Thanks to everyone who participated in the SPP&E Day, February 21 at the Carleen Bright Arboretum. It was a great time!

A special thanks goes to Jason “Honest Abe” Crawford, Planning Committee Chair, and committee members, Bonnie Duke, Casey Dusza, Suzie Edrington, Zach Graham, Cynthia Lowery, Lisa Nimocks, and Pam Rowe. Jason and the Planning Committee did an outstanding job organizing a fun and informative day!

Thanks also go to the SPP&E Program Managers and their “stand-ins” for the great presentations. Please see page 3 for program award winners and photos from the meeting.

I would like to expand on my closing comments related to diversifying the research program. The overall TTI goal is to change the overall mix of research expenditures over the next four years from the current 60% TxDOT and 40% other sponsors to 50% TxDOT and 50% other sponsors.

The current sponsor base of programs in the SPP&E varies widely. Some programs are conducting projects for a variety of sponsors, while others focus primarily on TxDOT IACs.

As a result, some programs may be a more logical focus for diversifying than others. There are opportunities to expand the research focus with new and different sponsors in all programs, however. Similar to personal investing, a diverse research portfolio for programs and individual researchers is desirable.

Rather than rushing willy-nilly (a technical term) forward, we will be taking a strategic approach to sponsor diversification in the SPP&E. We will be targeting both program goals and group goals for diversification.

We will continue to ensure that we are meeting the needs of TxDOT, our number one sponsor. In fact, we anticipate increases in some IACs, and we will be responsive to requests from TxDOT to add staff to support the travel survey program and other work.

At the same time, we will build on our strengths, and proactively pursue opportunities with other sponsors and other programs. As I noted at the SPP&E meeting, there are opportunities with FHWA, FTA, EPA, NCHRP, TCRP, SHARP II, other cooperative research programs, and pooled-fund studies with other states. There are also opportunities with transit agencies, MPOs, and RMAs in the state, as well as projects in other states.

Ed Seymour is taking the lead on International research, with recent efforts focused on China, India, and Dubai.

(Continued on page 4)
Staff Activities

More from the 2007 TRB Annual Meeting. Montie Wade was the Presiding Officer at the session, Recent Research on Transportation Planning in Small- and Medium-Sized Communities. Bill Frawley has been named Secretary of the Access Management Committee.

Tim Lomax presented testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Highways and Transit on January 24, 2007 in Washington, D.C.

As President of the TexITE Chapter, Jason Crawford presided over the TexITE Executive Board Meeting, the Business Luncheon, and other aspects of the TexITE Winter Meeting, February 1-2, 2007 in Houston. Linda Cherrington organized and moderated a session on Rapid Transit Through Traffic Engineering. Jeff Arndt gave a presentation on What is Bus Rapid Transit Really? at the session. Geoffrey Chum completed the background research and developed the presentation for Jeff.

Tim Lomax returned to Washington, D.C. on February 28 to present testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Transportation, Houston, and Urban Development.

RDO processed 98 TxDOT RMC semi-annual reports. Way to go RDO — now on to the RMC proposals this month!

Welcome

Jestin (Jess) Junek has joined the Research Development Office as a Proposal Coordinator. Jess graduated in December 2006 with a Bachelor of Business Administration (management emphasis) from Sam Houston State University.

Welcome, Jess!

Bill Eisele, and his wife Amanda, welcomed their second child on February 9th. Joshua William Eisele weighed 8 lbs, 7 ozs and was 19 3/4 inches long.

Congratulations Bill and Amanda!
Program Presentation Awards

Best Overall/Buttercup Award — Transit Mobility
Most Colorful (Literally) — System Operation Management
Most Dramatic — Environmental Management
Longest — Transportation Planning
Best “Old School” Delivery — Travel Forecasting
Most Drop Dead Laughing — Urban Analysis
Best Use of Technology — Air Quality

Planning Committee
Jason Crawford, Chair
Pam Rowe
Lisa Nimocks
Cynthia Lowery
Suzie Edrington
Casey Dusza
Bonnie Duke
Zach Graham
“Taxistan” is not on the list yet, but maybe Linda CHERrington can help establish contact. Shawn Turner will be traveling to Beijing later this month to discuss data monitoring and integration at the invitation of the Beijing Jaioteng University and the Beijing Transportation Research Center. Juan Villa has expanded research activities in Mexico, and Bill Stockton and Carlos Chang-Albitres have been developing work in South America.

While we will not turn down a “one-hit wonder” (to use a music term), we are obviously interested in establishing long-term relationships with new sponsors. For example, we are now part of teams supporting Eastern Federal Lands and the National Park System. We are also pursuing projects at the federal level, including efforts in partnership with North Dakota State University and the University of California, Berkeley. Finally, there may be some limited opportunities with foundations, which is an area we have never explored very seriously, but will be looking into.

We are also focusing on how RDO can serve all TTI researchers in meeting the diversity goal. Ensuring that TTI can respond quickly to opportunities is important. We are looking at how TTI, the Research Foundation, and TEES can be responsive to researcher and sponsor needs.

Please let me or your program manager know if you have any ideas related to expanding our research portfolio. Finally, as I said at SPP&E Day — thank you all for the outstanding job you continue to do!

Thanks!

Katie

System Planning, Policy & Environment Research Group

Calendar of Events

MARCH 14-16 — SPRING BREAK, TAMUS HOLIDAY
MAY 2, 2007 — TTI DAY, COLLEGE STATION
MAY 28, — MEMORIAL DAY, TAMUS HOLIDAY
JUNE 4-7 — TxDOT RMC SPRING MEETINGS, SAN ANTONIO

BIRTHDAYS

March
- Steve Farnsworth  3/10
- David Schrank  3/13
- Mary Levien  3/13
- Lauren Geng  3/23
- David Ungemah  3/23

April
- John Wikander  4/2
- Aruna Nathu  4/8
- Ryan Eurek  4/10
- Tim Forrest  4/13
- Sung Ho Chang  4/16
- David Ellis  4/20
- Geoffrey Chum  4/20
- Bonnie Duke  4/24
- Jett McFalls  4/30

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