1. **TTI Day Message—Leadership and Teamwork Begin with You**

It was clear that the 15th TTI Day, held April 29, was aptly named *Mission: Possible* after hearing from Director Dennis Christiansen in his State of the Institute presentation. “TTI is a very resilient agency,” Christiansen said as he thanked the approximately 400 employees in attendance for “staying all together” despite the budget challenges over the last year.

Christiansen emphasized numerous positive developments and initiatives, including:

- A 40-percent increase in non-Texas Department of Transportation expenditures. “It’s way beyond what we thought we could do,” Christiansen said.
- About $1 million in international contract work.
- The successful dissemination of the *2007 Urban Mobility Report*, which received “lead story status” for every major TV network and newspaper in the country.
- The current negotiations underway for implementing
TTI’s Universal Freight Shuttle. “This is potentially the biggest thing to come out of the Texas A&M University System, ever.”
• The overwhelmingly positive results from the employee Survey of Organizational Excellence.

Christiansen credited the staff for the accomplishments over the last year. “There’s no doubt that the people in this room are TTI’s greatest resource.”

In his keynote speech entitled “Leadership Makes the Mission Possible in a Changing World,” Dr. Dean Gage defined leadership and urged every individual to be an example to his or her team members. “Leaders are going somewhere, and they are able to persuade others to go with them,” he said.

Gage has extensive leadership experience including positions as executive vice president, provost and interim president of Texas A&M University, as well as numerous other professional, academic and civic leadership roles. He is currently the director of the Center for Executive Leadership in Veterinary Medicine for the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

“One person can make an impact,” Gage said. “Is that person you? I hope it is.”

Earlier in the day, the individual/teamwork link in achieving success was emphasized by Ron Crozier, the director of community relations for the Twin City Mission, which was the beneficiary of this year’s TTI Day charitable campaign. He told the story of a young girl who toured the Bryan, Texas, homeless shelter. The girl was so moved by the experience, she donated all she had—35 cents—to help out. Hearing of the donation, Bryan High School students conducted their own fundraiser and presented Twin City Mission with $1,500.


The Mission: Possible chair, Lance Bullard, announced that next year’s TTI Day will be held May 6. The chair will be Conference Coordinator Kerry Fillip.

“Please call her and volunteer to be on one of the TTI Day committees,” Bullard urged employees.
2. Employees Receive Awards at TTI Day

Ten employees were singled out April 29 during TTI Day for their excellence in research, technical support, and team work. The employee awards are funded with the support of Trinity Industries. Award winners are

- Research Technical Support—**Nada Trout**,  
- Research Support Staff—**Linda Chatham**,  
- Administrative Technical Support—**Brad Hoover**,  
- Administrative Support Staff—**Marilyn Keller**,  
- Administrative Professional—**Wally Simpson**,  
- New Researcher—**Jodi Carson**,  
- Researcher—**Tony Voigt**,  
- Senior Researcher—**Jerry Ullman**,  
- Charles J. “Jack” Keese Career Achievement for Agency Support—Susan Adams  
- Charley V. Wootan Career Achievement for Research—**Joe Button**.

3. TTI Day Team Award Has Record Number of Recipients

The 2007 Short Course Planning Committee was the winner of the Herbert H. Richardson Team Award during TTI Day. Headed up by **Mary Cearley**, special assistant to the agency director, the planning committee had the overwhelming task of arranging the opening session of the Texas Department of Transportation Short Course at Reed Arena, due to the temporary closure of Rudder, and the breakout sessions at the Memorial Student Center and Rudder Tower.

A total of 50 employees helped with the planning and were recognized at TTI Day.
4. TTI Council Tackles Transportation Challenges

Many of the 36 members of the TTI Council witnessed their first Riverside Campus crash test May 1 as part of their 2008 annual meeting in College Station. The anti-ram crash test for the U.S State Department involved a 15,000 pound truck traveling at 50 mph. Although the crash test was a highlight of the gathering, the subject of transportation challenges facing Texas and the nation dominated much of the discussion during the all-day event.

“Transportation decisions have never been as important as they are today,” Mike McKinney, chancellor of The Texas A&M University System, told the council members and others in attendance. McKinney told the group that Texas does not have the infrastructure to handle the expected future population growth. “It’s that simple. We’ve got to find ways of funding it.”

