ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

As the research process continues to evolve and improve, it has also become more competitive. One of TTI's strengths is its competitive ability. This strength comes from an understanding of the process and the needs of the funding agencies. I would like to discuss the process and some key issues in order that our staff can continue to focus on some of the critical issues in the future.

The figure below represents my summary of the critical parts of the research process. My thoughts continue to be refined as I discuss this with others, so I am always interested in feedback. Some of the key issues represented in the figure include the on-going nature of the process, the need to interact with the user community and other researchers, the possibility of not finding a solution, and the need for the process to produce useful products from time to time.

The process typically begins with the identification of a problem. This may take many forms including the TxDOT project statement process, and the NCHRP research process. The identification of researchable problems should be part of every researcher's interaction with the user community, because the user community is the one that funds research. Without funding, there is no research.

The research project must be conducted in a more collaborative process than the past. This collaboration includes working with various members of the user community and other researchers. This collaboration can take place in many ways. It may involve workshops to share research progress, presentations at professional organizations, or meetings with the user community at their place of business during the course of research in order to better understand the user community's needs. This process produces useful feedback in the form of experiences and ideas. This helps avoid reinventing the wheel as well as providing other ideas on how to solve the problem. I firmly believe that the more folks who work on a problem, the better the resulting solution. Since it is not usually possible to fund a large research team with project funding, engaging the user and research community is a means of getting others to help with your solution without having them on the project team.

As somewhat of an aside, I would like to congratulate our researchers on the success we had with TRB papers. TOG had 19 of 43 persons “pre-qualified” to attend TRB. That is an outstanding showing. However, we have an opportunity to improve in other forums such as ITS America, ITE, and TexITE. We must include these other forums in our process of interacting with the user community and other researchers. In the past, funding for such meetings has been extremely limited. We now have additional funds to support such activities and I encourage you to submit papers to other national organizations in addition to TRB.

Research reports have been the primary “deliverable” for research projects. This is often the item that is most measured. Is the report on time? Is it free from grammatical errors? Etc., etc., etc. Unfortunately, research reports are NOT the most important research product, in most cases. Research reports are documentation of efforts undertaken in most cases. They therefore contain much extraneous information from a user's perspective. Furthermore, when the research does not lead to any significant finding, the results are further

(Continued on page 2)

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.
In summary, I believe we need to improve our focus on true research products. We must do a better job of explaining how research can be successful; yet produce “no answer” to the problem. Lastly, we must engage the user community and other researchers even more actively than we have in the past. We have a lot to be proud of regarding our efforts. In order to stay at the forefront, we must continually get better.

Tom Urbanik

TTI PRESENTED AWARD

At the ITS Texas Business Luncheon in November, TTI received an award for its work in the ITS Arena. The award reads as follows:

The Intelligent Transportation Society of Texas Board of Directors and Membership is pleased to honor the Texas Transportation Institute for the opening of the TransLink® Research Laboratory in recognition of outstanding leadership in planning, design and deployment of Intelligent Transportation Systems. This award presented by the President of ITS Texas at the annual meeting, November 19, 1999.

The plaque was presented to Dr. Christianson and Kevin Balke. It is anticipated that the plaque will be placed in the Laboratory next to the Partnership Agreement.

CALENDAR MARKS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>Chanukah begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
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<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>TTI Day, Brazos Center</td>
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<td>Dec 9</td>
<td>TxDOT Research Implementation Meeting, Houston</td>
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<td>Dec 9</td>
<td>Ramadan begins</td>
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<td>Dec 10-15</td>
<td>Final Exams</td>
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<td>Dec 17-18</td>
<td>Graduation Ceremonies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 21</td>
<td>Winter Begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 23-Jan 2</td>
<td>Holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 9-13</td>
<td>79th Annual Meeting of TRB, Washington, D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Holiday</td>
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<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>Spring Semester begins</td>
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HAVE A HAPPY and
SAFE HOLIDAY
TRANSLINK® PARTNERS’ MEETING AND LAB DEDICATION A SUCCESS!!

