ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MESSAGE

Success in research is often seen as putting together a good research proposal, and if successful, doing the technical project. The reality is that research is conducted in a complex environment involving an ever growing process involving many people.

True success, as I have said many times, is getting new ideas into practice. The rules of the process often make innovation difficult because it goes against both the status quo and the rules. A successful researcher has to work with and around the rules to achieve the desired result. By working around the rules, I do not mean breaking the rules, I mean keeping the rules from being the reason for an unsuccessful result.

For example, the rules may require the PD to initiate the process to modify a project. The researcher could suggest a change and then wait for the PD to take the necessary action. The problem with this approach is several fold. First, the PD is busy and has many other demands on his or her time. The task may get delayed and even forgotten. The PD may also not know where to start to implement a modification. By the time the PD figures it all out, the researcher is now behind schedule. Working around the rules means the researcher must first know the rules, then do the preparation for the modification request (i.e., write a draft and explain where it is sent). Meanwhile, the researcher should work on the modification, working with RDO if necessary (after explaining to RDO that you are working in preparation for receiving a request from TxDOT) on the details, so that you can turn around the modification as soon as it comes in. The result is a quicker modification by working around the rules.

Remember, research is much more important to you than the sponsor. It is important that the researcher take responsibility for the success of the process, otherwise you will be frustrated at the slow pace of the system.

Tom Urbanik

Do or do not, there is no try.

Yoda

GOODBYE TO EMMOND CHANG

Dr. Edmond Ching-Ping Chang, P.E., has accepted the ITS Program Manager position at the Oakridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. Edmond has been with TTI for almost 20 years. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight his contributions to the traffic engineering profession in general, and to TTI’s research program in particular, during his tenure at TTI.

Dr. Chang, who served as a program manager from 1988 to 1993, has been a key member of research teams that developed MAXBAND 86, PASSER II, RAMBO I, and RAMBO II software packages for signal timing and freeway ramp metering optimization. In addition, Edmond was a principal member of the team that originally designed and maintained what is now known as TransLink® laboratory. Furthermore, Edmond serves as a key member of the research team that is installing an advanced real-time ramp metering system in Arlington, Texas. This system is based on a design that was proposed by him several years ago.

Dr. Chang has been active professionally in various national and international organizations. He took a leading role in assisting TxDOT in the development of specifications for the Ramp Metering Controller currently being used in Texas. Furthermore, he is an active member of U.S. NTCIP Ramp Metering Working Group sponsored by AASHTO, NEMA, and FHWA. The work of this group is nearing completion and Edmond will continue to actively participate in this group.

Edmond’s last day with TTI is June 4, 1999. He will join his new position within a few weeks after that. After a few months at the Oakridge National Lab facilities in Knoxville, Tennessee, Edmond plans to relocate to their Washington, D.C. office. Edmond’s departure will be difficult for those of us who have relied on his expertise for a long time, however, he generously offered his support to TTI during the transition period.

Finally, I would like to invite all TTI staff to join me in saying farewell to a longtime colleague and friend and to wish him, his wife Ann, and his son Andrew best wishes.

Nadeem Chaudhary

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.
Roelof Engelbrecht attended the ATMS Simulation Workshop in Florida in May.

TTI has awarded a contract to Global Audio Visual for the equipment in the new TransLink® Laboratory. This will allow TTI to maintain current research facilities and expand into the new building. The new laboratory will have 3 main areas of focus: research, training, and showcasing. After the new building is turned over to TTI, Global will work on installing the new equipment. The equipment consists of a video display wall, significant routing/switching equipment, a TMC console, and several computer workstations. Bob Brydia and Beth Neilson have spent an enormous amount of time and energy seeing this project through to award. In addition, none of this would be possible without the continued support from TTI administration (specifically Dennis Christiansen and Don Bugh) to provide facilities that assist researchers across the Institute.

Chris Poe

TTI HOSTS RESEARCH SEMINAR WITH CONSULTING ENGINEERS COUNCIL

TTI, in cooperation with the Consulting Engineers Council of Texas, hosted an Operations and Design Research Professional Development Seminar and Advanced Diamond Interchange Operations and Research Workshop. The event was held in College Station and was attended by 26 consulting engineer professionals from across the state. The objective of this seminar was to highlight some of the research going on at TTI and to provide the practicing transportation professional with research findings that can enhance their productivity.