In his first presentation to the advisory council, Executive Director of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Amadeo Saenz discussed the funding challenges facing his agency. Later, during a round table discussion, the members talked about “big picture” transportation issues and the role that TTI should play in addressing those challenges. “TTI has been approached with increasing frequency by legislators and other leaders to provide input and analysis,” Associate Agency Director Bill Stockton said. “But oftentimes, a funding source is not available to support the research.”

TTI researchers updated the council members on various initiatives at the Institute. Steve Roop provided an update on the Universal Freight Shuttle, Tim Lomax presented highlights of the Urban Mobility Report and Russell Henk discussed the Teens in the Driver Seat program.

The council is comprised of distinguished, high-level transportation professionals from across the state; they are listed on the TTI Council web page.

View list of TTI Council members:
http://tti.tamu.edu/council/

Members of the TTI Council look over wreckage after witnessing a crash test as part of their annual meeting.
5. Bridges Leaves Legacy of Excellence, Compassion

Transportation professionals in Texas and across the country are reflecting on the lifetime achievements and visionary guidance of G. Sadler Bridges, who passed away April 16. Bridges’ career spanned five decades and included a pioneering transportation appointment with the Texas governor’s office, accolades from a U.S. vice president and debts of gratitude from numerous colleagues whose careers he helped inspire.

Bridges was first hired by TTI in 1967 after receiving degrees in business administration and economics at Texas A&M University. Bridges also pursued doctoral studies at Southern Methodist University. He was an assistant professor of economics at Texas A&M before he began his 40-year career at TTI.

“In many ways, Sadler is responsible for shaping and influencing programs and initiatives within the Institute that helped us develop into a world-class organization,” Director Dennis Christiansen said. “The impact Sadler had on the people and programs at TTI and beyond will secure the G. Sadler Bridges name a rightful place in transportation history. We owe him an enormous amount of gratitude.”

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6. TTI Anniversaries

10 Years

Nora Martinez, Administrative Assistant (TSC)
Glen Schroeder, Construction Technician (CEF)
William Williams, Assistant Research Engineer (CEF)
Todd Carlson, Associate Transportation Researcher (HUA)

15 Years

Tom Freeman, Engineering Research Associate (BMR)
Srinivasa Sunkari, Associate Research Engineer (DTL)

20 Years
7. TTI State Headquarters Breaks New Ground

Despite wind gusts of at least 30 mph, TTI staff and special guests celebrated the construction of its State Headquarters and Research Building April 30. The crowd gathered on site under a large tent in the newly completed parking lot for the new building. Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) dignitaries and Texas Transportation Department (TxDOT) officials were among the guest speakers. Director Dennis Christiansen moderated the event.

“Today we are pleased to be celebrating another milestone in our 58-year history,” Christiansen said. “Our first state headquarters building will accommodate the growth that TTI has experienced.”

The three-story, 66,000-square-foot building will house a traffic control materials research facility, TTI’s main administrative offices, and research and support space. The $18.8 million building will be located next to TTI’s Gibb Gilchrist Building in the Texas A&M University Research Park.

Rex Cottle, Trinity Industries senior vice president, detailed the two-decade relationship between TTI and Trinity Industries, a relationship that has produced numerous roadside safety products implemented around the world. “You, your researchers and staff are really jewels in the crown of the state of Texas,” Cottle said. “We are most appreciative of being a part of this celebration.”

“It is not this building that we celebrate here today, but the work that will be done in this building, the lives that will be saved, the families that will be spared grieving for the loss of a loved one, the product that will be moved and the jobs that will be created and preserved,” Bill Jones, chairman of the Board of Regents, told the crowd.

TTI’s State Headquarters and Research Building is scheduled for
completion in the fall of 2009.

About the wind:

- “The good news is the wind blew away the first 22 pages of my comments.” —Mike McKinney, chancellor, TAMUS
- “As an engineer like most people here, I’ve been calculating the load on this tent.” —G. Kemble Bennett, vice chancellor and dean of engineering, TAMUS
- “The nice thing to know is that TTI people who are all engineers are not getting up and leaving, so I feel very comfortable about that.” —Rex Cottle, senior vice president for development and strategic planning, Trinity Industries.
- “With all this wind, I hope the engineers and staff of the tent company are as competent as the engineers and staff at TTI.” —Bill Jones, chairman, TAMUS Board of Regents

8. Transportation Forum Urges Solutions

With new businesses “moving to Texas in droves,” Governor Rick Perry urged state lawmakers to come up with solutions to ease congestion. “If we can’t find a way to move their people, goods and services—they are going to leave.” Perry’s warning was part of his keynote speech to the 1,276 people attending the Third Annual Texas Transportation Forum in Austin, April 20-22.

