Message from the Associate Director

Researchers in the SPP&E are working on projects for numerous sponsors at the federal, state, and local levels. While TxDOT continues to be a major sponsor for work in many programs, SPP&E research activities reflect a diverse funding base.

The IAC’s with TxDOT districts and divisions, the RMC program, and the Implementation program represent the core of many SPP&E programs. Researchers have developed strong working relationships with TxDOT staff throughout the state in conducting projects in all these programs.

Researchers are also assisting other state agencies, such as the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, on projects addressing critical issues. Researchers are helping DART, Houston METRO, and other transit agencies in the state.

SPP&E researchers have been successful at winning NCHRP and TCRP projects over the years. Researchers are developing and teaching NHI and NTI courses on different topics.

SPP&E’ers continue to conduct researcher projects for FHWA, primarily through the indefinite quantities (IDIQ) solicitations. TTI is part of the Battelle team on the ITS and the Operations Core Business Unit IDIQ contracts. The Institute is part of the Battelle team on the upcoming Environmental IDIQ and the Cambridge Systematics, Inc. team on the upcoming Planning IDIQ.

The IDIQ contracts work a little differently than other solicitations. First, a team must be selected through a competitive procurement. Typically, FHWA will select two or three teams on a specific IDIQ. FHWA then issues RFPs to the selected teams.

Once an RFP is issued, the team leader (Battelle or Cambridge Systematics, Inc.), asks the consulting firms and universities on the team to indicate their interest and to outline their qualifications. The lead firm selects the team member or members to respond to the specific RFP. FHWA reviews the proposals from all teams and selects the one that best meets their needs.

The IDIQ process thus involves first being on a team that is selected by FHWA to receive the RFP’s. We sometimes call this getting to the dance. Second, TTI has to be selected by the lead firm to respond to an RFP. We finally get to actually dance if the proposal with TTI is selected by FHWA.

Good researchers continually look for new research opportunities and new sponsors. The upcoming TxDOT project statement process, the Safety Center grant program, and the SWUTC research program all provide opportunities for developing new projects. I encourage you to take advantage of all these opportunities.

Thanks!
Katie

Harlow Landphair received the Distinguished Member of the Year Award from the Texas Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). The award, which is given annually in recognition of outstanding professional achievement, was presented at the Texas ASLA Chapter meeting in Dallas on April 15. Congratulations Harlow!
Staff Activities

Ginger Goodin was the keynote speaker at the Excellence in Environmental Awareness luncheon at the State Conference of the League of Women Voters in Austin on April 17th. The title of Ginger’s speech was Transportation and the Environment.

Michael Morris, Director of Transportation for the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) noted the efforts of Marty Boardman, Charlie Bell, Dennis Perkinson, and Larry White in a letter to Brian Bochner. Michael recognized their assistance in gathering data and performing analyses for emission inventories for the NCTCOG area. Congratulations Marty, Charlie, Dennis, and Larry!

Two SPP&E researchers gave presentations at the ITS America Annual Meeting in San Antonio on April 26-28. Tim Lomax was a panelist at the session on Misfits: ITS and Systems Operations vs. the Planning Process. Ginger Goodin gave a presentation on The Challenge of HOT Lanes: Operations and Enforcement. Darryl Puckett also helped with the Houston METRO exhibit, which included the MOC bus.

An article by Katie Turnbull was published in the January/February issue of TRNews. The article, “Planning the Road Ahead with Market Research,” was based on a recent NCHRP project developing a transportation planning market research notebook.