DIVISION HEAD MESSAGE

As part of the employee performance review process, I asked program managers to identify individuals outside their program who had made important contributions to the Division’s research program. Nine individuals were identified out of this process for their efforts. They are Lisa Badillo, Kevin Balke, Kay Fitzpatrick, Gene Hawkins, Russell Henk, Beth Neilson, Dale Picha, Jerry Ullman, and Steve Venglar. Congratulations on your great teamwork!

Customer satisfaction, as defined by the customer, is a key to our continued success. Our number one customer, TxDOT, has undergone a major restructuring as the result of retirements and their charting a new course for the future. We must recognize that the current TxDOT staff may have little understanding of our long history of helping them be a leader in transportation.

A key to understanding their needs is having good and regular communications. When was the last time you chatted with your project director? Regular communication will help build a good understanding of their problems and a stronger relationship with the TxDOT staff.

Remember that research is an added assignment that the project director does in addition to their full time assignment. You should go out of your way to make the project director’s job easier. Offer to make slides or overheads for their presentations at research meetings. Send them periodic brief “technical memorandums” summarizing the project status and accomplishments. The project director has to report periodically to the Research and Technology Transfer office on project status and that will be easier if you have given them some material which they can use.

Tom Urbanik

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The following is taken from a memorandum from Dennis Christiansen to Division Heads and Program Managers concerning project deliverables:

“At present, as a part of all TxDOT proposals and proposals that go through the Research Foundation, Study Supervisors clearly state the deliverables required on the project as well as the due date for those deliverables. Effective immediately, we request that the same information be provided for all other proposals prepared by TTI (e.g., contracts directly with TTI from agencies such as METRO and HGAC). The recent state audit of TTI has pointed out that TTI management is not aware of all deliverables and thus has difficulties in dealing with problems regarding deliverables. We are in the process of developing a Management Database that will be available on the network, and deliverables will be a part of that database.”

SEMINAR ON TxDOT RESEARCH MANUAL

Lisa Palmer and Denise Pineda will present seminars on the TxDOT Research Manual on March 4 and March 12. This manual is our official guide and central point of reference for all stages of all research projects for TxDOT. Make plans to attend one of these sessions today. Call or E-mail Beth Neilson for more information.

CALENDAR MARKS

Mar 4  Session on TxDOT Research Manual, 10:00-11:30 a.m., Room 217
Mar 12  Session on TxDOT Research Manual, 1:30-3:00 a.m., Room 217
Mar 14-15  Spring Break (Holidays)
Apr 15  ITS America Annual Meeting, Houston
May 17  Division Retreat 1996
Sep 30  FY 96 Reports are due to TxDOT

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Mar 3  Pete Luna
Mar 3  Melinda Butts
Mar 4  Russell Henk
Mar 8  Kwok-Yam Tam
Mar 25  Jennifer White
Mar 29  Kay Fitzpatrick

IN*FO*B*Y*T*E*S

This column is a new addition to our newsletter. It is intended to provide computer users with useful information and tips to make life with your computer a little easier. Send any questions/comments addressed to this column to josephk@cs.tamu.edu or Deborah Jasek@TRA@TTI by e-mail.

Tip of the month

Do you hate typing http://etc.etc.etc.? Did you know that most Web browsers do not need the “http://” prefix. It is automatically added. In fact most browsers can fill in most addresses. For example, to reach http://www.microsoft.com, just type microsoft
For http://herman.tamu.edu, just typing herman works from within tamu domain. There are always exceptions. But there is only one way to know what will work - Test it out!

Questions and Answers
(a) How do I send e-mail outside the Banyan network?

Let's say that you want to send e-mail to president@whitehouse.gov. Obviously, this does not look like a TTI address, and our MAILMAN program complains about it. The next time MAILMAN says "Do you want to correct an unverifiable name?", enclose the address within SMTP[]. For example, to contact the president of United States, use SMTP[president@whitehouse.gov]. (By the way, it is the actual address, even though Mr. Clinton rarely replies!)

SMTP stands for Simple Mail Transfer Protocol.

(b) How do you tell your address to someone outside the Banyan network?

Your Banyan e-mail address (e.g., Santa Claus@TRA@TTI) is not understood by other systems outside TTI. To let others sent e-mail to you, the address needs to be modified. Replace the @ in your address by %, and replace spaces with =, so that other systems do not misunderstand your address. Finally, add @ttiadmin.tamu.edu at the end of the name. In short, your address (Santa Claus@TRA@TTI) is actually Santa=Claus%TRA%TTI@ttiadmin.tamu.edu. Now, that may be useful next Christmas!

Quiz-Time

You probably know that the term bit means a binary digit. You may even know that a byte is eight binary digits. Now, what is a nibble? (Whoever named it number crunching). :-)

(Send your answers to Deborah Jasek@TRA@TTI the first person to get the right answer will be recognized in next month's column).

Joseph Koorthappally@TRA@TTI

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Ramanan Nageswara, from the Transport Operations Program, left TTI February 15. Ramanan, who has a position as an engineer for the City of Dallas, will graduate in May.

Danette Jarzombek has left the Traffic Management Program. Danette is working for the Human Resources Department at Texas A&M.

Lorelei Samuel has joined the Traffic Management Program as a student worker. Loreli, who is an junior Anthropology major, is from Poth, Texas. Welcome to our Division.

Nripendra Sarker is a new Graduate Research Assistant in the Transport Operations Program. Nripendra is from Bangladesh. He has an undergraduate degree in Agricultural Engineering from Bangladesh Agricultural University and will be working for Nadeem Chaudhary.

CONGRATULATIONS!!

Hassan and Samar Charara are the proud parents of a new baby girl. Hawraa Charara was born on January 6. Congratulations!

Congratulations are also in order for Dan and Michelle Walker, who are expecting their first child in August.

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION PREDICTIONS

Russell Henk predicts that within 40 years or so automobiles and other roadway vehicles will be replaced by magnetic levitation vehicles -- changing our transportation operations and control challenges to a third (perhaps in one sense fourth) dimension. This change will be caused by the depletion of fossil fuels and increased pressure from air quality problems and environmentalists.

Debbie Jasek predicts within 75 years a new source of fuel, that is similar to nuclear energy with a different element source, will drastically change all modes of transportation. The fuel source will be as efficient and clean as nuclear fuels without the dangerous waste products.

TRANSPORTATION TRIVIA

Here are the answers to the trivia questions in last months newsletter.

Lake Pontchartrain, the longest U.S. Bridge, is 24 miles long. It is located in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The first parking meter was installed in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in 1935.

The Verrazano-Narrows Bridge has the longest single span in the U.S. Ships passing under it are near the port of New York.

Are you getting any better at trivia? Here are this month’s questions.

The Delaware Memorial Bridge connects Delaware with what state?

Which U.S. City has the longest subway system?

What letter of the alphabet was not used for a street name in the heart of Washington, D.C.?

Can you name the city which has the largest man-made harbor in the country?

Good luck! Look for the answers next month!