



*April 2005*

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR 2005 ITS Texas Annual Meeting

It's not too early to plan for the 2005 ITS Texas Annual Meeting. Don't miss joining your fellow ITS Texas members at this exciting meeting. This year's meeting will be held in College Station from **November 16-18** at the Hilton Hotel. Stay tuned for more details on the ITS Texas website and in future ITS Texas Newsletters. See you there!

## Houston TranStar Adds Multi-modal Travel Speed Map

On November 4, 2004 Houston TranStar formally unveiled a new and improved multi-modal travel speed map designed to provide motorists in the greater Houston region with even more travel related information.

The new travel speed map allows motorists in a very user-friendly fashion the opportunity to view freeway incidents, construction lane closures, messages on the dynamic messages signs, freeway cameras, wait times for the Galveston – Port Bolivar Ferry system, airport information and a whole lot more.

In addition to these new features, the travel speed map has zoom capabilities for certain quadrants of the greater Houston region and allows motorists the ability to access this information via portable internet capable devices such as personal digital assistants (PDA's), mobile phones and pagers, as well as desktop computers, whenever and wherever they need it.

The website, [www.houstontranstar.org](http://www.houstontranstar.org), was selected by the United States Department of Transportation- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as one of top three best internet destinations providing travelers with real-time information in the nation. The website award is based on user friendliness, comprehensiveness of information and real-time reporting capabilities. Houston TranStar is the only transportation management center in the nation to have won this nationally recognized award (2001, 2002 and 2004) three of the past four years.

## President's Message

Greetings and thanks for your support.

Our Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) business is certainly in interesting times. ITS is maturing, various elements of ITS are being installed in many transportation projects, and legacy ITS systems probably need to be upgraded. Also, other transportation professionals are becoming more comfortable with including advanced technologies in projects. All of this will make it easier to deploy ITS, will make our industry very dynamic, and should lead to growth in ITS in Texas. However, funding will continue to be a concern. ITS Texas will try to keep you informed about projects underway, priorities, and funding opportunities.

One of our concerns as board members is the benefits this organization provides its members. Usually a majority of the board's energy is spent coordinating the annual meeting. However, there may be other areas of support that are equally important to our members, or that could be provided easily. Accordingly, later this year, we plan to send a survey to all of our members. Please give this survey some thought, and provide your input and ideas into what this state chapter should do for you. ITS Texas will only be valuable if it provides what you want and need.

As always, please give me a call if you have any concerns, comments, or questions.

Al Kosik  
ITS Texas President

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**ITS Texas has a new home on the web:  
[www.itstexas.org](http://www.itstexas.org)**

## Trucking Companies Say Highway Advisory Radio and Road Weather Information Systems Made Them Safer

The Washington State Department of Transportation deployed improved road weather information systems (RWIS) and highway advisory radio (HAR) on a remote section of US-395 north of Spokane, Washington. An evaluation of the project used customer satisfaction surveys to evaluate the impacts of ITS information on the behavior, safety, and efficiency of commercial vehicle operators (CVOs). The surveys focused on trip timing, trip routing, and level of preparedness.

During the baseline survey data collection period (winter of 2000-2001), Internet weather information covered the immediate Spokane area only, and broadcast radio reports were limited to providing general information on traffic conditions. Closed circuit television camera (CCTV) coverage and on-site highway advisory radio systems were not available.

In 2002, WSDOT integrated two environmental

sensing stations with a RWIS and Transportation Management Center. The information collected by the environmental sensor stations and CCTV cameras was disseminated to travelers via the WSDOT traveler information website. In addition, two mobile HAR systems provided travelers with updated information in the areas of Loon Lake and Laurier on US-395, and at Sherman Pass on SR-20.

During the post deployment period, 39 CVOs were surveyed and asked, whether the availability of HARs, camera images of key roadway segments, and enhanced Internet information affected driving safety for them in the region. Eleven of the respondents said they did not know whether their drivers used these information sources, or they themselves did not use them. Of the remaining 28 CVOs, 16 (57%) said the availability of the new information made them "somewhat" or "a lot" safer.

