ITS Texas

Fall 2006

President's Message

I hope all had a wonderful and safe summer. I know those along the coast had a much more relaxing summer than last year. Yet while the Gulf waters have been fairly calm, our colleagues in the western part of Texas battled floods not seen in decades.

Throughout the summer, your ITS Texas Board has been working hard. ITS Texas sponsored a training seminar in late May. The seminar covered all aspects of wireless communications, a technology becoming more popular in the industry. For those unable to attend our May training seminar, the course will be offered in November as part of our annual meeting.

Speaking of our annual meeting, ITS Primetime will be held on November 15-17, 2006 in Houston, Texas. Your officers and board members have been hard at work developing a program spotlighting ITS today and tomorrow. Click on the ITS Texas website (www.itstexas.org) to get all the latest information, read the program and register.

One of the meeting highlights is the presentation of the ITS Texas awards. The awards recognize the advances Texas is making to utilize technology to solve transportation issues. The awards cannot occur without people or projects being nominated. If you know of someone who has gone above and beyond or a project that has demonstrated technology solving transportation issues, let the awards committee know. Email myself, Al Kosik or Natalie Bettger with a one page summary of your nominated project or individual.

The board is also looking for those wanting to continue the rich tradition of ITS Texas by serving as an officer or board member. Nominations are open. Contact any current ITS officer or board member with your nomination.

Don't forget to mark your calendar and plan to be in Houston in November.

Duane E Hartman

2006 ITS Texas President

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Integrated Corridor Management (ICM) Program

Efforts to combat urban congestion include a variety of policies, strategies, and technologies to improve performance of the transportation system, but these have typically been developed for one specific network at a time (i.e. roadways, or rail, or bus). However, integrating these efforts among adjacent networks throughout a corridor will provide ways for transportation agencies to fully use operations and ITS technologies to increase mobility and reduce congestion.

Through a competitive application process, FHWA selected eight sites that have agreed to pioneer the development and demonstration of the ICM concept over the next five years; **three of the eight sites are in Texas!** Each "ICM Pioneer Site" will conduct technical work in three stages:

- Stage One is the initial process in which each of the eight ICM Pioneer Sites will develop a site-specific Concept of Operations (ConOps) and Requirements document. Stages Two and Three are optional and are dependent on each site's ability to successfully complete Stage One.

- Up to four ICM Pioneer Sites will be selected to participate in Stage Two. The sites selected will have their proposed ICM Concept (as identified in the Stage One ConOps and Requirements documents) analyzed and modeled using USDOT-provided resources, methodology, and tools.

- Stage Three is for demonstration. Up to four of the original ICM Pioneer Sites will be selected by the U.S. DOT as Pioneer Demonstration Sites and will receive funding for demonstrations, up to $10,000,000 for the total program.

Each of the eight ICM Pioneer Sites features a corridor with unique configurations and

characteristics that represent many other corridors across the nation. In many instances, these sites have blazed other paths in relation to implementing components of ICM. All have implemented real-time signal control on their arterials; many have implemented HOV and value pricing; others have advanced bus operations that include express bus and Bus Rapid Transit services. All these operational capabilities contribute to the array of ICM strategies that can be implemented in the various corridors to demonstrate the many aspects of ICM.

1. Oakland, CA: I-880 (from SR 237 in the south to I-580/I-80 in the north).

2. San Diego, CA: I-15 (from SR 52 in San Diego to SR 78 in Escondido).

3. Montgomery County, MD: I-270 (from the capital beltway to the Fredrick/Montgomery County Line with I-270 as the west border and the Metro red line and MD 355 as the east border).

4. Minneapolis, MN: I-394 (from the Minneapolis central business district to the Hennepin County line with TH 55 to the north and TH7 to the south).

5. Dallas, TX: US-75 (from downtown Dallas to SH 121 with the North Dallas Toll Way to the west and various arterials to the east).

6. Houston, TX: IH-10 and US-290 (with US-290 as the north border, West Park Toll Road to the south; SH-99 on the west and IH-610 to the east).

