Interim Chairman Judie Ryan opened the meeting at 12:40. Members and guests introduced themselves. Those members in attendance included:

Judie Ryan, Wisconsin DOT
John Hinrichsen, Iowa DOT
Amy Schutzbach, Illinois DOT
Ron Walker, INDOT
Will Stalcup, Missouri DOT
Lee Gallivan, FHWA

Cliff Hobson, Kansas DOT
Mike Kvach, Asphalt Paving Assn of Iowa
Marvin Traylor, Illinois Asphalt Pavement Assn
Lloyd Bandy, Asphalt Pavement Assn of Indiana
David Yates, Missouri Asphalt Pavement Assn
Wayne Jones, Asphalt Institute

The guests in attendance included:
Michael Heitzman, NCAT
Dale Williams, Missouri DOT
Jan Olek, NCSC
Jody Reigel, NCSC
Ayesha Shah, NCSC

Gerry Huber, Heritage Research Group (HRG)
Joe Schroer, Missouri DOT
Rick Barezinsky, Kansas DOT
Rebecca McDaniel, NCSC

The agenda is shown in Appendix A.

Membership
Ryan initiated discussion of the Steering Committee membership by asking if the committee has adequate representation of all constituents. She added that John Hinrichsen will be the Iowa DOT representative following Mike Heitzman’s move to NCAT. It was noted that at this point, that the committee does not have representation from Michigan and that Michigan has been removed from the Combined State Binder Group (CSBG). Lee Gallivan suggested adding Brenda O’Brien from MichDOT to the list so that she gets copied on correspondence. Mike Kvach talked to John Becsey of the Asphalt Paving Association of Michigan regarding the NCSC. Becsey said it would be good to keep Michigan informed about what is going on; when the Materials position is permanently filled, they may get more involved. Wayne Jones noted that Dave Powers is still the right contact in Ohio, but out of state travel restrictions make attending the meetings difficult. Cliff Ursich is still the Ohio industry representative, but has not been attending the NCSC meetings.

Becky McDaniel stated that we have been approached about the possibility of adding a liaison from NCAT to the NCSC Steering Committee. She added that the Asphalt Institute has a liaison on the committee, Wayne Jones; Lee Gallivan is the FHWA liaison; and Gerry Huber, from Heritage Research Group (HRG), attends the meetings as a “friend,” with no official standing. She asked if we should consider adding NCAT, HRG or other groups as liaisons. Mike Heitzman indicated that NCAT wants to be in touch with all of the user producer groups to understand what their research needs are; they are also
interested in staying in touch with the North Central Superpave Center. Huber stated
that as a private company, it would be inappropriate for the HRG to be an official
member of the committee; he will remain a friend. After group discussion, Kvach
moved and John Hinrichsen seconded adding an NCAT liaison to the committee. The
move was unanimously accepted. Ryan suggested waiting until other groups ask for
representation before we add any other members to the committee. (Appendix B shows
the current membership of the NCSC Steering Committee as revised at this meeting.)

Update on Marketing Plan
Jan Olek and Jody Reigel presented an update on the NCSC marketing activities (see
Appendices C and D). Reigel is the new Marketing and Business Specialist for the NCSC.

The Marketing Plan originated with the NCSC Steering Committee Meeting in St. Louis,
Missouri on January 10, 2006. At that time, a marketing subcommittee was formed that
included Noel Fortier, Lloyd Bandy, Judie Ryan, Amy Schutzbach, Jill Thomas, and Dave
Yates. The goals of this committee were to develop a strategy for increasing awareness
and participation of Departments of Transportation and HMA Industry in the region; to
develop a guide for marketing the center, and to discover additional funding sources. It
was the recommendation of the subcommittee to hire a manager to direct the Center’s
day-to-day operations, to market it to new and existing customers, and to provide
timeliness of reporting and financial accountability.