TransLink® held its semi-annual Partners’ Meeting on November 17th. Representatives from FHWA, TxDOT, and Houston METRO attended the meeting. At the meeting, Bob Brydia, Roelof Engelbrecht and Leonard Ruback, led the Partners on a personal tour of the new TransLink® Laboratory in the Gilchrist Building. After the tour, TransLink® researchers made the following presentations summarizing the results of their research efforts:

- **ITS Data and Traffic Microsimulation** by Larry Rilett
- **Measuring System Performance** by Shawn Turner
- **Framework for Evaluating Advance Controller Features and Technologies** by Roelof Engelbrecht
- **Integrating Airline Information and Traveler Information** by Debra Burdette
- **Integrating Real-Time Traffic Information Into METROLift Operations** by Mark Hickman
- **Professional Capacity Building** by Beverly Kuhn.

Copies of these presentations can be found on the TransLink® Web Page.

Following the presentations, the Partners were taken into the Laboratory where they got to experience how the Laboratory could be used as a training facility. Using a railroad preemption exerciser developed by Roelof Engelbrecht, the Partners were led through an exercise that illustrated some of the issues associated with timing a traffic signal during the preemption for a train.

Later in the evening, a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony was held that “officially” opened the new TransLink® Laboratory. Speakers at the dedication included Al Kosik of the Texas Department of Transportation, Tom Lambert of the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, David Gibson of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and Dr. Tom Larson, the former Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. Each speaker talked about the importance of research, in general, and TransLink®, in specific, in addressing the existing and future challenges of their agencies.

By all accounts, the meeting and the dedication were a great success. I want to thank everyone who worked really hard to make the meeting a success. Thanks to all the researchers who took time out of their busy schedules to talk about what they were doing as part of TransLink®. Also, thanks to Natalie Johnson, Helen Olivarez, Sue Suter, Edward Brackin, Paul Davis, and Beth Neilson for their help in making the meeting and the dedication a success.

Kevin Balke
Director, TransLink® Research Center

NOTES FROM THE CPD

Traffic Signal Summer Camp

A summer traffic signal camp will be conducted by the National Institute for Advanced Transportation Technology (NIATT) at the University of Idaho. This camp is geared toward undergraduates and graduate students that have a strong interest in transportation engineering and would like to gain practical experience, work with industry professionals, and use the latest equipment and software. Consider applying if you wish to:

- Gain first-hand experience working with advanced traffic control systems
- Learn how to program traffic controllers
- Use video detection equipment to collect data and control traffic signals
- Learn to use hardware-in-the-loop simulation
- Build and test loop detectors
- Learn how to design signal timing and test your design in the field.

Ten university junior or senior or first year graduate students will be selected to participate, all expenses paid (except transportation). The application can be found at [http://niatt.uidaho.edu](http://niatt.uidaho.edu).

A Call for Poetry

U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater has called on the nation’s young poets, in grades 1-8, to craft poems about transportation in the hope that their writings will inspire them to get ready for jobs in transportation by studying math and science.

The theme for the poetry contest is “Land, air and sea, transportation moving things for you and me.” The contest is divided into categories for grades 1-3, grades 4-6 and grades 7-8. The deadline for entry is Jan. 31, 2000, with winners announced in March 2000. Winners will be selected based on best presentation of the theme, originality, and artistic interpretation. There will be regional winners and a national winner for each category.

Winners will receive a certificate and winning poems will be published in the Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Futures Program web site and in the program’s quarterly newsletter.

The poetry contest guidelines and additional information about the contest are on the Internet at [http://education.dot.gov](http://education.dot.gov). They can be viewed by clicking on “Poetry Contest.”

Community Futures Forum—Texas Speaks

Throughout 1999 the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, part of the Texas A&M University System, led an effort to bring together citizens from all walks of life to consider, discuss and define the need of their communities. These forums were held in 250 of the 254 counties and over 10,000 people participated in the process. Focus forums that identified specific needs and issues were also held. The objective of the forum was to
provide a report on the needs and concerns at local levels to state agencies, so that they can better serve the communities. A database of the issues were created and the results of this effort can be found at the Community Futures web site: http://futuresforum.tamu.edu/. The database can be searched by keyword, county, issue, or forum. There are a number of transportation and transportation infrastructure concerns cited in the forum. Debbie Jasek attended a leadership issues conference regarding Community Futures Forum issues and will be happy to provide information on the program.

