



Policymakers, researchers look to the future of mileage-based user fees

Innovative technologies and policies to meet future transportation needs were on the agenda at the second annual Symposium on Mileage-Based User Fees, held on the University of Minnesota campus April 20 and 21.

CTS, the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, and the University Transportation Center for Mobility (UTCM) at the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) planned and coordinated the event; some financial sponsorship was provided by Wilbur Smith Associates, IBM, and SRF Consulting.

As fuel tax revenues decline in response to the implementation of more stringent vehicle fuel economy standards and changing travel demand patterns, programs that enable road users to be charged directly for their use of transportation facilities are emerging as viable transportation funding mechanisms. The annual symposium is an opportunity for

policymakers, researchers, industry leaders, and advocacy groups to share experiences and perspectives.

Following a welcome and introduction by **Lee Munnich**, director of the State and Local Policy Program (SLPP) at the Humphrey Institute, TTI's **Ginger Goodin** offered a recap of major themes from the first annual symposium, which was hosted by her organization in 2009. Goodin emphasized the necessity of communicating the value of transportation user fees to the general public and called for the formation of a coalition to develop road maps for implementation.

The next panel, on demonstration projects, included a presentation by **Max Donath**, director of the Intelligent Transportation Systems Institute at CTS, who shared findings

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Lee Munnich

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U of M holds teen driver safety forum

Crashes involving young drivers have recently claimed several lives in Minnesota, and these tragedies have left parents, teens, and communities asking what they can do to avoid more deaths and serious injuries.

In response, U.S. Rep. **James Oberstar** and transportation safety experts held a forum



James Oberstar

June 4 to discuss with community members and safety advocates ways to address the safety challenges presented by teen drivers. The forum, sponsored by the Center for Excellence in Rural Safety (CERS) and the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Institute at the University of Minnesota, was held at Anoka-Ramsey Community College in Cambridge, Minnesota.

Isanti County Judge **James Dehn** moderated the forum, which also featured presentations by CERS director **Lee Munnich**, ITS Institute director **Max Donath**, and **Gordy Pehrson**, youth and alcohol coordinator for the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Office of Traffic Safety.

Oberstar and the others

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ITS America attendees ride Bus 2.0

A group of researchers from the Intelligent Vehicles Laboratory, a unit of the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Institute at CTS, demonstrated their driver-assistive technologies for bus rapid transit (BRT) applications at the ITS America Annual Meeting and Exposition, held May 3–5 in Houston.

IV Lab director **Craig Shankwitz**, IV Lab staff members **Bryan Newstrom** and **Erin Kurshoff**, and **Mike Abegg** from the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) showcased the driver-assistive system developed by the IV Lab for use in MVTA buses. The technology will be deployed on 10 buses providing express service between Apple Valley and downtown Minneapolis, a 22-mile, one-way trip, under the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Urban Partnership Agreement.

On May 4 the team gave a demonstration to USDOT administrators and staff, including



Peter Appel, Polly Trottenberg, and Peter Rogoff rode the MVTA bus in Houston.

Peter Appel, administrator of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA); **Peter Rogoff**, administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); **Anne Ferro**, Federal Motor Carrier Safety administrator; **Polly Trottenberg**, assistant secretary for transportation policy; **Brian Farber**, associate administrator for communications and congressional affairs; **Gail Lyssy**, FTA Region VI director of program management and oversight; and **John Augustine**, deputy director

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Minnesota TZD helps provide safer ways home with new guide

With names like Dial-a-Ride, SoberCab, SafeRide, Tipsy Taxi, and Road Crew, these and other programs throughout the country have a similar objective: to ensure a sober ride home for individuals who have consumed alcohol and would otherwise drive, posing a risk to themselves, their passengers, and others sharing the roadway.

The Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths program and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety's Office of Traffic Safety have published *A Safer Way Home: the Minnesota Safe Ride Guide*. The goal of the new publication is to provide critical information about alternative transportation or safe ride programs to individuals or communities interested in providing

similar services. With a solid understanding of the elements necessary to build strong safe ride programs, interested stakeholders can create an effective local program that provides a valuable service while reducing the incidence of impaired driving in their communities.

A Safer Way Home: the Minnesota Safe Ride Guide shares four examples of Minnesota safe ride programs that successfully provide this critical public service in diverse communities. It also provides direction and assistance to those considering safe ride programs for their own community.

The publication focuses primarily on guidance for smaller communities with fewer public transportation options,

though it may help programs in communities of any size.

Safe ride programs enjoy broad support from potential users, drinking establishments, community organizations, and the alcohol beverage industry and are believed to help reduce the number of intoxicated drivers on the roads.