As a follow-up, a Marketing Committee was established that included Michael Heitzman
(chair), Lloyd Bandy, Jan Olek, Becky McDaniel, Ayesha Shah, Gerry Huber, Noël Fortier,
Will Stalcup, Jill Thomas and Lee Gallivan. Judith Johnson, Marketing Specialist for the
FHWA, was also retained as an external resource to the Marketing Committee to help
with the formulation of the strategic plan for the Center. The Marketing Committee
developed a Marketing Plan with the following Vision and Mission:
Vision: Be a Recognized Source of HMA expertise.
- Focus on emerging technologies and trends, always on the cutting edge of
research, technology, and training.
Mission: To provide Services to Advance and Transfer HMA Technology.
- To become a central information resource and clearinghouse, serving the north
central region and expanding the Center’s outreach to deliver national programs.

The NCSC Marketing Committee recommended the following Goals (within the written
Marketing Plan):
1. Develop a strategic planning approach, employing an annual assessment of the
Center’s performance to strengthen future strategies and action plans.
2. Establish a new image and identity for the NCSC. Increase awareness of the
NCSC by promoting the Center as the North Central region’s premier resource for
HMA technology.
3. Increase customer relations and retention through a customer management and
loyalty program.
4. Determine appropriate programs and services to meet the needs of the NCSC’s
target market(s). Become a customer-focused organization.
5. Build awareness and create interest in the NCSC through promotions and communication.
6. Increase the visibility of the NCSC through a public relations program.

The above goals will be accomplished in three Phases, namely:
Phase 1: Determine what the customer wants, and create the identity of the Center.
Phase 2: Develop a marketing plan to sell to the customers.
Phase 3: Implement the plan.

Jody Reigel was hired as the NCSC’s Marketing and Business Specialist on December 17, 2007. Jody is already working on “Phase 1” of the marketing plan which involves determining current needs of the customers and enhancing the center’s identity. To do this, as well as to begin Phases 2 and 3 of the Marketing Plan, Jody is working on and planning the following:

- Identifying current and potential customers.
  - What is the geographical scope?
  - What is the demographical scope?
- Defining the current purpose of the NCSC.
- Defining the primary functions of the NCSC.
  - Are we indeed performing the intended functions?
- Defining our customers’ return on their investment (ROI) in supporting the NCSC.
  - What are the current benefits of membership?
  - Identify metrics to be able to measure and report on customers’ ROI.
- Identifying and promoting our “competitive advantage.”
  - What makes the NCSC unique and “better” than its competition? Capitalize on this. Our competitive advantage should be consistently promoted throughout our message and should shine through in everything we do.
- Identifying the NCSC’s expectations of our customers.
  - What are our expectations in terms of input from members and customers? For example, we expect them to provide input, feedback, requests for services, requests for research, knowledge-sharing, creative ideas, participation, and membership base funding.
- Listing current base projects as well as research projects and their sponsoring agencies and report on their current status.
- Maintaining, building upon, and strengthening existing customer relationships.
- Fostering and cultivating new client relationships.
- Developing a current (and potential) customer survey; sending out surveys; collecting, compiling and evaluating survey responses.
- Composing survey evaluation report. Providing report to Marketing Committee and NCSC Steering Committee.
- Proceeding with customer visits and conference calls to cultivate new business (more projects.)

Following the presentation, discussion ensued. Huber said that he sees three activities the Center can pursue to benefit the region: (1) determine what states in the region are
doing with the Superpave Performance Tester and how the region can benefit; (2) evaluate how the Multi-Step Creep Recovery (MSCR) test would impact the region since similar binder grades are used; and (3) coordinate activities on mechanistic empirical design. Gallivan encouraged the development of printed materials to promote the NCSC and will assist the Center in securing funding for marketing. In addition, Judith Johnson is still available to help.

Heitzman asked about the format of the proposed state visits. Olek responded that the initial team will include two people; the Marketing Specialist (Reigel) and one technical person (McDaniel, Shah, or Olek.) Meetings will be one-half day or less.

Hinrichsen commented that there is a regional meeting coming up in Iowa on the Mechanistic-Empirical Pavement Design Guide (MEPDG), and it might be appropriate for the NCSC to have someone there. He also added that the Combined State Binder Group is very interested in the MSCR test. Ryan noted a new Pooled Fund study coming up on equipment issues; states need to know how to use the information.