### FHWA and FTA Create Joint Program for Planning & Operations

The FHWA Office of Operations and Office of Planning and FTA's Office of Planning have created a joint program and a website for Planning & Operations, known as the "Program for Transportation System Management and Operations". The link to the website is:

<http://www.plan4operations.dot.gov/default.asp>

The goal of this website is to promote multimodal planning practice that supports 21st century transportation system management and operations. In order to link 21st Century operational services into the transportation planning and programming process, transportation planners and operators should have a common understanding of the mobility, safety, and efficiency benefits of linking planning and operations.

This website contains numerous resources to help planners and operators gain insight into the linkage between the two fields. The site has a resource library of documents, presentations, and reports on current practices. It also contains a toolbox that gives examples of best practices, a calendar of upcoming relevant events, a listing of courses that span the two disciplines, a "What's New" section that will be updated monthly, and links to other sites that should be of interest.

### Service Sends Traffic Images to Cell Phone

Cell phone users in the Washington D.C. area have a reason to rejoice as a Fairfax based company is offering a new video service that sends updates to any Internet-enabled phone.

TrafficLand Inc. recently released what it calls AirVideo, an add-on to the \$59-a-year traffic-monitoring service it sells ([www.trafficland.com/airvideo](http://www.trafficland.com/airvideo)). That price (or an \$8 month-by-month option) now lets customers view live video on their cell phones as well as their personal computers. TrafficLand provides these feeds from nearly 300 Web cameras stationed on roads throughout the District and the Maryland and Virginia suburbs.

AirVideo works with any Web-enabled phone with software that supports the "WAP 2.0" standard for wireless browsing. In addition to the Capital Beltway and major roads in the District, camera locations include Interstates 81 and 95 in Virginia all the way to Richmond, I-270 in Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, as well as major highways to Annapolis and Baltimore.

## Yahoo! Maps to Provide Real Time Traffic Information

Yahoo! Inc., a leading global Internet company, recently announced the launch of a service that lets consumers view live local traffic information on their online maps and driving directions. Yahoo! is the first online site to provide speed conditions and dynamic traffic information nationwide.

The new mapping feature will initially be integrated in Yahoo! Search, Yahoo! Local, and Yahoo! Maps and is available to consumers at <http://maps.yahoo.com>. In the coming months, Yahoo! will continue to develop additional enhancements that increase the functionality and power of its mapping and traffic technology to deliver on its vision of delivering the best local search experience online. With this new mapping service, consumers can now

- Customize their Yahoo! Maps display and layer traffic information on top of driving directions or maps.
- Scroll over the traffic icons - an extension of Yahoo!'s SmartView technology - to find out the road conditions on their journey ahead including the time the incident occurred and the estimated time that it will be resolved.
- Find traffic accident reports and road construction information in over 70 metropolitan areas.
- Find real-time driving speed data in over 20 top metropolitan areas.
- Pan and zoom to find the traffic information most relevant to them.
- Provide the best way to reach their destinations by incorporating reliable information from embedded road sensors, traffic cameras, police scanners/reports, and traffic helicopters.

## I-30 Managed HOV Lane Project

The first Managed HOV Lane project in the Dallas-Fort Worth area will be implemented along the I-30/Tom Landry Freeway corridor between Dallas and Fort Worth. As part of its Value Pricing Pilot Program, FHWA recently approved the application for design, construction, maintenance and operational funding assistance. The application was forwarded by the Regional Transportation Council on behalf of the Texas Department of Transportation (Dallas and Ft. Worth Districts), Dallas Area Rapid Transit, Fort Worth Transportation Authority, North Central Texas Council of Governments and the North Texas Tollway Authority. Preliminary engineering activities for the Managed HOV lane are underway. Original plans for this corridor included a single-reversible HOV lane.

## Integrated Vehicle Operations Management System

The Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) of Harris County is currently deploying their Integrated Vehicle Operations Management System (IVOMS). The IVOMS project is deploying a variety of technologies including automatic vehicle location, passenger counters, stop annunciators, and signal priority on over 1300 fixed route METRO buses. The system will utilize the regional Harris County radio system for data communications. METRO is also deploying wireless local area networks (WLAN) at their bus operating facilities. The WLAN will allow METRO to download and upload data and software updates from all bus facilities to its bus fleet. To date over 85% of the fleet has been outfitted with equipment. Data provisioning of schedule, bus stop, and the GIS map has been completed. Currently the project is on schedule with final acceptance testing beginning in April with the anticipation of going live by the end on May.



