



RTAP NEWSLETTER

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
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RTAP ESTABLISHED IN MONTANA!

The following article was written by Ms Louise Freese, RTAP Director, Federal Highway Administration, Washington, D.C.

What is RTAP?

Traditionally, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has worked with State highway agencies to assist counties and cities in acquiring the needed expertise to carry out their responsibilities in constructing, maintaining, and repairing their roads, streets, and bridges. This is no small task because local highway agencies are responsible for 78 percent of the entire highway and street mileage in this country as well as 55 percent of all bridges. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of previous FHWA efforts has varied widely. There is agreement in the transportation community that the best efforts by FHWA and the states often have fallen short of adequately serving the needs of the local transportation agencies, not only for additional expertise but for state-of-the-art research results, demonstrations of new technology, and well-timed training. As a result of this lack, many cities and counties are not dealing with their transportation problems nor administering their street and road

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The following article was written by Tom Valente, the RTAP Coordinator at Montana State University.

WHAT RTAP CAN DO FOR YOU!

In an accompanying article Ms Louise Freese of the Federal Highway Administration explained the general overall purpose of the Rural Technical Assistance Program and particularly the portion of the Program dealing with Technology Transfer to local agencies. In this article I will get much more specific and will address what specific benefits the RTAP has for you, the city, county, and tribal transportation and highway officials in Montana.

First of all I would like to explain what RTAP will not do for you. The RTAP is not intended to make an engineering consulting firm out of the university. We at MSU will probably not be able to spend a lot of time solving any specific technical engineering problems you may have. Similarly, we will not be able to design, assist in your management, or conduct engineering studies for your agencies.

So how can we be of assistance to you? We can help you by providing you with the necessary information to enable you to do your jobs better. That is,

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programs as effectively as they could be. Thus millions of dollars in savings are not realized.

Realizing a need for the FHWA to address this problem of transferring technology to local agencies, Mr. W.S. Mendenhall, Jr., the Regional Federal Highway Administrator in Fort Worth, Texas, suggested in January 1982 that the FHWA establish a mini-transportation extension service. This extension service would be similar in concept to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Extension Service.

At the same time the FHWA was assessing its technology transfer efforts for local agencies the U.S. Congress was also becoming concerned with the transportation problems of non-urbanized areas. In December 1981 Congress appropriated \$5 million to be used by the FHWA to provide technical assistance for rural agencies with transportation responsibilities. Congress directed the funds be used for technical assistance to "...meet the growing demands placed on rural roads resulting from increased urban sprawl and the increased size and weight of trucks carrying goods from farm to market." Using this appropriation the FHWA established a Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) which included 13 smaller projects

One of these projects is the FHWA Technology Transfer Program for Local Transportation Agencies. This program implements to some extent Mr. Mendenhall's suggestion. The objectives

of this program are: (1) to establish or improve an already established system for transferring technology to local transportation agencies, (2) to improve communication on technical transportation issues between FHWA, state highway agencies, local agencies, and universities, (3) to encourage implementation of effective procedures and technology at the local level, and (4) to synthesize experiences of the selected participants to serve as models which could be used in other states.

Under the program, the FHWA is establishing technology transfer centers in the following states: Vermont, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, and California. Ten of the states are working with universities--St. Michael's College (Vermont), Pennsylvania State University, Auburn University, Georgia Institute of Technology, Purdue University, Oklahoma State University, Iowa State University, University of Kansas, Montana State University, and the University of California at Berkeley. In New Mexico the center is located in the State Highway Department. Each center will provide the following services: (1) publish a quarterly newsletter, (2) provide technology transfer materials, (3) provide technical information (limited), and (4) conduct or arrange seminars and/or training sessions.

The FHWA funded the program for 2 years and will consider funding the program for a third year based upon

the recommendations of the states and the results of evaluations of the program to be conducted near the end of the second year. The first requirements for the success of this program have already been accomplished--the commitment of the FHWA, states, and the universities to its success. With the additional commitment and cooperation of the local agencies the continuation of the program will be assured.

WHAT RTAP CAN DO FOR YOU!

