TTAP Is Here to Help YOU

by Matt Cate, P.E.

The Tennessee Transportation Assistance Program, or TTAP, has been serving the needs of local roadway and transportation agencies throughout Tennessee for more than 25 years. With this history, it is easy to assume that the members of our target audience are familiar with the program and its services. However, we all operate in a changing workplace. Familiar faces retire, take advantage of better opportunities through promotion or relocation, or simply move in another direction. With this in mind, we would like to provide a brief overview of TTAP and the benefits that are available to Tennessee’s local roadway community.

TTAP is one of 51 Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) centers across the country. We are sponsored jointly by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and the University of Tennessee. TTAP’s mission is to foster a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound transportation system by improving skills and knowledge of transportation providers through training, technical assistance, and technology transfer. A brief summary of TTAP’s activities and services within each focus area are provided in the following paragraphs.

Technical Assistance
TTAP is available to provide no-cost transportation technical assistance to all local governments in Tennessee. Technical assistance projects may range in scope from a single phone call to several on-site visits, depending on the nature and...
I guess it’s a fact of getting older, but the time seems to pass faster and faster these days. It’s already deep into football season and the leaves are starting to turn here in East Tennessee. Fall 2012 seems like just a few days ago.

I’d like to congratulate colleagues at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) who submitted a winning proposal for a U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) funded University Transportation Center grant. The Southeastern Transportation Center (STC) will represent the states in USDOT Region 4, including Tennessee. The Center’s theme is “Comprehensive Transportation Safety,” and highway safety will be a key research focus area. TTAP will work with the center to support technology transfer and workforce development initiatives. Besides UTK, the STC consortium includes the University of Kentucky, the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, North Carolina A&T State University, Clemson University, the University of South Florida, the University of Central Florida, the University of Alabama, and the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

One other note, my best wishes go out to TTAP staff member Jonathan Watson, P.E., who moved on to new challenges at the end of August. Many of you have probably met Jonathan, as he did a lot of our field work across the state. It’s another mark of time passing, as Jonathan joined us as a new graduate, learned the TTAP ropes, and earned his P.E. That’s taken a few years, and I and all the rest of the TTAP family wish Jonathan well. If you know of any talented engineers, we have a big hole to fill.

We’re going to make a push over the next year to get out to visit as many city and county road agencies as time permits. With 95 counties and hundreds of towns, it’s hard for us to get to know all the hard working people responsible for local roads in our lovely state. But, it’s something I really hope to spend more time doing. If we can see firsthand what you all face, it will really help in both our workforce development and technology transfer focus areas. So, we’ll see how much ground we can cover in the months to come. If there’s something on your mind, give us a call and we’ll make it a priority to head your way.

I’ll conclude by relating an interesting talk I heard recently about project failures. The speaker defined a failed project as “one that, when at its end, we’re sorry we ever started.” I got a big chuckle over that, but he was right. Of course, sometimes people don’t want to admit they’re sorry, and do their best to spin a tale of success, but deep down, they know. Anyway, may all your projects be truly successful.
TTAP is Here to Help YOU, continued from page 1

complexity of the issue under discussion. Technical assistance projects cover a broad range of topics, including traffic operations, highway safety, roadway drainage, and pavement management. Local government officials may request TTAP assistance by telephone or email.

Equipment Loan Program
TTAP also offers an equipment loan program as part of its technical assistance efforts. Any Tennessee city or county may utilize these items, including traffic counter-classifiers (tube counters), turning movement count boards, and handheld traffic sign retroreflectometers. TTAP staff members are available to provide instruction and assistance in the use of this equipment.

Training and Continuing Education
TTAP is charged with improving the state of practice for Tennessee Transportation Professionals. In our quest to achieve that goal, we train and inform thousands of state, city and county transportation personnel annually. We conduct dozens of training courses throughout the year using experienced and dynamic instructors. The continuing education program covers topics ranging from basics such as work zone traffic control and drainage maintenance to advanced topics such as traffic signal timing and access management. Visit the TTAP website for an up-to-date listing of upcoming training opportunities.

