INTERCHANGE

Transportation Operations Group

http://tog.tamu.edu

Texas Transportation Institute

http://tti.tamu.edu

Volume 3 Number 11 November 1997

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR MESSAGE

This month Ed Seymour discusses the goals of the Traffic Operations Division.

Tom Urbanik

THE TRAFFIC OPERATIONS DIVISION

This fiscal year we've reorganized the Transportation Operations Group to create a division consisting of urban offices. This geographic emphasis acknowledges TTI's focus on applied, real-world research that can be implemented in many transportation environments. The arrangement also serves to facilitate our service delivery to TxDOT through direct working relationships with District staff.

During the upcoming year, you'll notice our efforts to achieve some important goals.

* **Improve communications.** Among other initiatives, we're installing a PC-based video conference system that will link the urban offices with the campus.

* **Identify common issues, opportunities and solutions.** We'll start coordinating our work efforts more closely - both with the urban offices and with the campus.

* **Refine the role of urban offices in the TxDOT - TTI environment.** This is an undertaking that involves all of the TTI divisions and offices.

* **Install mechanisms that will assist in diversifying our sponsor base.** We'll track our initiatives to secure non-interagency work, and we'll broaden our definition of potential urban office projects.

These initiatives are especially important given TxDOT's ongoing reassessment of the value of transportation research and interagency work. We need to demonstrate that our permanent offices will continue to serve as urban laboratories that enhance the applied, "real-world" nature of TTI's research.

On behalf of Russell Henk, Gene Goolsby, and Jim Carvell, we look forward to accelerating the transfer of emerging technologies from the research environment to the deployment arena. Please contact any of us in the urban offices if you have any suggestions that will facilitate achievement of these goals.

Ed Seymour

CALENDAR MARKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov 3-7</td>
<td>RMC Meetings, Omni Southpark, Austin</td>
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<td>Nov 4</td>
<td>Election Day</td>
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<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>Formal Dedication of Bush Library</td>
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<td>Nov 7</td>
<td>Bush Library Community Day Celebration</td>
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<td>Nov 13</td>
<td>Division Thanksgiving Lunch</td>
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<td>Nov 14-18</td>
<td>AASHTO Annual Meeting, Salt Lake</td>
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<td>Nov 18 - 19</td>
<td>RCE/TransLink Meetings, College Station</td>
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<td>Nov 19-21</td>
<td>ITS Texas, College Station</td>
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<td>Nov 24</td>
<td>Project Exchange Meeting, 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., Room 217</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 27-28</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 27</td>
<td>Bonfire</td>
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<td>Dec 9</td>
<td>Last Day of classes fall semester</td>
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<td>Dec 10</td>
<td>TTI Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 12-17</td>
<td>Finals</td>
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<td>Dec 19-20</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 22</td>
<td>Christmas/New Years Holiday begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 5</td>
<td>1st day back from Holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 11-15</td>
<td>TRB Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.</td>
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<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 29 - Feb 1</td>
<td>TexITE, San Antonio Menger Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 16-20</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>Mar 24-25</td>
<td>TTI Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 22</td>
<td>TOG Retreat</td>
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</table>

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the following Graduate Students who had their thesis defenses in October:

- **David Finklea** (Rilett chair)
- **Marc Jacobson** (Fambro chair)
- **Jonathan Bean** (Fambro chair)
- **Gary Carlin** (Krammes chair)
- **Kerry Perrillo** (Fambro, Krammes co-chairs)
- **Jon Collins** (Fambro chair)
- **Julia Kuhn-Butorac** (Rilett chair)
- **Andre Frieslaar** (Fambro chair)
- **Roloef Engelbrecht** (Fambro chair)

HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE THANKSGIVING

TOG'S Mission

Develop implementable solutions which promote a safer, more effective, more efficient, and sustainable transportation system by providing quality leadership, education, research, and technology transfer in transportation system operations.
GRAMMAR AND STYLE

TTI researchers and editors devote countless hours to writing and editing research reports, professional papers, technical memorandums, and other documents. Because most reports and papers are the end product of months/years of research, it is critically important that these documents present clear and concise information, in a consistent manner. What is a “consistent manner?” Simply put, it is the use of correct grammar and style. Many of our sponsors' reporting standards require that researchers follow the Chicago Manual of Style (14th edition) as a guideline for style, punctuation, editing, mechanics, and a host of other grammar- and style-related issues.

