



# ROADTALK

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## Shelby County Utility Pole Safety Committee Works to Reduce Crashes

by Matt Cate

Every year, collisions with fixed objects such as utility poles account for a high percentage of fatal crashes on America's streets and highways. In 2002, 1,084 drivers and passengers were killed in crashes where the

cies responsible for roadways and utility poles in Shelby County to the table to identify problem areas and develop strategies to further reduce the occurrence of utility pole fatalities. Represented on the committee are: the Memphis Metropolitan Plan-



Shelby County Utility Pole Safety Committee Members

first harmful event was collision with a utility pole. Of this total, 59 of these fatalities were in Tennessee (the sixth highest total in the nation). In past years, almost one quarter of Tennessee's utility pole fatalities occurred in Shelby County, though this number has dropped some since 1999.

In order to deal with this traffic safety issue, a utility pole safety committee has been formed to bring most of the agen-

ning Organization; Shelby County; the Cities of Memphis, Germantown, Collierville, and Bartlett; the Tennessee Department of Transportation; the Federal Highway Administration; the University of Memphis; Memphis Light, Gas, and Power; and BellSouth.

From these meetings, a number of strategies have been recommended to further reduce the num-

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## FIELD REPS.

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Robert Russell  
1-800-252-ROAD

# ROADTALK

is a publication of the Tennessee Transportation Assistance Program (TTAP). TTAP is part of a nationwide Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) financed jointly by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT). Its purpose is to translate into understandable terms the latest state-of-the-art technologies in the areas of roads, bridges, and public transportation to local highway and transportation personnel.

The views, opinions, and recommendations contained within this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of FHWA and TDOT.

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## From the Director

Greetings,

**Budget Impacts:** Has your training budget affected your attendance at TTAP workshops? Our attendance numbers indicate that may be the case. Or, is it because we are not offering the right courses at the right places at the right time at the right price? Please tell us how we can do a better job with our training program. We'll do our best to serve you better despite our own budget concerns. However, because of funding constraints, we must enforce higher minimum attendees to conduct classes.

**City/County Focus:** Did you notice more City/County articles along with more pictures in this ROADTALK? ROADTALK is focusing more on lessons learned and good news stories rather than out of state technical stories. Do you have a good news story to share? If so, we'd like to hear from you. And if you have pictures to go along with your story, we can publish those, also.

It is an interesting time to be in the Transportation support business. Keep TTAP in mind with your training and technical assistance needs. FHWA and TDOT provide TTAP with funding to help you. Use us.

Robert Russell

## Tennessee County Services Association Conference

by Frank Brewer

On October 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> the Tennessee County Services Association held its 2003 conference at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville. During this meeting, members of county governments were given the opportunity to discuss common county problems with subject-matter experts. TTAP hosted an information booth at the conference. Matt Cate and Frank Brewer attended the conference, manning the booth in the vendor area.

County officials had the opportunity to stop by and discuss the training and technical assistance offered by TTAP. Of those who visited our booth, some were County Council members or other county officials as well as county highway officials. We were able to introduce the TTAP program to those officials who were not familiar with what TTAP has to offer them.

We would like to thank those that stopped by our booth. Please call if we can provide training or technical assistance in the transportation field.

## TDOT's New Logo

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) has a new logo.



The arrow in the logo represents TDOT's efforts to streamline the department's business practices; to move their customers forward in a unified, focused direction. The new logo will be integrated into TDOT's systems gradually. The logo will be placed on vehicles, buildings and signs over a one-year period.

