertise in what they do. Processing vouchers without mistakes should be a goal. Having the best visual aids in the transportation profession should be another goal. Having the best field data is essential to our research. So we must also continue to recognize and reward all our staff. (Have you been thinking about nominating someone for the upcoming TTI awards?)

Let me give a few examples of technical leadership. Roelof Engelbrecht is nationally known for his work and innovation with hardware in the loop simulation. It would be impractical and unwise to have a “Hardware in the Loop Simulation Program,” yet Roelof’s efforts should be recognized and rewarded for his technical leadership. Jerry Ullman, a program manager, is also representative of someone who has areas of technical leadership. One example of Jerry’s technical expertise would be “lane control signals” which are used in several Texas cities. Jerry knows more about this subject than anyone, yet it is not the basis of creating a new program in our administrative structure. Ed Seymour, a division head, also has a leadership role in the National Transportation Communications for ITS Protocol work has provide national leadership in this area. There are many more examples, I just picked a few to illustrate the difference between our administrative structure and our technical expertise. We will be discussing and testing new ideas to raise the importance of technical leadership to a higher level in TOG. Ideas include developing some technical councils to meet and discuss important issues. Perhaps developing a young researchers group to discuss and implement necessary professional development efforts so that our newest staff can grow into technical leadership positions. If you have ideas, please discuss with your supervisor, your mentor (the subject of a future discussion), or me.

The future for TOG is extremely bright. Each of us should strive to make the group even better.

Tom Urbanik

CALENDAR MARKS

Aug 9-10 2nd Summer Term/10 Week Term Finals
Aug 10 Semi-Annual Reports due to RDO
Aug 16-18 Moving Days
Aug 13-14 Summer Commencement
Aug 27 LBJ Birthday (TxDOT holiday minimal staffing)
Aug 30 Fall Classes Begin
Aug 30 TxDOT Reports due to ITEC
Aug 30 End of Fiscal Year (State)
Sep 6 Labor Day (TxDOT holiday)
Sep 15-16 ITS Texas Incident Management Specialty Conference, Dallas (tentative)
Sep 20 Yom Kippur (Optional TxDOT holiday)
Sep 22 Autumn Begins
Sep 30 End of Fiscal Year (Federal)
Oct 1 Applications for PTOE Certification Due
Oct 7 TAMU Academic Convocation, Rudder Auditorium
Oct 11-13 Transportation Conference, MSC
Oct 17-19 Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Conference, College Station
Oct 31 Daylight Savings Time begins
Nov 2 Election Day
Nov 6 PTOE Certification, Arlington
Nov 11 New TTI Research Building Dedication
Nov 11 Veterans Day
Nov 17 TransLink® Partners Meeting
Nov 24 Bonfire
Nov 25-26 Thanksgiving Holidays

TOG’s Mission
To facilitate innovations in transportation system operations which promote implementation of a safer, more effective, more efficient, and sustainable transportation system through leadership in research, education, and technology transfer.
NEW TOG WEB PAGES

The Intranet web site for the Transportation Operations group (http://tog.tamu.edu) is changing. These changes consist of a new look, easier navigation, and improved coverage of news for TOG staff.

The goal of the new site is to provide up-to-date information and useful tools for researchers and staff. Changes will include use of new technology to update content automatically. Improvements to external sites are forthcoming, and people should check http://dev-tog.tamu.edu periodically to see what's new and in pre-release.

The dev-tog site also provides information about good web page design for those who want to create their own pages. Included is a table of comparisons among internal and external transportation sites. People can use this table to rate appearance and functionality. Paul Davis, the TOG Webmaster, welcomes helpful comments and suggestions during this upgrade process.

NOTES FROM THE CPD

1999 Summer Transportation Institute Near Completion

TTI, in partnership with Texas A&M University (TAMU), Texas Southern University (TSU) in Houston and Paul Quinn College (PQC) in Dallas, sponsored a Summer Transportation Institute to promote transportation as a viable career option to the youth of Texas. Twenty-four Houston high school students attended the 2-week institute on the TSU Campus. On July 13th the students visited the TAMU campus and learned about TTI. A graduation ceremony was held on July 16th at TSU, and the Guest Speaker was Ms. Kelley S. Coyner, Administrator of the Research and Special Programs Administration of U.S. DOT.

Approximately 12 high school students from Dallas completed the 2-week institute on the PQC Campus. A graduation ceremony for the Dallas students will feature Mr. Lee Waddleton, Regional Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration. Look for a special Center newsletter devoted to the STI and read what the Dallas students have to say about the program at the following URL: http://www.pqc.edu/sti.

SWTA Workshop

The Center is sponsoring a 1/2 day workshop in conjunction with the Southwest Transit Association's Marketing Seminar that will take place in New Orleans on August 22-25. The Transit and Schools Workshop will most likely be on August 23rd. The workshop will provide information on exemplary public transit system programs and projects that target schools and to prepare a directory of school project contacts at each transit property to encourage networking and a continual exchange of ideas and information.

