1. Childers Becomes Assistant Agency Director

The former deputy city manager for the City of College Station, Terry Childers, has accepted the position of assistant agency director for TTI effective May 19. Terry Childers joins the Institute with a distinguished career in municipal government and private-sector management.

“Terry brings a unique set of skills and experiences that will provide TTI with strategic, objective insight into many of the challenges faced by all levels of government,” says Associate Agency Director Bill Stockton. “Furthermore, Terry has a long history of innovative organizational development that will benefit our professional development and research development goals.”

Childers will spend the next few weeks visiting with groups throughout TTI to familiarize himself with the breadth and quality of the TTI family.

Childers received a bachelor’s degree in political science from Abilene Christian University and a master’s degree in public administration from the University of North Texas. He held city management positions in Austin, Tyler and...
Oklahoma City before starting his own business and serving as its president for seven years. He accepted the position of deputy city manager of College Station in 2006.

According to Director Dennis Christiansen, “TTI needs to be devoting more time and effort to strategic initiatives—sorting out where we want to be in three to five years and how we are going to get there. Terry brings an outstanding set of skills to help move us forward. When you get an opportunity, I hope you will welcome Terry to TTI.”

Childers is a long-term board member for Abilene Christian University and is currently serving on the board of directors for the Brazos Food Bank.

2. Doing Our Part to Clear the Air

Fourteen years after May was designated Clean Air Month by the American Lung Association in 1994, the quest for cleaner air has taken on added significance. In addition to the recent emphasis on global warming and greenhouse gases, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that more stringent ozone standards will be put in place next March. It means that an additional 13 counties could be added to the state’s non-attainment list in Texas alone, bringing the total to about 30 counties that fail to meet the EPA’s National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

TTI’s Center for Air Quality Studies and Transportation Modeling Program are dedicated to solving the problems of pollution through research funded by sponsors like the EPA, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Texas Department of Transportation, among others. Recent initiatives include evaluating new emission reduction technologies, formulating guidelines to optimize transportation funds for air quality improvement and leading Texas’ statewide transportation air quality public education program.

“The researchers with the Transportation Modeling Program will be helping Texas counties deal with these changing air quality mandates,” says Program Manager Dennis Perkinson. “Our main focus is in using the methods and procedures we’ve developed to estimate vehicle emissions,
which is a complicated process.” The emission modeling techniques developed at TTI are used across the state and in the Federal Highway Administration’s National Highway Institute training course.

Full story:
http://tti.tamu.edu/infofor/media/archive.htm?news_id=4704

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3. TTI Survey: Teen Drivers Take Risks Despite Dangers

Despite knowing the dangers of risky driving behaviors, a survey of young drivers at a Texas Panhandle high school shows that teens regularly adopt those behaviors anyway. The results of the survey, conducted by the TTI Teens in the Driver Seat program, were compared to results from 34 other Texas high schools.

“We’ve found that, compared to urban teenagers, young drivers in rural areas are more inclined to drive at night, use a cell phone and not wear seatbelts,” says Russell Henk, manager of the Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) program. “These are among the factors that account for 6,000 teen deaths a year in the United States, and that’s why we’re thrilled to get the program started at Pampa High School.”

TDS is the nation’s first peer-to-peer driver safety program and, so far, has been deployed in about 100 Texas high schools. The TDS program was developed by TTI, which provides the science, materials and support for the safety campaign, while each student group determines how the program will work in their own school. In Texas, TDS is offered to high schools at no cost through funding support from the Texas Department of Transportation and State Farm Insurance.

Full story:
http://tti.tamu.edu/infofor/media/feature.htm

Read news report:
http://www.thepampanews.com/articles/2008/05/16/news/1news.txt

4. TTI Anniversaries

5 Years

Derrold Foster, Assistant Research Specialist (AEM)
Gladys Higgins, Business Associate III (BFP)
Jesse Stanley, Research Associate (THF)

20 Years

Kevin Balke, Center Director (DTL)
David Schrank, Associate Research Scientist (AMA)

5. Signs of Change: TxDOT Set to Enact New Policy

Based on a series of research studies conducted by TTI, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has been reviewing its specifications for retroreflective sign sheeting materials. In preparation of adopting new specifications for highway signs along the state’s roadways, TxDOT recently worked with TTI to conduct a nighttime demonstration of the available sign sheeting materials. The demonstration was set up at the Riverside Campus and included daytime and nighttime evaluations of the signs from different vehicles.

