

CONNECTIONS

THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS CLEARINGHOUSE NEWSLETTER
SPONSORED BY THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 4

FALL 2003

Transportation Enhancements Professionals Meet in Providence

Transportation Enhancements (TE) professionals representing State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) headquarters and division offices met in Providence, Rhode Island on June 25 – 26 at the 2003 TE Professionals Seminar. The seminar, sponsored by the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse (NTEC) and the FHWA was intended to provide information of national interest and promote the exchange of ideas among State and Federal entities.

Participants were welcomed to “the Renaissance City” by James Capaldi, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. Mr. Capaldi detailed the development of the TE program in Rhode Island and shared some of the bumps encountered along the way. He stated that through the years “TE has really brought the community back to DOT” and enabled planners, engineers, and environmentalists within the State’s 39 cities and towns to form strong relationships and build good projects. In Rhode Island solid public support has gotten the program where it is and enabled projects to get done.

A report on the status of TE spending was presented by NTEC followed by a panel discussion on the reauthorization efforts of non-government organizations including National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, Civil War Preservation Trust, Trust for Public Land, League of American Bicyclists, and Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.

John Horsley, Executive Director of American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), outlined what AASHTO is endorsing for TE in their reauthorization proposals. He stated that AASHTO supports the continuation of TE as a 10 percent set aside of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds and endorses maintaining the existing eligibility categories without change. AASHTO also endorses providing relief from the burdens of environmental documentation and reimbursements. He praised the “Enhancements revolution” as a program for DOTs to be proud of.



Hugh Morris and Rob Draper listen to James Capaldi's opening remarks to TE professionals. Photo: Franz Gimmler, RTC.



JOHNS HORSLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AASHTO, PRAISED THE “ENHANCEMENTS REVOLUTION” AS A PROGRAM FOR DOTs TO BE PROUD OF.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|---|
| BRIGHT SPOT IN DARKE COUNTY, OHIO | 2 |
| RAILROAD GONE BUT TRAIL REMAINS IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS | 3 |
| ON THE HILL | 3 |
| QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FROM THE TE SEMINAR | 4 |
| TE IN THE NEWS | 5 |
| RESOURCES | 5 |
| SAVE THE DATE | 6 |

(continued on page 2)

FHWA Headquarters staff (Rob Draper and Christopher Douwes) provided an overview of the Bush Administration's surface transportation reauthorization proposal as it pertains to Transportation Enhancements and related programs, and offered a discussion about what it might mean for the States.

Participants from State DOTs were enthusiastic about their TE programs, and several provided presentations on their States' TE programs, projects, and Web sites. Val Horton of Louisiana DOT and Ronda Britt of Georgia DOT shared their State TE Web sites. Dave Young of Wyoming DOT presented a new rail-trail project for his State, the Medicine Bow Rail to Trail. Oregon DOT provided a video presentation of bike safety public service announcements aired on local television stations. Pennsylvania and Michigan DOTs also shared video presentations with the group.

Breakout sessions were offered in which participants were offered the opportunity to break into small groups to discuss topics of interest. Sessions included: Successful TE Program/Project Management; Right-of-Way and Land Acquisition; Environmental Documentation and Review; Innovative TE Financing; Maintenance and Operations; and Promoting Equity and Documenting Benefits.

Lucy Garliauskas, FHWA, Rhode Island Division Admin-

istrator, addressed the group regarding the importance of the TE program and what it has done for the Federal-aid Highway Program as a whole. Ms. Garliauskas stated that Transportation Enhancements reminded FHWA and DOTs "to think about the aesthetics of transportation, the relationship of transportation to our communities, to our history, and to our environment in fresh and very tangible ways."

Christopher Douwes and John Fegan of FHWA presented responses to questions pertaining to project eligibility that were submitted in advance of the seminar. Written responses to the questions were distributed and reviewed with the group and can be viewed on the NTEC Web site at www.enhancements.org. Several questions and responses are included on Page 4.

Most participants of the seminar appreciated the opportunity to meet with professionals from other States to discuss issues unique to TE. Many felt that they left with useful ideas, tools, and resources to take back to their States. The group expressed the desire to meet again following the reauthorization of the surface transportation bill to discuss any changes to the TE program. The full proceedings of the seminar will be posted later this Fall at www.enhancements.org.