ITS Standards Workshop

The Center is helping organize a Workshop on Outreach, Education, and Training for ITS Architecture and Standards, to be held on August 24-25, in the Washington, D.C. area. Sponsored by ITE, workshop will solicit insight from the user community on a variety of topics related to the development of a Work Plan for ITS Architecture and ITS standards outreach, training, and education. Workshop participants will assist ITE and other Standards Development Organizations (SDOs) in determining appropriate target audiences that can benefit from training and education, the most effective delivery methods for conveying information and developing critical skills, and the content that is critically needed to facilitate the deployment of ITS.

As always for more information on these topics please contact Beverly Kuhn at (512) 467-0946 or by e-mail at b-kuhn@tamu.edu.

Beverly Kuhn

CHRIS, YOU WILL BE MISSED!

As you know, Chris Poe has decided to leave us and accept a new challenge by opening an office for PB Farradyne in Dallas. Chris has worked for TTI for over 10 years in a couple of assignments. For the last few years he has lead a team of TTI researchers in the establishment of the TransLink Research Center. Now we could get all sappy about missing Chris, which we most definitely will, but instead we decided it may be appropriate to remember the fun times with Chris.

When TOG and TransLink members (who shall remain nameless) were asked about the things they would fondly remember and things they would miss the most about Chris, we got some surprising answers! Here are a few of their comments:

- Coffee and Coke stains on papers that crossed Chris's desk.
- No more filling out travel request forms after the trip is completed (Please note that this was not said by Natilie).
- Office with no walkspace due to papers on floor.
- Watching Chris devise clever ways of snitching candy from the bowl on Natilie's desk.
- Periodic email that says "Hey...who has my such and such publication?"
- Discussions between Chris and Tom about American Airlines service.
- Watching Chris dart from place to place at warp speed. It has been hypothesized that this may be due to the copious amounts of Starbucks coffee he consumes.
- Bumming change from the secretaries to feed his caffeine habit.
- Chris's team approach and "let's get it done" attitude.
- Ongoing discussions between Jerry and Chris about the legacy of "Pork Chop" and "Lobster Boy."
- Listening to Debbie and Chris discuss their eccentric neighborhood and neighbors.
- Needless to say Chris, you will be missed and we wish you happiness and all the very best life has to offer!!

You are invited to comment on this story. Click the box below to submit your comment.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NOTES

Recently, Chris Pierce enrolled in a three-day course titled Traffic Engineering Basics offered by TEEX. Here is a review of the course by Chris.

The course was taught at the Mesquite office of TEEX. Overall, it was a basic course on the disciplines of traffic engineering such as vehicle and traffic characteristics, traffic studies, highway capacity, and accident data analysis. Geometric design and tort liability were also briefly discussed. Taking the class allowed me to refresh what I knew about traffic engineering and also enabled me to learn more about the basics of traffic engineering. Many real-world examples were given during the class by the participants, which allowed thorough discussions about those areas to take place. As for the persons who might want to consider taking this course, I would recommend anyone just coming into the traffic engineering field or those that need a refresher course on the basic ideas of traffic engineering.

Chris Pierce

HELLO AND GOODBYE!

Hello and Welcome

Elizabeth Post (Liz) has joined the DTM Program as Secretary. Elizabeth comes to TTI from Scott and White. In addition to beginning a new job, Elizabeth received the good news of a new addition to her family. The little one will arrive in March. Welcome to the group and Congratulations!

Karl Zimmerman has joined DDO and is starting his Ph.D. program. Karl has a bachelor's degree from the University of Oklahoma and a master's degree from the University of Nebraska. He's worked for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation since January 1997. Welcome Karl!

Uhura Davis is a new student worker in the Dallas office. She is a student at Richland College, which is about a mile north of the Dallas Office. Welcome Uhura!

Goodbye and Best Wishes

The DTM Program wishes a fond farewell to Sherry Burr. Sherry had been with the program for one year. Sherry took a position with Technology Licensing Office as a Staff Assistant. The program as well as everyone in TOG wishes her well in her new position.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Kerry Williams of the Dallas Office who was married to Carlton Brown (an Aggie of course) on July 25th on a mountainside in Lake Tahoe. Best wishes to Kerry and Carlton from all of us!

At the June TexiTE meeting in Corpus Christi, Melissa Finley received the 1999 TexiTE Student Paper Award. Melissa wrote the paper for the Texas A&M graduate course, Advanced Surface Transportation Systems. The paper was titled "In-vehicle Information Systems for Commercial Vehicle Operations (CVO)." Gerald Ullman, Nada Trout, and Brooke Durkop from DTM were there to congratulate her. Way to go, Melissa!

Congratulations are also in order for Paul Carlson. Paul passed his Ph.D. prelims in June and his PE exam in July. Congratulations Paul!

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

Brooke Durkop, a Graduate Student from the DTM Program, has accepted a job in the Houston TTI Office working for Gene Goolsby as an Assistant Transportation Researcher. Brooke is planning on finishing her thesis titled "Texas Driver Comprehension of Abbreviations For Changeable Message Signs" in August. She will start in Houston in September after a brief trip home in Michigan.

Gerald Ullman recently traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in the Board of Advisors of the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse meeting.

