Secretary of State visits TTI

The Texas Secretary of State, Hope Andrade, visited the El Paso region in mid-May with the objective of learning first hand the border crossing congestion challenges that commuters and industries in border communities face and to understand how these challenges affect the competitiveness of Texas.

As part of her visit, the Secretary visited the TTI El Paso office where she met the staff and was briefed on the office’s research project portfolio.

Secretary Andrade invited TTI’s Rafael Aldrete and Russell Henk to join her and her staff for a tour of all five commercial and passenger border facilities in the El Paso region (Stanton, Paso Del Norte, Bridge of the Americas and Zaragoza bridges in Texas, and Santa Teresa, in New Mexico).

The Secretary leaned on TTI for technical insight into the operation of the border crossings and the relevance of the different research projects TTI has underway to apply innovative technological solutions to border wait time measurement. The tour was led by Rafael and Russell were also requested to accompany the Secretary to a dinner meeting and a private luncheon with the Mayor of El Paso (and his key staff).

Authorities that also accompanied the Secretary for the bridge tours: Ana Hinojosa, US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) El Paso Director of Field Operations; Jane Shang, City of El Paso Deputy City Manager for Mobility; Said Larbi-Sherif, Director of International Bridges; and Capt. Lambert Cantu, of TxDOT.

Trying to reason with hurricane season

June 1 officially kicked off the dreaded and often unpredictable hurricane season. What we do know, is that this season is expected to be “near-normal.” Houston and Galveston TTI staff know all too well how a storm can directly affect them: last year some TTIers worked feverishly to provide on-site assistance to local agencies at TranStar during Hurricane Ike.

Some of the staff in the Houston office work closely with the local TxDOT and DPS officials regarding hurricane evacuation planning, deployment and operation of the ITS components needed to monitor traffic operations, reverse flow operational planning for freeways, as well as the collection and review of traffic data relating to evacuations.

This year the staff is getting ready to assist TxDOT and other agencies within TranStar on an as-needed basis if any evacuations are necessary. Typically, TTI staff make additions and modifications to the Houston TranStar web site to provide the most updated information to the general public as well as doing traffic operational analysis and provide guidance during evacuation events.
RSAs in Mexico

In February, the TTI-El Paso office was invited to participate in the Infrastructure Forum, organized by the Mexican Chamber of Construction Industry (CMIC) at the University of Sonora. More than 400 attendees representing civil engineering professionals, students and government officials took part in the presentation given by Arturo Bujanda. The topic of the presentation was Road Safety Audits (RSAs). The objectives of the presentation were to introduce RSAs as a useful tool to reduce traffic fatalities in Mexico; to help local agencies understand the RSAs concepts; and to assist local institutions with the orientation of their transportation strategies in order to make the implementation of RSAs possible to Mexico.

Bujanda shared the scene with nationally recognized Mexican leaders like Eduardo Bours (Governor of the State of Sonora); Clemente Poon (Mexican Highway’s General Director); Luis E. Mercado (founder of the national journal “El Economista”); and Dr. Roberto Newell (founder of the “Mexican Competitiveness Institute”). The presentation was very interactive and well received by the students who identified with Arturo.

The Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) program is adding to its list of honors with the news that the program has earned a pair of Videographer Awards for television spots now on the air across Texas.

The first public service announcement, “I’m a teenager,” features a series of teens speaking directly to the camera, relating first-hand the dangers faced by young drivers and the urgency of the issue in general. The spot was produced in both English and Spanish.

The second message, “Buckle up, dude,” is the program’s first music video spot, addressing the lower-than-average rate of seat belt use by teens -- particularly when teens are passengers in the back seat. Together, the two spots have aired more than 2,000 times on TV stations statewide through an agreement with the Texas Association of Broadcasters.

Considered one of the most coveted awards in the video industry, the honors recognize efforts from network news operations, cable television, advertising agencies and a wide range of other organizations. Both of the TDS entries were recognized for their excellence.

David Martin and Clyde Hance were responsible for the shooting, editing and production of the projects, with production assistance from Morgan McKay, Krizia Martinez, Llubia Corella, Shawna Russell, Sam Holland, Jen Ross, Richard Cole, Russell Henk and Bernie Fette.

To watch the PSA’s visit http://www.t-driver.com/start/videos/.
Meetings and workshops

Intelligent Transportation Society of Texas (ITS) is holding its annual meeting from November 11-13, 2009 in Galveston, Texas, at the Hotel Galvez. Training will take place on Wednesday, November 11, while technical presentations will take place on Thursday, November 12, and Friday, November 13. More information on the annual meeting can be found at http://www.itstexas.org. ITS Texas is actively planning the technical portion of the annual meeting program. If you have a topic you’d like to present that fits into one of the session areas, please e-mail Robert E. Brydia.