The governor told the crowd that Texas’ population is growing by 1,500 people each day, which is the equivalent, the Aggie graduate said, of filling Kyle Field every 55 days. “This is a place of big challenges, not big excuses,” Perry said, referring to the stormy 2007 legislative session, which shunned his push to fund new roads with public-private partnerships. “Too often these debates over highways have been driven by emotion and not reason. Honest debate has been stifled, and progress has been sacrificed at the altar of politics.”

The two-day forum was dominated by conversations about Comprehensive Development Agreements (CDAs), deteriorating infrastructure, the motor fuels tax and the debate over earmarks in transportation bills.
Speakers like State Representative Mike Kruse, chairman of the House Transportation Committee, gave examples of why “the system is failing.” The legislator from Central Texas told the crowd that over the last 25 years, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) increased 100 percent, yet highway lane miles only increased 3 percent. Kruse also said that there has been a 425 percent increase in travel delay.

Other keynote speakers included Congressman John Mica of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson of the House Transportation Committee.

The event was hosted by the Texas Department of Transportation, Associated General Contractors of Texas, the Texas Good Roads Association and TTI.

The opening session of the forum included a video tribute to the late chair of the Texas Transportation Commission, Ric Williamson, who died December 30. Williamson was an adamant supporter of public-private partnerships. “With his passing, we certainly lost a clear, passionate voice,” Governor Perry said. “But the challenges that he vigorously fought to overcome have not gone away. If anything, those challenges have grown larger.”

9. TTI Patent Recipients Honored

Seven TTI researchers were among 30 Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) employees who were issued patents during the 2007 calendar year. They were honored April 4 during a Patents Award ceremony presented by the Office of Technology Commercialization and held at the Annenberg Presidential Conference Center. Five other TAMUS employees “whose research exemplified the spirit of innovation” received Innovation Awards.

The TTI employees and the products they designed were:

- Roger Bligh, Hayes Ross, Gene Buth, Lance Bullard, Dean Alberson and Akram Abu-Odeh—box beam terminal
- Alberson and Bullard—HEART™ crash cushion
- Buth, Alberson, Bullard, Bligh and Ross—cable anchor

Chancellor Mike McKinney poses with TTI employees who were honored during a Patents Award ceremony (l to r): Roger Bligh, Gene Buth, Akram Abu-Odeh, Lance Bullard and Dean Alberson. (Not pictured: Hayes Ross and Jean-Louis Briaud.)
Jean-Louis Briaud, TTI research engineer and Texas A&M University civil engineering professor, was a member of a team that received a patent for “a system and method for testing the compaction of soil.”

In his keynote speech, TAMUS Chancellor Mike McKinney said, “Four percent of the U.S. population [is composed of] engineers or scientists. They create the jobs for the other 96 percent of us. When the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas opened its doors in 1876, part of its land-grant mission was to make research available to the masses. That is still our mission.”

10. Federal Funding Accelerates Teen Driving Safety

With over 100 Texas high schools now deploying Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) initiatives, new federal funding totaling $343,000—announced by U.S. Rep. Ciro Rodriquez in April—will help this unique TTI teen driver safety program continue to grow.

TDS is America’s first peer-to-peer program that alerts young drivers to the distractions and behaviors that are responsible for the majority of teen accidents: driving at night, using a cell phone, texting, having too many teen passengers, speeding, not wearing a seat belt and drinking and driving. Every year, 6,000 teenagers die in U.S. car crashes. That’s more than 16 dead teenagers per day.

“We are, in fact, facing an epidemic and a public health crisis,” Rodriquez said at a San Antonio news conference April 7. “There is an important role for law enforcement and parents, but the most important role is the one taken on by young drivers. That’s what Teens in the Driver Seat is all about, and I want to congratulate the young people behind me.” The funding for TDS was part of a National Highway Transportation Safety Administration special appropriation approved by Congress.

Texas Transportation Commission Chairwoman Hope Andrade also spoke at the news conference. “We are here to announce a major step forward in our efforts to stop an epidemic that is the number one killer of teenagers,” she said. “What better way, then, to make them safer on the roadways...
than to have them carry the message to each other?”

Part of the money will help fund two inaugural safety summits planned for San Antonio and El Paso in the near future. The TDS-hosted events will bring law enforcement, medical professionals, teachers, legislators and, most importantly, teenagers together to examine the avoidable teen death crisis on the nation’s roadways.

