



April 2007

President's Message

Greetings and welcome to ITS Texas 15th year!

We have two new board members: Andy Oberlander and Gary Jost. I thank them and the rest of the board for their sacrifices to volunteer for this worthy organization. I look forward to the insight and experience that all of the board members bring as we put together the annual meeting. Please contact me or any board member with any inspiration you may have of a speaker or speaker topic. It only takes a moment to send a quick email. We value all feedback and suggestions on how to make each annual meeting better than the last. Duane certainly set the bar high last year with his "talk show" format.

I would like to thank all of you who braved the cold and wind to attend the annual meeting in Houston. For those who were not able to make it, you missed an outstanding event. The friendships and business that were cultivated will no doubt result in remarkable achievements in the years to come. When we all get together to say hello, have a beverage, discuss ideas and swap stories of success and failure we inspire achievements that we could not create alone. In that spirit I ask each of you to encourage a colleague to attend the annual meeting this year. The increased interaction will create even greater opportunities for Texans to solve the transportation operations challenges of our lifetime.

Paul Luedtke
president@itstexas.org

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Message from the Past President

I want to take this time to thank the membership in giving me the opportunity to serve as your 2006 ITS Texas President. I also must thank the other officers and board members whom which I served. Serving on the board is a fulfilling experience I hope many members will seriously consider. It is an opportunity to associate with many ITS colleagues and keep Texas in the ITS forefront. Serving did not come without challenges. ITS Texas has reached out several times to expand the membership to include law enforcement and emergency service agencies. Paul Luedtke, our current president, challenged the board to bring one new agency to ITS Texas. This challenge is passed to you, the membership.

I and my predecessors were blessed with healthy available funds in our treasury to expand

membership services, including awarding our ITS Texas scholarship to Jason West and a memorable 2006 annual meeting.

It was a privilege to serve the membership and I call upon all members to recognize the officers and board members, who voluntarily donate their time to bring knowledge and fellowship to the ITS community in Texas. While leaders provide direction, it takes many, working together, to reach the destination. While the path you take may lead to a closed door, continue down the path until you find an open window.



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
2007 ITS Texas Annual Meeting**



The 2007 ITS Texas Annual Meeting is just around the corner! Don't miss joining your fellow ITS Texas members at this exciting meeting. This year's meeting will be held in Dallas **November 14-16** at the Holiday Inn Select North Dallas. This year's theme is **ITS 24/7**.

The preliminary list of session topics is provided below for your information. If you are interested in speaking on a topic below, please send an email to Natalie Bettger at nbettger@nctcog.org.

- Traveler Information
- ITS in Transit
- Communication Technology I
- Communication Technology II
- Regional Coordination/Multi-Agency Partnerships
- Toll Facilities and Comprehensive Development Agreements
- ITS in TxDOT
- Funding for ITS Projects
- Engineering Ethics

Accommodations have been arranged at the Holiday Inn Select North Dallas. For details about the Hotel, please visit their web site (<http://www.hoteldallastexas.com/>). Additional information will be released in the future regarding conference registration, exhibitor registration and sponsorship participation for the 2007 ITS Texas Annual Meeting. Please look for updates on the ITSTexas.org website. We look forward to seeing you in Dallas!

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
Spring/Summer 2007 ITS Texas Training**

One of the many advantages of your ITS Texas membership is the training hosted by ITS Texas. This is an opportunity to receive training on one of ITS's technologies that are important to you, the ITS professional. The Spring/Summer training topic will be Wireline Communications taught by Bob Brydia and Gary Thomas, PhD, P.E. both of TTI.

This workshop is intended to provide practicing traffic engineers and system technicians with exposure to the wireline communications concepts necessary for weighing system needs criteria against available technologies. The material has been developed to familiarize engineers and technicians involved in Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) with the background information, limitations, and applicability of modern data communications technologies. The workshop will explore various

media types, common protocols, network topologies and commonly implemented communication technologies in the ITS arena. The workshop will also present a methodology for evaluating ITS communication solutions. Participants will receive a desk reference notebook containing the information presented in the course, as well as blank worksheets for the evaluation of communication solutions."

The training will be held on June 7th at the TxDOT Riverside facilities. Watch for emails and check the ITS Texas website for information on the upcoming ITS Texas Training

tour a few of the interesting Houston area attractions.

The wireless training was conducted on November 14th with 21 attendees registered. This class was a continuation for the training that was offered in May. The first half of the class was a synopsis of the May training. This allowed participants that did not have the opportunity to attend the May training to still obtain the necessary baseline information for the remainder of the class. The second half of the class provided a more in depth look at wireless communications with several case studies in which students had the opportunity to work through solutions for different wireless problems.

ITS Texas Annual Meeting

Conference Highlights

The ITS Texas Annual Meeting was held in Houston at the NASA Hilton from November 14th – 16th. The conference provided many opportunities for ITS professionals to interact with one another as well as a host of vendors. The conference was very successful with almost 150 participants from around the state and a few from outside Texas.