# 2003 Southeastern Local Roads Conference

by Matt Cate

This year's Southeastern Local Roads Conference was held in Asheville, NC, on October 12-14. The event was attended by over 130 people associated with the maintenance and operation of local roads throughout the southeast region, including Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

The purpose of the local roads conference is to bring local roads officials together to learn about new technologies and best practices available to local agencies. This year's topics included:

- Proven Solutions to Old Problems (Red light confirmation lights, reusable sidewalk form boards, and adjustable manhole covers)
- Innovative Paving Materials
- Traffic Signal LED Usage
- New Days, New Ways (Context-sensitive construction, rehabilitation of HWY/RR grade crossings, and access management)
- Highway Accidents and Transit Characteristics in Puerto Rico
- Bridge Rating and Rehabilitation Approaches
- Innovative Cement Applications
- Safety and Mobility Issues

The three-day conference also provides attendees an opportunity to interact with exhibitors representing suppliers and service providers that serve local road agencies and to share ideas and experiences with other city and county road officials. This year's conference was a roaring success and all are looking forward to the next Southeastern Local Roads Conference, tentatively scheduled to be hosted by the Georgia Local Technical Assistance Program Center in the Spring of 2005. We will provide details in our RoadTalk newsletter as they become available.

Andrew Sonner, Alcoa Public Works Department discusses his city's experience with the use of Light-Emitting Diode (LED) traffic signal heads.



## Utility Pole Safety Committee. *continued from page 1*

ber of fatalities and injuries occurring as a result of collisions with utility poles. These strategies include:

- Use of underground utilities when feasible
- Sharing of poles by overhead utilities – reduce the number of poles
- Increase the width of utility easements by five feet to both sides on collector and arterial roadways
- Placement of utility and light poles behind sidewalks wherever possible
- Use of breakaway lighting poles in all new installations; systematic replacement of imbedded steel poles in known problem areas

While the utility pole safety committee appears to have a good start on combating utility pole crashes in Shelby County, the group plans to continue its meetings so that it can monitor its results and continue to develop new countermeasures. Future plans for the group include a best practices review and potentially field trips to meet with officials in other cities that have had success in reducing the number of similar crashes.

If you are interested in learning more about the prevention of utility pole crashes in your community, you may contact Brian Fouch with the Federal Highway Administration in Nashville by phone at (615) 781-5765 or by email at [Brian.Fouch@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:Brian.Fouch@fhwa.dot.gov)

# RAILROADS?

by Bart Jennings

(Editor's Note: Dr. Bart Jennings is a Senior Research Associate/ Adjunct Professor at The University of Tennessee Center for Transportation Research.)

Wait...Whoa...Hold on there for a moment. I know that I said a bad word for many of you, "railroads," but you really should read on a bit further. Railroads can be found in the vast majority of Tennessee's cities, counties, and communities. Somewhere along the way, almost every street and highway official is going to run into those two steel streaks running through their domain. Simply at the worst, the old rule is to know your enemy. However, for many of you, railroads are actually among your best friends. Remember, unlike highways, railroads are almost always privately owned and operated. This means that they pay property taxes, possibly helping to pay your salary. In fact, in many areas, railroads are the number one source of local taxes.

Another reason to pay attention is that the State of Tennessee is a bit unique in that it has a very aggressive rail program, fighting to keep rail service to many communities. This means that a number of small railroads are actually owned by the communities that they serve. This might mean that you can get asked to get involved to help solve a local problem involving the railroad. Even where a community doesn't own a railroad, they may be involved with such things as industrial parks where rail is a part of the infrastructure provided.

For most people, the railroad industry is a mystery. However, each year, U.S. railroads actually move far more ton-miles of freight than any other mode of transportation. The problem is that most freight is shipped by big users who often move thousands of tons of freight at a time. Few small and local industries use rail directly, often preferring to use intermodal movements instead. Therefore, the use of rail is often hidden but can often lead to additional highway traffic around rail facilities.

***Go to our website  
ctr.utk.edu/ttap/  
for Dr. Jennings's  
complete article.***

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Railroads also mean railroad-highway grade crossings, another special issue for many road officials. Anyone working with a railroad needs to know the rules. Unlike the highway industry where most regulations are locally or state based, railroads get most of their rules and regulations from the Federal government through the Federal Railroad Administration. For example, everything from train speeds to locomotive engineer qualifications to whistling at grade crossings is regulated by the FRA. It is only in areas that the FRA has decided to not regulate that governments at lower levels can get involved. For example, Tennessee law indicates that it is the responsibility of the railroad to maintain existing public crossings but that local road authorities have the responsibility for highway signage. Tennessee also recently established a set of engineering procedures for building new grade crossings.