Attendees were treated to a tour of the TransLink® Laboratory and Roadside Equipment Laboratory, the State Highway 6 Test Bed, the Smart Diamond Test Site, and the Wellborn Railroad Research Corridor. Presentations were also given by TTI staff on a variety of design, operations, and safety topics, including design consistency, stopping sight distance, using zero length vertical curves, design speed and operating speed, traffic detectors and sensors, the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse, the TransLink Research Program, and the Center for Professional Development. TTI speakers were Dan Fambro, Kay Fitzpatrick, Beverly Kuhn, Dan Middleton, Christopher Poe, Jerry Ulman, and Mark Wooldridge. The Advanced Diamond Interchange Operations & Research Workshop was also offered to attendees, and featured recent research findings on new ways to help improve diamond interchange operations and a demonstration of PASSER III-98 and the hardware-in-the-loop simulation. The workshop instructors were Tom Urbanik, Srinivasa Sunkari, Steven Venglar, and Roelof Engelbrecht.

Beverly Kuhn
OUTLOOK WEB ACCESS
Did you know that it is easy to check your TTI E-mail from the web?
1. http://ititimail.tamu.edu/exchange
2. Log On: type your login name (i.e. j-smith)
3. User Name: type tti-servers/j-smith (use your login name)
4. Password: type your password

Beth Neilson

NOTES FROM THE CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Center Changes Name

The Center for Professional Capacity Building is now known as the Center for Professional Development. Why, might you ask, did we change the name? Well, we believe that Professional Development better describes the focus and mission of the Center. While professional capacity building (PCB) is the term used by the U.S. DOT to indicate the movement to educate and prepare existing and future transportation professionals with respect to ITS, it is not always immediately understood. Professional development encompasses all aspects of education, training, and outreach in all areas of the transportation industry—not just in the ITS arena. Hence—the new name. If you have any comments on the name change please let me know. The Center's URL address is: http://tti.tamu.edu/centers/prof-development.

TITI to Host 1999 Summer Transportation Institute

TTI, in partnership with Texas A&M University, Texas Southern University in Houston and Paul Quinn College in Dallas, is sponsoring a 1999 Summer Transportation Institute to promote transportation as a viable career option to the youth of Texas. The Houston dates for the STI are July 5-16, and the Dallas dates are July 19-30. Students from the Houston program will be visiting TTI and Texas A&M University on Thursday, July 13th and will tour our facilities and take part in hands-on activities involving traffic signal timing and research. Students from the Dallas program will receive the same stellar TTI treatment on the Paul Quinn College campus on Tuesday, July 27th.

PCB Workshop

A Workshop on Transportation Education and Training: Toward the Development of Graduate Curriculum is going to take place on June 9th at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. This workshop will build on the the Forum on Transportation Education held at TRB and will focus on Graduate Curriculum in Transportation Education. This workshop is being held in conjunction with the Council of University Transportation Centers (CUTC) Annual Summer Meeting. The fee for the workshop is $15 and covers expenses associated with the meeting. For additional information contact Steve Hay, University of Minnesota, at (612) 626-1808 / swhay@cts.umn.edu or Ria Melendez, ITS America, at (202) 484-4547 / rmelendez@itsa.org. To register, complete the form in the CUTC Meeting Brochure, or contact Catherine Ploetz, University of Minnesota, at (612) 626-2259 / cploetz@mail.cee.umn.edu.

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

TOG IN Y2K: THE TOG ANNUAL MEETING

The TOG Annual Meeting was held on Friday, May 21st at the Salado Civic Center. All of our programs were represented. Dennis Christiansen welcomed us and commended us for our efforts to enhance internal communication. Ms. Eloise Lundgren, the Director of Public Information at TxDOT, was the morning speaker. She provided valuable advice on what to do when Connie Chung calls. Her tips can help you and TTI keep from being maligned or misinterpreted by the media.