As always for more information on these topics please contact Beverly Kuhn at 862-3558 or by e-mail at b-kuhn@tamu.edu or Debbie Jasek at 845-5239 or by e-mail at d-jasek@tamu.edu.

Beverly Kuhn

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

Kevin Balke was recently elected to serve a two-year term on the ITS Texas Board beginning in January 2000.

Jerry Ullman and Conrad Dudek participated in the 6th World Congress on ITS in Toronto, Canada, November 8-12, 1999. Jerry presented a paper that was co-authored with Conrad titled “Legibility Distance of Light-Emitting Diode (LED) Variable Message Signs.” Conrad presented a paper titled “Mentors Help Expand ITS Experiences of Transportation Engineering Graduate Students.” Conrad was also an invited guest at a dinner reception hosted by the Honorable David Turnbull, Minister, Ontario Ministry of Transportation and held at the CN Tower in honor of the 6th World Congress on ITS and the 25th Anniversary of Toronto’s COMPASS. He was also an invited guest at the V.I.P. World Congress Dinner held at the Ontario Place.

TTI SERVICE MILESTONES

Congratulations to the following people who recently reached a service milestone working for TTI.

Monye Brookover 10 years
Nadeem Chaudhary 15 years
Gene Goolsby 10 years
Liz Perez 10 years
Jerry Ullman 15 years

DID YOU KNOW??

Here are 2 hints/tips found by Beth Neilson.
1. Files in Adobe Acrobat are searchable. Click on the binoculars on the tool bar to bring up the find option. (This makes the TTI Chart of Accounts a lot more useful.)
2. A TTI phone, fax, and office directory is available online at http://ttimail/phonelist/default.asp
   If you find a shortcut, tip, or site that makes life in general easier, or can help someone get the job done quicker, let us know so we can share the information with everyone.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Dec 2 David Fenno
Dec 3 Jeremy Johnson
Dec 6 Steve Liu
Dec 6 Kandis Salazar
Dec 7 Debbie Jasek
Dec 8 Rajasekhar Basavaraju
Dec 14 David Rickerson
Dec 15 Mark Harris
Dec 27 Kisha Thompson
Jan 1 Ed Seymour
Jan 2 Kyu-Ok Kim
Jan 7 Kimberly Murphy
Jan 12 Natalie Johnson
Jan 13 John Denholm
Jan 16 Chris Pierce
Jan 17 Edward Brackin
Jan 17 Byron Gajewski
Jan 17 Selvam Raghupathy
Jan 19 Melissa Finley
Jan 20 Michael Vickich
Jan 23 Curtis Hamilton

STATE MOTTOS FOR THE YEAR 2000

We continue our saga of “proposed state mottos:”

Maryland: A Thinking Man’s Delaware
Massachusetts: Our Taxes Are Lower Than Sweden’s (For Most Tax Brackets)
Michigan: First Line of Defense From the Canadians
Minnesota: 10,000 Lakes and 10,000,000 Mosquitoes
Mississippi: Come Feel Better About Your Own State
Missouri: Your Federal Flood Relief Tax Dollars at Work
Montana: Land of the Big Sky, the Unabomber, Right-Wing Crazies, and Very Little Else
Nebraska: Ask About Our State Motto Contest
Nevada: Hookers and Poker!
New Hampshire: Go Away and Leave Us Alone
New Jersey: Ya Wanna ##$%%%! Motto? I Got Yer ##$%%%! Motto Right Here!
New Mexico: Lizards Make Excellent Pets
New York: You Have the Right to Remain Silent, You Have the Right to an Attorney...
North Carolina: Tobacco Is a Vegetable
North Dakota: We Really Are One of the 50 States!
Ohio: We Wish We Were In Michigan

...To be continued