



Spring 2006

President's Message

Hello ITS Texas. Welcome to our first newsletter of 2006.

On behalf of the officers and board members, welcome to ITS Texas. We are ready to see ITS Texas transition to "Beyond Primetime." I applaud our officers and board for their continued dedication and service to this organization.

Our meeting last year in College Station was a complete success in terms of participation and enthusiasm. Proceeds from the event have delivered a healthy treasury and the leverage to enhance member services. Plans for our annual '06 gathering are already underway. Mark your calendars:

ITS Texas Annual Meeting

November 15-17, 2006

*Clear Lake Hilton Hotel & Conference Center
Houston, Texas*

Due to our evolving status, new initiatives are in the works to increase membership and bolster the presence of ITS Texas members throughout Society. Here are just a few of the goals planned for this year. Our training program has been a huge success and we will again hold two training classes this year. To further extend our window within ITS, the ITS Texas Portal is overdue for some enhancements. A new, innovative look and feel to the site should help attract existing and prospective members. To continue progressing and preparing the next generation of ITS practitioners, we will offer an ITS Texas scholarship to a well-deserving graduate.

Remember, ITS Texas is only as strong as its members. Officers and board members are committed to providing members with more opportunities to actively engage in Society. We are currently forming subcommittees to address this objective as well as improve the overall delivery of member services. These subcommittees will be open to any member wanting the opportunity to actively participate in the Society and direct the Society to the future.

We look forward to an exciting and productive year and stand ready to serve you and see ITS Texas expand to new heights.

If you have additional suggestions regarding our 2006 goals, please contact me direct at (281) 589-5871, or email hartmann@pbworld.com.

Duane E Hartmann
President, ITS Texas

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2005 Annual Meeting Survey Results

A membership survey was conducted at the ITS Texas Annual Meeting, held November 16 - 18, 2005. The purpose of the survey is to help the 2006 ITS Texas Board determine the membership benefits that are most important to ITS Texas members. The survey was divided into sections reflecting initiatives worked towards by the 2005 ITS Texas Board. These initiatives included the Annual Meeting, training seminars, website development, newsletter, and membership/chapter involvement. Below is a summary of survey results.

In terms of the Annual Meeting, most members felt that the Annual Meeting should continue to rotate among metropolitan areas, and the cost was reasonable. The top three rated session topics included Session 1: Bridging People, Places with the Future; Session 5B: Technology – Where Is It Taking Us? and Session 6A: Professional Development. The Board also received several recommendations for future topics that will be considered for this year's Annual Meeting.

Training seminars were the second initiative surveyed. The majority of the responses received stated members would like to see training seminars held bi-annually and rotated between large and small metropolitan areas. The average rank for the training seminars held during 2005 was 3.7, with 5 the highest ranking.

Website usage by members was low, with the majority visiting the ITS Texas website once a month or once a year. The sections of the website visited most frequently included the Upcoming Events and Annual Meeting sections. Member recommended added features include a search function, links to technology white papers, links to other relevant ITS-related sites, and links to vendor's websites who support ITS.

ITS Texas publishes a newsletter on a quarterly basis, delivered via email. The majority of survey respondents preferred to have the newsletter emailed to them as a portable document format (PDF) attachment. The sections of the newsletter that are liked the most include Local and State Transportation Issues, ITS Texas Activities, Annual Meeting Information, and Transportation Legislation. A recommendation was also made on the surveys to add a section on technology issues.

The last section of the survey focused on membership/chapter involvement. In this section of the survey, members were asked what they felt were the primary benefits of being an ITS Texas member. The top three responses were the Annual Meeting, networking, and training seminars. The survey also asked what members thought the priorities of the ITS Texas Chapter for 2006 should be. The item that received the highest points in response was the Annual Meeting. Training seminars, membership growth, corporate sponsors, newsletter, and website tied for second.