7. San Antonio, TX: IH-10 West (from IH-35 in downtown San Antonio to Loop 1604).

8. Seattle, WA: I-5 (from Airport Way in the south to Jackson Street in the north).

Details of the ICM Program can be found at http://www.itsdocs.fhwa.dot.gov/icms/icms_pioneer.htm .

LEGISLATION

The Texas Legislature will convene for its 80th Regular Session at noon on January 9, 2007. Pre-filing for bills begins on November 13, 2006.

The TxDOT Government and Business Enterprises Division is trusted with four crucial department business areas: State Legislative Affairs, Federal Legislative Affairs, Marketing and Research. The State and Federal legislative sections manage all of the agency's business before the Texas Legislature and the United States Congress.

Several issues have been identified for discussion this session. Near the top has to be capitalizing the Rail Relocation Fund; it needs a funding source.

Other issues for State transportation include the point of collection for the State fuel tax, reviewing utility accommodation, and sobriety check points. Keep a finger on the pulse of the 80th Regular Session for these and other issues.

STATE /LOCAL ISSUES

Flashing Yellow Arrow Gets Interim Approval from FHWA

On March 20, 2006 the FHWA issued a memorandum informing the public of the decision to allow the optional use of the flashing yellow arrow (FYA) for permissive left turn displays. Following over 10 years of research, the following key findings were made:

The FYA was found to be the best overall alternative to the circular green as the permissive signal display for a left-turn movement

FYA was found to have a high level of understanding and correct response by left-turn drivers and a lower fail-critical rate than the circular green.

The FYA display in a separate signal face for the left-turn movement offers more versatility in field application. It is capable of being operated in any of the various modes of left-turn operation by time of day, and is easily programmed to avoid the "yellow trap" associated with some permissive turns at the end of the circular green display.

The memo describes the applications that it may be used for, the modes of operation, the signal face arrangement, signal face location and appropriate signal displays. An agency wishing to implement this operation must submit an application to FHWA and agree to its conditions of interim approval. For more information please contact Scott Wainwright at FHWA at scott.wainwright@fhwa.dot.gov.

Houston TranStar Wins National Award

HOUSTON (November 1, 2006) – As many of the region's inhabitants boarded up their windows and collected their personal belongings to evacuate Hurricane Rita's expected path, they accessed Houston TranStar's Web site for continuous, up-to-date information about traffic on the area's major thoroughfares.

For its service, Houston TranStar has received a 2006 Best of Texas Award from the national research and advisory association Center for Digital Government. The award, "Best Application Serving the Public for 2006," was given for outstanding information technology (IT) innovations and contributions.

"During the Rita evacuation and reentry, the Houston TranStar web site was accessed more than 9.8 million times by 475,000 visitors. During the peak, the web site was serving 8000 connections and 30 megabits per second, and just like every other day of the year, it performed like a champ," said John Whaley, director of Houston TranStar. "We're honored to receive this recognition for best-in-nation service—service we provide every day of the year, every hour of the day."

The Best of Texas awards program salutes IT professionals and local government organizations for dedication, hard work and contributions in the state of Texas. Winners are selected based on criteria including collaboration between agencies, innovative use of technology and service improvement for citizens or state employees.

The Houston TranStar website, **http://www.houstontranstar.org**, has evolved into one of the US' most extensive traveler and emergency information systems, providing--

- Real-time and historical speed and travel time information;
- Freeway incident and road closure information;
- Roadway weather sensors;
- Road construction information;
- Hurricane evacuation routes;
- Closed Circuit Television traffic snapshots;
- Dynamic message sign notices such as Amber Alerts; and Email- and Web-based traffic alerts and trip reports.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, Houston TranStar was the first center in the nation to combine both transportation and emergency management functions in a single complex; and the first to include state, city, county, and public transportation operations under one roof.

Houston TranStar member agencies plan, design, maintain and operate regional transportation and emergency management functions in a unique collaboration of four government organizations in a 13-county area. Sharing their resources to serve area residents are the City of Houston, Harris County, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (Metro) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

ITS Texas on the web: www.itstexas.org

Your ITS Texas Web site is your source of information for what's going on in the organization. Recent additions to the website include:

- A complete update with information pertaining to the ITS Texas 2006 annual meeting.

