

M-TRAC Meeting Notes
Albuquerque, NM
August 20-21, 2008

Wednesday, August 20, 2008

Bob Meyers, NMDOT Materials Bureau Chief, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted that New Mexico initiated their joint training program (agency and industry) in 1996 and it has proven to be very successful.

Mike Gibson, Executive Director of the Associated Contractors of New Mexico, also welcomed everyone. He commented that their arrangement allows NMDOT to take advantage of the non-profit status of the ACNM and the flexibility that gives them. ACNM is looking into the possibility of forming a foundation for workforce development that would allow them even more flexibility in working with universities, accepting donations of land and equipment, etc. Over \$1 million was recently invested to expand their facility. Working together provides a cost effective program and ability to look to the future.

Lee Gallivan and Dennis Dvorak addressed the group via video. They complimented the group on the work they are doing and encouraged continued collaboration.

Pete Rahn, current director of the Missouri DOT and former secretary of the NM State Highway and Transportation Department, spoke about the Transportation Curriculum Coordination Council (TCCC). Rahn is also currently president of AASHTO, where one of his goals is to expand support for the TCCC. He said the TCCC, which was formed in 2000 to address the federal requirement for qualified employees, offers tremendous resources to the states. DOTs and local agencies need good training programs. TCCC identifies the best ones, tweaks them to make them generally applicable (not state specific) and makes them available for use. The National Transportation Training Database is being unveiled this summer and will provide even more information. Rahn concluded that "training is the investment we make in our people" and its importance is often underappreciated.

Chris Anderson, Iowa DOT then expanded the discussion of the TCCC and its web-based training. She noted that the TCCC is supported by a pooled fund, which is up for renewal after five years. She said that Iowa supports the pooled fund to the tune of \$25,000 per year, which is less than it would cost to develop one course. For TCCC's E-Learning Initiative, they are trying to "steal" existing web-based training, get PowerPoints and convert them into web-based training or, if all else fails; develop training from scratch. NHI offered space on their Learning Management System server, plus staff support to help develop training courses. Programs that are ready include: Ethics in Highway Transportation, Reporting/Daily Diary, Basic Materials, Math, GPS, Pavement Preservation and Concrete Durability. Courses in development include Plan Reading, PCC Materials, PCC Paving Inspection, Bolt Connections and Pipe Inspection. A new website for TCCC is coming soon. Chris also noted that if people will send her links of

training programs, she will do all the data entry for the National Transportation Training Database.

Chuck Hamilton, president of James Hamilton Construction Co., offered a contractor's perspective on training. His company employs about 600 people, doing about 60% highway work. If they aren't technical, they can't do their jobs. Ensuring they have the proper training is critical. Hamilton noted how beneficial it is for industry and agency folks to take classes side by side, as it builds trust, helpfulness and healthy relationships. He commented that they have had to invest a lot in new equipment and training, but it has been well worth it.

States gave updates on their local programs. Most participants provided PowerPoint presentations about their state's training program. Those PowerPoint presentations are located on the M-TRAC website at <https://engineering.purdue.edu/M-TRAC/>. Iowa and Missouri gave their presentations on the first day.

Frank Lozano, FHWA Area Engineer in New Mexico, talked about the joint NMDOT/FHWA process review. This program started over a year ago looking at work zone process control. They identified some 250 deficiencies on 18 projects, many of which were recurring. This allowed them to target correction of these problems. They have also done a QC/QA review and are starting one on HMA pavement operations. They are surveying the level of experience of workers and trying to ascertain which policies are working and whether there are deficiencies that should be addressed through training. Lozano said "knowledge is empowerment."

Becky McDaniel provided an update on the status of Superpave implementation, training and the Superpave Centers. She noted that most states had adopted the mix design process and even more had adopted Performance Graded (PG) binders. Many states, though, had put local twists on Superpave, so global uniformity was a lost cause. The original five Superpave Centers varied in their organization, activities and relationships with their regions; some are not very active now, while others are. Training has largely been absorbed into existing states programs, which is appropriate.

Art Gottlieb, Inspector General of New Mexico DOT, and Anthony Lujan, Chief Investigator, talked about cooperative training and the Office of the Inspector General. The goal is to ensure people are doing things the right way. The Office worked with Brian Legan to develop and teach an ethics class. They will eventually reach all NMDOT personnel.