Student listen as Pat Clair discusses one of the case studies analyzed during the wireless training class



Attendees listen to speakers as the talk show "ITS Primetime" kicks off the conference

The conference offered a second round of wireless training, exciting technical sessions, and a chance to

Participants had an opportunity to partake in several tours that were setup as part of the conference. Registrants could go across the street and sign up for one of the NASA Space Centers tours. For a more in depth tour, ITS Texas arranged a special NASA level 9 tour. In addition, registrants could take a boat tour of the Port of Houston where they had an opportunity to see how the port operates. As the host city, TransStar also had tours available. Everyone reported that they enjoyed the tours and opportunity to see the different aspects of the Houston area.



ITS Texas conference attendees enjoy a brisk day at the port

An informative and exciting set of technical sessions were provided making it difficult to choose which ones to attend. The first day the sessions included discussions on examining the future of ITS, real world ITS applications, how ITS is being utilized in Homeland Security applications, how ITS is being applied in multimodal situations, and ways to gather, use, and disseminate traveler information..



Attendees listen to how ITS is applied in the real world

At the end of the first day, the vendor technology forum was held. This forum allowed each exhibitor approximately 3 minutes to discuss their products and services and the day ended with a reception in the exhibit hall.

The second day, the sessions again picked up with discussions on tolls roads and the development of

CDAs, performance measures, and how ITS is used to enable small agencies to large statewide efforts. Finally, day 2 also included a special session on Engineering Ethics for those needing certification.



Andy Oberlander discusses the DalTrans TMC

The presentations for the conference are available on the ITS Texas website (ITSTexas.org).

At the business luncheon the new ITS Board was announced, many achievements were recognized including

Charlie Farnham - Statewide Developer and Integrator Program

Charlie played many behind the scenes roles integral to keeping the program moving forward. His primary task during his tenure on the SDI program has been serving as the Configuration manager. Charlie also manages the TxDOT Issues database and works with the TxDOT Information Systems Division to ensure the systems developed conform to the TxDOT Core Architecture. Charlie also participates in the developing visions for other statewide activities.

Eagen O'Brien - Houston TranStar System Administrator

Eagen provided leadership and expertise needed to keep the Houston TranStar network, servers, and

workstations operation as well as providing a cohesive network for all Houston TranStar partners. He was instrumental in ensuring the migration of the Houston TranStar network, SDI CCTV and DMS subsystem installation and other system activities went smoothly.

Harry Grothues - Statewide Developer and Integrator Program

Harry serves as the SDI Program Manager and has been associated with the program since its inception. Harry is also directing the Border Safety Inspection Facility design and development being deployed at eight border crossings with Mexico. Harry works at the state and national levels on various other ITS subjects including CVISN and TMC operations.

TransVista - August 2006 El Paso area Flooding Event

Heavy downpours occurred on Tuesday, August 1, 2006. By the following Tuesday, the El Paso region received over 15 inches of rain. The State of Texas District Disaster Command Center managed by the Department of Public Safety operated for the first time. The El Paso County and City Office of emergency management was operational as well. TransVista was operational 24/7 from August 1st until August 8th providing traffic information and video images to the media and the public. The data CCTV images provide vital road closure information and undoubtedly saved lives.

Houston TranStar - Hurricane Evacuation Route Cameras

A major deficiency during the Hurricane Rita evacuation was getting reliable traffic condition data on major evacuation routes outside the existing Houston TranStar ITS infrastructure. The TxDOT Houston District Transportation Management section set out to solve this problem. The solution included the use of Internet accessible cameras with

PTZ capability, utilizing the State of Texas contract with Cingular for wireless service, utilizing TxDOT personnel from the Houston, Yoakum and Beaumont Districts to rapidly install the equipment and develop a webpage that provided snapshots from the camera or video server every three minutes. Eighty percent of the 75 locations were completed before August 2006, the height of the hurricane season. All 75 locations were installed by September 2006. Now the State can get traffic condition data a key locations throughout Southeast Texas on IH-10 from Orange, TX to Luling, TX; IH-45 north of Houston, TX to Huntsville, TX; US 290 from Houston to Giddings, TX; US 59 from north of Houston to Nacogdoches, TX; and many other evacuation routes in southeast Texas.



ITS Texas 2006 President Duane Hartmann presents Edgar Fino the TransVista ITS Award

We had the pleasure of having the Honorable Bill White, the Mayor of Houston. Mayor White discussed how he has come to understand the value of ITS not only on the freeway system but also on the arterials as well. Mayor White thanked the audience for all that they were doing and encouraged us to keep pushing forward.



Mayor White addressing the ITS participants at the ITS Business luncheon

Also during the luncheon, the University of Texas Student Chapter gave their yearly report to the membership. Nicholas Lownes provided the highlights of the year to the membership and received a \$500 check from ITS Texas to continue our support of the organization.