During the afternoon, Tom Urbanik gave service pins to those TOG staff with 10 or more years of TTI service, Wally Simpson provided us with the latest news on anticipated health insurance premium increases, Penny Beaumont gave us an overview of the legislative session and how TTI fared, Susan Lancaster discussed a new TTI logo and encouraged TOG to adopt it, and Sandy Tucker provided an overview of the TTINet and the wealth of information contained therein that staff can use.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the TOG Annual Meeting Planning Committee for all of their hard work. Without their efforts, the meeting would not have been possible. The members were Jim Carvell (vice-chairperson), Rene Arredondo, Natilie Johnson, Lisa Patke, Larry Rilett, and Paul Carlson. Special thanks go to Mike Davis for assembling the TOG personnel packet, which provides a unique look at the professional and personal interests of the staff of TOG. See you next year!

Beverly Kuhn
- TOG Annual Meeting Chairperson

TELL US ABOUT IT!

Here are a synopsis of your thoughts on this year's TOG Meeting. Full comments will be available shortly. Overall comments were favorable and most of you thought that the meeting was a good use of time and was fairly priced. The majority of you liked the speakers, and the ability to interact with other members of TOG.

Suggestions for next year include: meeting at a halfway point, speakers on research styles, having lunch later in the day, and door prizes. Next year’s meeting is May 19th. Jim Carvell will be next year’s chair. If you want to sign up to help as a committee member please contact him.
CONNIE CHUNG, DAN RATHER, AND THE REST OF THAT BUNCH!

Ms. Eloise Lundgren, the Director of Public Information at TxDOT, was the morning speaker for the recent TOG Retreat. Her topic was provocatively titled *What to do when Connie Chung calls* and her focus was to help you and TTI keep from being maligned or misinterpreted by the media.

Now I know many of you may be saying, no reporter is going to call me. However, you may be surprised, and it is better to be prepared than caught off guard. As a researcher, you are listed on the TTI Web Page along with your special areas of interest. If you have authored or co-authored a report you are also listed in many search engines such as FirstSearch, NTIS, and EI Village. A reporter looking for an expert or source, may very well use a search engine. Key words that match your interests may respond with the TTI web site and your name. As a member of a support staff, you may be the first person that the reporter has contact with. If you do not know who to refer the reporter to, give them Bernie Fette’s name and phone number.

Ms. Lundgren’s presentation provided some very wise advice on handling a “cold” call from a reporter. First of all remember to relax. Be responsive, honest, and professional. If the reporter is asking about a specific subject you are unfamiliar with, don’t speculate. If you don’t know the answer, tell the reporter that you will get the answer right away and then do it.

If you need time to collect your thoughts, it is perfectly alright to state, you have caught me at a bad time or I’m on my way to a meeting can you fax me your questions and I’ll call you back later this afternoon.

Determine your message and then emphasize your point, and then re-emphasize it. Never speak off the record and avoid saying “No” or “No Comment.”

Remember that transportation is news and can be a hot topic, both for us and for our sponsors. Keep the communication lines open between you and your sponsors when approached about a TxDOT matter.

Get in touch with ITEC, Bernie Fette, to find out more about media interviews and how to handle the press.

Debbie Jasek

HELLO AND GOODBYE!

Hello and Welcome

Vijay Kovvali has joined Traffic Systems as a Graduate Student Worker for Dr. Chaudhary. Welcome Vijay.

The Traffic Analysis Program would like to welcome Crystal Garza. She is from Edinburg, TX and is a Student Worker II. Crystal will be working for Kay Fibpatrick. Welcome Crystal.

Design and Operations would like to welcome their new Summer Undergraduate Fellow, Jonathan McNally.

Jonathan is a junior at the University of Delaware, and his major is Civil Engineering. Welcome to Texas and TTI Jonathan!

The Systems Implementation Program welcomes two new student workers, Brian DeLatte and Mark Harris. Welcome Brian and Mark.

Goodbye and Best Wishes

Goodbye and best wishes to Audeline Harris, from the Traffic Analysis Program. Audeline has graduated and moved to Arlington, TX. We wish her well and the best of luck in the future!