**Combined State Binder Group**

Ryan informed the group that Jim McGraw, MinnDOT, had requested support for the Combined State Binder Group (CSBG). McDaniel added that McGraw’s e-mail noted that the CSBG was having difficulty with out-of-state travel and wondered if there was something that NCSC could do to help get people to the meeting. In looking at what the NCSC could do that would be of benefit to the region, one suggestion was that the Center take a more active role with the CSBG. At this point, the Center’s involvement is limited to providing a website to post the results of the round robin testing, which we participate in via Ron Walker’s office on behalf of the NCSC. Ryan feels the NCSC may be able to take up some of the tasks performed by or on behalf of the CSBG and the state of Wisconsin, such as coordinating the round robins or sharing information on the MSCR test.

Discussion followed about the extent of travel support required for the CSBG. McGraw had indicated that about ten people typically attend the meeting. Michigan has been removed from the CSBG, so six states remain actively involved. If two people represented each state, that would require travel for 12 people. The CSBG was looking into holding their meeting before or after the NCAUPG meeting. If the NCSC could provide some travel support for the CSBG, it might help their meeting and the NCAUPG meeting.

There was some concern amongst the group that the CSBG is not part of NCSC and NCAUPG. Although some of the same states are involved, not all of the states who contribute to the NCSC are part of CSBG. The CSBG currently consists of Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa. (Michigan is no longer a member.) McDaniel indicated the NCSC is more than willing to work with the CSBG, if the Steering Committee agrees, but is interested in what the states that are not in the CSBG think. Would they not also benefit from sharing information across the region? Joe Schroer said that once you get south of the Iowa border you get a different set of binder suppliers. Hinrichsen agreed, but said there is still some overlap.
Hinrichsen summarized the history and purpose of the CSBG, which was established 10 years ago by Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. At that time, they were implementing the Superpave binder specification together. The point was to get all the states together to agree on the specifications. They could then have one point of inspection, and share inspection duties and certification procedures. The idea was that any supplier of asphalt from any of these states would be approved to sell asphalt to the other states. This saved suppliers and states a lot of time. When the other states saw this, they joined in.

Ryan said that her lab had some recent staffing changes and loss of staff. If there is something else by way of services that the NCSC could pick up, Wisconsin would probably appreciate the help. WisDOT currently manages the round robins, which are quite a bit of work. There is an opportunity here for the NCSC to expand its services and take more of a leadership role.

Ron Walker said that INDOT has its own certification program, but they also sample at the hot mix plant for acceptance. This could be an issue for those states like Indiana that are not in the CSBG. Would the sampling and testing by the CSBG states be comparable to what they do?

Ryan suggested that, if there is no objection, McDaniel work with McGraw, Hinrichsen and Tom Brokaw of the CSBG to put together a plan for the review by the NCSC Steering Committee. Gallivan said the plan should include all resources that the Center would need to support the suggested activities, not just the funding. The Steering Committee can then review the plan and decide if and how much support the NCSC can provide to the CSBG. McDaniel said that they will prepare a plan within the next couple of months and send it out electronically for review and input. Whether you are a state that participates in the CSBG or not, if you have any input, please respond.

Financial and Staffing Report
Jan Olek provided a status report on the Center’s finances and staffing (see Appendix E for details.) Some of the highlights are described below. In addition to adding Jody Reigel to the staff as Marketing and Business Specialist, Mark Baker has been hired part-time to lead the accreditation efforts and to provide testing support. Baker is currently the lab manager of the Materials Labs on campus of Purdue University and is available to assist the Center one day a week. He will aggressively pursue accreditation, as the Marketing Subcommittee strongly recommended. We also have a growing number of graduate and undergraduate students and a post doc supplementing the main staff.

