

## Students' experiences at TRB

**F**ifteen students from Iowa State University attended TRB this year. We asked three students to reflect on their experience.

Overall TRB was an excellent forum for educational, academic, and professional development with its vast array of extremely proficient and knowledgeable speakers.

I personally benefited from interacting directly with experts such as Dr. Francis McKelvey

and Dr. Vukan Vuchic and attending sessions that included speakers from academia and private industry as well. The presence of international speakers at various sessions added another dimension to my appreciation of the changes evolving globally in the transportation industry.

Dr. McKelvey took time to discuss an airport project on which I am currently working on. Having described the scope of the work and querying him about the future feasibility of building expensive offshore airports, I was somewhat comforted by his remarks that indeed that is the way to go.

*by Reggie Sinha, Iowa State University graduate student*

The TRB-related activities proved very interesting and valuable. In particular, the ability to listen in person to presentations made by authors of textbooks I've used was much appreciated. Asking questions of these individuals and challenging their views in certain areas proved to be a real confidence booster with regards to my educational development. The only downside to the conference is the fact that you cannot be everywhere at the same time and thus inevitably end up missing some sessions that seem very interesting based on the outline in the handbook.

*by Sheldon Harrison, Iowa State University graduate student*

Going to TRB was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I got hands-on knowledge of real world projects and the amount of work that goes into them. I can apply what I learned in the sessions I attended to my schoolwork. Now, for example, when my professors talk about red-light running, I can talk about what I learned at TRB: that to reduce red-light running we can implement better signal visibility, signal timing and operations, and signal accessory. However, the hardest aspect to implement is public acceptance and program oversight.

*by Debbie Witt, Iowa State University undergraduate student*

## Optimizing the management of snow removal assets and resources

**D**r. MD Salim of the University of Northern Iowa is in the final stages of his research to help transportation agencies get better

results from their snow removal assets and resources. The project involves development of a computer program that incorporates a knowledge base derived from human experts and a GIS database of roadway data. The human experts are local and state winter maintenance personnel who were interviewed about a wide variety of issues

related to their snow removal procedures.

The computer program's user-friendly interface will provide a series of features to guide a user in inputting data such as the severity of the expected snowfall. Based on user input, the system would be able to import GIS data and do snowplow routing based on priority, assign plowing

equipment, and assign drivers. Other parameters the program addresses include asset allocation, costs, time, and miles of roads to be plowed.

In the long run, Salim thinks the program will help users make better decisions on the selection and deployment of snow removal assets and resources.