- Contact your officers via the ITS Texas web site. All board officers now have ITS Texas email addresses for your ease in contacting them.

Come to the website after the meeting and get / view PDF copies of the presentations from the annual meeting sessions!

The University of Texas Intelligent Transportation Society

UT ITS, The University of Texas Intelligent Transportation Society student chapter, provides opportunities for information exchange, participation, and networking for those students interested in Intelligent Transportation Systems. This chapter is organized and operated by students under the supervision of professors in the Transportation Division of the Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering Department at The University of Texas. Although most of our members are graduate students in transportation engineering, membership in the organization is open to students taking graduate or undergraduate courses in Transportation Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Community & Regional Planning, Computer Science, or Communications.

We accomplished our objectives for information exchange, participation, and networking in 2006 by:

- hosting guest speakers,

- attending ITS conferences, and,

- supporting initiatives to foster community involvement.

Throughout this past year UT ITS has sponsored several speakers in the ITS Fall and Spring Speaker Series, and co-sponsored events with the student chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (UT ITE) and the Transportation Division's Distinguished Lecture Series. The ITS Speaker Series hosted four speakers over the course of the year covering various topics including: ITS, safety, and congestion pricing. In addition, UT ITS and UT ITE had Joseph M. Giglio, author of *Mobility: America's Transportation Mess and How to Fix It,* speak on how technology affects organizations and industries in transportation. Finally, UT ITS co-sponsored the Distinguished Lecture Series titled *Expert Perspectives in Transportation*, which

included presentations by Bill Millar, President of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), Mortimer Downey, Chairman of PB Consult, Inc. and former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Transportation, and Harry Voccola, Senior Vice President with Navigation Technologies (NAVTEQ).

UT ITS also encourages students to attend ITS conferences. UT ITS provided support for students to attend both the 2006 ITS America Annual Meeting and the 2006 ITS Texas Annual Meeting.

UT ITS also desires to have a positive impact on the UT campus and community. Most of our students participate in community service projects such as Habitat for Humanity, Explore UT (a university open house for the entire community), and Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day. UT ITS members also join UT ITE for their Adopt-A-Highway service project.

UT ITS has enjoyed a very successful year and would like to thank ITS Texas for their continued support of UT ITS.

YOUR ARTICLE HERE

If you have information concerning an ITS project in Texas you would like to share, send it to bburk@dot.state.tx.us for inclusion in the ITS Texas Newsletter.

The City of Garland Reduces Red Light Crashes by 56 percent!

The city of Garland has completed a study of the effectiveness of installing automated photo enforcement of red lights. The study reviewed 31 months of crash data before the cameras began operation vs. 31 months of data after the cameras began operation. The key findings of this report are:

- The total number of crashes at the intersections that had red light running cameras decreased by 25% (from 106 crashes to 80 crashes) whereas intersections that did not have them decreased by 10% (from 183 crashes to 165 crashes).

- Crashes caused by red light runners decreased by 56% (from 43 crashes to 19 crashes) at the intersections with the cameras; whereas the crashes at intersections without cameras decreased by 38% (from 87 crashes to 54 crashes).

- At the intersections where red light cameras are installed, crashes caused by red light runners on the approach monitored by the camera decreased by 100% (from 13 crashes to 0 crashes).

- The total number of injuries at the locations with red light cameras decreased by 27% (from 95 injuries to 69 injuries).

As a result of this successful program, seven additional red light enforcement cameras have been installed. If you would like more information about this program please contact Paul Luedtke pluedtke@ci.garland.tx.us.

Operations Academy

As the emphasis on transportation management and operations increases, the demand for personnel with skills in these areas is also growing. In order to address these needs, the University of Maryland Center for Advanced Transportation Technology (CATT) has developed a two-week, total immersion transportation management and operations Senior Management Program.

The Operations Academy has been modeled after successful leadership training programs offered in other fields. It uses a mix of classroom instruction, workshops, and field studies focused on the analysis of existing systems to ensure the retention of the material presented. The academy will provide opportunities to practice and internalize the principles learned which is usually not possible in traditional classes and short courses.

Additional information is also available on the Academy's web site:
http://www.operationsacademy.org/

If you have any questions, please contact:
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