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1. Oberstar Comes to TTI

In a historic meeting between the chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and TTI leaders, Rep. James Oberstar arrived in College Station April 14 for a tour, saying “TTI creates a forum where ideas can clash.”

Called “Mr. Transportation” by Rep. Chet Edwards, who arranged the visit, Oberstar often mentions TTI’s research during public speeches. Prior to a news conference in the TransLink® Laboratory, Oberstar met with Institute leaders and outlined his “future of transportation,” which focuses on transforming surface transportation programs, increasing multimodalism, enhancing livable communities, and developing new methods to fund and approve infrastructure projects.

Oberstar was given an overview of TTI, which included details of the Freight Shuttle, a “sneak peak” of the soon-to-be released Urban Mobility Report and a briefing on the Transportation Performance Measurement Program (a collaborative effort between TTI and the University of Minnesota, which is in Oberstar’s home state).

“I salute you for your vision,” the 17-term congressman told attendees. “A big problem facing America is the cost of logistics [the movement of people and goods]. And it’s going up.”

During the news conference and gathering with members of the Bryan/College Station Mobility Initiative, Oberstar detailed his committee’s proposed $450 billion transportation bill that calls for streamlining federal funding mechanisms. “We’re at a point where the current formula is not working very well,” he said. “We need to attack the major congestion choke points in America.” Oberstar blamed some of our congestion problems on the amount of time it takes to approve infrastructure projects.
The new transportation bill should be sent to the House floor in the next few weeks.

Oberstar heard from the mayors of Bryan and College Station and the Brazos County Judge. The elected officials outlined their local road project priorities and their concerns about future congestion problems.

**About Jim Oberstar:**

**Read local media coverage:**

**Oberstar’s Waco visit:**

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**2. The TTI/TxDOT Relationship: Survey Results Revealed**

After four months of visiting all 25 Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) districts and 11 divisions and interviewing 151 TxDOT employees, **Assistant Agency Director Terry Childers** has a good sense of how the state agency feels about the Institute.

“The bottom line is TTI is viewed very positively by TxDOT personnel,” Childers told attendees of a Research Development Seminar April 9. “Our goodwill quotient
Childers was asked by Agency Director Dennis Christiansen to assess TTI’s involvement in TxDOT research in order to answer two questions: How are we doing? What do we need to do better? Although the results of a lengthy survey pinpointed numerous TTI strengths (knowledge of material, data collection and analysis, responsiveness, and highly trained and motivated individuals), there were some areas where TxDOT would like to see improvements.

“The biggest complaint I heard involves our technical write-ups,” Childers said. “TxDOT would like to have research reports written in plain English. They also want a user-friendly, searchable database to identify completed research that addresses current problems. They also want more in-person meetings with staff members.”

Among the other suggestions for improvement are:

- provide better communication of research results,
- provide on-time delivery of research deliverables,
- have research address stated TxDOT goals, and
- consider the needs of rural TxDOT districts.

“We will be implementing several recommendations to address these concerns,” Childers said. “I want to make it clear that TxDOT values our relationship, and they are looking for us to help them.”
4. Institute Aids Legislature with Transportation Funding Info

Armed with evidence of Texas’ massive transportation needs and a looming transportation funding shortfall, state Sen. John Carona — chairman of the Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee — held a news conference in Austin April 8 to focus attention on the issues.

The 2030 Committee identified the state’s transportation needs in a detailed report issued earlier this year. That committee, composed of business leaders and transportation experts from around the state, was formed by State Transportation Commission Chair Deirdre Delisi to provide an independent assessment of Texas’ transportation needs out to the year 2030.

Full story:
http://tti.tamu.edu/infofor/media/news.htm?news_id=5098
5. New Erosion Control Lab Facility ahead of Its Time

A new sediment device testing facility at TTI’s Hydraulic, Sedimentation and Erosion Control Laboratory (HSECL) at the Riverside Campus puts TTI and the Texas Department of Transportation “way ahead” of future, strict run-off regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

“For the first time, run-off at construction sites will have to meet EPA restrictions called Effluent Limitation Guidelines,” says Assistant Research Scientist Jett McFalls. “Although we don’t expect the new guidelines to come out for a few years, we’ll already know which products meet those restrictions, which gives us a great advantage.”