The Traffic Operations Program bids a fond farewell to Mary O’Connell, Program Secretary. Mary’s last day will be June 11th and she will be missed by all of us. She and her family are moving to Fort Lavaca. We wish her well and best of luck in the future!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations are in order for David Fenno of the Houston office. David has been promoted to Assistant Research Engineer. Congratulations David!

Congratulations to Tony Voigt of the Houston office. Tony has also been promoted to Assistant Research Engineer. Congratulations Tony!

Congratulations to Mike Vickich in the Houston Office. He has been promoted to a Systems Analyst I. Mike provides all aspects of system support for the AVI system in Houston, maintains the TranStar web site, updates the real-time traffic information system, and provides systems support for a number of TTI projects.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Jun 1  Renee Hulett
Jun 4  Rene Arredondo
Jun 9  William McCasland
Jun 11 Edmond Chang
Jun 14 Jonathan Lammert
Jun 19 Roelof Engelbrecht
Jul 2  Scott Booth
Jul 3  Karen Sparks-Ellis
Jul 7  Matthew Estes
Jul 14 Catherine Robinson
Jul 16 Mina Tadros
Jul 19 Scott Byrd
Jul 20 Angela Parham
Jul 28 Ricky Parker
Jul 29 Lisa Badillo
Jul 29 Jim Bonneson
Jul 30 Vanessa Izaguirre
Jul 30 Vijay Kovvali
Jul 31 Paul Barricklow

Renee Hulett
Rene Arredondo
William McCasland
Edmond Chang
Jonathan Lammert
Roelof Engelbrecht
Scott Booth
Karen Sparks-Ellis
Matthew Estes
Catherine Robinson
Mina Tadros
Scott Byrd
Angela Parham
Ricky Parker
Lisa Badillo
Jim Bonneson
Vanessa Izaguirre
Vijay Kovvali
Paul Barricklow
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cesar Quiroga recently attended a workshop titled “Fundamentals of Successful Project Management.” Here are his comments on the workshop.

The objective of the workshop was to provide guidelines and tips on how to define, plan, implement, monitor, and complete projects. The workshop was generic given the wide variety of backgrounds and interests of the people who attended (approximately 70% were from the private sector, and 30% were from the public sector). However, the workshop did provide a number of tips that could be of interest to us. The workshop focused both on technical aspects (e.g. task definition, time and cost estimates, tracking diagrams) and human aspects (e.g. team building, motivation, monitoring). The techniques described can be used to assist in managing both external and internal projects.

Two sound bites came across as being central to the workshop. The first sound bite was the list of Ten Commandments of Project Management:
1. Set a goal
2. Determine the project objective
3. Establish checkpoints (milestones), activities (tasks), relationships, and time estimates
4. Draw a picture (chart) of the project schedule
5. Direct people individually and as a project team
6. Reinforce the commitment and excitement of the project team
7. Keep everyone connected with the project informed
8. Build agreements that vitalize team members
9. Empower yourself and others on the project team
10. Encourage risk taking and creativity

The second sound bite was one of the most important “secrets” of effective project management: monitor closely, communicate clearly, and resolve quickly.

I have a four-page summary of the workshop that I will e-mail to anyone who is interested. Please contact me at c-qiuroga@tamu.edu.

Cesar Quiroga

TOG DECISIONS — DID YOU KNOW?

TOG has officially adopted a new Logo. If you currently have TTI business cards, forward one of your current business cards and any changes to Beth Neilson. Beth is ordering the new cards.

TOG has officially adopted Microsoft Word as the word processing software. If you have problems with Word, the training Library (contact Beth) has a series of CD’s to assist in tackling the ins and outs of Word. There are also training funds available for courses. Contact your program manager or Beth Neilson for more information.

ADVENTURES FROM THE HINTERLANDS

Sometimes going out in the field can be a real adventure and stories of travels abound. Just ask anyone who has been to South Texas. This past month several members of TOG ventured into the huisache and mesquite to emerge not only with data but tales to tell.