Bright Spot in Darke County, Ohio

With the help of a Transportation Enhancements award from the Ohio Department of Transportation a small town in southwestern Ohio was able to breathe new life into its fading downtown business district. TE funds enabled the Village of Versailles to renovate Fountain Square — the focal point of the community — the spot where locals and visitors alike gather for concerts, festivals, farmers markets and other special village events. Improvements to the square included the relocation and restoration of the existing fountain, the addition of new decorative pavement, light fixtures, flagpoles, and a gazebo. Curbed tree areas planted with evergreens and large canopy shade trees complement the square.

Streetscape improvements over a six block area were also incorporated into the project. These improvements combined wider brick and concrete sidewalks, new curbing, street resurfacing, and access ramps. Decorative street lighting and furnishings were added along with wrought iron fencing, street trees, and new signs.

The final component of the project encouraged the improvement of facade treatments among the businesses in the downtown area by coordinating color schemes, canopies, and awnings on the storefronts.

In undertaking this TE project, the goals of the Village of Versailles were to maintain a downtown atmosphere that reflected the long history of community pride, to increase business activity in the downtown area, to attract new commercial and retail development and investment, to increase property values, to improve pedestrian safety and comfort, and to create a unified community image with visual impact.

Construction began in May 2001 and was completed one year later with a dedication ceremony on April 23, 2002 attended by Governor Bob Taft. The total cost of the project was \$1,796,381, with a local contribution of \$876,443 and Federal TE funds of \$919,938.

The Village of Versailles is extremely proud of the project and feels that the improvements have already encouraged new business enterprises to locate downtown, including a craft shop and a much needed pharmacy.

For more information on this project contact Randy Gump, Village Administrator at 937-562-3294.



TE project in the Village of Versailles, Ohio.
Photos: Ohio DOT, District 7.

Railroad Gone But Trail Remains In Southern Illinois

Beginning in the 1870s the route of the Vincennes and Cairo Railroad was used to transport passengers, coal, salt, wood products, and produce between southern Illinois and Indiana. Today, a 44.5 mile segment of that same route, known as the Tunnel Hill State Trail, is used to transport bicyclists, joggers, and hikers between the communities of Harrisburg, Carrier Mills, Stonefort, New Burnside, Tunnel Hill, Vienna, Belknap, and Karnak in southern Illinois.

In 1991, the Norfolk Southern Railroad deeded the right-of-way of the abandoned railroad to the State of Illinois. Since that time, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and Department of Transportation have worked in partnership to develop the right-of-way into a dynamic trail system. More than \$2 million in Transportation Enhancements funds have been invested in the project with IDNR contributing the 20 percent non-Federal match. The Tunnel Hill Trail opened in 1998 with additional segments added in 2000 and 2001.

The IDNR operates and maintains the Tunnel Hill State Trail which begins in the flat farm country of Harrisburg and extends southward through the Shawnee National Forest. The elevations along the trail gradually increase at a gentle 2 percent grade to the highest point midway along the trail at Tunnel Hill where a 543 feet long tunnel passes through the hillside. Breeden Trestle at 90 feet high and 430 long is the highest and longest of the trail's 23 trestles and is located 2.5 miles to the south of the tunnel. Further to the south the trail emerges into wetlands and the ancient cypress-tupelo swamp of the Cache River State Natural Area.

Along its course, the Tunnel Hill Trail crosses three recreational or historic routes: the River-to-River Hiking Trail which connects the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers; the Discovery Trail, a transcontinental bicycle route; and the Trail of Tears, the primary route used by the Cherokee Nation on their forced relocation from the Great Smoky Mountains to Oklahoma during the winter of 1838 and 1839.

At the northern end of the Tunnel Hill State Trail, the City of Harrisburg has sponsored its own Transportation Enhancements project with a 2.5 mile trail segment that connects with the trunk line. At the southern end a 2.5 mile spur trail connects Karnak to the Barkhausen Wetlands Center in the Cache River State Natural Area. These types of connector projects are occurring all over the State. Smaller communities are building trails to connect to the larger State-sponsored trail projects.

In addition to connector trails, local communities are taking advantage of the economic opportunities offered by the trail. Growing numbers of Bed and Breakfasts, camping areas, and other tourism infrastructure are appearing in the region.

