Message from the Associate Director

I apologize for the delay in getting this month’s newsletter out. Like many of you, it seems that work has been extra busy the last few months.

One of the projects occupying a good deal of my time has been helping TxDOT’s Public Transportation Division with a series of listening sessions on the development of a new funding formula for small urban and rural transit systems.

The first session was a videoconference linking all 25 TxDOT districts. It was the first time TxDOT has used the videoconference network for a public meeting and it worked very well.

The videoconference lasted from 5:30 p.m. to about 7:45 p.m. Participants in all 25 districts were able to make brief comments and to hear from others around the state. The feedback from participants on the videoconference was very positive.

The Polycom links to all the TTI offices has greatly enhanced our internal communications. The TxDOT videoconference made me think of other ways we could effectively use the Polycom system in the future for both internal and external meetings. For example, staff in the Arlington Office have talked with TxDOT staff about the potential of linking into the TxDOT system.

Please let me or your Program Manager know if you have any ideas on the use of the Polycom system.

Thanks!

Katie

Safety Center Grant Awards

Harlow Landphair’s proposal on Measuring Safety Perception in the Pedestrian Environment was selected as one of the projects funded in the first round of TTI’s Safety Center Grant program. A total of 26 proposals were submitted and 8 were selected for funding. Only two of the 26 proposals were from SPP&E researchers. A second round of proposals will be due in May. SPP&E’ers serving on the Selection Committee were Shawn Turner and Ginger Goodin.

Spring RMC Meetings

TxDOT has provided the following information on the schedule for the Spring RMC meetings at the Red Lion Hotel in Austin.

- RMC 1 and 2 – Wednesday, June 9, 2004, 10:00 am. and Thursday, June 10, 2004, 8:00 a.m.
- RMC 3, 4, and 5 – Monday, June 7, 2004, 1:00 p.m. and Tuesday, June 8, 2004, 8:00 a.m.

More information should be available soon from TxDOT on the projects scheduled for presentation at each of the RMCs.
New Arrival

Ed Hard, Transportation Planning Program, and his wife, Heidi, welcomed their third child, George Mason Hard, on January 15th. He weighed 7lbs, 13 oz and was 19 ¾ inches long.

Congratulations Ed and Heidi!

Welcome

Yatin Rathod joined the System Operation Management Program as an Assistant Transportation Researcher in January. Yatin worked in the program as a Graduate Student Worker. Yatin has a Bachelor’s Degree in Civil Engineering from Sardor Patel University in India and a Masters of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at Arlington. He will be working primarily on TxDOT IAC projects for the Dallas and Fort Worth Districts.

Jennifer Barry recently joined the SPP&E as an Office Associate for the Transportation Planning Program, Transportation Modeling Program, the System Planning Program, and the Center for Air Quality Studies. She is originally from San Antonio and has been in the B/CS area for 14 years. Jennifer has spent the last 28 years in the insurance industry, most recently for Anco Insurance. Her hobbies include Vintage WWII aircraft, motorcycles (Harleys), and working on older cars. Jennifer replaces Mary Hewitt, who took a position with the Texas Engineering Extension Service.

Welcome Yatin and Jennifer!

Birthdays

March
Joanna Rakes 3/1
George Dresser 3/9
Steve Farnsworth 3/10
David Schrank 3/13
Mary Levien 3/13
Lauren Geng 3/23
Karen Eddleman 3/27

April
John Wikander 4/2
Aruna Nathu 4/8
Tim Forrest 4/13
Sung Ho Chang 4/16
David Ellis 4/20
Robin Rabinowitz 4/22
Bonnie Duke 4/24
Charles Bell 4/25