Even when just working around a railroad, highway employees need to know other simple rules. These can include such items as trains take a great deal of distance to stop in an emergency, trains are much wider than the tracks that they ride on, and even the slightest misalignment of the track caused by a road scraper or snow plow can result in a train derailment. It is generally best, and safest, to alert a railroad to the fact that highway work is about to take place around their track.

Railroads are different from highways in many other ways. Their tonnages are much greater than a truck with a loaded freight car weighing as much as 286,000 pounds. The railroad industry uses the chord surveying method, producing a different definition of a curve as compared to the arc surveying method found in the highway industry. Railroads are generally exclusively freight haulers while highway officials worry about freight and passenger issues.

Railroads can be an interesting transportation industry to work with. The Center for Transportation Research at The University of Tennessee conducts a number of training programs and workshops each year on the subject. These classes include subjects as broad as track inspection and engineering, bridge inspection, and grade crossing safety. To read Dr. Jennings's entire article, go to our website at [ctr.utk.edu/ttap](http://ctr.utk.edu/ttap).



# HAVE YOU MET “DOTTIE”

by Frank Brewer

There is a new face at TDOT. Her name is “Dottie.” Not only does she represent the new TDOT face to the Tennessee drivers, she represents the safe TDOT Highway Worker. “Dottie” has her Hard Hat to protect her from flying debris or other hazards. She also has her high visibility/retroreflective vest on, even though she is in the bright daylight. She will remove her hard hat for meetings.

“Dottie” stands for all hard working TDOT employees as well as representing TDOT’s commitment to customer service. She represents the TDOT employees who



Joe Warren and his new friend “Dottie”

perform duties such as bridge inspections, highway design, highway maintenance, drive HELP Trucks or any of many other occupations. “Dottie” is all aspects of TDOT. She is dressed for success and safety.

Drivers have many distractions calling for their attention. So, like all highway workers “Dottie” wants to be seen by the other people using the highway. With her personal protective equipment on, “Dottie” is more easily seen and is not a surprise hazard to the drivers. At the end of the day she is able to return home to her family.

If you see “Dottie” give her a wave but be careful as you pass any highway work.

## Materials from TTAP



TTAP has received CDs and publications from a variety of sources. As part of TTAP’s mission to provide information on the latest materials and techniques being used in transportation field, we make these materials available to you, the city and county transportation officials of Tennessee. We have multiple copies of some materials, while others can only be loaned for short-term use. A complete listing can be found on our website [ctr.utk.edu/ttap/](http://ctr.utk.edu/ttap/) If you have an interest in any of the materials listed below, please contact Denczil Rolle at 1-800-252-ROAD or (865) 974-5255.

Title	Source	Date
<b>CDs</b>		
Asphalt Pavement Maintenance: Field Guide	Minnesota DOT	2001
Maintenance of Signs and Sign Supports for Local Roads and Streets	LTAP	2003
Rubblization: The Quick, Cost-Effective, Environmentally Friendly fix for Failed Concrete Pavement	Asphalt Pavement Alliance	2003
Water/Road Interaction Toolkit	USDA	2000
<b>PUBLICATIONS</b>		
Access Management Manual	TRB	2003
NCHRP Report 500, Volume 3: A Guide for Addressing Collisions with Trees in Hazardous Locations	NCHRP	2003
NCHRP Report 500, Volume 4: A Guide for Addressing Head-On Collisions	NCHRP	2003
NCHRP Report 500, Volume 5: A Guide for Addressing Unsignalized Intersection Collisions	NCHRP	2003
NCHRP Report 500, Volume 6: A Guide for Addressing Run-off-the-Road Collisions	NCHRP	2003
NCHRP Synthesis 310: Impact of Red Light Camera Enforcement on Crash Experience	NCHRP	2003
Scenic Byways: A Design Guide for Roadside Improvements	FHWA	2002
<b>VIDEO</b>		
Making the Effort Works: Reducing Utility Delays During Construction	AASHTO	2003
The Case for Roundabouts	Federal Highway Administration	2003