RoadTalk
RoadTalk is a quarterly newsletter published by the Tennessee Transportation Assistance Program. Its purpose is to translate into understandable terms the latest state-of-the-art technologies in the areas of roads, bridges, and public transportation for local highway and transportation personnel. An archive of past RoadTalk issues is available on our website.

TTAP Library
TTAP maintains a library of printed transportation publications and reference materials for use by local transportation agencies in the State of Tennessee.

Most of these publications are available for a free three-week loan to in-state local agencies. If multiple copies of a publication are available, they will be distributed to in-state local agencies on a first come, first served basis. TTAP also maintains an extensive library of transportation-related video titles. Many of these videos are available in either VHS or DVD format to accommodate a variety of audio-visual and training needs. In-state agencies may borrow any of TTAP’s video titles at no cost, or they may purchase copies of non-copyrighted titles for a minimal fee.

TTAP Staff
These programs and services are supported by a core staff of nine employees. If you have worked with TTAP in the past, many of these names may be familiar. If you aren’t familiar with TTAP, we look forward to meeting you in the future. All staff members can be reached through our toll-free number at 1-800-252-7623.

• David B. Clarke, Ph.D., P.E., TTAP Director (dclarke@utk.edu)
• Frank Brewer, Continuing Education Coordinator (fbrewer1@utk.edu)
• Linda Capps, Field Technician (lcapps@utk.edu)
• Matt Cate, P.E., Technical Assistance Coordinator (mcate@utk.edu)
• Jenny Jones, RoadTalk Editor (gohjones@utk.edu)
• Airton Kohls, Ph.D., Engineer (akohls@utk.edu)
• Spence Meyers, Database, Website & Technical Assistance (meyers@utk.edu)
• Mollie C. Mitchell, Administrative Specialist (mmitche6@utk.edu)
• Diana Webb, Workshop Registration (dwebb21@utk.edu)

Well, that’s about it for this issue. As always, if we can help, please don’t hesitate to call or email. TTAP looks forward to assisting you. Be safe!

From the Director, continued from page 2
The 2009 MUTCD has incorporated some new Standards and new Guidance regarding the positioning of Traffic Signal faces. I have noticed lately that some locations are not following some of these recommendations and rules, (even on new or reconstructed installations), leaving the door open for potential liability issues! First, let me address the positioning and arrangement of shared signal faces for protected/permissive left turn movements:

- Section 4D-13 provides GUIDANCE stating that signal faces containing a circular green signal indication for a permissive left-turn should not be located overhead above an exclusive left-turn lane or the extension of the lane, nor should they be post-mounted on the far side median in front of the left-turn lane. This recommendation applies only to new or reconstructed signal installations. It doesn’t happen very often that a driver will incorrectly interpret the circular green over the left-turn lane as meaning they have the right-of-way to “go” without yielding. But when it does happen, the resulting crash can be serious or fatal!

Here is the typical position and arrangement of shared signal faces for protected/permissive mode left turns, as described on Section 4D-20 (Figure 4D-11) of the MUTCD:

Notice that placing the shared signal display over the lane line or to the right of it helps to promote the idea that the signal display with the circular green is being shared by the left turn lane and the thru lane, and reduces the chance that a left turning driver will misinterpret the circular green as a “go, you have the right of way” message.

Now, Section 4D-19 addresses the issue that protected only mode left-turn faces must use a red arrow, not circular red. This enhances uniformity by requiring States and local agencies to use a red arrow instead of a circular red for protected-only mode turn signals. Red arrow signal indications have been in use for over 35 years, are extensively implemented for protected turn movements in the majority of the States, are well understood by road users, present a clear message regarding which movement is prohibited when the red indication is displayed, and eliminate the need for a supplemental LEFT TURN

Shared signal face for protected/permissive mode left turn inconsistent with 2009 MUTCD Section 4D-13 and Figure 4D-11 guidance.
In the 2012 winter edition of our RoadTalk newsletter we wrote an article titled "Our Commitment to Roadway Safety". There, we provided information on a set of countermeasures addressing Roadway Departure Safety, including installing advanced curve warning signs, providing curve delineation chevron signs, installing object markers, creating clear zones, installing center line and edge pavement markings, etc.