The Transportation Research Center (TRC) at the University of Florida is hosting a workshop on Roundabouts on August 18, 2009 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Orlando North Hotel in Maitland, Florida. The workshop has been developed for transportation professionals interested in learning the latest in roundabout design and operations. Six Professional Development Hours (PDHs) will be offered. To learn more about the workshop visit the web site at http://trc.ce.ufl.edu/roundabouts_workshop_2009.html

TTI-El Paso helps at El Papalote Daycare

The TTI - El Paso Office participated in a spring community event at El Papalote Daycare. The daycare is a non-profit organization that provides services to local children with disabilities. With a full-office participation, employees were asked to make a donation for food and drinks for the children, daycare staff, volunteers and TTI employees.

In addition, TTI employees formed four groups and each group designed a set of interactive “transportation-related” activities that would inform the children about safety practices and traffic signs and symbols. The groups developed amazing activities which took place during the visit to El Papalote Daycare. All of the children had an opportunity to participate and learn about important transportation issues.

News

Susan Adams, Juan Villa and Teresa Qu discussed the challenges and opportunities of contracting international work at the International Development Seminar on April 23. Terri Parker talked about how to gather input from TTI employees for the development of a business plan for international research and for the international component of a TTI marketing plan.

On May 12 and 13 Melisa Finley, Debbie Jasek, LuAnn Theiss and Brooke Ullman conducted workshops at two middle schools in Killeen, Texas to introduce 7th and 8th grade students to the transportation field and engineering. Students participated in an introduction presentation and four breakout activities where they designed their own sign, built and raced a Zoom Mobile, found transportation in the news, and got an up-close look at some transportation gadgets. Overall, they reached approximately 150 students. Thanks to everyone that donated items for the teacher and student gift bags.
It took only 17 years and 31 tries, but **Gary Thomas** finally went to Washington D.C. on a trip that had nothing to do with work. No conference, no meetings, no project work, and no ITE business. He and his son, Cameron, went to the NCAA Division I Hockey Tournament on April 8-12. One notable highlight of the trip was a visit to Rep. Chet Edward’s office. Rep. Edwards was not in D.C. at the time, but one of his staffers (in photo) gave the Thomas’ a special treat by bringing them onto the floor of the House chamber where they sat in the front row of seats. Cameron sat where the Secretary of Defense sits during State of the Union addresses.

**Ed Seymour**, who is usually traveling to far away destinations as Beijing, China or Doha, Qatar, on international research proposals, spent much of the last two months in the great state of Texas! Along with others from TTI Leadership Team, he visited with TxDOT District Engineers in Abilene, Odessa, El Paso, San Antonio and wrapping up with the Dallas District in mid-June. Ed also visited TxDOT Division Directors Carlos Lopez (Traffic) and John Campbell (Right-of-Way). The visits are to determine the research needs and to follow-up on the interagency work activities with each area. The Leadership Team’s goal is to visit all 25 districts by the end of June. **Rafael Aldrete-Sanchez, Russell Henk, Steven Venglar and Cesar Quiroga** made visits with Seymour to their respective TxDOT Districts and/or Divisions. **Chris Poe** and **Curtis Beaty** will join him in the Dallas District.

**Marsha Anderson-Bomar** will be attending the National Highway Institute (NHI) trainer training course at NHI head quarters in Arlington, Virginia in July. Bomar will be attending the Transportation Research Board mid-year meeting in Seattle and will also be meeting to finalize the conference program.

**Jerry Ullman** attended the TRB Roadside Safety Design mid-year committee meeting in San Antonio. He gave a presentation on the 23 CFR 630 Subpart K regulations, and facilitated discussions about forming a joint subcommittee on positive protection between the Work Zone Traffic Control, Roadside Safety Design, and Construction Management committees.

**Brooke** and **Jerry Ullman** traveled to Hartford, CT (via a detour through Providence, RI) to teach the NHI course on Advanced Work Zone Management and Design. Travel problems (both going and coming back) have convinced Brooke and Jerry that Cleveland is where air travel goes to die.

**Kay Fitzpatrick** attended the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) spring meeting in Phoenix and gave a presentation on “Safety Effectiveness of the HAWK Pedestrian Treatment.”
Rafael Aldrete-Sanchez traveled to Manila to deliver a workshop on risk analysis and guidelines to structure public-private partnerships in infrastructure projects for staff of the Philippines National Economic Development Agency, and several other national infrastructure agencies, including the Department of Highways and the Department of Transportation. Aldrete-Sanchez also traveled to Portland, Oregon, to present a paper at the Transportation Research Forum annual meeting.