Olek explained that we have not yet asked for obligations of base funding for Year Two of Base Funding Cycle Five (FY2007), nor Base Funding Cycle Six, Years One and Two (FY2008 and FY2009). We did not ask the states to obligate the FY2007 funding because we were planning to do that after initiating the marketing efforts, as directed by the Marketing Committee. Because of Linda Pitstick’s departure from the Center, the marketing efforts were delayed. Also, last January (2007), we should have asked if the states were willing to commit to base funding of $25K each for FY 2008 and FY 2009. We did not ask, again because of the planned marketing efforts.
We plan to immediately follow up after this meeting with a letter of request for written commitment for base funding for Base Funding cycle Five Year Two, which is FY 2007. These funds were verbally committed in 2006 as part of our usual two year funding cycle request. (We request commitment of funds for two years, but funds are obligated by the states each year.)

As you can see from the spreadsheets, we are showing $200K base funding for FY2007 ($25K from each participating state DOT) for which we do have verbal commitment but not written obligation yet. For FY 08, the expenses are higher, mostly because of the marketing position and activities. The Marketing Plan dated December 2006 suggested that 10% of the budget should be devoted to marketing activities. The cost of accreditation is estimated at greater than $30K, but we are already picking up part of the technician’s salary for this in the salary line, so the remaining is listed as $25K. The Center will work closely with Lee Gallivan and the FHWA to secure $75K in additional funds needed to support the marketing position and activities and lab accreditation.

Olek indicated that verbal commitment from the states for base funding support needed to be obtained at this meeting. Once obtained, the Center will then follow up with written letters of commitment requests to the states. Upon receiving the signed written commitment forms from the states, INDOT will initiate the pooled fund obligation process.

Tommy Nantung from INDOT will be initiating the pooled fund process and he asked us to inform everyone that this will follow the new pooled fund procedure using FHWA Form 1575. So, please anticipate the letter requesting obligation of base funding.

States have used SP&R (State Planning and Research) funds in the past. Heitzman noted that the amount of SP&R funds is not going up, but the demands on those funds is, so the sooner the request is made the better, or the funds will be used elsewhere.

Olek asked if the state representatives feel comfortable verbally committing to the base funding for FY2007, FY2008, and FY2009 after seeing the efforts we have initiated towards fulfilling the recommendations of the Marketing Subcommittee (hiring marketing specialist and pursuing accreditation). Ryan reminded the state representatives that the urgency is upon them to commit.

The states present agreed to the commitment.

Olek asked if we should request the FY2007 funding first and then follow this a short time later with a request for the FY2008 and 2009 funding. Ryan suggested that the letter should request funding for all three years; Missouri and Kansas agreed and no states offered a dissenting opinion. So for this one time, the NCSC will be sending one letter of commitment requesting written confirmation of base funding for FY 07, FY 08, and FY 09.
Cliff Hobson mentioned that last year we had discussion regarding whether base funding should support travel for marketing outreach to the states. The NCSC staff responded that the base funding will not be used for marketing travel or brochures, etc., and that FHWA funding would be sought for those efforts.

Update on Center Status
McDaniel highlighted some of the ongoing activities at the NCSC in terms of recently completed, ongoing and new research. (See presentation in Appendix F.) The research focuses on recycling, noise, friction and texture, plus other issues. Collaborative work with NCAT is continuing as the NCSC works on two projects related to the test track and is soon to begin work on an FHWA funded project on high RAP content mixes. The Center is also getting involved in projects related to pavement design and instrumentation. Reports on two projects dealing with friction and use of the ignition oven for dolomite aggregates are in final review and will be available soon.

McDaniel also noted projects that the NCSC had submitted proposals for, but was not successful. We continue to look for potential funding from a variety of sources to supplement the base funding.

She also reported on additional work that the Center has undertaken in the last year, including special friction and texture testing for several projects, development of an ASTM standard for the SST, chairing an NCHRP project panel on surface energy, and more.

In closing, she reminded everyone that the NCSC is always willing to collaborate with the states and other researchers. She asked the members to keep us in mind, if there are places where we could assist. She also asked for any suggestions of additional research, testing, training or other needs.

Chairperson for NCSC
Ryan noted that she had been asked by Heitzman to fill in for him at this meeting. She asked if anyone wanted to volunteer to chair the committee. Hearing nothing, she agreed to stay on as chair for the next meeting. We will revisit the question of electing a new chair then.

With no addition business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:06pm.