Contaminants in run-off are considered the number one pollution problem in the United States because they can adversely affect wildlife and water supplies. TTI’s first-of-its-kind sediment testing facility will measure the effectiveness of the various erosion control devices on the market.

“The facility was built this year and is a great addition to the lab,” says Assistant Research Specialist Derrold Foster, the on-site lab manager. “It allows us to effectively measure the amount of contaminants that pass through the device that’s being tested.”

Members of the HSECL Pooled Fund Project toured the new facility as part of their annual visit in April. The Pooled Fund Project includes departments of transportation (DOTs) from Texas, Missouri, Louisiana, Nebraska and Nevada. In exchange for their contributions to the lab, the DOTs are given priority in receiving test results and
use of the lab. Twenty other states use the data collected from the HSECL for their state’s programs.

In addition to the facility tour, members of the Pooled Fund Project heard details of two new research projects conducted by TTI’s Environmental Management Group: a bio-retention project and a low-slope runoff project.

6. TTI Innovators Honored by Texas A&M System

Six Roadside Safety and Physical Security Division employees have been honored with an Innovation Award from The Texas A&M University System Office of Technology Commercialization. Gene Buth, Dean Alberson, Roger Bligh, Lance Bullard, Akram Abu-Odeh and Hayes Ross received the award during a luncheon ceremony April 9.

In addressing the audience, Chancellor Mike McKinney said the System is committed to achieving excellence in research and developing ideas to benefit public health. “That is why this annual event is very important to me. When an individual, or a team of individuals, does innovative work that brings great credit to our universities and our university system, it deserves recognition.”

In addition to the Innovation Award, all six TTI recipients including Jacob Ness received a Patent Award for receiving patents in 2008. One patent was for a guardrail end terminal, and the other was for their design of a crash cushion. One of the roadside safety products is nearing production, and the other is in the development stage.

Chancellor Mike McKinney (left) and Vice Chancellor for Federal Relations and Commercialization Guy Diedrich (right) flank TTI Innovation Award winners Gene Buth, Roger Bligh, Lance Bullard and Akram Abu-Odeh. (Dean Alberson and Hayes Ross, other awardees, are not pictured).
7. User Fee Symposium Creates Interest, Discussion

Eighty people attended a first-of-its-kind symposium on the issue of charging motorists for the miles they drive — instead of taxing fuel purchases — to pay for road projects. The TTI-organized Mileage Based User Fee Symposium, April 14-15 in Austin, was funded by the University Transportation Center for Mobility (UTCM) and was designed to create a forum for researchers, legislators and other interested parties.

The Center for Transportation Studies and the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota partnered with TTI in hosting the event.

“The Symposium could not have turned out better,” says Senior Research Engineer Ginger Goodin. “Every element of a mileage-based user fee was addressed by experts, opponents and proponents, legislators and researchers. The symposium culminated with a fascinating interactive discussion and was a great end to the two-day event.”

The goal of the seminar was to bring together all interested parties and viewpoints. Details of the symposium will be used to further the discussion about the feasibility of mileage-based user fees. Other TTI researchers and staff supporting the event included Katie Turnbull, Trey Baker, Casey Dusza, Kerry Fillip, Karen Smith, David Ungemah, Tina Geiselbrecht, Joan Hudson, and Martha Raney Taylor. Students helping with the project were Matt Bomberg and Angel Descomps.
“During a recent Texas visit, the chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Jim Oberstar, requested the results of our symposium to consider in future federal legislation,” says Goodin. “We will soon have all the presentations and findings in place on the UTCM website.”

Read more:  
http://utcm.tamu.edu/mbuf/

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http://utcm.tamu.edu/mbuf/  

8. TTI in the News

There have been numerous mentions of TTI and our experts in recent media reports. Here are links to some of the stories.