“There is a lot that goes into the determination of sign sheeting materials,” says Division Head Paul Carlson of TTI’s Operations and Design Division. “Not only is brightness and retroreflectivity an issue, but equally as important is durability and ease of use.”

The demonstration included evaluation of the signs under various lighting conditions. Employees with TxDOT’s Construction and Traffic Divisions and the local Bryan District office participated in the evaluation process. Once the specification is changed, signs will be replaced on an as-needed basis as determined through annual nighttime
6. Showing Off TTI

Employees attending trade shows, conferences and other public events can put the Institute in a whole new light thanks to a new TTI display. The three-to-four paneled, modern display replaces an old-fashioned version that had been used for years.

The new display was first used at this year’s annual Chancellor’s Century Council meeting held in College Station on February 20-22. Recently, the display made appearances at TTI Day and the annual meeting of the TTI Council.

To reserve the TTI display, contact Sheila Fields.
7. Little Receives Major Recognition

Senior Research Fellow Dallas Little has been recognized by the Association of Asphalt Pavement Technologists due “to his many services to the association, for his research efforts, his publications, and because of the high esteem in which he is held.” The association’s award of recognition is presented each year and represents the fourth award Little has received from the organization.

In addition, Little, who is a civil engineering professor with Texas A&M University, was selected to deliver the Kent Distinguished Lecture in Transportation Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) earlier this year.

“It is a huge honor for me personally to be so honored by this preeminent department and distinguished colleagues with whom I have had the pleasure of working,” said Little. “I have the honor of holding a (master’s) degree from UIUC, which makes this all the more special.”

The title of Little’s lecture was “A Framework for the Mechanism of Microdamage Healing in Asphalt Pavement Mixtures and the Impact of Healing on Performance.” The Paul F. Kent Distinguished Lecture, initiated in 2007, honors outstanding leadership in the field of transportation engineering.

Dallas Little’s bio:
http://ttinet.tamu.edu/ttipeople/result_long.asp?P_PID=611

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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.

Gas prices and driving behavior (Austin American-Statesman) May 30

Truck lanes (Indianapolis Business Journal) May 24

Surveying seat belt use (Fort Worth Star-Telegram) May 18
9. Students Learn TTI Message: Transportation Can Be Fun

A group of 61 students—who normally would not have the opportunity to learn about engineering—tooked TTI for a behind-the-scenes look at transportation research including crash testing, driving simulation and transportation technology. The idea was to focus on areas of interest for 12- to 14-year-olds and perhaps open their eyes to possible exciting careers in transportation.

The students from a Harker Heights middle school are part of the AVID program, which stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination. AVID’s goal is to reach out to “average” students who are capable of succeeding in college but may not have the right motivation to reach their potential.

“It was very rewarding to see these young people asking questions and being engaged,” says Associate Research Engineer Melisa Finley, who organized the tour. “For many of the kids, you could tell a light went on. I think TTI sparked their interest.”
Finley, Brooke Ullman and LuAnn Theiss showed the students around the Texas A&M University campus. Gene Buth, Beverly Kuhn, Gary Thomas, Sue Chrysler and members of the Texas A&M Institute of Transportation Engineers Student Chapter conducted presentations and breakout sessions. Numerous other employees were instrumental in the coordination of this event.

Learn more about AVID: http://www.avidonline.org/

10. Employees Donate Money, Clothes for Shelters

TTI employees donated $1,225 to the Twin City Mission homeless shelter in Bryan as part of this year’s TTI Day charitable event. In addition to the money, employees donated food, clothing and toiletries that are being used by the shelter residents.

“I want to thank everyone at TTI for not only the work they do on a daily basis, but also in this generous gift of caring,” Director of Community Relations Ron Crozier said. “Your actions will help us with our vision of providing an opportunity for hope, acceptance and stability for the people who really do need our community’s support.” Crozier spoke at TTI Day, where he emphasized individual effort in accomplishing initiatives undertaken by a team.

In addition to Twin City Mission, homeless shelters in El Paso, Houston, Dallas, Arlington and San Antonio received donations from employees located at the Institute’s urban offices.