“This money will go a long way in helping us continue to save lives,” said TDS Program Manager Russell Henk. “The enthusiastic support of Congressman Rodriguez and Chairwoman Andrade for Teens in the Driver Seat is greatly appreciated. The increased credibility that their support adds to our efforts is priceless.”

View media coverage:
San Antonio Business Journal
San Antonio Express-News

Visit TDS website:
http://www.tdriver.com

11. AAPO Honors TTI with Vision Award

Texas A&M University’s African-American Professional Organization (AAPO) presented TTI with a “Keeping the Vision” Award during the organization’s Scholarship Gala March 29.

“An active supporter of the African-American Professional Organization, TTI has been steadfast in their commitment to improve the diversity of Texas A&M University,” said AAPO President Albert Broussard in presenting the award. “TTI staff consistently supports the organization by volunteering to schedule meetings, laying out the bi-annual newsletter, and training webmasters to update and input information to the website and AAPO list serve. We will be indebted for many years to TTI for their assistance.”

TTI hosts the AAPO website, which was developed and designed by NIS staff who worked with the organization’s website committee. TTI also hosts the group’s monthly board meetings.

The “Keeping the Vision” awards were designed to publicly recognize the individuals, departments and organizations that
actively support AAPO’s goals and mission. The award is based on supporting the imperatives of the university’s Vision 2020 program.

The other Vision awards were presented to the Benz School of Floral Design, the Office of the Dean of Faculties and Associate Provost, the Office of Employee Services, and the Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies.

Visit AAPO website:
http://aapo.tamu.edu/

12. 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.

TTI construction celebration (The Eagle) May 1

Teen drivers may have to pass driving test (El Paso Times) April 30

Hot lane for Seattle (Seattle Times) April 28

Walkability survey (Times Record) April 28

Qatar road challenges (Gulf Times) April 22

Florida roadside assistance program may end (Palm Beach Post) April 17

Flashing yellow arrow for Tyler traffic lights (KLT-TV) April 15

Teen driving safety grant (Corpus Christi Caller-Times) April 14

Construction project delayed (Galveston County Daily News) April 13

Teen driving safety (San Antonio Express-News) April 13

Most congested cities (Forbes.com) April 10
Signal light engineering may help congestion *(Colorado Springs Independent)* April 10

North Texas congestion nation’s fastest growing *(KXAS-TV)* April 9

Minneapolis area congestion *(Twin Cities Daily Planet)* April 7

Local emissions/ozone levels *(Indianapolis Business Journal)* April 5

Pharr, TX border crossing study *(The Monitor)* April 4

Atlanta, GA transportation news *(Atlanta Progressive News)* April 1

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13. Erosion Control Lab Contributors Meet at TTI

On April 11, members of the Hydraulic, Sedimentation, and Erosion Control Laboratory (HSECL) Pooled Fund Project received updates and a tour of the TTI-operated lab, which is located at the Riverside Campus.

The annual meeting allows contributors of the HSECL Pooled Fund Project to see the lab in operation and view improvements. The state departments of transportation (DOTs) contributing to the lab’s operational budget include Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Texas, Utah and Virginia.

In exchange for their contributions, the DOTs are given priority in receiving specific test results and use of the lab for erosion and sediment control research.

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14. Easterwood Airport and TTI Seek Collaboration

TTI researchers met with John Happ, director of aviation at Easterwood Airport, April 11 to discuss possible areas of collaboration on aviation and airport research and education. The meeting, which included a tour of the various facilities at Easterwood, built on previous discussions between TTI personnel and Happ.

“All ideas that you might come up with that can improve aviation, I am open to anything, especially in the field of aviation education,” Happ told members of a TTI delegation. “You will have my support.”

The meeting gave TTI employees an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the airport environment so they might seek aviation-related research projects. TTI researchers who attended the meeting included Jeff Borowiec, Katie Turnbull, Gene Buth, Bob Brydia, Curtis Morgan, Jett McFalls, Beverly Storey and Bob De Roche.

“There are a lot of areas of shared interest,” says Borowiec, who has extensive experience with airport system planning and research. “Perimeter fencing, multimodal freight, landscape architecture and intelligent transportation systems, just to name a few. I foresee a time when we will work together on projects.”

Happ, who became airport director in 1999, is a retired Air Force pilot and a 1967 graduate of Texas A&M University. He also served as a professor of aerospace studies at Texas A&M. His goals for the airport include the construction of hangars that would accommodate larger jets and, if the demand occurs, an additional runway.

