



National Operations Center of Excellence Newsletter March 2015

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From the Executive Director

By Dennis Motiani



On February 25, 2015, AASHTO convened this year's Washington Briefing. A handout titled "Nation at a Crossroads" was distributed. I thought I would [share](#) some of the numbers with all of you. Worth noting are the figures for 2015 cost of congestion - \$6.7B, if we interpolate between the congestion costs of 2011 and 2020. That's staggering! The experts are predicting that by 2030, vehicle-based travel and commercial travel will increase by 25% and 64% respectively! A good question to ask ourselves is what are we doing about it? Are we still in reactive mode or can we get ahead of the curve? The total number of fatalities from traffic crashes is 33,561 for 2012, that's 33,561 more than there should be. Have we done everything under our power to save these lives? As we wait for Congress to pass the transportation bill and all the uncertainty around it, one thing is quite certain and that is the need to efficiently and effectively manage and operate our transportation system. As we stand here and ask for funding, it's vital that we also provide a reliable system.

Since I am an urbanite now, I rely on mass transit, as well as Uber and Car2Go. As I listened to the speakers of the morning session titled "Impact of Technology on Business and Transportation Policy Decisions" on the first day of

the AASHTO Washington Briefing, I was amazed how technology is transforming the way we travel much more quickly than we thought.

While driven by competition and monetary goals, the private sector will do its part in reforming transportation. The question becomes; what can the public sector do to realize substantially more benefits by improving, changing, and modifying the infrastructure to complement what the private sector is doing? Innovation is a process as in any other field.

The process includes envisioning, producing and implementing ideas.

We can talk about an autonomous vehicle showing up at our doorstep one day via a click on our smartphone with the ability to deliver us to our destination without actually driving that vehicle. But we can't get there from here without incremental changes. If you agree with that, then you will also agree that the process to innovation requires public agencies to be part of the incremental change through implementation and or deployment.

There are several states, cities and communities that have accepted the role of early adopters and they should be congratulated for their vision and courage. Are we sharing these ideas? Where are we sharing them? How are we sharing them? Do we need to wait for an annual meeting of some sort? I believe that we do a great job of solving problems and making things work well, but we do a poor job of sharing our success stories. It's not because we don't want to share our them but because we get dragged into another problems/issues that need to be resolved.

Let's take some time out from our crazy schedules to share our success stories as they happen, using the Center's web portal. This Center has been built for **YOU**. It's your turn now to use it.

Have you visited the NOCoE website?

<http://www.transportationops.org/>

The National Operations Center of Excellence is your source for the latest transportation systems management and operations news! Check the site for recently added blog posts, events, reference documents, forum discussions and more.

Please email contact@transportationops.org and offer us your feedback on the website as well as your thoughts on helpful webinar, workshop, peer-to-peer exchanges and summit topics as we start to create our annual technical service plan.

Register today at <http://www.transportationops.org/registration> and stay in the loop!

Developing Your Performance Measurement and Transportation Planning Programs? We're Here to Help!

As DOTs develop performance measurement and management programs and inform transportation planning, NOCoE is sponsoring a FREE webinar series highlighting the data available to state DOTs, how the National Performance Management Research Dataset (NPMRDS) can be useful as a performance management tool, and how others are using the NPMRDS to support decision making. Learn some tricks of the trade to using the data sets from your colleagues.

Designed for managers, directors, and executives, the first webinar, **"NOCoE/AASHTO NPMRDS Webinar Series Part 1: Introduction to the NPMRDS"** will be held on **Tuesday, April 7, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. EDT**. Registration information is available [here](#). This webinar will also be recorded and posted on the NOCoE website.

Tennessee Houses Country's First Traffic Incident Management Training Facility



Tennessee is now the home of the Nation's first Traffic Management (TIM) Training Facility. Brad Freeze, P.E. for the Middle Tennessee section, discussed the progress of the facility which was completed in September 2014. Freeze says the facility has proven very successful

and offered the following background on the facility's beginnings:

The story of the Tennessee Traffic Incident Management Training facility starts in the summer of 2012. June 26-27, a transportation and public safety summit was held in Washington, DC. This summit was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation and included senior executive level leadership from law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, and transportation agencies from across the nation. The Tennessee Department of Transportation's (TDOT) Chief Engineer, Paul Degges, and the Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP) Colonel, Tracy Trott, were in attendance.

The primary focus of the summit was enhancing the practice of TIM nationally. The group of approximately 52 executives endorsed the deployment of a multi-disciplinary TIM responder training course developed by the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2).