Brian Legan, New Mexico DOT, discussed an analysis he did to try to get at the "return on investment" from training. A recent NCHRP study identified New Mexico as being in the top five states in the US for smooth pavements. One of the reasons cited for this in the report was their training program. A Missouri study quantified the benefits of smoother pavements. Using their study with updated fuel costs and vehicle miles travelled, one could show that smoother roads resulted in a cost savings of over \$3 billion and at least part of this could be due to improved training. So training really does provide a very favorable return on investment, though it is sometimes hard to quantify.

Greg Christensen described Alaska and its training efforts. Because Alaska is so big and remote, there is great interest in web-based training. In addition, there are cultural issues that must be considered. Alaska needs to train locals to provide an economic benefit to the remote communities it serves, however some locals do not want to be long term employees. Web-based training is more accessible, though centralized training is still needed for performance exams, written exams, etc. (Training is also available on CD for really remote locations with poor internet availability.) Greg demonstrated what is available on their website (www.dot.state.ak.us/stwddes/desmaterial/mat_resources.shtml#) and noted these training modules will reduce in class time by one to two days, which is important for such a big, diverse state.

Thursday, August 21, 2008

Ahmed Farouki of NICET provided a presentation showing the web-based training that NICET has developed in the demonstrated abilities portion of testing. Ahmed gave a brief demonstration showing how hands-on testing could be accomplished with a nuclear density gauge. He provided step by step process and the various icons that can be used to guide the user through the process. Ahmed indicated that a large variety of web-based hands-on testing is being developed by NICET. They want to maintain their defensible certification program. They are modeling their hands on performance exam after the medical, dental, sonography (ultrasound) and acupuncture industries. Ahmed demonstrated the alpha version of the testing piece, not the training piece.

The age old problem of using AASHTO specifications was brought up again. Will Stalcup is going to do some checking for the group on reproduction requirements. We had states that reproduce and don't pay anything, universities that say the TEACH Act allows them to reproduce copyrighted materials, states that pay a large fee each year, and states that don't use them so they don't have to pay.

Open discussion included Title VI, related to non-English speaking civil rights issues, Sec. 508 for the hearing impaired that requires captioned videos, states use of a provisional type certification to bridge the gap when training is not in session. This provisional type certification, Missouri calls it "in term status", is not found in the states where construction and training goes on all year round.

State presentations finished out the second day. Those presentations are located on the M-TRAC website. Kansas, Arkansas, Florida, Utah, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Virginia and New Mexico all gave presentations.

Next year's meeting is planned for South Dakota. North Dakota is checking with Susan Schemmel to see about both states being joint hosts. Ken Cox, Florida DOT, would like to host the 2010 meeting.

M-TRAC Workshop – Albuquerque 2008 – Attendees:

Chris Anderson	Iowa DOT
Brian Legan	New Mexico DOT
Bob Meyers	New Mexico DOT
Jeff Saddler	Utah DOT
Ken Cox	Florida DOT
Hugh Griner	New Mexico DOT
Jessica Sena	New Mexico DOT
Albert Oyerly	Kansas DOT
Lora Kowach	Kansas DOT
Teri Van Wey	Kansas State University – Salina
Joe Krause	Kansas State University – Salina
Tim Jeter	Univeristy of Alaska – Corporate Programs
Greg Christensen	Alaska DOT
Ahmed Farouki	NICET
Jeff Huffman	Missouri DOT
Will Stalcup	Missouri DOT
Pete Rahn	Missouri DOT
Leopoldo Gutierrez	New Mexico DOT
Robert Martinez	New Mexico DOT
Joel Archuleta	New Mexico DOT
Ray Spellman	University of Wisconsin – Platteville
Wayne Chase	Wisconsin DOT
Sharon Taylor	North Dakota DOT
Lorrie Pavlicek	North Dakota DOT
Frances Griffith	University of Arkansas
Julie Rodriguez	TLN
Mike Gibson	Associated Contractors of New Mexico
Art Gottlieb	New Mexico DOT
Anthony Lujan	New Mexico DOT
Chuck Hamilton	James Hamilton Construction
Becky McDaniel	North Central Superpave Center
Duane Sayer	Virginia DOT