Visit Easterwood Airport website: http://www.easterwoodairport.com/
15. Why Your Customer Should Come First

The importance of keeping the customer happy was the focus of the latest research development seminar held April 10, organized by **Associate Agency Director Katie Turnbull**.

With 25 years of experience working for the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County—which included a role as senior vice president of operations—**Jeff Arndt** presented “Just Tryin’ to Keep the Customers Satisfied.” This humor-filled presentation included lessons learned from attending a Disney University Professional Development Program.

Arndt outlined numerous reasons why customer service should be a priority for researchers, including the fact that it costs six times more to attract a new customer than it costs to retain an existing customer. He also pointed out that customers who have bad experiences share that with others ten times over.

Arndt suggested that each research unit create a mission statement that reflects a customer orientation.

16. Annual Communication Competition Honors TTI Employees

TTI Communications was the recipient of eight awards presented at the 22nd Annual International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Viva, Brazos Bravo! Ceremony, which honors the work of area business communicators.

**Vicky Nelson** and **Jim Lyle** received the top Brazos Bravo! award in the brochure design category for their work on “Destination Aggieland: Texas A&M University Freshman Admissions Guide.” The brochure also received an Award of Excellence in the promotional writing category and was presented to Nelson and clients Lindsey Bacon, Michele Majors and Sharon McCord.

An Award of Excellence was also awarded to **Brandon Webb, Julian Letton, Mark Coppock, Anna Joe Mitchell** and **Marie Ethridge** in their Internal Communications entry entitled “V is for Voucher.”

Awards of Merit were presented in five categories:
• Media Relations—Michelle Hoelscher, Richard Cole, Rick Davenport, Tobey Lindsey, Bernie Fette, Tim Lomax and David Schrank for the 2007 Urban Mobility Report;
• Printed Magazine—Kelly West, Chris Sasser, Stacy Schnettler, Lyle, Webb, Chris Pourteau and Davenport for Texas Transportation Researcher;
• Printed Communications—West, Nelson, Lyle and David Dennis for “Driving Clean Across Texas Calend-air”;
• Feature Writing—Webb, Pourteau and Jeff Borowiec for a Wingtips article entitled “Savoring Stephenville” and
• Writing for the Web—Davenport for “Parent-Taught Drivers at Greater Risk for Crashes/Injuries.”

17. UTCM Colloquium Tackles Stated Choice Modeling

A survey technique long used by new-product marketers to determine, for example, what type of shampoo consumers might buy, stated choice modeling (SCM) “has a direct application” in transportation projects. W. Douglass Shaw, the presenter of the latest University Transportation Center for Mobility (UTCM) lunchtime colloquium April 14, had many examples of how SCM might be used by transportation researchers.

Shaw is a professor with the Texas A&M University departments of Agricultural Economics and Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences (RPTS).

“Stated choice modeling has some advantages in transportation, especially because it gives respondents the chance to choose from several alternatives that don’t yet actually exist,” Shaw told the crowd. For example, SCM can help determine what factors might be important in establishing new transportation routes or making improvements in existing ones.

Shaw’s presentation was entitled “Smile! You’re on Traffic Light Camera: Applying Stated Choice Modeling to Transportation.” The title was derived from a project by the agricultural economics and RPTS graduate students who are using SCM to assess College Station’s existing and future red light camera programs.
In the project, the students are determining how the red light cameras affect driver behavior, as well as road, traffic and pedestrian safety, at key intersections in Bryan and College Station. Their preliminary results indicate that the assessed fines are an important attribute of the future program. The speed limit at those intersections also matters.

TTI researchers **Tim Lomax** and **Mark Burris** are using SCM on current transportation projects, including an examination of the potential for congestion lanes on Texas freeways. Shaw will be helping Burris and a graduate student on a UTCM-funded project this summer.

**Visit the UTCM website:**
http://utcm.tamu.edu/

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**18. Reminders/Calendar**

**May 9**—Understanding the Teacher Retirement System  
Henry D. Smith Operations Complex  
TEEX Brayton Fire Field  
Room 101A-D  
1:00-3:00 p.m.

**May 15**—TxDOT RMC supplemental proposals due to RDO

**May 26**—Memorial Day Holiday

**May 27-30**—2008 Transportation Planning Conference  
For more information,  
http://tti.tamu.edu/conferences/tpp08/

**June 26-28**—2008 TexITE Summer Meeting  
For more information,  
http://www.texite.org/summermeeting/

**June 30-July 1**—TxDOT Metro District Engineer Meeting
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.