The Tennessee DOT had been involved in the pilot phase of the SHRP2 TIM responder training. The commitment to support the deployment phase of this training was taken seriously by Colonel Trott and Paul Degges. Working together to champion and facilitate TIM responder training sessions, the THP

and TDOT have supported the professional development of over 2,750 Tennessee first responders and stimulated broader coordination across Tennessee to support the safe and quick clearance of traffic incidents.

TDOT applied for and received funding for the construction of the facility from the FHWA through the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

The final design of the TIM training facility included some of the following design features: Approximately 1,500 feet of simulated roadway with multiple lane transitions, cross-section changes, and points of curvature; connector access to facilitate the circulation of traffic flow during training; interstate ramp terminal staging area; full 4-leg intersection with multiple signing options; 100 feet of portable barrier rail, 100 feet of guardrail; 300 feet of cable barrier; full pavement markings; and enhanced reference markers signage.



On October 30, 2014, the Tennessee Highway Patrol and the Tennessee Department of Transportation held an official ribbon cutting event at the site. TIM professionals from Tennessee and across the country were in attendance. The event featured the staging of a simulated traffic incident. The site was dedicated to the memories of first responders killed in the line of duty and a commemorative sign was unveiled with the names of THP and TDOT employees lost.

The Tennessee Traffic Incident Management Training Facility represents the first step in the institutionalization of TIM as a professional discipline in Tennessee. The site will be used to create a sustainable and consistent TIM training program for all first responder stakeholders. Other states have expressed interest in following Tennessee's lead in building such sites.

States and Cities Try Smarter Signals to Reduce Red Lights

Via [pewtrusts.org](https://www.pewtrusts.org)

You're stuck in traffic, waiting for the signal to turn green. When it finally does, you inch forward, as several cars up ahead of you make it through the intersection. Then the light turns red and you hit the brakes again, only to repeat the process.

Most drivers can relate to this frustrating scenario, whether they're commuting to work or heading to the mall. Now, a growing number of cities, counties and states are trying to tackle the traffic congestion nightmare by improving the way lights are synchronized.

They're using a variety of high-tech tools to prevent backups at intersections and smooth the flow of traffic. Some collect and analyze data to pinpoint problem spots. Others use advanced technology to fix the problem right then and there.

Transportation experts say that revamping the way signals work will reduce congestion, save fuel costs, cut down on air pollution and make the roads safer. To read more, please click on the link above.

Wi-Fi Legislation Could Threaten Auto Safety

Via [ITS America](https://www.itsa.org)

Please visit [this video link](#) for a story featured via national news on vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure communication, with a focus on the Wi-Fi Innovation Act and efforts to explore spectrum sharing in the 5.9 GHz band.

Dr. Peter Sweatman, Director of the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute and Chair of **ITS America's Leadership Circle**, was featured in the story along with National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Administrator Mark Rosekind and U.S. Senator Cory Booker.

State Transportation Data? We've Got That

Via [USDOT Fast Lane blog](#)

This month, BTS released [State Transportation by the Numbers Profiles](#). If you're curious about how your state is moving or what your state is moving, these easy-to-read profiles have a lot to offer. The BTS fact sheets are visually friendly, two-page collections of transportation information for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Each sheet includes information on infrastructure, safety, freight transportation, passenger travel, registered vehicles and vehicle-miles traveled, economy and finance, and energy and environment. Please click the links above for more information.

The Role of Planning in a 21st Century State Department of Transportation: Supporting Strategic Decisionmaking

TRB's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 798: [The Role of Planning in a 21st Century State Department of Transportation—Supporting Strategic Decisionmaking](#) examines how the planning function in state departments of transportation can more effectively support strategic decisionmaking.

Stakeholder Partnering

The Every Day Counts innovation of the month for March is [stakeholder partnering](#), which provides local, state and federal stakeholders with an effective way to work together to improve and streamline the Federal-Aid Highway Program delivery process.

Stakeholder partnering committees are groups that meet to identify program-level issues and review project development processes. They work on solutions through a defined decision-making process and action plans. Members include representatives of local public agencies, the state transportation department and the Federal Highway Administration.

After encouraging states to form stakeholder partnering committees in the second round of EDC, FHWA is building on the effort in EDC-3 to enhance success for local agencies. Please click the link above to find out more.

Interactive Training for All-Hazards Emergency Planning, Preparation and Response for Maintenance and Operations Field Personnel

TRB's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Synthesis [468: Interactive Training for All-Hazards Emergency Planning, Preparation, and Response for Maintenance and Operations Field Personnel](#) identifies interactive emergency training tools and sources that may be applied by maintenance and operations field personnel of state departments of transportation and public works agencies. The report also identifies potential obstacles to their implementation and develops a toolkit of relevant training and exercise information.

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