Srinivasa Sunkari, provides this report. Hassan (Charara), Ricky (Parker), and I went down to McAllen to install a system to identify and minimize truck stops on high speed approaches of isolated intersections. We can report that the system is functioning satisfactorily. Hassan should be commended for developing a very user friendly user interface. He and Ricky also went through a very tedious testing procedure before installation. We had a good and productive trip down to the valley. Of course Hassan got tired of the Mexican food very quickly.

Ricky on the other hand provides a few more interesting details. We had an interesting time during our trip to the Pharr District. To our surprise, when we opened the traffic controller cabinet there was a large snake skin laying in the bottom. Our cabinet had the remains of several scorpions in it and this cabinet has a space under the bottom. A perfect place for snakes to hide from the heat. The TxDOT district Engineer said that was normal for South Texas. He told us to be careful and check under the cabinet for snakes before walking up to open the door.

One morning we arrived at the cabinet before dawn. We had to use the car’s head lamps to check for snakes and scorpions. I was the first to get out of the car and check the area under and around the cabinet. Needless to say it wasn’t an enviable position, kind of like drawing the short straw.

Being a veteran of a South Texas project, I can certainly relate. Data collection can certainly be more intriguing when it involves creepy crawlers or having a front row seat for a high speed drug chase. But that is another story. Tales of summer data collection adventures are always welcome.

Debbie Jasek

TRAFFIC RULES FOR URBAN AREAS

1. Turn signals provide clues as to your next move in the road battle, so never use them.
2. Right lane construction closures are just a game to see how many people can cut in line by passing you on the right as you sit in the left lane waiting for the same jerks to squeeze their way back in before hitting construction barrels. Bonus points are awarded for getting out of your car and moving the barrels.
3. The electronic traffic warning system signs are not there to provide useful information, but just to tell time and make the city look progressive.
MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

Gene Hawkins may be close to setting some kind of record this month. During May, he was in the office a total of 4 days. Gene spent the first week in Gaithersburg, MD in a HITEC evaluation. Of those four days, three were in an environmental chamber. One day at 105 degrees, 85% humidity; one at 105 degrees, 15% humidity; and one at 35 degrees with 20% humidity. Gene reports that he handled the heat better than the others, but had more trouble with the cold than they did. The second week he was in the thriving metropolis of Childress collecting work zone data with Paul Carlson, Jonathan Lammert, and Rhett Gordon. The third week, Gene was out of town on two days. After all of that, he took off the last week for a well-deserved rest. Gene is spending it at home working on the honey-do list. Many thanks to Liz Perez for keeping things running while he was away.

Dongjoo Park, a Post-doctoral research associate, recently made two presentations (with Dr. Rilett) at the INFORMS Cincinnati meeting during May 2-5. The presentations were: Solving Multiple Constrained Shortest Path Problem With a Lagrangian Relaxation and Using AVI-based Travel Time Information for Freeway Incident Detection.

B. J. Fritz-Lewis has been voted into the Lexington Who's Who Registry Among Executives & Professionals for 1999-2000. Congratulations B.J.

Terri Arendale of the Traffic Analysis Program will be working as a Co-op Student for the summer.

MORE DRIVING RULES
1. You don't have to wait for an exit to get off a freeway, just follow the ruts in the grass to the frontage road like everyone else. This is how to notify the DOT where the exits should have been built.
2. Seeking eye contact with another driver automatically revokes your right of way.
3. Learn to swerve abruptly. Cities are training courses for high-speed slalom driving thanks to the traffic department, who places potholes in key locations to test drivers' reflexes and keep them on their toes. Parts of truck tires are left on new highways where potholes haven't yet been established.
4. Construction signs are carefully positioned to tell you about road closures immediately after you pass the last opportunity to exit, but just before the traffic begins to back up.

NEW PROJECTS

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<th>PI</th>
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<tr>
<td>449519</td>
<td>Gerald Ullman</td>
<td>TxDOT</td>
<td>Improved ITS Information Network for Incident Management and Travelers</td>
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<tr>
<td>418859</td>
<td>Chris Poe</td>
<td>TxDOT</td>
<td>Multi-state Operations, Research, and Implementation Program</td>
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