Chris Pierce of the Dallas Office will begin working on his Master's Degree in Transportation Engineering at the UT Arlington this Fall.

Conrad dudek, along with Liz Post, are busy getting ready for the 1999 Advanced Surface Transportation System Program meeting scheduled for July 29 - 31, 1999. This Mentors Program provides students with unique learning experiences. The mentors, who are leaders in their field and have extensive experience are:

- Tom Hicks, Director of the Office of Traffic and Safety for the Maryland State Highway Administration;
- Pat Irwin, Director of Transportation Operations in the San Antonio District for the Texas Department of Transportation;
- Wayne Kittelson, Principal transportation consultant from Kittelson & Associates, Inc.;
- Doug Robertson, Vice President and Regional Operations Manager for SAIC's Transportation Consulting Group;
- Bill Speitzer, Retired from General Motors in January 1998 as Technical Direction, General Motors ITS Program; and
- Carol Zimmerman, ITS Program Manager for Battelle Memorial Institute's Washington DC, office.

Students that will be making presentations this year are: Luke P. Albert, Scott P. Booth, Marcus A. Brewer, Debbie Burdette, Randy Carroll, R. Matthew Estes, Scott R. Harry, Kevin Hoppers, Renee Hulett, Jacqueline Jenkins, and Jonathan K. Lammert. In addition, there will be seventeen students and faculty members from University of Texas at Austin, Texas Southern University, Prairie View A&M University, Texas A&M University, and the University of Delaware.
Jim Carvell recently hosted a day of the Summer Transportation Institute students in Dallas. He arranged for a tour of the TxDOT Freeway Management Center; a visit to a consulting engineering company (Kimley-Horn); and a briefing by three young engineers from the Dallas District on careers in TxDOT. Jim also gave a presentation on the history of transportation and an exercise on transportation resources on the Internet. Beverly Kuhn was the STI Project Coordinator for the two week plunge into all aspects of transportation for the high school student participants.

Jim Bonneson and Dan Fambro attended the mid-year meeting of TRB's Highway Capacity and Quality of Service Committee in Irvine, California, July 6-10. The committee approved the 33 draft chapters in the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual for publication in January of next year. Jim and Dan also took in an Angels-Mariners game and experienced Los Angeles freeway congestion up close and personal.

Srinivasa Sunkari recently had a great three week trip to India. Enroute to India he also spent about 4 days in France, two days in Paris and two days on the Riviera. Srinivasa then came home, closed on a house and moved in this month. Talk about busy!

Roelof Engelbrecht is a prime candidate for the busiest guy in July! On July 11 - 12 he attended the TRB Traffic Signal Systems Committee meeting and Transit Signal Priority Workshop in Bloomington, Minnesota, home of the Mall of America. Issues discussed in the Transit Signal Priority Workshop included: the goals and objectives of providing priority to transit vehicles; the state-of-the-practice in transit priority; algorithm and standard development; and research needs.

Roelof was back in College Station on July 13 for the Summer Transportation Institute's visit hosted by Beverly Kuhn. He gave a presentation titled "Behind the scenes: Traffic control" to the 20 or so high school students attending. The presentation gave them some information on traffic signal timing and the design of lane layout at an intersection. The students divided into groups and designed their own traffic signal timing and lane layout for a hypothetical intersection. Roelof then used a traffic simulation model to evaluate the group's designs. He also created a graphical animation of the traffic operation which he played back to the students. They had lots of fun identifying operational failures in each other's designs, and learned something in the process as well. The session was taped by Marilyn Martell for Homefront News and has been airing recently on CNN Headline News (TCA Channel 13). Roelof would like to thank Chris Poe and Bob Brydia for helping out with the groups.

Roelof was back on the road on July 21 - 23 for the ITS America Highway-Rail Intersection Standards Workshop in Arlington, Virginia. The workshop, sponsored by the Federal Railroad Administration and the U.S. DOT ITS Joint Program Office, brought together rail, highway, standards development, and other private and public sector interests to initiate the standards development process for ITS in the Highway-Rail intersection.

On July 27 Roelof traveled to Dallas, where another Summer Transportation Institute was held at Paul Quinn College. Roelof again gave the "Behind the scenes: Traffic control" presentation, after which the 9 students attending designed their own signal timing and lane layout. As in College Station, much fun was had by all.

To end this busy month Roelof will be attending the ITE Annual Meeting in Las Vegas August 1 - 4. However, he and his wife Loela are leaving July 29 for Las Vegas for a few days vacation before the ITE conference starts. They are planning to visit Hoover Dam as well as the Bryce and Zion canyons in Utah.

Debbie Jasek was recently recognized for her efforts in documenting African-American education in College Station by the Lincoln School Former Students Association. Lincoln School was the African-American school in College Station until 1967 and is now the home to Lincoln Center. Debbie's efforts led to the placement of a historic site marker at Lincoln Center.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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### DEEP THOUGHTS

If a parsley farmer is sued, do they garnish his wages? Should a wingless fly be called a walk? Why do they lock gas station bathrooms? Are they worried someone will clean them? Is a shell-less turtle homeless or just naked? Can a vegetarian eat animal crackers?