**Education and training opportunities** are available through The University of Tennessee Center for Transportation Research (CTR), Southeast Transportation Center (STC), and Tennessee Transportation Assistance Program (TTAP). This listing of courses currently available includes both TTAP and TATE courses that are offered in conjunction with The University of Tennessee Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the Tennessee Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Local roadway departments can benefit from all of the workshops. Because of this, we ask that you please share this listing with others who might be interested in our workshops. The Center for Transportation Research is always eager to meet your research and training needs. If you have a special course in mind or would like a course held on site especially for your employees, please contact Annette Jones at 1-800-252-ROAD.

**\*CEU and PDH credit hours available.**

TITLE	DATE	LOCATION	INSTRUCTOR(S)
Storm Water Drainage	Dec 08, 2003	Nashville	Kervin
Traffic Engineering 1	Dec 16-18, 2003	Nashville	Wegmann/Chatterjee/Han
Geotechnical Engineering Concepts 2	Jan 26, 2004	Nashville	Drumm
Plans Interpretation	Jan 30, 2004	Nashville	Beckwith
Design of At-Grade Intersections	Feb 02, 2004	Knoxville	Childers
Work Zone / Flagging	Feb 11, 2004	Chattanooga	Kervin
Work Zone / Flagging	Feb 12, 2004	Knoxville	Kervin
Traffic Signs & Pavement Markings	Feb 24, 2004	Jackson	Kervin/ Brunelle
Road Surface Management System (RSMS) for Beginners	Mar 01, 2004	Jackson	Cate/Brewer
Storm Water Drainage	Mar 04, 2004	Chattanooga	Kervin
Advanced Roadway Surveying	Mar 25-26, 2004	Jackson	Kervin
Basic Roadway Surveying	Apr 08, 2004	Knoxville	Kervin
Context Sensitive Highway Design	Apr 22, 2004	Nashville	Norm Johnson
Millennium Edition of the MUTCD: Revision 2 Significant Changes	Apr 27, 2004	Jackson	Brunelle
Millennium Edition of the MUTCD: Revision 2 Significant Changes	Apr 29, 2004	Chattanooga	Brunelle
Traffic Engineering 2	May 12-14, 2004	Nashville	Wegmann/Chatterjee/Han
Pavement Design	May 17, 2004	Chattanooga	Huang
Road Surface Management System (RSMS) for Beginners	Sept 08, 2004	Nashville	Cate/Brewer
Design of At-Grade Intersections	Sept 13, 2004	Nashville	Childers
Advanced Roadway Surveying	Sept 20-21, 2004	Nashville	Kervin
Roadside Design Guide	Sept 29, 2004	Chattanooga	Brunelle
Work Zone/Flagging	Oct 04, 2004	Jackson	Kervin
Work Zone/Flagging	Oct 05, 2004	Nashville	Kervin
Pavement Design	Oct 14, 2004	Jackson	Huang
Storm Water Drainage	Oct 25, 2004	Nashville	Kervin
Asphalt Pavement Patching	Nov 08, 2004	Knoxville	Hearn
Asphalt Pavement Patching	Nov, 09, 2004	Nashville	Hearn
Traffic Signs & Pavement Markings	Nov 16, 2004	Nashville	Kervin/Brunelle
Traffic Engineering 1	Dec 13-15, 2004	Nashville	Wegmann/Chatterjee/Han

## New Staff

There's a new voice at the end of the phone in our office as Jean Spangler has taken early retirement which she is enjoying immensely.