Research suggests that safe ride programs do not promote or encourage levels of drinking beyond what would otherwise occur, and that safe ride programs actually attract drinkers at high risk for DWI.

CTS coordinated the production of the guide and also maintains the TZD Web site. Read the guide or download a copy from www.minnesotatzd.org. **CTS**

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introduced and solicited feedback on potentially life-saving new policies, research, and technologies, and they called on parents to take the lead in holding their children accountable.

"You can change habits if parents take responsibility," Oberstar said. "It's not just the teenager. Most of what we learn, we learn by example from our families."

Dehn, lauded by Oberstar for his national leadership to rehabilitate offenders, urged that creative options must be explored to keep everyone safe on the road. "If you take away that license, then you get their attention," he said.

Donath introduced a new version of the Teen Driver Support System (TDSS) in development at the ITS Institute with support from the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the USDOT. The system is a GPS-enabled smart phone mounted on a car's dashboard to provide the driver real-time visual and audio feedback about driving performance.

Donath explained that the system provides parents with data about their teen's driving behavior. This is especially important on rural roads, which account for the majority of fatal highway crashes.

"We bother the parent," Donath said. "There need to be consequences, and the only people who can really provide the true consequences are the parents."

Munnich added that parents could use TDSS as a tool to teach their children

good driving habits as well as protect them, ultimately reducing the high number of teens who die in crashes each year.

"More teens die from automobile collisions than any other cause—motor vehicle crashes account for 36 percent of all teen deaths in the United States," Munnich said. "We know that late-night driving and teens driving without seat belts are primary causes of these fatalities."

Oberstar received a live demonstration of the TDSS in a test vehicle just prior to the forum. During his speech, he cited the value of research by the ITS Institute and CERS.

The forum also included several comments from safety advocates, educators,



James Dehn, Oberstar, and Max Donath

and parents. Oberstar, chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, has made rural transportation safety a priority as Congress works on new federal transportation funding legislation to succeed SAFETEA-LU, which expired last fall. **CTS**

Klobuchar views technology

Max Donath demonstrated the TDSS to U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar and David Strickland, administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, as part of a teen driving safety forum held June 1 at Tartan High School in Oakdale, Minnesota.

"To make a lasting difference, it's going to take all of us working together—law enforcement, educators, parents, and teens," Klobuchar said. "Ultimately, what we need is a change in what society views as acceptable and unacceptable behavior." **CTS**



Amy Klobuchar, Max Donath, and David Strickland

Roads Scholars honored at maintenance expo

Lean municipal budgets, road safety innovations, and the arrival of the emerald ash borer were some of the topics of discussion at this year's Spring Maintenance Training Expo in St. Cloud, Minnesota. The two-day event drew more than 400 maintenance and transportation workers to the St. Cloud Civic Center in April.

The Minnesota Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), which is housed at CTS, was one of the expo sponsors. Other cosponsors were the Minnesota Local Road Research Board, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Minnesota Street Superintendents Association, and the American Public Works Association (APWA) Minnesota Chapter.

Jim Grothaus, director of Minnesota LTAP, and **David Hutton**,

president of APWA-Minnesota, kicked off the event with a ceremony honoring this year's 15 LTAP Roads Scholars.

The Scholars, who complete eight credits of training and professional development, represent a "bright spot" in the profession, Grothaus said. More than 2,000 students are enrolled in the Roads Scholar program (www.mnltap.umn.edu/RoadsScholar), which combines a range of training options into a structured curriculum. Graduates earn a valuable

professional development credential.

One grad was Becker County maintenance superintendent **John Okeson**, an instructor for Minnesota LTAP's Gravel Road Maintenance Workshop. According to Okeson, the program has provided an opportunity to build on his experience. "It will give me the ability to use some of the ideas, techniques, and product information to make better decisions in completing the maintenance goals of the Becker County Highway Department." **CTS**



Mindy Carlson (far left), the Roads Scholars, and Jim Grothaus (far right)

Faculty news

Will Craig, the associate director of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, has earned a spot in the Geographic Information Systems Hall of Fame, awarded by the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association. Craig is the co-founder of the University's master of geographic information science professional degree program and is a member of the research team for the Transitway Impacts Research Program (www.cts.umn.edu/Research/Featured/Transitways).

Jason Cao's work is featured in a special 30th anniversary issue of the international journal *Transport Reviews*. The editors selected 30 of the best articles in the history of the journal and made them freely accessible to the public as part of the anniversary celebration. Cao is a CTS Scholar and an assistant professor in the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. His article, "Examining the Impacts of Residential Self-Selection on Travel Behavior: A Focus on Empirical Findings," was co-authored with **Patricia L. Mokhtarian** and **Susan L. Handy** of

the University of California-Davis.