The Illinois Department of Transportation is currently working on an inventory of bicycle facilities to help communities better plan for future needs. This inventory will enable numerous small communities to see what their neighbors are planning and allow for a more effective use of resources. These efforts will facilitate the development of a more cohesive nonmotorized transportation network for the use and enjoyment of the citizens of Illinois.

To learn more about this trail project contact Todd Hill at hilltw@nt.dot.state.il.us.



Dramatic views from Breeden Trestle along the Tunnel Hill State Trail. Photo: Adele Hodde, IDNR.

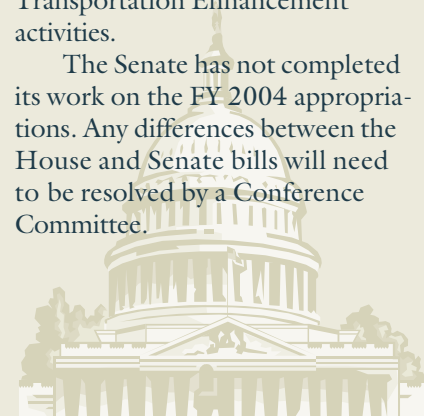
ON THE HILL

AT PRESS TIME, neither the House of Representatives nor the Senate had introduced language for the reauthorization of the surface transportation bill. The current legislation, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), expires September 30, 2003. The Bush Administration's reauthorization proposal, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003 (SAFETEA) was unveiled last May. The full text of the Administration's proposal is posted at www.fhwa.dot.gov/reauthorization/safetea.

On September 9, 2003, the House passed their FY 2004 transportation appropriations bill, HR 2989. The bill as put forth by the House Appropriations Committee proposed to eliminate the mandatory set-aside of Surface Transportation Program funds for Transportation Enhancements. Section 114 of HR 2989 stated: "None of the funds limited or made available in this Act shall be available to carry out 23 U.S.C. 133(d)(2)." [The 10 percent set-aside for TE activities was created under 23 U.S.C. 133(d)(2).]

Congressman Tom Petri of Wisconsin and Congressman John Olver of Massachusetts offered an amendment to strike Section 114 from the FY 2004 transportation appropriations bill. The amendment passed, 327-90, thus retaining the 10 percent set-aside of Surface Transportation Program funds for Transportation Enhancement activities.

The Senate has not completed its work on the FY 2004 appropriations. Any differences between the House and Senate bills will need to be resolved by a Conference Committee.



TE Questions & Answers From TE Seminar

FHWA Staff led a TE question and answer discussion at the TE Professionals Seminar on June 26, 2003. These are just a few of the discussion topics. For more information on these and other questions, please contact your State TE Coordinator, your FHWA Division Office or NTEC. The remainder of the questions and contact info can be found at www.enhancements.org.

Q: Are Military bases, or reservations, eligible to receive TE funding through State DOT agencies?

A: Yes, the State DOT may have a subgrant to a military base, military reservation, and/or Indian reservation provided the project is an eligible TE activity and the facility will be open to the general public.

Q: Can TE funds be used for TE program administration? Can TE funds be used for consultants? Can TE funds be used for educational/training/outreach activities (i.e., training local sponsors on project/funding requirements)?

A: TE funds cannot be used for TE program administration, for consultants to help administer the State's program, or to conduct general TE training. Consultants may be hired to help administer the State's TE program using State funds.

A State may charge indirect costs to TE projects if it has an approved indirect cost rate.

A State may be reimbursed for direct costs incurred on individual TE projects (including management and administration of the specific TE project).

Q: Are pullouts eligible for funding? For example, a pullout for a historical marker?

A: The TE Guidance states (www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te_final.htm#scenic): *Activities eligible under the National Scenic Byways Program are generally eligible under TE activities.*

Pullouts, overlooks, and interpretive signing along scenic byways or historic roads generally are eligible under the National Scenic Byways Program and as TE projects.

Q: Are plazas eligible under streetscaping?

A: A plaza or elements of a plaza may be eligible under multiple TE categories, such as facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, landscaping, or historic preservation.

Q: Are TE funds available for projects relating to the Underground Railroad?