In the next few months, I would like your assistance in providing helpful suggestions and hints on improving the grammar and style of our research documents. Even though TTI's Information and Technology Exchange Center (ITEC) provides editorial review on TxDOT reports, their staff is not always available to review and comment on other documents and reports produced by our division, such as TRB papers, interim reports, and technical memorandums. Even if ITEC can provide an editorial review, it is to our benefit to provide the editors with our best effort. Doing so will improve the turnaround time on the review process and establish some credibility for yourself with the editors at ITEC.

To help get you started, here is an initial list of available documents/sources that can assist you in your writing and editing.

- Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), 14th Edition (hard cover), University of Chicago Press, ©1993. Available at TAMU Bookstore for $34.00 (includes 15% faculty/staff discount). Also at Barnes & Noble Bookstore for $40.00 (look for 20-25% off coupons in the newspaper/mail!!)
- Guidelines for Preparing, Editing, and Submitting TxDOT Technical Reports. Texas Transportation Institute, ITEC, July 1994. Available through ITEC. (free!)
- 1998 Information for Authors, Transportation Research Board. Contact TRB Office of Reports and Editorial Services for questions or a copy of this brochure. Phone No. (202) 334-2972. (free!)

Web Sites
- www.press.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/hfs.cgi/00/12245.ctl (Chicago Manual of Style)
- www.m-w.com/mw/mwhome.htm (Webster On-Line)

Tip of the Month: Don’t (Do Not) Use Contractions

In formal/professional documents and presentations, it is advisable to not use contractions in your text (including table/figure titles) and speech, unless, of course, you were quoting someone. Avoid such terms as don’t, won’t, can’t, and of course, my favorite, y’all (you all). To find most contractions in your documents, search for “apostrophe” (’) and “apostrophe t” (’t) using your wordprocessor’s search/find feature.

If you have comments or suggestions that can help everyone, please forward them to me through E-mail and we can include them in next month’s newsletter.

Dale Picha

TOO MANY WORDS?

Sometimes we become too wordy, when we try to get our point across. We need to remember that short and to the point may be the most effective method. Consider following the lead of Honest Abe!

When Abraham Lincoln delivered his Gettysburg Address just over 130 years ago, he used 272 words. Look at how his words compare to some of today’s writings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Number of words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gettysburg Address</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag of Lay’s Potato Chips</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRA Form 1040 EZ</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average USA Today cover story</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONGRATULATIONS

Kimberly Mastako, a Graduate Research Assistant in the TransLink™ Research Center, is pleased to announce her recent engagement to Matthew Wormley. Matthew is from San Luis Obispo, CA. Congratulations and best wishes to Kimberly and Matthew.

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

TransLink™ has established its Roadside Equipment Laboratory in Building A-108 in the Texas 707 complex. The goal of this lab is to test, demonstrate, and evaluate field equipment for use in surface transportation management. This laboratory acts as a staging area to determine successful technology to be used in the local test beds or field operational tests in other urban areas. There is a significant traffic signal system component to this laboratory to evaluate advanced operating strategies using simulated traffic and real traffic signal hardware. If you have questions or interest in this laboratory please contact Christopher Poe.

Kay Fitzpatrick presented the findings from Phase I of the NCHRP Project, Accident Mitigation on Congested Rural and Exurban Two and Three Lane Highways, to the project's panel members on Oct 10 in Washington, DC. The panel has approved the interim report and has instructed TTI to proceed with Phase II!
Dan Fambro attended "1997 Large Truck Safety Symposium" in Knoxville. He made a presentation on "Geometric Design of Facilities for Large Trucks." Dan also attended a TRB Workshop on "Simultaneous Vehicle and Infrastructure Design" in Washington, D. C.

Dan Middleton attended two conferences in October and traveled to California to meet with PATH researchers. He traveled to Pittsburgh, PA to attend the International Society for Optical Engineering (SPIE) conference to present a paper entitled, "Selection of Advanced Technologies for Detection of Trucks." He traveled to Knoxville, TN to attend the International Large Truck Safety Symposium and present a paper entitled, "Enhancements to CVO Enforcement."

Congratulations to Joseph Koothrapplly from the Traffic Systems Program, who recently defended and all went well.