**Annette Jones** has joined the TTAP team as Jean's replacement. Annette was born and reared in South Carolina. She came to Knoxville for the 1982 World's Fair and stayed, making East Tennessee her home. Annette is a busy mom raising her 15 year old son, Trent, and 13 year old daughter, Taylor. After many years working in the food and beverage industry she is delighted to join us at TTAP and so are we! You will have a chance to talk with Annette when you call to sign up for our workshops and she does have a very sweet voice.

## MTAS Offers Classes

The University of Tennessee's Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) offers training in a variety of formats that include: on-site classroom or city hall instruction, retreat settings, hands-on learning, small group processes, and self-assessments.

**City University** is a training initiative developed by The University of Tennessee's Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) and includes the participation of various State of Tennessee departments and Tennessee municipal associations. It is a comprehensive program, addressing the training needs of elected and ap-

pointed municipal officials. Each component of the program is designed to provide you, the official, with the knowledge and the tools you need to guide your municipalities into the 21st Century.

The classes include topics like Conflict Management, Finance Workshop; Municipal Budget; Legal Issues; Customer Service; Planning and Zoning for

Municipalities; Be a Hero! Improve your ISO Rating. The class schedule, locations, and fees can be found on their webpage [www.mtas.utk.edu](http://www.mtas.utk.edu), or contact Jennifer Hicks at 865-974-9847 or email her at [hicksj@tennessee.edu](mailto:hicksj@tennessee.edu).

**For information, contact  
Jennifer Hicks  
865-974-9847 or email  
[hicksj@tennessee.edu](mailto:hicksj@tennessee.edu)**

## TALK TO TTAP

**W**e are always looking for your comments, ideas and suggestions to help make the TTAP program more useful to you.

1. Please send me more information on the following articles mentioned in this newsletter.

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2. Please list any additional training workshops you would be interested in attending.

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3. Please list topics for videos you would like TTAP to obtain.

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4. Please list any other ideas or suggestions on how TTAP could assist you.

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5. Please list your name and organization to verify for TTAP's mailing list.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently on TTAP's mailing list? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

Do you wish to be on the mailing list? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

Please fax your form to TTAP at (865) 974-3889 or mail to TTAP; Suite 309 Conference Center Building; Knoxville, TN 37996-4133.

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_

Tennessee Transportation Assistance Program  
Center for Transportation Research  
The University of Tennessee  
Suite 309 Conference Center Building  
Knoxville, TN 37996-4133  
Tel: 865-974-5255/1-800-252-ROAD  
Fax: 865-974-3889

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Web: [ctr.utk.edu/ttap](http://ctr.utk.edu/ttap)



Federal Highway  
Administration



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## TTAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS TO HELP YOU

by Robert Russell

The initial meeting of the TTAP Advisory Committee was held at TDOT Nashville on Thursday, September 11, 2003.

We thank the following members for volunteering to help the UT TTAP Team do a better job to help you:

<i>Karen Brunelle/FHWA</i>	<i>David Martin/FHWA</i>
<i>Ralph Volpe/FHWA</i>	<i>Preston Elliott/TDOT</i>
<i>Sharon Rollins/MTAS</i>	<i>Ed Archer/TCAPWA</i>
<i>Debbie Blanchard/TCHOA</i>	<i>Robert Russell/TTAP</i>
<i>Frank Brewer/TTAP</i>	<i>Matt Cate/TTAP</i>

The following major action items were addressed:

1. *Develop group email address to advertise TTAP services*
2. *Hire/maintain active Regional Field Reps—Do you know a candidate?*
3. *Partner with MTAS/TCHOA/TCAPWA to promote TTAP training*
4. *Use TTAP Advisory Cmte to help develop next TTAP course offering*
5. *Advisory Cmte act as sounding board by email/ phone*
6. *ROADTALK focus more on City/County stories*

**YOU** may want to help TTAP with ideas to help achieve some of these actions. You may have suggestions for other improvements. **We want to get better to serve you better.**

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