A: This depends on the project. The resulting project must be open to the public. Some eligible projects include:

- ❑ Developing a pedestrian or bicycle facility along a known Underground Railroad corridor.
- ❑ Acquisition of a historic site that was significant in the Underground Railroad (many people fled there, transferred from one guide to another there, etc.).
- ❑ Providing kiosks with information about the Underground Railroad.
- ❑ Rehabilitation of a historic facility related to the Underground Railroad.

Ineligible projects include:

- ❑ Acquiring a corridor along a river simply because people walked along it, without an intent to allow the corridor to be open for public use. (Solution: put in a pedestrian facility.)
- ❑ Rehabilitating a barn simply because a few people used it a few times.
- ❑ Providing funding for a facility that will remain closed to the public.

Q: Can TE funds be used for statewide inventories of historic roads, road resources, and road networks?

A: Yes, as part of a State's scenic and historic highway program.

Q: Can the purchase of equipment (tractors, laboratory equipment, vehicle for travel around State, etc.) used for TE projects be funded with TE? For example, a State is in the process of establishing a Statewide Wildflower Program with Enhancements and will ultimately need equipment for the program.

A: Yes, equipment purchases are eligible provided the equipment is retained primarily for use for TE eligible activities.

Q: Can TE funds be used to create a State recognized trail/bike/pedestrian design handbook in order to help streamline the engineering/design/review process and move more projects to construction and completion?

A: Yes, to the extent the handbook is "provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists".

Q: Clarification/guidance on eligibility determinations for scenic acquisition projects where much of the property is not visible from the transportation facility, or part of the property would be used for active recreation purposes. Guidelines for making the determination and justification that only part of the property would be eligible for TE.

A: In 2002, the FHWA division office provided the following feedback and advice to VDOT and a project sponsor when advancing TE projects in a scenic and historic district:

- ❑ The purpose of the application should be the preservation and protection of the landmark district, including buildings and cultural landscapes. This particular landmark district, as a whole, meets the eligibility requirements. The landmark

(continued on page 6)

Jamestown, North Dakota

This summer TE funds will be used to landscape and help interpret the site of the historic Fort Seward, a military installation in Jamestown, North Dakota, in operation between 1872–1877. Archaeological studies have determined that the fort was located at the railhead of the Northern Pacific Railroad. As in past years, North Dakota State University graduate students will direct an archaeological survey of Fort Seward; their findings will be featured in the city interpretive center as part of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. [*The Jamestown Sun* 4/24/03]

Lebanon, Oregon

The restoration and rehabilitation of the Southern Pacific Railroad station in Lebanon, Oregon, is nearly complete thanks to over \$700,000 in TE funding. The station, expected to open later this summer, will be used as a visitor center and community meeting space. TE funds were used to replace the roof, update plumbing and wiring, repaint the interior and exterior, and landscape the surrounding grounds. [*Corvallis Gazette-Times* 4/20/03]

Venango County, Pennsylvania

The Allegheny Valley River Trail can count seven more miles of paved trail through the Kennerdell tunnel and Rockland Station tunnels. The new trail addition offers scenic views of the Al-

legheny River and forests within Venango County. Much of the \$611,500 project cost was financed with funds from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and DOT TE funds. [*The Derrick & News Herald* 7/31/03]

North Kingstown, Rhode Island

A \$500,000 TE award is financing the exterior restoration of the historic Plum Beach Lighthouse. The lighthouse improvements include stabilization, painting, deck repair, and the installation of new doors and windows. Renovations should be complete by early December. Plum Beach Lighthouse, a survivor of the Hurricane of 1938, guided boats passing through Narragansett Bay from 1899 to 1941. [*Providence Journal-Bulletin* 6/25/03]

Statewide, Tennessee

The Tennessee Department of Transportation plans to scale back its budget of TE funded highway landscaping projects for next year. The budget will be reduced from \$435,000 this year to \$140,000 due to the elimination of a particular weed killer. So, expect to find a few more weeds mixed in with the cosmos, poppies, and black-eyed Susans. This doesn't mean fewer TE projects; DOT expects to use the remaining funds for more bikeways and greenways. [*GoMemphis* 7/26/03]

RESOURCES

ACTIVE LIVING BY DESIGN, a project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, has created a tool kit titled *Promoting Active Living Communities: A Guide to Marketing and Communication*. The guide offers: a step-by-step approach to planning marketing and communication programs; insights into motivating, influencing, and persuading audiences; and tools and resources to help you apply the contents of the guide. To download a copy of the guidebook and learn more about Active Living By Design visit www.activelivingbydesign.org/resources/RWJF_ToolKit.pdf.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT at Harvard University and the Center for Community Change released *Moving to Equity: Addressing Inequitable Effects of Transportation Policies on Minorities*. The report examines the historical and current impacts transportation policies have on minority communities and suggest policy changes to surface transportation legislation. The report can be downloaded at www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/transportation/MovingtoEquity.pdf.

