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President's Message

“Howdy!” from your ITS Texas President and Board. We are beginning a very exciting year of activities. Your ITS Texas Board has already been working hard to plan an informative and productive year for you.

First off, the Annual Meeting of ITS America will be coming to the Henry B. Gonzalez Conference Center in San Antonio, Texas this year April 26-28. The theme of this year's meeting is “At the Crossroads: Integrating Mobility, Safety, and Security.” The keynote speaker for the meeting is James E. Hall, who is the former Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board in President Clinton's Administration. There are 66 sessions planned with speakers on all aspects of ITS with workshops, tours, training courses both before and after the meeting. For those of you who have not been an ITS America meeting, the exhibit hall is something to be seen. You can learn more about the annual meeting by visiting the ITS America website at <http://www.itsa.org>. A discounted registration fee is available for those who volunteer (e.g., session monitor, pre-registration, etc.) for a day during the meeting. For more information about volunteering, contact Gloria Boysen at gloria.boysen@viainfo.net.

On a more local level, the ITS Texas Board is continuing its planning for the upcoming year. We are planning again to hold the ITS Communication workshop in early summer and the ITS Annual Meeting in late November. This year's ITS Texas Annual Meeting will be held in the Fort Worth/Arlington area.

We hope that we will see you at one, if not all, of these exciting opportunities. If you are interested in helping with any of these activities or want to become further involved with ITS Texas, please feel free to contact me or any of the other board members. See you in San Antonio!

Kevin Balke
ITS Texas President

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SafeLight Garland - Reducing Red Light Running in Garland

The efforts to reduce the number of collisions occurring due to red light runners are well underway in Garland. On August 29, 2003 a news conference was held at the intersection of Plano Road with Buckingham Road to highlight this widespread problem. The following week, automated enforcement of this intersection and three others in Garland began.

Automated enforcement violations at these four intersections have averaged 700 to 900 per week. Though no specific analysis has been done to determine the acceptance of this program by the public, more than 90 percent of the violations have been paid with no protest. Approximately 100 have requested a hearing. The contractor that maintains and operates the cameras has also noted that the cameras have been taking noticeably fewer pictures. So far no one has challenged the program and some who received citations even noted their support of the program!

A private contractor administers the program for a flat monthly fee and each notice of violation is reviewed by sworn members of the Garland Police Department. Only those that are clear violations are sent to the offending party. For more information please contact Paul Luedtke at pluedtke@ci.garland.tx.us

Brown Bag Presentation at the UT ITS Student Chapter

Larry Yermack, past president of ITSA and president of PB Farradyne, met with UT ITS Student Chapter members on February 25, 2004 at the Earnest Cockrell building on the UT campus. Larry Yermack talked about the state of the ITS industry, trends in the industry, the current federal transportation legislation, and employment opportunities in ITS and transportation. Fourteen students participated in the one hour presentation and discussion. The presentation was organized by current UT ITS Student Chapter president Zach Piepmeyer and Dr Michael Walton, Ph.D, P.E.

ITS Data Quality The Hot Topic at Houston Workshop

Feb. 24, 2004 - ITS professionals gathered in Houston for a Data Quality Workshop sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The primary purpose of the Workshop was to discuss the increasing demands for high-quality data to drive ITS deployments. The reauthorization of the transportation bill will most likely require more real-time information and performance measures. This timely workshop had attendees looking at how the industry should address the needs and issues involved in getting quality data from ITS systems. Six topics were presented:

Where Are We Now Dealt specifically with the issue of Traffic Management Center (TMC) data quality.

Data Metrics Shawn Turner of the Texas Transportation Institute introduced six metrics to use when trying to determine the quality of TMC data: accuracy, completeness (availability), validity, timeliness, coverage and accessibility (usability).

Case Studies in Data Quality Spanned Monday and Tuesday and featured a number of examples of how data quality can be achieved.

Quality Impacts on Transportation Management and Performance Rick Schuman discussed the data and data quality aspects of the iFlorida Model Deployment. Liang Hsia then reported on Florida DOT's performance measurement program. Mark Hallenbeck reported on the uses that are made of Washington State DOT's Freeway Operations Archive. Martin Knopp presented on a tool he developed at the Utah DOT to provide easy, map access to detectors on the roadways.

Actions that need to be taken to move the industry closer to the type of data quality that can support many current and future applications. Some of the higher priority actions include:

- Develop guidelines and standards for calculating traffic data quality measures
- Synthesize validation procedures and rules used by various States and other agencies for traffic monitoring devices
- Conduct sensitivity analyses and document the results to illustrate the implications of data quality on user applications

Political Value for Sustaining ITS Funding A number of anecdotes on how data and its quality can play a major role in successfully funding ITS projects were shared.

The Workshop was sponsored by the U.S. DOT's ITS Joint Program Office with assistance from ITS America. For more information on the Workshop, contact James Pol (james.pol@fhwa.dot.gov) or Rich Taylor (rtaylor@itsa.org).