Culvert barriers (*Houston Chronicle*) April 29

Seldom-used border crossing to receive funding (*USA Today*) April 28

Faster commutes (*Wall Street Journal*) April 28

Oberstar, Edwards meet at TTI (*KBTX-TV*) April 14

Capturing energy from Indian landfills (*America.gov*) April 9
9. International Research Opportunities Come with Challenges

With numerous TTI research projects involving other countries either underway or in the works, the latest Research Development Seminar, April 23, focused on international opportunities and the obstacles foreign research often brings.

For example, “China is a huge market for transportation professionals like us,” Assistant Research Engineer Teresa Qu told attendees after detailing the massive buildup of China’s highway system over the last two decades. “Before 1988, there were no freeways at all in China.” A map showing its highway system today totals 34,000 miles.

Despite the huge research opportunity in China, Qu outlined the numerous cultural challenges between our countries.
Associate Agency Director Ed Seymour, Program Manager Juan Villa and Research Development Office Director Susan Adams discussed potential sponsors, federal regulations that may influence international research and current international projects. Kevin Balke provided an update on a project beginning in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

“As you can see, these projects are multi-faceted with multiple sponsors,” Villa told seminar attendees. “The great thing is — TTI is able to meet the needs of these various sponsors from start to finish.”

10. Delta-T Leadership Class Named

The second Developing Leaders for Today and Tomorrow (Delta-T) class of TTI employees kicked off April 7 with the first of four all-day workshops to be held during the year.

The individuals selected for this year’s class are Curtis Beaty, Robert Benz, Jeff Borowiec, Jason Crawford, Ed Hard, Mary Levien, Curtis Morgan, Martha Raney Taylor, Phillip Reeder, Karen Smith, Srinivasa Sunkari and Shawn Turner.

“Delta-T was designed to offer a leadership development class for TTI employees,” says class coordinator Gary Thomas, director of the Center for Professional Development. “This will not only help the individuals in their professional careers, but in their personal lives as well.”

Delta-T is also designed to benefit the Institute by helping employees understand leadership styles in order to better prepare them for leadership positions within TTI.
11. Proving Grounds Receives Accreditation

The American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) has approved the accreditation of TTI’s Proving Grounds Research Facility following an extensive assessment earlier this year.

“The A2LA accreditation is a great thing for us,” says Assistant Agency Director Gene Buth, who is the assistant director of the Materials, Safety and Structures group. “Even though we enjoy a great reputation, the accreditation tells potential clients that we run a credible facility dedicated to quality.”

Specifically, the accreditation is “for technical competence in the field of mechanical testing.”

As part of the process for the quality management standard, Buth and others put together a 450-page document about Proving Grounds functions and performed numerous elements of testing procedures while measurement devices were inspected.

In a new requirement, laboratories must be accredited in order to work with federal sponsors. Previously, the Proving Grounds facility was on a Federal Highway Administration list of acceptable laboratories.
12. Carlson, Hawkins Singled Out for Safety

Two TTI researchers have received national recognition for their work on the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA’s) Retroreflectivity Team. Head of the Operations and Design Division Paul Carlson and Associate Professor/Research Engineer Gene Hawkins were recipients of Outstanding Service Awards “in recognition of outstanding dedication and commitment toward improving the safety and visibility of America’s highways.”

Carlson and Hawkins have worked with the FHWA Retroreflectivity Team since 1999. The researchers were instrumental in obtaining a new standard for traffic sign retroreflectivity, which is now included in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The team received a Secretary’s Transportation Safety Award for its work on the new standard during ceremonies in Washington, D.C.
Navy Reservist and TTI Safety Coordinator Stuart Denner was on a mission: to meet Secretary of Defense Robert Gates again and present him with a deployment challenge coin, which is a traditional sign of respect among the military.

“I met Secretary Gates and President Bush in Iraq, where I was deployed in 2007,” says Denner. “When I heard that Gates was going to be on campus for Aggie Muster last month, I wanted to give him one of my deployment coins to let him know how much we appreciate what’s he’s doing.”