Today I would like to address a simple procedure that can save lives on the roads and help your agency avoid liability issues. Agencies all around the state have personnel driving vehicles to and from worksites several times during the day. Many of these vehicles carry (usually on truck beds, bucket trucks, etc.) all sorts of equipment to be used to make our roads safer, from trimmers to air compressors to stop signs to hammers, you name it. What happens when a piece of equipment not appropriately secured on the vehicle falls out on the road? It definitely becomes a potential hazard for other road users. So, it is best practice to systematically check if equipment is appropriately secured to a service vehicle. It is also best practice to report to police any hazardous debris on the road. Please, constantly remind your personnel to engage in this practice!
Build a Better Mousetrap Competition Submissions due January 31

by Matt Cate, P.E.

TTAP still wants to hear about your creative solutions to common problems. As we told you in the Summer issue of RoadTalk (http://ctr.utk.edu/ttap/newsletter/27/02/01.php), the annual LTAP Build a Better Mousetrap competition gathers best practices, tips from the field, and innovative answers. The competition allows LTAP centers across the country to share these ideas so others may benefit from different concepts and perspectives. The competition also provides well-earned recognition for the hard work and creativity of these city, county, and tribal transportation workers.

TTAP is looking for projects that you, your employees or crew designed and built. Potential Build a Better Mousetrap projects include the development of tools, equipment modification, and/or processes that increase safety, reduce cost, improve efficiency, and improve the quality of transportation. These ideas don’t have to be complex or high-tech – sometimes the most effective approach is to keep things simple.

To get you started, we included some examples from previous competitions in the Summer 2013 RoadTalk article referenced above. For more examples, please visit the Build a Better Mousetrap page at the Local Technical Assistance Program Clearinghouse website (http://www.ltap.org/resources/mousetrap.php).

If you have developed a unique solution to a common problem or have found a faster/better/cheaper way to serve your community’s transportation needs, we want to hear from you! Submissions will be judged on five criteria, including:

- **Cost**
- **Savings/benefit to the community**
- **Ingenuity**
- **Transferability to others**
- **Effectiveness**

Each submission will be assigned points within each category using a five-point scale. The winner will be the project with the highest point total. Tennessee’s winner will be included for consideration in the national Build a Better Mousetrap competition.

If you have a project that you would like to submit for the 2014 Tennessee Build a Better Mousetrap competition, visit the TTAP website at http://ctr.utk.edu/ttap/ If you have questions about the competition or know of an innovative solution that has been implemented by another Tennessee local agency, please call Matt Cate or Airton Kohls at 1-800-252-7623 or send us an email at TTAP@utk.edu.

**TTAP Training News**

by Frank Brewer.

On July 1, 2013, TDOT issued Circular Letter #712.04-05, subject; WorkZone Flagger Training. It stated “Effective all letting after July 1, 2013, Workzone Flaggers shall be trained and certified in flagging operations ... ” This can be viewed on page 256 at http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/construction/Circular_Letters/circltr.pdf. TTAP is a resource for this training. TTAP has scheduled eight Flagger/Highway Safety workshops to be offered across the state throughout 2014. Please refer to the calendar. This workshop is available as an on-site workshop as well. For more information, please contact Frank Brewer (865-974-8251, 800-252-7623, or fbrewer1@utk.edu) of the TTAP office.

The actual dates and locations for the 2014 TTAP Training Calendar are still being finalized and are subject to change. TTAP will publish finalized information on our web site and brochures. For more information, please contact TTAP (865-974-5255, 800-252-7623) or you may view the calendar at http://ctr.utk.edu/ttap/training/index.php.

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*continued on page 7*
## Preliminary 2014 Training Schedule

Dates and locations will be posted on our website at [http://ctr.utk.edu/ttap/training/index.php](http://ctr.utk.edu/ttap/training/index.php) when confirmed.

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TALK TO TTAP

We are always looking for your comments, ideas and suggestions to help make the TTAP Program more useful to you. Please fill out and fax the form below to TTAP at (865) 974-3889 or mail to TTAP; Suite 309 Conference Center Building, Knoxville, TN 37996-4133.

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