THE INTERNATIONAL CITY COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION launched a new Web site dedicated to the collection of information related to land use controls, with a searchable library of case studies, fact sheets, guides, policies,

zoning codes, site reuse plans, and more. Visit www.lucs.org for more information.

THE TRAILS AND GREENWAYS CLEARINGHOUSE announces the launch of its redesigned Web site adding and retaining many features including a funding database, enhanced technical and informational resources, the Trails and Greenways Yellow Pages, referrals to trail and greenway advocates and developers across the nation, as well as an email listserv. Visit the Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse at www.trailsandgreenways.org.

THE U.S. EPA OFFICE OF POLICY, ECONOMICS, AND INNOVATION has released several publications on community based environmental protection including *Community Culture and the Environment: A Guide to Understanding a Sense of Place* and *Evaluation of Community-Based Environmental Protection Projects: Accomplishments and Lessons Learned*. These guides explore the concepts of community and culture and provide tools for identifying, assessing, and working cooperatively within the social dynamics and local values connected to environmental protection. The guides, contact information, case studies, and other publications and tools can be found at www.epa.gov/ecocommunity.

TOLLFREE TEL: (888) 388-NTEC

FAX: (202) 466-3742

EMAIL: NTEC@TRANSACT.ORG

WEB SITE: WWW.ENHANCEMENTS.ORG

SAVE THE DATE!
CONFERENCE CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2003

MIDAMERICA TRAILS AND GREENWAYS CONFERENCE

September 21 – 24, 2003 • Indianapolis, Ind.
Web site: www.indygreenways.org/conference

NATIONAL PRESERVATION CONFERENCE 2003

September 30 – October 5, 2003 • Denver, Col.
Web site: www.nthpconference.org

OCTOBER 2003

INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL WEEK
International Walk to School Day is October 8, 2003
October 6 – 10, 2003 • Worldwide
Web site: www.iwalktoschool.org

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE:

A Strategic Approach to Natural Resource
Planning and Conservation
October 27 – 30, 2003 • Shepherdstown, W.Va.
Web site: www.greeninfrastructure.net

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS CONFERENCE

October 30 – November 3, 2003 • New Orleans, La.
Web site: www.asla.org

NOVEMBER 2003

SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION 2003
CONFERENCE, Assembling the Pieces: Restora-
tion, Design & Landscape Ecology
November 19 – 22, 2003 • Austin, Tex.
Web site: www.ser.org

TE Questions & Answers...

(continued from page 4)

district already has been designated scenic/historic. Evidence of the landmark district contributing to the traveler's visual experience, enhancing the traveler's experience, and its intrinsic characteristics (relationships to surface transportation) can be easily obtained.

- ❑ The purpose will be accomplished through direct purchase of property up for sale (along with open space easements in perpetuity) or the purchase of preservation easements on properties not up for sale within the landmark district. These purchases act as "phases" of the project.
- ❑ The nonprofit organization should have a public cosponsor to assure that there is continued responsibility on the part of a public agency for the project.
- ❑ Applications will be submitted annually and will identify properties to be purchased outright or on which to acquire easements. These properties can be those up for sale, coming up for sale, or known to be available for sale.
- ❑ Properties intended for resale once acquired with TE funds are not eligible.
- ❑ Properties that, as a whole, are not visible from the public roads are not eligible unless development on that property would harm the historic viewshed.

Connections is a quarterly publication of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration. Submission of articles as well as letters and other comments are welcome.

Editor: Elizabeth Parr
Contributing Writers: Elizabeth Parr, Bethaney Bacher
Graphic Designer: Barbara Richey

Unless otherwise stated, the contents of this newsletter reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the opinions, findings and conclusions presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FHWA and USDOT.