Jeff Shelton traveled to Portland, Oregon to present at the annual PTV America, Inc. User’s Group conference. The presentation entitled “Multi-Resolution Simulation Assignment Modeling Methods for Analyzing Truck Restricted Lanes” used multiple simulation tools at both the mesoscopic and microscopic level to analyze the feasibility of restricting vehicles with three or more axels from the left-most lane on I-10 in El Paso (April 29-May 1st). Shelton also attended and presented at the TRB Applications Planning Conference in Houston, TX. The presentation entitled “Toward a Consistent and Robust Integrated Multi-Resolution Modeling Approach for Traffic Analysis” showcased the new DynusT-VISSIM Conversion (DVC) tool that the El Paso office and the University of Arizona have developed (May 18th – 21st).

Edward Brackin, Jeremy Johnson, & Doh-Whon Lee spent more than two weeks in El Paso, Texas, doing emission studies on Mexican Drayage trucks, for the Air Quality Group. This was a federal project. Johnson and Lee are back again for another two weeks.

From May 27 through 29, Edward Brackin and Ryan Longmire traveled to San Antonio to install DCS equipment for a Federal Highway project.

Brooke Ullman traveled to Wyoming for two weeks with co-workers Sandra Schoeneman, Jon Re, Andrew Persyn and Sarah Young for a project with Wyoming DOT. After a long day of data collection, they were able to travel up to the mountains near where they were staying.
Welcome to TTI!

Please welcome Nicole Rice and Brian Jones. Both Nicole and Brian join the Houston office as student technicians for the summer. Nicole is pursuing an electrical engineering degree at Vanderbilt University, and Brian is pursuing a civil engineering degree at the University of Southern California.

Please welcome Karen Fierro to the TTI - El Paso office as the newest full-time member. Andrea Chacon, is a new student worker currently enrolled at UTEP. She will be assisting the TTI - El Paso office with administration duties. Also welcome Andy Cole, a junior Civil Engineering major at the University of Florida, working this summer in the Dallas Office as a student technician. Welcome to TTI!

Goodbye

The Operations and Design Division says goodbye to RJ Porter. RJ has been with Signs and Markings group for about 2 years. He was a valuable asset to the division. His last day with TTI was on May 29. “We will miss you and good luck in your new career.”
In our thoughts and prayers

Andy Ballard was part of a multi-vehicle car crash that involved a pickup truck flying over a highway median and onto the roof of his van. Police said a man driving a BMW was westbound on Loop 410 near Fredericksburg Road at about 12:30 p.m. when he collided with the pickup. The truck flipped over the median and landed on Andy’s van that was eastbound on Loop 410. [http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/fatal_accident_closes_loop_410.html](http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/fatal_accident_closes_loop_410.html)

The crash left Andy with a fractured cheek bone, bruised brain, broken left arm and hand. However, after a successful surgery and lots of prayer from loved ones, Andy has started rehabilitation and recovery looks promising.

To stay up to date on the latest with Andy and to leave him and his family an encouraging message, visit: [www.prayingforandy.blogspot.com](http://www.prayingforandy.blogspot.com)

Happy birthday to you...

May 2 - Mark Burris
May 10 - Bob Brydia
May 11 - Jeffrey Shelton
May 13 - Jordan Easterling
May 15 - Sunil Patil
May 16 - Steve Venglar
May 18 - Brooke Ullman
May 19 - Jerry Le
May 20 - Robert De Roche
May 21 - Rahul Putha
May 26 - Jeffrey Miles
May 28 - Jonathon Tydlacka
May 31 - Brian Jones

June 2 - Susan Paulus
June 10 - Gary Barricklow
June 10 - Chung-Wei Shen
May 16 - Darryl Puckett
June 20 - James Campbell
June 24 - Shamanth Kuchangi
June 25 - Christina Madsen
June 27 - Gary Thomas
June 28 - Liang Ding
June 28 - Derek Ladd
June 29 - Kwaku Obeng-Boampong
June 30 - Ganesh Karkee
June 30 - Rodrigo Torres

July 1 - Llubia Corella
July 1 - Samantha Holland
July 4 - Andrew Frimpong
July 7 - Fan Ye
July 10 - Laura Naquin
July 14 - Paden Portillo
July 16 - Byung-Jung Park
July 16 - Wendy Ealding
July 16 - Ridwan Quaium
July 17 - Marsha Bomar
July 23 - Curtis Beaty
July 23 - Yingfeng (Eric) Li
July 24 - Kathy Montemayor
July 25 - Krizia Martinez
July 26 - Roma Garg
July 28 - Lisa Palmer
July 29 - Jim Bonneson
July 30 - Amanda Pina

"Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work." --Vince Lombardi