The mission was accomplished. Gates accepted one of Denner’s Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 28 coins. As a bonus, Gates posed for a picture with Denner. “When I met Secretary Gates in Iraq, I didn’t have a camera. So, this is something I will always cherish,” he says.
14. Nelson, Lyle Honored for Communications Projects

Two TTI Communications employees, Graphic Artist Vicky Nelson and Photographer Jim Lyle, picked up numerous awards recently for projects they completed this fiscal year.

The latest kudos came from the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) of the Brazos Valley. Nelson and Lyle received an Award of Merit in the category of Communications Skills, an Award of Excellence in Publication Design and a Brazos Bravo for Cover Design. The awards were for their work with the Texas A&M University Office of Admissions and Records.

Nelson and Lyle were also honored with two IABC awards for their work with Texas A&M’s Marketing and Communications (MARCOM). In addition, Lyle’s photography for an AgriLife Communications project was recognized with an award from IABC.

The duo was also honored with a Gold and Best of Show award by the Printing Industries of the Gulf Coast for their MARCOM project.

The TTI Communications employees also received an American In-House Graphic Design Award for a university brochure. Graphic Design USA, which sponsors the awards, will publish the brochure in the magazine’s Award Annual later this year.

15. Unique Ambulance Highlighted at Colloquium

Some 59 million Americans live in rural areas, many of them isolated from health
care access. Texas A&M Health Science Center Assistant Professor Mark Benden and his co-inventor, Dr. Eric Wilke, are seeking a patent on a three-wheeled, long-framed medical transport vehicle that could reach patients living where traditional ambulances can’t travel.

The AmbiCycle™ was the subject of the April 6 University Transportation Center for Mobility (UTCM) Colloquium.

“I see this as an option for rural patients who need emergency transportation but can’t get it from traditional EMS care,” Benden explains. Benden and Wilke see the AmbiCycle also being used in congested urban settings, in military situations, at commercial locations like refineries and as a low-cost ambulance alternative in poor countries.

When Benden and Wilke were coming up with the concept of an ambulance alternative, they kept the AmbiCycle within strict design parameters: it could not be more than 36 inches in width, must have a stable ride with a tight turning radius, can be operated by just one person and can be kept under a $2,000 manufacturing cost.

Because the patient is lying underneath the seat (see photo), “the AmbiCycle allows for constant visual contact between the driver and the patient,” Benden says, unlike other types of medical transport vehicles.

The inventors applied for a provisional patent for the AmbiCycle in January and are now seeking funding for its manufacture.
16. TDS Golf Tournament Knocks It Long

The first Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) golf tournament March 5 at San Antonio’s Quarry Golf Club was a “great success.” The tournament was held to support the continued expansion of TDS efforts across Texas.

The honorary event co-chairs, Secretary of State Hope Andrade and Railroad Commissioner Elizabeth Ames Jones, offered their thanks to the numerous sponsors, which included BANC PASS, HEB, Silver Eagle Distributors, AECOM, Bank of America and the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

After a windy spring morning of golf, Secretary Andrade spoke at lunch and thanked the golfers for their support of the TDS mission of reducing the number of crashes that injure and kill young drivers. TDS Director Russell Henk recognized the tournament winners after lunch. The team from Martin Marietta Materials won first place, and the AECOM/University of Texas at San Antonio team won second. Awards were handed out for closest to the pin and longest drive competitions.

Shawna Russell and the San Antonio staff coordinated the event. Organizers are already planning for the second annual tournament, to be held next March.

17. Editor’s Corner: Two for One…or Maybe Not

Posing for a picture at the first TDS golf tournament were (from left to right) Russell Henk, Secretary of State Hope Andrade and Shawna Russell.
Last month’s Editor’s Corner about “word cousins” (similar words with different meanings) prompted requests for a few thoughts on a related group of troublesome words: compound words and their counterparts. Compound words combine two freestanding terms into one, so I’ll call the sets of two “word twins.”

Sometimes word twins mean the same thing, but sometimes the meanings differ. Here are a few examples of two-for-one words that might cause you trouble.