The Workshop was held at Houston TranStar, the traffic and emergency management center in Houston. For more information on Houston TranStar, visit their web site (<http://www.houstontranstar.org>).

North Central Texas Council of Governments Offering Freeway Incident Management Training

Over the last year, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) has developed freeway incident management training for the Dallas-Fort Worth region. Multi-agency incident management training has been demonstrated to improve responder safety, motorist safety, and significantly reduce the time and size of roadway closures. Congestion in and around the Dallas-Fort Worth region has created environmentally unsatisfactory pollution levels, and safety issues. The increased interest in roadway operations related to better management of incidents is recognized as one method to decrease the pollution levels associated with cars idling on freeways blocked or impacted by traffic incidents. Improved incident clearance can also alleviate secondary crashes resulting from freeway incidents.

The purpose of the program is to train incident responders in the Dallas-Fort Worth region in multi-agency coordination and best practices in the field of incident management. Three courses have been developed: one for responders, one for managers, and one for policy-makers. NCTCOG held the first regional Freeway Incident Management training course in December 2003 and plans to continue to offer this course on a monthly basis. For more information, please visit the NCTCOG website at <http://www.dfwinfo.com/rtc/index.html> or contact Natalie Bettger at (817) 695-9280, nbettger@nctcog.org.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

It is not too late! The Local Arrangements committee is looking for individuals who would like to serve as volunteers to serve as session monitors, and to staff the registration desk for the upcoming ITS America Annual Meeting to be held in San Antonio April 26-29th. By serving as a volunteer, you can receive a discount on your registration! For more information on how you can participate as a volunteer, please contact Gloria Boysen, Public Affairs, VIA Metropolitan Transit at (210)362-2370 ext. 7383 or gloria.boysen@viainfo.net.

ITS America News, the monthly newsletter of ITS America, is now available online at: <http://www.itsa.org/newsletter.html>.

FCC Releases DSRC Report and Order

On February 10, 2004, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released its Report & Order (R&O) on licensing rules and technical operations of Dedicated Short Range Communications (DSRC) in the 5.9 GHz band. This exclusive radio spectrum has been devoted specifically toward ITS and works only at very short ranges i.e. under a 100 yards. It can be used only for communication between vehicles and the roadside or between vehicles that are close together.

The decision to devote a radio spectrum entirely for ITS was approved on December 17, 2003 and is expected to pave the way for a whole new gamut of ITS services including advanced crash avoidance systems, safer highway-railroad intersections and traffic signal changers exclusive to emergency vehicles.

Currently devices such as electronic toll tags operate on a radio frequency used by a wide variety of other devices, including cordless phones and garage door openers. The broader spectrum approved by the FCC today provides for a larger range of options and leads the way for developing advanced crash avoidance systems. As the new spectrum is dedicated to transportation purposes only, the possibility of harmful interference between signals on the same frequency has been virtually eliminated.

In an effort to accelerate the potential availability of 5.9 GHz DSRC devices for safety applications, the U.S. Department of Transportation have recently let a task order to the consulting firm ARINC Inc. to begin the process of building and testing 5.9 GHz prototype devices. USDOT hopes that a prototyping effort at this scale will pave the way for the application of 5.9 GHz DSRC technologies in a wide variety of new safety-related applications, particularly those that involve communication from vehicle to vehicle and between vehicles and the roadside, a subject that was broadly discussed under the umbrella of Vehicle Infrastructure Integration (VII) at the TRB meeting in January, 2004.

PLACE YOUR AD HERE



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Senate Passes Transportation Reauthorization Bill

On February 13, 2004, the US Senate passed its version of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA) with a variety of amendments attached. ITS America will be in charge of summarizing the sections of the Act that will impact the ITS sector including public, private and academic sector. The information about this will be given out to members in upcoming ITS Weekly briefings.

"With so many amendments coming at a late hour, it will take a few days before we can thoroughly analyze the potential opportunities - or challenges - this bill provides to the ITS community" said Neil Schuster, ITS America's President and CEO.

As for the overall reauthorization process, attention will now turn to the US House of Representatives, who this week passed another extension to TEA-21 attempting to relieve some of the pressure that exists with the February 29th deadline. The issue of funding for this massive highway and transit bill continues to draw a sharp divide between governing bodies. The Senate's \$318 billion authorization falls short of the House's \$375 billion. However both are significantly above what the Administration has to offer at \$256 billion.

References: <http://www.its.dot.gov>
<http://www.itsa.org>
<http://www.nawgits.com/icdn>

Intelligent Transportation Society of Texas
P. O. Box 2021, College Station, Texas 77840

Four Month Extension Approved for National Highway & Transit Funding Programs

The US House of Representatives unanimously approved a four month extension for the funding of national highway and transit programs. This continues funding for highway construction, highway safety, transit, motor carrier, and surface transportation research programs at the levels. The national highway and transit funding bill expired on 09/30/2003, but was extended by five months (until 02/29/2004) prior to the additional four month extension through 06/20/2004.