The University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment announced its second cohort of resident fellows in April. One of the fellows is **Elizabeth Wilson**, also a CTS Scholar and an assistant professor in the Humphrey Institute. Each fellow will receive flexible funding to pursue cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research and problem solving and to create new models of teaching and training.

The American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) inducted **Richard S. Bolan** into the AICP's College of Fellows at an April 10 ceremony held in conjunction with the American Planning Association's 2010 National Planning Conference in New Orleans. Bolan is an active emeritus professor of urban planning at the Humphrey Institute and has conducted research recently for the ITS Institute. **CTS**

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of the ITS Joint Program Office, RITA. Also attending was **Paul Feenstra**, ITS America's vice president of government affairs.

The driver-assistive system, a project begun at the IV Lab in 2000, combines several technologies to help drivers operate in the narrow bus-only shoulder lanes. This allows a BRT vehicle to operate at higher speeds while still maintaining the safety of the bus, its passengers, and other drivers on the roadway.

To learn more about this driver-assistive technology and how it is being deployed in Minnesota buses, visit www.bus2.me.umn.edu. **CTS**



A Houston reporter interviewed Mike Abegg.

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from Institute research exploring technology to enable nationwide implementation of user fees. The University of Iowa's **Paul Hanley**, co-principal investigator of the National Evaluation of a Mileage-Based Road User Charge Project, presented initial results from the project, which is in its final year of field testing.

A panel devoted to the development of political leadership and project champions featured perspectives from former Senate Environment and Public Works Committee staff member **Susan J. Binder**, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) director of program finance and management **Jack Basso**, **Mark Muriello** of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and **Bob Pitcher** of the American Trucking Association.

Strategies for building public awareness and acceptance of user fees were the subject of an afternoon session featuring representatives of state and regional transportation agencies, moderated by the Humphrey Institute's **Adeel Lari**.

The second day of the symposium featured a presentation on implementation of a national road pricing program in the Netherlands by **Marian Jongman**, director of strategy for the Dutch Road Pricing Project at the Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management. Reviewing European



Laurie McGinnis (second from right) moderated an interactive discussion.

implementations, Jongman emphasized the importance of creating simple, transparent systems that the public can understand and support, and encouraged policymakers to involve all stakeholders from the beginning of the process.

Transition issues and research needs were discussed by a panel including representatives of the Federal Highway Administration, advocacy groups, and researchers from academia and the private sector. The panel was moderated by the Humphrey Institute's **Zhirong (Jerry) Zhao**.

Acting CTS director **Laurie McGinnis** and **Katie Turnbull** of TTI served as moderators for a final interactive discussion with symposium participants that focused on implementation directions and specific areas for research, development,

and demonstration. The lively debate among participants representing diverse perspectives showed that user fees remain an area of extremely active policy and technology development.

In addition to participating in the discussions, Humphrey Institute research fellow **Ferrol Robinson** tracked key themes as they emerged in participant discussions. Among the key themes, challenges, and issues Robinson identified were strategies for building public acceptance of road user fees, administrative approaches to the transition away from fuel taxes, and the need for strong political leadership in support of user fee programs.

Detailed information on the symposium, including panelists and presentation materials, is available on the CTS Web site at www.cts.umn.edu/Events/MBUF. **CTS**

Upcoming events *To see other events or publicize yours, visit www.cts.umn.edu/Events.*

July 22–23	4th International Symposium on Transportation Network Reliability, Minneapolis. See www.instr.org .	Sept. 14–16	Global Sustainable Bioenergy, Minneapolis. See http://environment.umn.edu/gsb/index.html .
Aug. 19–20	Mid-Continent Transportation Research Symposium, Madison, Wis. See www.mrutc.org/midcon .	Sept. 22–24	2010 American Planning Association Upper Midwest Planning Conference, Mankato, Minn. See www.plannersconference.com .
Aug. 20	TERRA Innovation Series event, Madison, Wis. See www.terreroadalliance.org/events .	Oct. 6–7	Minnesota Fall Maintenance Expo, St. Cloud, Minn. See www.mnltap.umn.edu/Events .
Sept. 12–16	National States Geographic Information Council, Minneapolis. See www.nsgic.org/events/2010_conference.cfm .	Oct. 7–8	AirTAP Fall Forum, Alexandria, Minn. See www.airtap.umn.edu .
Sept. 13–15	Minnesota Public Transit Conference, Rochester, Minn. See www.mpta-transit.org .	Oct. 25–26	Toward Zero Deaths Conference, St. Paul. See www.minnesotatzd.org . CTS