Nicholas Lownes discusses the UT Student Chapter activities

A big thanks goes out to Charlie Brindell (PBS&J) for handling the registration for exhibitors. Charlie worked tirelessly to ensure we had a full exhibit hall

and in fact we not only did we sell out, we also had one exhibitor in the parking lot.



Vendors preparing for Exhibit Hall opening

During the conference, members were asked to cast their ballots for the 2007 Board of Directors. The results were:

- Paul Luedtke President,
- Natalie Bettger Vice President,
- Mahesh Kuimil Treasurer,
- Brian Burke Secretary,
- Duane Hartmann Past President,
- Bob Brydia Director,
- Steve Novosad Director, and

joining the board this year

- Gary Jost Director and
- Andy Oberlander Director.

Please congratulate and thank these people when you see them for volunteering to work on the board. If you are interested in being a member of the board or just helping out, you can contact any of the current board members for more information.

Supporting Our Future ITS Professionals

As a young, wet behind the ears engineering graduate, I learned many things. Over lunch one day with a 30+ year veteran bridge engineer, we discussed a bridge replacement he was designing.

He said to me “You know you’re at the end of your career when you are designing the replacement of the same bridge you designed thirty years ago.” ITS Texas recognizes the responsibility to support the future of our profession. This support is through a \$1000 scholarship to a graduate student whose academic career emphasizes ITS. The recipient is announced at the Annual Meeting.



The Scholarship review committee received two scholarship applications for the 2006 scholarship. Jason West from the University of Texas was the 2006 ITS Texas Scholarship recipient. Jason is a past Dwight D. Eisenhower Transportation Fellow whose research titled “Review of model Border Facilities at the United States and Mexico Border” allowed him to graduate with Tier 2 honors. Jason is also a Texas A&M Undergraduate Transportation Fellow and has gained professional experience as a TxDOT and US Coast Guard intern. Jason will complete his Master of Civil Engineering and Master of Public Affairs degrees in 2008. Our future is bright.

Results of Conference Survey

A membership survey was conducted at the ITS Texas Annual Meeting, held November 15 - 17, 2006. The purpose of the survey is to help the 2007 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 2006 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 3B: Traveler Information; Session 4: Vendor Technology Forum and Session 5A: Toll Roads and Comprehensive Development Agreement’s. 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 4.5, 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 upcoming events, meeting information, and newsletter. Members recommended added features including an option for online membership and schedules for Request for Information and Request for Proposal’s.

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, and Annual Meeting information. Recommendations were made to add more information about new developments in other states, and new technology or approaches to problems.

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 2007 should be. The item that received the highest points in response was the Annual Meeting. Training seminars, membership growth followed close behind.

The ITS Texas Board would like your feedback regarding the Chapter priorities and initiatives for 2007. If you didn't have a chance to complete the survey during the 2006 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.

Model Legislation for PPPs Published by USDOT

States wanting to utilize Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) for funding transportation project now can reference model legislation published by USDOT. The legislation is based on current PPP laws that exist in 21 states; one of which is Texas. There have been 28 key elements identified by the USDOT that are vital to states being able to negotiate a PPP project successfully upon which this legislation was developed to provide guidance and act as a starting point. It is part of the USDOT efforts to address what Transportation Secretary Mary Peters describes as the “growing stranglehold that congestion is placing on America’s transportation network.” Texas has passed versions of 25 of the 28 key elements; make it the leading state in implementing the elements. Some examples of key elements are eligible modes of transportation, tolling methodology, procurement methods, leasing requirements, and project eligibility.

STATE /LOCAL ISSUES

TxDOT Annual Summary Available Online

Each year TxDOT releases its annual summary that provides an update on how much progress was made on the agency’s strategic plan goals. The summary is titled “TxDOT: Meeting the Challenge” which serves as a checkpoint for TxDOT’s Strategic Plan for 2007 – 2011. The summary discusses reducing congestion, improving air quality, enhancing safety, expanding economic opportunity, and increasing the value of transportation assets. The summary can be found at the following link: <ftp://ftp.dot.state.tx.us:21/pub/txdot-info/pio/annualsummary2006.pdf>

2nd Annual Texas Transportation Forum

The 2nd Annual Texas Transportation Forum will be held from July 18th-20th in Austin. The topics will focus on ways to “Keep Texas Moving”. Leaders from local, regional, and state levels will join with national experts to discuss topics ranging from congestion, safety, economic opportunity, air quality, and transportation assets. For more information and to register follow this link: <http://www.dot.state.tx.us/ttf/>

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:

- Email addresses have been added so that you can contact any of the officers directly with your inquiries. For example to contact the President you would click on the Board of Directors link and then select the president@itstexas.org email address.
- 2006 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.

PLACE YOUR AD HERE



Contact Brian Burk
512-974-0899 or
bburk@dot.state.tx.us

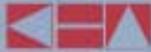


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