## PLACE YOUR AD HERE

Contact  
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## Houston TranStar featured in National Media for its Innovative Approach to Addressing Traffic Congestion

“Recognized nationally and internationally, Houston TranStar serves as a model for government agencies combining resources across modal and political jurisdictional boundaries”

Over the past five (5) weeks, Houston TranStar, the Transportation and Emergency Management center for the greater Houston region, has been featured on ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings and in respected national newspapers including the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Chicago Tribune and the Houston Chronicle for its high-tech and innovative approach to addressing traffic congestion in Houston, Texas, the fourth largest city in the nation.

Hailed as a model for government agencies combining resources across modal and political jurisdictional boundaries, Houston TranStar is a unique multi-agency partnership comprised of the City of Houston, Harris County, the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County and the Texas Department of Transportation-Houston District.

Together this unique multi-agency partnership is responsible for coordinating the planning, design, operations and maintenance of transportation and emergency management functions in the greater Houston region and is recognized nationally and internationally for its collaborative and innovative approach to transportation and emergency management solutions.

Since February of 2005, the Houston TranStar partnership and/or services offered by the partnership have been featured in many nationally recognized media outlets including:

**The Wall Street Journal – February 9, 2005**

Efforts to Curb Traffic on Houston Freeways Has Mayor in a Jam  
By Thaddeus Herrick

**The New York Times – February 10, 2005**

Houston’s Mandatory Towing Law Leads to Debate  
By Ralph Blumenthal

**ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings – February 14, 2005**

Houston Finds Innovative Ways to Reduce Congestion  
By Peter Jennings

**Houston Chronicle – March 1, 2005**

METRO Officers Added to Help Motorists Assistance Program (MAP)  
By Lucas Wall / Ron Nossimov

**Chicago Tribune – March 6, 2005**

City Believes Traffic is Ready for Reform / Chicago Takes High-Tech Tips from Houston  
By Jon Hilkevitch

According to Jack Whaley, Director of Houston TranStar, “We as a partnership have always strived to be as effective as we possibly can in the delivery of critical transportation and emergency management services to the greater Houston region. To have other major cities like Chicago, Dallas, Beijing and others attempt to emulate what we are doing in the region makes the whole process just that much more satisfying.”

To manage transportation and emergency management functions in the greater Houston region, the Houston TranStar partnership employs a wide-variety of technologies and services including over 300 Closed Circuit Television Cameras, 150 Dynamic Message Signs, Traveler Information Devices, Roadway Flooding Systems, Wrecker Capabilities, Public/Private Partnerships, Railroad Monitoring Systems, Automated Flood Alert Systems and a whole lot more.

For more information on the Houston TranStar partnership, please contact Artee T. Jones, Executive Public Information Officer for Houston TranStar at 713-881-3244 or [ajones3@houstontranstar.org](mailto:ajones3@houstontranstar.org).

You may also visit the web addresses ([www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com), [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), [www.abcnews.com](http://www.abcnews.com), [www.chicagotribune.com](http://www.chicagotribune.com), [www.chron.com](http://www.chron.com)) for each newspaper and broadcast outlet for more information on the stories.

## Summary of FHWA Initiatives

Nine FHWA initiatives were announced by Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Transportation Policy and Director of Intermodalism Emil Frankel at the 2004 ITS America Annual Meeting. The initiatives include Integrated Vehicle Based Safety Systems, Cooperative Intersection Collision Avoidance Systems, Next Generation 9-1-1, Mobility Services for All Americans, Integrated Corridor Management Systems, Nationwide Surface Transportation Weather Observing and Forecasting System -- Clarus, Emergency Transportation Operations, Universal Electronic Freight Manifest, and Vehicle Infrastructure Integration (VII). Although the nine new major initiatives were approved for funding, to date, it appears that little new funding has trickled down to Texas as a result.

There are opportunities in Texas to address issues in each of the initiatives, in particular, Next Generation 9-1-1, Integrated Corridor Management Systems, Nationwide Surface Transportation Weather Observing and Forecasting System -- Clarus, and Emergency Transportation Operations. For more information on these initiatives and funding opportunities refer to [www.its.dot.gov/initiatives](http://www.its.dot.gov/initiatives).

## The Time Is Now: 2005 ITS Texas Membership Drive

How can you learn about the latest news in the ITS industry and network with your peers at the same time?

