MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

TTI hosted the TxDOT Metro District Engineers meeting again this year. The District Engineers from Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio met in College Station on May 24-25. The Deputy District Engineers were also included in the meeting for the first time.

The meeting started with a working lunch with TxDOT personnel highlighting issues and priorities in their districts. TTI had an hour after lunch to provide updates on a few research projects. The TxDOT staff met on their own for most of the afternoon and the next morning. TTI hosted the DEs and Deputy DEs for dinner.

The working lunch provided a great opportunity to gain further insight into the projects and issues in the metro districts. While many of the issues discussed are not new, they bear repeating as SPP&E researchers consider FY 06 RMC projects statements and other opportunities to promote needed research.

Toll projects and toll-related issues were identified as priorities in all of the districts. While the nature of projects and issues described varied based on past experience with tolling and the existence of a toll authority or Regional Mobility Authority (RMAs), some common concerns emerged. These concerns included communicating with the public and policymakers on the need for tolls and the benefits of toll projects, financial arrangements with toll authorities and RMAs, criteria for reviewing comprehensive development agreements, and negotiating pass through tolls.

A number of issues related to managed lane projects were identified. These issues included lane separation methods, signing for multiple user groups, enforcement, and communicating use requirements to the public and travelers. Rail relocation issues were identified as important concerns in most metro districts.

Other issues identified in multiple districts include privatization of routine functions, groups promoting contact sensitive design, planning and funding projects in rural/urban transition areas, driver behavior, accommodating bicycle use on rural roadways for recreation and urban roads for commuting, and right-of-way acquisition.

More detailed notes will be circulated and follow-up efforts will be undertaken as appropriate. The Metro DEs agreed to meet in College Station again next year.

Meeting with TxDOT personnel is a great way to establish working relationships and to help identify research needs. Please let me or your program manager know if there are groups or individuals you think should be invited to TTI.

Thanks,

Katie
Welcome!

David Ungemah has joined the Austin Liaison Office as an Associate Research Scientist. David was previously with UrbanTrans Consultants in Denver, Colorado. He has also worked for the City of Boulder and Adams County in Colorado. David holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Colorado and a Masters of Planning from the University of Minnesota, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. He will be working on value pricing, managed lanes, HOV, TDM, and tolling projects for TxDOT, FHWA, and other sponsors.

Welcome David!

Goodbye

Lisa Day, Urban Analysis Program, has taken a job with Kelly, Brown & Root. She will be working South of Baghdad providing support to U.S. troops in Iraq.

Karen Eddleman, Environmental Management, resigned to spend more time with her children and family.

We with both Lisa and Karen the best of luck in their endeavors!

Congratulations!

Kimberly Phillips, Environmental Management Program, was awarded the 2005 Sally Kallam Award by Leadership Arlington. The award was presented at the Leadership Arlington annual meeting and graduation dinner on May 5. Kimberly was recognized for her leadership in the community and her contributions to Leadership Arlington.

Birthdays

June
Beverly Storey 6/5
Derrold Foster 6/7
Darryl Puckett 6/16
Zack Graham 6/17
Mark Ojah 6/20
Ed Pultorak 6/30
Larry White 6/30

July
Shawn Turner 7/15
Cynthia Lowery 7/20
Casey Toycen 7/22
Tim Lomax 7/25
Gary Lobough 7/26
Teresa Qu 7/30