



TECHNOLOGY TALKS
(excerpts from FHWA weekly reports)
Mid-February Report, 2007

Arizona: Road Safety Audits on the Move: Arizona continues to advance their Statewide Road Safety Audit (RSA) program through the implementation of the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Council's RSA Subcommittee's Action Plan. Training is being scheduled and conducted and RSA implementation is well underway. As part of the Arizona Tribal Traffic Safety Capacity Building Project, an RSA was conducted on the Tohono O'odham Nation (TON) at an Indian Reservation Road (IRR) and State Route Intersection. The RSA location was selected by the TON. Training was provided to representatives from the Nation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, and AZ DOT Tucson District prior to the RSA. The owners (TON, BIA, and ADOT) were engaged in the process and the RSA. They agreed to prepare a joint owner's response to the RSA recommendations. They have successfully agreed to actions and responsible parties for each recommendation. The RSA has paved a path to make this intersection safer and opened lines of communications for future safety initiatives on the Tohono O'odham Nation.

Florida Keeping the Momentum Going in Highway Safety: Preliminary numbers suggest an almost 7% decline (239 fatalities) in highway fatalities in Florida from 2005 to 2006. The Florida safety community wants to keep this positive momentum going. The Florida DOT will be conducting a series of Transportation Safety Roundtable meetings throughout the state, rolling the Florida Strategic Highway Safety Plan and collecting success stories and safety activities currently being implemented throughout the State. The Roundtables will culminate with a Statewide summit in late March.

Kansas Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Posted on Internet
The Kansas DOT has posted the approved 2007-2010 STIP on the internet. The link to view the document, or portions of it, is available at the site: <http://www.ksdot.org/publications.asp>. Quarterly amendments to the STIP will also be posted at the site as they are approved, making planning information much more accessible to the general public and other transportation stakeholders.

Illinois "Teens at the Wheel" – A Chicago Tribune Special Report: Because automobile crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers, the Chicago Tribune studied the nearly 50 teen related crashes in 2006 that took 59 young lives within the six northeastern Illinois counties that are part of the Chicago metropolitan region. The newspaper tried to identify the reasons behind these crashes, explore solutions, and raise awareness of this most challenging problem. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/specials/chi-teendrivers-series-specialpackage,1,1394070.special?coll=chi-news-hed>

Michigan Holds Visualization Workshop: The Michigan Division and the Michigan DOT are co-sponsoring a workshop, on January 31, 2007, on the visualization requirement in Section 6001 of SAFETEA-LU. **'Visualization'** is now a viable core technology useful throughout the

transportation planning process to support decision-making, communication, and coordination, made possible, and practical, by ever-improving CAD software (Computer Assisted Drawing). The workshop, presented by the **FHWA Resource Center**, will cover the range of current applications, emerging trends, and the challenges facing MPOs and State DOTs in meeting this new requirement.

New Mexico Roundabout: A European solution has come to Albuquerque. The city has built its first roundabout on a major street. The City's inaugural roundabout is located at Central Avenue and Eighth Street Northwest, in Downtown. Although it's not quite like the huge traffic circles you see throughout Europe, the purpose is the same-- to simplify a complicated intersection. For pedestrian safety, the new roundabout will move more traffic at slower speeds than the previous intersection did. The new roundabout cost about \$1.1 million to build.

Tennessee Cable Barrier Project Makes a Difference: The Tennessee Department of Transportation recently installed a cable barrier along Interstate 26 in Sullivan and Washington Counties. This project is one of three pilot cable rail projects in Tennessee. It was noted by law enforcement that the cable barrier is making a significant difference. A Johnson City police officer reported that a crash occurred during installation of the project. The cables had not been tightened yet but caught the vehicle. The police officer also noted that the cable rail is making a difference because they are preventing head-on collisions and will be more forgiving on impact than other barriers. Citizens of both counties are also starting to realize the favorable impacts of cable barrier.

Washington State DOT Web Usage Breaks Previous Record: On Wednesday, January 10, the website served up 15.2 million page views, outpacing the previous record of 14 million page views on November 26, 2006. Recent network improvements performed by the Office of Information Technology allowed more people to access the site simultaneously. Network bandwidth usage was reported well below capacity at 55 percent. WSDOT also set a new annual record. In 2006, the site served up 1.5 billion page views; a 35 percent increase over 2005.

Last Deck Section Added to the New Tacoma Narrows Bridge: On January 30, the last section was raised into place completing the last major phase of this 5 year project to build a new Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Crews had to temporarily create a 3-foot gap by pulling nine other sections out of the way in order to raise the final section into place. Several months of work still remain before the bridge will open to traffic. The Washington State DOT is estimating that the bridge will open sometime this August.

Operations/JPO/ITS: Maintenance Decision Support System (MDSS) Meeting to Explore Expansion - The Road Weather Management Team will be conducting two workshops in the end of February/early March to explore the expansion of the Maintenance Decision Support System (MDSS) to become a Maintenance, *and Operations*, Decision Support System (MODSS). Based on input from those State DOTs deploying the MDSS, there's a need to add functionality to support other weather-related decisions. Such additions will make the system a better investment by the States, since they will be able to use it all year to support a broader set of needs. This effort will explore traffic management decisions pertaining to adverse weather, as well as maintenance decisions beyond snow & ice control. The output from the workshops

will be weather-related information requirements by the operations and maintenance personnel, which will serve as the basis for the design of additional modules to the MODSS. The workshops will be held in Boulder, Colorado.