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we will be able to obtain and transfer existing technology to you and your personnel. Here are just a few examples of how we can accomplish our technology transfer function:

a. We can obtain lists of technical reports and training materials that are available from the Federal Highway Administration and other agencies and provide these lists to you. If you need any of the items on these lists, you may order them through us.

b. If you have a need that is not fulfilled by some item on any of our published lists, let us know. We will check with other agencies in the State, other educational institutions engaged in RTAP, as well as the various programs of the FHWA. If the item you need is available, we'll find it.

c. Being a university, our forte is education and training. We therefore have numerous resources which can be employed to train your employees in a wide variety of technical and management subjects. To hold costs to a minimum while reaching the

largest possible audience, we intend to export our classes to you via videotape cassette.

d. The best way to assist you in improving your operations is to open new channels of communications for you, both to the Montana Department of Highways and the Federal Highway Administration, and to other county, city, and tribal transportation agencies. To further these communication channels, we will be sponsoring a series of seminars to foster an exchange of information between you and your counterparts in other cities, counties, and tribal governments.

We firmly believe that we can benefit your individual operations. But first we need to know what you need! I already have received some ideas from some of you, but we need more information. So I therefore request that you complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us, promptly please. Your responses to the questionnaire will enable us to establish our videotape class schedule and also plan the seminars.

In the meantime, we will obtain copies of the draft catalog of technical and training materials and mail this to you shortly.

If you have any questions about the program, do not hesitate to call either me or Rich Hovey at the Civil Engineering/Engineering Mechanics office, Montana State University, telephone (406) 994-2111.

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RTAP QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire will enable us at Montana State University to be responsive to your technology transfer needs and desires. Your responses will enable us to develop instructional videotapes and to organize seminars and workshops that will be useful and beneficial to your agency's operations. Please complete the questionnaire and drop it in the mail. **NO STAMP IS REQUIRED.** Your prompt response will be greatly appreciated.

1. VIDEOTAPED INSTRUCTION: Listed below are possible instruction subjects to be videotaped. Please check the subjects which you believe would be most beneficial to your operations.

a. Road Maintenance Procedures (Check THREE)

- Soils and Aggregate Testing Procedures
- Pothole Repair Procedures
- Quality Control Testing of Asphalt Hot Mix
- Chip and Seal Procedures
- Bridge Deck Maintenance Procedures
- Asphalt Quality Control Specifications
- Other (Please specify) _____

b. Roadway/Bridge Inspection & Design Procedures (Check THREE)

- Bridge Inspection Procedures
- Hydrology - Drainage Ditch and Culvert Design
- Basic Surveying
- Construction Surveying
- Filter Fabrics
- Other (Please Specify) _____

c. Highway Maintenance Management (Check THREE)

- Equipment Maintenance Programming and Scheduling
- Roadway Maintenance Cost Analysis
- Production Control
- Productivity Control
- Conducting Traffic Engineering Studies
- Safety Management
- Other (Please Specify) _____

d. General Subjects (Check ONE or more)

- Math for Highway Technicians
- Mathematics and Hand Held Calculators
- Basic Desktop Computer Programming
- Other (Please Specify) _____

2. SEMINAR AND WORKSHOP SUBJECTS: Seminars and workshops will be scheduled at various locations throughout the state, affording participants an excellent opportunity to exchange information with their counterparts from other counties, cities, and tribal governments. Workshops will enable participants to learn about topics that are not readily adaptable to the videotape format. Listed below are possible seminar and workshop subjects. Please check the THREE subjects which you believe would be most beneficial to your operations.

- Use of Computers in Highway Maintenance Management: Using local government computers in highway maintenance management
- Dust Control on Unpaved Roads: Minimizing the effects of traffic-caused dust on air quality.
- Recycling Pavement Materials
- Nuclear Densometer Gauge Operation. Our existing course meets the Nuclear Regulatory Commission requirements for operator training.
- Nuclear Asphalt Content Gauge. This new device determines the asphalt content of asphaltic concrete in a manner parallel to the nuclear densometer's use in moisture and density measurements.

_____ Frost Heave: Causes, Prevention, Repairing
Damage

_____ New Developments in Pavements

_____ Other (Please Specify) _____

Please complete the following:

(Name of individual who completed questionnaire)

(Title)

(Name of city, county, or tribal government agency)

(Address)

(City)

(Zip Code)

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN COMPLETING
AND PROMPTLY RETURNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.