### **Become a member of ITS Texas!**

ITS Texas is celebrating its 13th year and wants you take part in the excitement. ITS Texas promotes and encourages a safer, more efficient, and environmentally sound highway system via research and development of advanced technology.

Here are just some of the benefits you'll receive by becoming a member of this prestigious organization:

- \$50 reduction in the annual ITS Texas meeting registration.
- E-mail notification of specialty conferences and breaking news in the ITS field.
- Excellent opportunities to network with other transportation and ITS professionals, including ITS vendors.
- Discounts to ITS Texas sponsored training classes and seminars.
- Voting privileges on ITS Texas chapter business.

Yearly membership dues in ITS Texas are only \$25.00 and are good through December 2005.

## Dynamic Message Signs Benefit Drivers in Wisconsin

In December 2001, the University of Wisconsin surveyed drivers in Wisconsin to assess the impacts of traveler information made available on a freeway dynamic message sign (DMS) system. Mail-back questionnaires were sent to 428 random drivers residing in 22 counties subject to major freeway traffic. To encourage residents to complete and return the questionnaire, two 34-cent stamps and a letter explaining the intent of the survey and its importance to Wisconsin were included with each mailer. Each participant who completed the questionnaire and returned it by December 28, 2001, was promised ten more 34-cent stamps.

The questionnaire included 38 multiple choice questions (and a comments section) designed to gauge drivers' opinions of travel conditions, investigate drivers' knowledge on general freeway issues, and determine user awareness and perception of active incident management programs in Wisconsin.

A total of 221 questionnaires were returned and analyzed. The following data derived from the report, highlight general findings associated with the driver use and satisfaction.

- Approximately 68% of respondents reported adjusting their travel routes based on the travel time or traffic information provided by the DMS system during the winter months (December – March). About 12% of respondents adjusted their travel routes more than 5 times per month using this information
- Approximately 72% of respondents reported adjusting their travel routes based on the travel time or traffic information provided by the DMS system during non-winter months (April – Nov). About 18% of respondents adjusted their travel routes more than 5 times per month using this information.



**The ITS Texas Annual Meeting  
will be  
November 16-18, 2005**

## “No-cost” Copies of NTCIP Standards Available Now

AASHTO, ITE, and NEMA are pleased to announce that no-cost copies of the NTCIP standards are available from the NTCIP Web site, [www.ntcip.org](http://www.ntcip.org). The available "no-cost" standards are those that have been jointly approved and published. This special offer is made possible by funding from the FHWA's Joint Program Office, and will only be available for a limited, 12-month period.

The FHWA hopes to counter the "standards cost too much" barrier that may be preventing some agencies and others in the ITS community from considering a standards-based project design. NTCIP Coordinator Bruce Schopp said, "By the end of calendar 2005, we're expecting to have 26 of the standards available as Adobe PDF files on the NTCIP Web site."

### How do I get the standards?

To get the no-cost copies of the NTCIP standards, go to the [www.ntcip.org](http://www.ntcip.org) Library >> Document Links table, and click on one of the "PDF shopping carts" to start your registration. Then, registered users can download a copy of the Adobe PDF file for each standard they want. Users should save each file to their own computer.

Registered users have 24 hours to download the PDF file to the same computer IP address where the request was started. Users should follow the instructions in the customer agreement for duplicating and printing the standards. By registering, users will receive announcements when each standard is updated or revised.

### What are the other details?

The "no-cost" standard download feature requires a separate, new registration -- which is different from the Committee Work Area FTP sign-in, and different from the Forum Web conference log-in. The document download registration collects user information, but now uses a secure site.

The customer agreement allows the NTCIP PDF files to be used for personal, noncommercial, and intra-organizational purposes only. Users may make one more electronic copy of the file, and may print or copy two paper copies. For other use or further redistribution of the PDF files, users should contact NEMA at [ntcip@nema.org](mailto:ntcip@nema.org).

The NTCIP standards that are jointly approved and published are still for sale in hardcopy form, from either Global Engineering Documents, <http://global.ihs.com>, or the ITE Bookstore, <http://www.ite.org/bookstore/index.asp>.

As other NTCIP standards reach joint approval status and are edited for publishing, Adobe PDF files for each of those new standards will be added to the no-cost download feature on the NTCIP Web site. Then they will

also each be available for 12 months.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) represents the state departments of transportation in Washington, D.C.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) is an international individual member educational and scientific association, and is one of the largest and fastest-growing multimodal professional transportation organizations in the world.