The San Antonio office would like to welcome Julia Wilkie to the "full-time" ranks. Julia has been working part-time while taking courses toward her PhD. She has decided to forego the PhD (at least for now) and will officially be working full-time.

This November marks Dan Walker’s 15 year anniversary with TTI. Dan started in 1982 back when the wheel was invented, rumor has it he was hired to do roadside data collection on the effects of the wheel.

Lyla Pallan and her daughter, Annie, have returned from an extended visit to India.

Lisa Patke from the Houston office just got back from a week in the Bahamas!!! Needless to say everyone in the Houston group is jealous of her trip.

Curt Hamilton, also of the Houston office, recently took a few days off for a Softball tournament in Phoenix, AZ.

TRANSPORTATION TRIVIA
Here are the answers to last months trivia:

Herbert Hoover was president of the United States when the stock marked crashed in 1929.

There are 4 state capitals are named after presidents, Jackson, Mississippi; Jefferson City, Missouri; Lincoln, Nebraska; and Madison, Wisconsin.

The Washington state flag shows a portrait of George Washington.

The oldest public building in the U. S. is “The Palace of Governors” built in 1610. It is located in Santa Fe.

This month’s questions are:

Thanksgiving Day was first celebrated in 1621 in honor of the harvest reaped in what early New England settlement?

Name 5 states in the U. S. Where cranberries are grown.

What state grows more cherries and dry beans than any other state?

Name two of the top six maple syrup producing states in the U. S.

The U. S. And one other country grow 95% of all the world’s blueberries. Name the other country.

Good luck. Look for the answers next month.

WHO’S REALLY IMPORTANT?

A sea Captain and his chief engineer got into an argument about which one was more important to the ship. Finally, they decided to trade places for a day.

The chief went up to the bridge and the Captain went down to the engine room. After a few hours, the Captain suddenly appeared on deck, covered with oil and soot, and wildly waving a monkey wrench.

“Chief! Chief!” he yelled. “You’ll have to come down here! I can’t make her go!”

“Of course not!” replied the chief. “We’ve run aground!”

ETHICS

I would rather be the man who bought the Brooklyn Bridge than the man who sold it.

Will Rogers

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

Nov 1 Ivan Lorenz
Nov 2 Lyla Pallan
Nov 5 Donjoo Park
Nov 6 Gene Ritch
Nov 6 Padmavathi Upmaka
Nov 8 Mark Woolridge
Nov 10 Paul Carlson
Nov 12 Thomas Barnett
Nov 14 Jennifer Ogle
Nov 19 Christina Borja Slabic
Nov 26 Joan Stapp
Dec 2 David Fenno
Dec 6 Steve Liu
Dec 6 Kandis Salazar
Dec 6 Shalini Rubdi
Dec 7 Rachel Donovan
Dec 7 Debbie Jasek
Dec 9 Dale Picha
Dec 11 Elizabeth Crowe
Dec 11 Jason Vaughn
Dec 13 Lizette Laguna
Dec 15 Anthony Voigt
Dec 16 Pete Ferrier
Dec 22 Sonya House
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS DIVISION

THANKSGIVING LUNCH

WHEN: Thursday, November 13, 1997, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

WHERE: Hensel Park, Area 2 Pavilion
(In Case of Bad Weather, 217 Conference Room)

MENU: Turkey, Dressing, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Green Beans, Corn, Cranberry Sauce, Bread, Dessert, and Iced Tea

COST: $5.50 Per Person
Spouse and Guests are Welcome

RSVP: Please let your program secretary know (or you may call Lisa Badillo at 862-4591) before Friday, November 7 if you will be attending. They will also be collecting money.

PROJECT EXCHANGE MEETING

The next Project Exchange Meeting will be held November 24, from 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. in room 217. The following presentations are scheduled:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>473000</td>
<td>Dan Fambro</td>
<td>Improved Traffic Control Devices at Rail-Highway Grade Crossings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>429877</td>
<td>Kay Fitzpatrick</td>
<td>Evaluation of Automated Highway Railroad Grade Crossing Enforcement Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>414697</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhanced Traffic Control Devices and Railroad Operations for Highway Railroad Grade Crossings</td>
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<tr>
<td>417528-70</td>
<td>Jack Webb</td>
<td>Railroad Integration</td>
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