Some of the items collected from the Houston office employees for their local shelter
11. Teens Speak Up and Cash In

Teens across Texas recently had a chance to speak up on teen driver safety issues as part of a contest by TTI’s Teens in the Driver Seat program. The “Driving the Message” communications contest helped raise awareness of teen driver safety issues. High school students submitted public service announcements (PSAs), posters and scrapbooks highlighting their group’s effort in stopping the number-one killer of teens across America. The young drivers didn’t just speak up; they lived up to the challenge.

There were 41 posters, 25 PSAs and 6 program overview scrapbooks submitted. Judges were made up of representatives from the Texas Department of Transportation, Sherry Matthews Advocacy Marketing, State Farm Insurance and TTI.

“I was extremely impressed with the quality and creativity of each of the submissions,” says Richard Cole, TTI director of communications, who was a judge for the contest entries. “It was a difficult task to come up with the winners.”

Entrants exercised a lot of freedom in creating their works, as long as each entry addressed one or more of the five main driving dangers for young people:

- driving at night,
- distractions (cell phones, texting and teen passengers),
- speeding,
- low seat belt use, and
- alcohol.

Contest winners were awarded cash prizes donated by State Farm Insurance. Cash prizes included $1,000 for first place, $500 for second place and $250 for third place in each category.

View the winning entries: http://www.t-driver.com/activities/contest/

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12. Editor’s Corner: Working with Large Document Files

Document files that contain formatting, graphics or tables can sometimes end up many megabytes in size. Working with large files is difficult because they slow down your system’s processing time, can be difficult to save and store, sometimes corrupt and often cause problems when you need to transfer the file. You can cut down on problems associated with large files by using a number of techniques such as linking graphics rather than embedding them, dividing files and reducing the memory required for graphics.

File solutions

Here are some operational options for working with large files:

- Turn off automatic updating—Program settings that automatically update page numbers and other fields can be maddeningly slow. Temporarily adjusting your settings for manual update can speed work with large files.
- Maintain separate files—On a regular basis, I don’t recommend making separate files for a single document because it can cause more problems than it solves. Sometimes, however, it’s the best solution. For example, some report formats call for references to appear between the main body of the report and appendices. Because Microsoft Word® allows autogenerated references (endnotes) only at the end of the file or each section, appendices need to be placed in a separate file.
- Use master/subdocuments—Most advanced word processing systems have the capability to create a master document that compiles subdocuments contained in separate files. While this arrangement can work well for large documents, it can be tedious to use in creating a final consistent document. It’s an option you might want to learn more about if you frequently use large document files.

Graphics solutions
Because graphics are often the culprits causing large files, reducing memory required for them can quickly reduce your overall file size. Here are some tips:

- Link graphics—Maintaining graphics in separate files and linking them to your MS Word file instead of embedding them can significantly reduce the size of your file. The trick here is to be sure all the graphics files convey with the main document file, and that link names remain the same.
- Reduce graphic size—When reducing graphic size, take care not to reduce resolution below acceptable limits (usually 300-600 dpi). If you compress graphics or reduce resolution, I recommend that you keep the original graphics files with the document file so that you can refer to them or replace them if needed.
- Remove graphic clutter—If you’ve cropped a picture, the cropped area will simply be hidden unless you remove it. Removing cropped parts of a picture and other graphic clutter will reduce overall memory required.
- Change graphic file type—Some file formats require more memory than others. For example, .tif and .gif files are usually larger than .jpg or .eps files. If you have the option to try several types of graphic files, see if one type takes less memory than others.

Methods for implementing memory-saving measures will vary based on the version of MS Word you’re using. For more information, check out help files, online discussion boards or other resources—or contact me for more information.

*Editor’s Corner is written by Rhonda Brinkmann, research editor in TTI Communications. This column resulted from a reader request, and Rhonda is happy to respond to requests for column topics.*

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### 13. Reminders/Calendar

**June 15-19**—2008 Freeway and Tollway Operations Conference  
For more information,
June 26-28—2008 TexITE Summer Meeting
   For more information,
   http://www.texite.org/summermeeting/

June 30-July 1—TxDOT Metro District Engineer
   Meeting

July 23-25—Texas Ports and Waterways Conference
   For more information,
   http://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/pw08/

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Please send email to news@ttimail.tamu.edu or call
Rick Davenport at (979) 862-3763.