"This bill is necessary in order to give the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and our colleagues in the Senate time to complete a multi-year surface transportation bill," U.S. Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), the Chairman of the Transportation Committee, stated. "In the

interim, this four-month extension is a 'must-pass' bill.

If we don't pass this bill, four Department of Transportation agencies will close their doors and furlough their employees: the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. If we do not pass this extension, new highway projects will be shelved, states will not be reimbursed the federal share of projects, safety grants will not be provided to states, transit construction will be halted and federal enforcement of motor carrier safety regulations on the highways and at the borders will suffer." The legislation was approved by a 421 to 0 vote in the House. The bill now goes to the U.S. Senate for consideration.

ITS Texas Treasurer's Report Dave Davis

I enjoy these annual chances
To discuss ITS Texas' finances.
Let me first make it clear,
To all that are here,
As of today, our balance sheet balances.

Some of you might hear a rumor
The IRS threatened our doom, or
Short of seizing our assets,
And arrested my ass, its
An exaggerated piece of bad humor.

We are officially exempt from their tax.
I just thought that meant I could relax.
Prison's a hard way to learn
I must file a return
Once a year, and include all the facts.

The Feds gladly wiped clean our slate,
Once I got our returns up-to-date,
They never threatened to martyr
Us, or cancel our charter.
No, actually, that was the State.

We once undertook the creation
Of a franchised state organization
We filed all the forms
And met all the norms
For the process of incorporation.

You would think that some smart engineers
Could succeed in brief legal careers,
It required close attention
To attain Tax-exemption
But our heads were stuck right up our rears.

Years later the State thought us deadbeats
Scoundrels, scofflaws and tax-cheats

Deciding our fate,
The Secretary of State,
And the Comptroller General's elites.

The evidence against us was vast
Penalties and interest had also amassed
For mercy we'd plea
Our defense it would be
Our intelligence was clearly half-assed.

To make a too-long story short
Our corporate status is now restored
A second attempt
To become tax-exempt
Succeeded in gaining accord.

At long last we appear to be saved,
We have gotten the verdict we craved
Who'd have thought we'd be landing
Approved, in good standing
All tax, fines and interest waived.

To this excellent news, I've appended
That our meetings have been well-attended
The food has been nice
The registration price,
Has covered what we have expended.

In conclusion, your treasurer's able,
To report that we're solvent and stable.
ITS Texas can cite
That its future is bright
The numbers to prove it are all at your table.

P.S. I've been asked, to be polite
To be treasurer again, and I might.
I'm not in jail
(I'm out on bail)
Maybe this year I could do the job right.

**ITS America Annual Meeting
April 26-28, 2004 in San Antonio, Texas**

No other event provides so many business and learning opportunities in one place.

Transportation Safety Keynote Hear Jim Hall, former chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board talk about the future of ITS and safety.

Demonstration of Public Safety ITS in Action Watch a live demonstration of first responders managing a "mass casualty incident" using ITS technologies.

Forum Showcase Connects you to people and projects. Our new Forum Showcase provides a great new dimension to your Annual Meeting networking. Meet with colleagues who share your interests and exchange ideas and solutions.

Networking & Entertainment Kick up your heels at a Texas-style bash featuring nationally known "Asleep at the Wheel". This closing party will be like no other for networking and fun so don't miss out!

To register or for more information about these and other exciting events taking place at the ITS America 2004 Annual Meeting & Exposition, please visit our website at www.itsa.org or call us at 202.484.4847.

Special Thanks for Company Sponsorship

The ITS Texas Board would like to thank the following companies for sponsoring the breaks and reception at the 2003 ITS Texas Annual Meeting:

Fiberoptic Display Systems, Inc.

Consortium of ITS Training & Education (CITE)

International Road Dynamics Inc.

PB Farradyne

North American Controls Corporation

We would also like to thank **Data, Voice, and Video, Inc.** for their sponsorship of the lunch at the Communication Workshop help prior to the annual meeting.

We appreciate all the kind support and contributions that all our sponsors give us throughout the year.

**ITS Texas
2003 Annual Meeting Awards**

Elizabeth Ramirez, P.E.

for planning, designing and implementing the City of Dallas Thoroughfare Motorist Information Project

Amarillo SchoolNet Project

an innovative Regional Weather Alert System

Roelof J. Engelbrecht, P.E.

for planning, designing and implementing the ITS Texas Website

**Texas Department of Transportation
El Paso District**

for planning, designing and implementing Region-wide, Multi-jurisdictional Incident Management Plans

**Texas Department of Transportation
Houston District**

for planning, designing and implementing the Sugarland Railroad Monitoring System

City of San Antonio

for planning, designing and implementing the SBC Center Special Events Traffic Enhancements

Andy Ballard

ITS Texas Board Member
1998-2003

Pete Schumacher

ITS Texas Board Member
2002-2003

Mark Conway, P.E.

President of ITS Texas 2003
Vice-President of ITS Texas 2002
Secretary of ITS Texas 2001