The ITS Texas Board would like your feedback regarding the Chapter priorities and initiatives for 2006. If you didn't have a chance to complete the survey during the 2005 Annual Meeting, the survey is still available on-line at the ITS Texas website at the following link <http://www.itstexas.org>. Please take a few minutes to fill it out.



2005 ANNUAL MEETING

The thirteenth annual meeting was held in College Station, Texas from November 16 – 18th, 2005. A total of 124 attendees interacted with 25 vendors.

The meeting began with training sessions on Wireless Technologies/Design and Center-to-Center. Tours included the Brayton Fire Training Field where attendees witnessed oil platform firefighting, Disaster City rescue canine, and incident command training. The final tour at the Messina Hof winery and resort included a bonus training session on wine tasting.

The opening session provided Katrina and Rita Hurricane perspectives from TxDOT District, TxDOT Division, as well as, the LaDOTD. Additional sessions presented information concerning Selling ITS, ITS Operations, ITS Nationally, ITS Transit, ITS Practitioners, technology, managed lanes, and ever popular ethics and vendor forum. Luncheon speakers provided inspiring information concerning the history of the Interstate and building tomorrow's transportation systems.

The meeting concluded with recognition of outstanding individuals and projects for contributions to ITS in the State of Texas. Dave Davis, P.E. received the Wallace Ewell Award for ITS Excellence. The ITS Texas Award was presented to Steve Dellenback. In addition, Southwest Research Institute was recognized for its valued work in Texas. Finally, the membership elected new Directors.

Thanks to all speakers, vendors, and attendees for making the annual meeting a success. Success is not possible without your participation.

STATE /LOCAL ISSUES

On April 4, 2006, a TxDOT News Release announced that a multi-use transportation alternative to the heavily congested Interstate 35 corridor was approved today, according to a 4,000-page draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) signed by the Texas Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration on the Trans-Texas Corridor-35 (TTC-35). The report reveals that the narrowed study area lies slightly to the east of and incorporates the southern half of Interstate 35.

The area identified runs from Gainesville to Laredo. The study area will be generally 10 miles wide and within close proximity to I-35 and metropolitan centers, except where it is centered on I-35 south of San Antonio to Laredo.

The narrowed study area was identified as the preferred option because it best supports the purpose and need for TTC-35 and incorporates the most miles of existing highways and rail, 195 and 214 miles respectively - an important factor according to public comments received.

More than 50 public hearings will be held this summer throughout the study area. Dates, times and locations of the hearings will be released in the near future.

A map of the narrowed study area and additional information on the DEIS are available at www.keeptexasmoving.org.

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

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LEGISLATION

In recent weeks, a number of official and semi-official sources have said that the federal highway trust fund will run out of money. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has prepared a report that gets the date narrowed to a range.

There are two primary players in this: the White House and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The CBO says the fund goes negative at the end of 2011; the White House says it will head south in 2010. So there you have the range: 2010 to 2011. The current federal legislation that governs the distribution of those funds (SAFETEA:LU) seems to be distributing the funds faster than the money is projected to come in.

The GAO's report and summary was issued April 4, 2006. If you do nothing more than read this article, then you have the 10-second version of it. If you want to learn more, then read the full report at www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-572T.

TRAINING

Mark your calendars for May 23rd for the ITS Texas training seminar "Wireless Systems in ITS Training" to be held in San Antonio at Southwest Research Institute. This seminar presents information on deploying wireless systems to support ITS communications infrastructures and provide a general understanding of the practical aspects of wireless communications.

The seminar will be presented by Mr. Pat Clair and Ryan Lamm, Southwest Research Institute. Go to the ITS Texas Website for registration information. Space is limited so sign up early!!

Registration will be limited to ITS Texas Members only until May 1st.

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:

- Dates and information for the ITS Texas 2006 Summer Training Course
- Dates and information for the ITS Texas 2006 Annual Meeting
- Membership survey from the 2005 Annual Meeting (see the results in this newsletter). Fill out your survey now to make your voice heard.
- 2005 Annual Meeting Presentations – Get a PDF of that fact-filled presentation!

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.