The National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) is the leading trade association in the United States representing the interests of electroindustry manufacturers. Founded in 1926, its 400 member companies manufacture products used in the generation, transmission and distribution, control, and end-use of electricity.

Since 1996, AASHTO, ITE, and NEMA have co-sponsored the development of the NTCIP family of data dictionary and communication protocol standards, with funding and support for ITS standards from the U.S. DOT's FHWA.

### For further information contact:

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## 12th International HOV Systems Conference in Houston, Texas

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) will be hosting the 12th International HOV Systems Conference titled "Improving Mobility and Accessibility with managed lanes, pricing and BRT" from April 18-20, 2005 at the Doubletree Hotel in Houston downtown. Registration fees for the three-day conference are \$335 before March 19, 2005. All registration fees include: all sessions and breaks; Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday continental breakfast; Monday and Tuesday lunch; and the Monday Evening Reception and Cash Bar. The full registration package also includes a tour of the Houston HOV lanes and TranStar, the traffic management center for Houston.

Discount rates for accommodation are available at the Doubletree Hotel at \$80/night. For further information or for online registration please access the following link: <http://www.trb.org/Conferences/HOV/>

## Curtain Rises on the Vehicle Infrastructure Integration Initiative

The Vehicle Infrastructure Integration (VII) coalition held its first public meeting in San Francisco, CA on February 9 and February 10, 2005. The Public Meeting reported on efforts on the U.S. Department of Transportation's Vehicle Infrastructure Integration (VII) Initiative. The VII Coalition, which is comprised of the U.S. DOT, AASHTO and ten state DOT representatives, and most automobile manufacturers, reported on their efforts "to determine if the investment necessary to equip new vehicles and the roadway infrastructure with communications are warranted and can be synchronized."

The goal of the VII coalition is to achieve nationwide deployment of a communications infrastructure on the roadways and in all production vehicles and to enable a number of key safety and operational services that would take advantage of this capability. Another primary reason for the VII is the potential mobility benefits. Recent history shows that the number of vehicle miles traveled on U.S. roadways is far outstripping the addition of capacity on our roadways. Hours of delay for drivers has increased every year. The VII and the data it provides can help us better manage congestion and make the transportation system a more reliable system. California is planning to set up two VII test beds with vehicle to roadside communication capabilities and plans to highlight the effort at the 12th ITS World Congress which is to be held later this year in California.

The VII initiative has a program plan approach that consists of six concurrent tracks:

1. Technical Implementation
2. DSRC Prototype
3. Business Planning
4. Policy
5. Outreach
6. Test Program

VII builds on the availability of advanced vehicle safety systems developed under the Intelligent Vehicle Initiative (IVI) and the availability of radio spectrum at 5.9GHZ recently approved by the FCC for Dedicated Short Range Communications. The VII would enable deployment of advanced vehicle-vehicle and vehicle-infrastructure communications that could keep vehicles from leaving the road and enhance their safe movement through intersections. These deadly roadway scenarios account for 32,000 of the 43,000 deaths annually on America's highways.

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

## 2004 Annual ITS Texas Meeting

The 12th Annual ITS Texas meeting was held in Fort Worth, Texas from November 15-17th, 2004. Over 150 ITS and Transportation Engineering professionals interacted with over 20 exhibitors to share their experiences in topics ranging from design and operations of Transportation Management Centers (TMCs) to managing Special Events and from Transit operations to interagency ITS integration. The meeting was kicked off with a well attended half-day course on Incident Management. Opening day luncheon speaker, Dr. Walter Kraft spoke about transportation and related effects on the quality of our lives while a special session on engineering ethics provided detailed information on ethical conflicts and issues faced by the engineering profession.

For the first time, a vendor technology forum was presented where all exhibitors were provided an opportunity to present their products to all attendees in a separate session. Continuing its long standing tradition of recognizing outstanding projects and individuals for their contributions to ITS in the State of Texas, the inaugural Wallace Ewell Award for ITS Excellence was awarded to TxDOT's Mel Partee. The Uptown Houston Development Authority was also recognized for its part in a unique public-private partnership program. The membership elected a new Board of Directors for 2005 at this meeting.

## ITS Texas Board of Directors

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**Al Kosik**

Texas Department of Transportation, Austin

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