

M-TRAC Annual Meeting
Dubuque, Iowa
July 26-27, 2017
Minutes

The 22nd annual meeting of the Multi-Regional Training and Certification (M-TRAC) group was held on July 26 and 27th in Dubuque, Iowa. The hosts for this year's meeting were the Iowa DOT and University of Wisconsin-Platteville. They did an excellent job with planning, providing an excellent location and great food. The meeting room had a large glass window overlooking the Mississippi River. A special thanks to Brian Squier and Jodi Pluemer.

A welcome to the group and introductions started this year's meeting. There were nine states represented, as well as, the FHWA and four colleges or universities. Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) provided prizes throughout the meeting, all with an Iowa theme.

Comments on the presentations will be kept brief since all presentations, minutes, and attendee list will be available on the M-TRAC website at: <https://engineering.purdue.edu/M-TRAC/>. Please note the change of the website URL from the original URL used in previous years.

Emily Lloyd from e-Content gave the first presentation on the efforts of the Transportation Curriculum Coordination Council (TC3). The TC3 now has around 150 courses available and have several thousand viewers from all states. TC3 is an AASHTO Technical Service Program and the AASHTO billing recently went out to all states. Please assist the TC3 in continuing their effort to supply good courses for technicians, supervisors, and engineers in the construction, materials, and maintenance areas by promoting the TC3 in your agency. There are materials available on the TC3 website at: <https://tc3.transportation.org/> that will explain the benefits of the TC3.

Kelli Bennett with DMACC gave a presentation on the Instructor Development course that DMACC requires for anyone instructing for Iowa's Technical Training and Certification Program. They use the NHI course shortened, with a section on instructing in a laboratory setting. There was a consensus among the states that this type of training is needed for all instructors, but several didn't have anything available. Dennis Dvorak discussed the need for someone to take over the NHI course, since they are not going to offer it in the future. He recommended the TC3 consider offering the materials for this course. Chris Anderson mentioned that this might be a good course to also offer as a web based course, when there may only be one or two needing the course or to use as a review.

Brian Legan gave a presentation on the Return on Investment for training. New Mexico calculated this out for their profilometer training and it is amazing how much the training saved the state.

Emily Lloyd brought some show and tell items for her presentation on New Technology in Training. The group was allowed to try out the HoloLens. Virtual reality may be a new way of training in the near future.

Chris Anderson developed certification summaries for the group. She summarized each participating state's program and what was included in each certification. She added this to the work she did last year comparing each state's test methods to AASHTO Test Methods. Each person received a copy of the summary and a copy will be mailed to participating states that were unable to attend. She would like to continue this effort and branch out to more states. Thanks to everyone that participated.

Dennis Dvorak with the FHWA is always a great asset to the M-TRAC meeting. Dennis brings us up to date on anything the FHWA is suggesting/changing that may affect the training programs. He also adds so much to the meeting with his ideas and help answering questions. Dennis's presentation is always a highlight. Thanks Dennis!

Brian Squier led a discussion on offering materials in languages other than English. After much discussion and scenarios, the group agreed that it would be unadvisable to instruct and test in any language other than English

The group had an open discussion on training the generations. One challenge is making the course interesting enough to capture the attention of the younger group. They seem to learn better in small pieces rather than a long lecture. We all need to review our courses and make sure they are hitting all audiences. This was an excellent discussion.

Each state participant gave a presentation on their state's technical training and certification program. These presentations are very important to the M-TRAC meetings, with all of us taking a lot away from the shared information.

There are several presentations in the two days, but some of the most important information shared is in open discussions. Some of the many discussions included:

1. Having a question/answer site on the M-TRAC website. Throughout the year, there are questions that come up and passed around the group. Many felt this information would be beneficial. Chris will check into setting this up.
2. Using Facebook to communicate about their program
3. New software that summarizes the course evaluations
4. Conflicts, don't teach instructors how to handle properly
5. And many, many more

The meeting ended, but the communication continues. If anyone has a question or an idea they would like to share with the group, please pass it onto Chris Anderson and she will see that it gets shared.

Hopefully, we will have a great turnout for next year's meeting and some more of you will be able to travel and join us for this excellent meeting. Next year's meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 24-25 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was discussed looking at a different time frame, for example June, August, or earlier in July, yet avoiding the AASHTO subcommittee meetings. We would appreciate hearing from you if you have any thoughts on the meeting dates.