**A lot/alot** — The term *a lot* means more than a few. The tempting compound word *alot* is not a legitimate word, so avoid its use. The term *a lot* is considered informal and isn’t generally used in a technical document. Avoid confusing either form with the unrelated word *allot*, which means to apportion something.

**All right/alright** — The word twin *all right* means that things are satisfactory or every item is correct, such as “the answers are all right.” You can use it to mean yes or signal agreement. The compound word *alright* is used to signal acceptability or agreement in speech or informal writing, but is generally not acceptable in formal writing.

**A while/awhile** — These twins mean essentially the same thing, and you can use them interchangeably without causing problems for your readers, as long as you choose one form and use it consistently. There is a slight technical difference in the way they should be used. *While* indicates a period of time and is usually the object of a preposition, such as “the emerging blue line appeared after a while.” *Awhile* incorporates the passing of time within its definition, so you don’t usually see it used with a preposition. For example, you would see “the birds stayed awhile and then flew away.”

**A loud/aloud** — Even though these two terms qualify as twins, it’s easy to keep them straight in use. The two-word version *a loud* describes a noisy sound, such as “I heard a loud clap of thunder.” The single word *aloud* means audible, as in “I went
over the essay silently before I read it aloud.”

**All ready/already** — The term *all ready* means something or someone is prepared, such as “the test setup is all ready.” In most technical documents, that term would change to simply *ready*, as in “the test setup is ready.” The single word *already* means something in place by or before the indicated time, such as “the test was already in progress when I arrived.”

**All together/altogether** — *All together* signifies at one time or in one place, such as “the test subjects were all together in one room.” The single twin *altogether* means taken in total, such as “altogether, we tested five sections.”

**Any way/anyway** — The term *any way* describes an open choice of alternative methods, as in “capture the snake any way you can.” Its twin *anyway* means in any case or despite the odds. For example, you might say “I forgot to study but passed the test anyway.” Avoid the colloquialism *anyways* in formal writing.

**Any one/anyone and every one/everyone** — The word *anyone* indicates an unspecified person. The term *any one*, however, usually doesn’t relate to people. It generally refers to a single item out of a group of items. For example, “any one of the tests will provide sufficient data” would not make sense if you substituted the other twin to read “anyone of the tests.” Similar logic applies to *every one* and *everyone*.

**Some one/someone, no one/noone** — While you might think the same rule would apply to these twins as for *anyone* and *everyone*, it doesn’t. The plural nature of “some” doesn’t agree with the singular nature of “one” so *some one* fails to make sense. *Someone* is the form to use when you mean an anonymous person. *No one* means no person, but the combined form *noone* is not a word and would be confusing to read because of the placement of the two O’s that appear together when combined.

**Some time/sometime/sometimes** — This set of twins is triplets. *Some time* indicates
an unspecified but exact time or that an unspecified amount of time has elapsed, such as “we will hold the lecture at some time on Friday” or “some time passed before we saw the sun rise.” *Sometime* is an indefinite point in the future, such as “we will hold the lecture sometime, but we don’t know when.” The related term *sometimes* means now and then, such as “we sometimes go to the park.”

**Can not/cannot** — Unlike most of the word pairs discussed in this column, both of these forms mean the same thing and both are acceptable. I recommend consistent use of *cannot* instead of *can not* because it eliminates the possibility of splitting the phrase at the end of a line of text, which could confuse your readers and increase the possibility of missing the negative meaning of the sentence.

**A as an article** — There is a set of similar words that appear to be word twins but are really just a word preceded by the article *a*. It’s not likely you will confuse them since the single word usually has a totally different meaning than its two-word counterpart. These include words such as *a verse/averse, a cross/across* and *a part/apart.*

*Editor’s Corner* is written by Rhonda Brinkmann, research editor in TTI Communications. Rhonda is happy to accept requests for column topics.

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### 18. Reminders/Calendar

**May 6** — TTI Day

**May 11-13** — 27th Annual Texas Aviation Conference
CenterLine is a production of TTI Communications. We encourage your comments and suggestions for articles about TTI people and research efforts. Please send email to news@ttimail.tamu.edu or call Rick Davenport at (979) 862-3763.