

LTAP extends services to communities

THROUGH A new partnership with Iowa State University's Extension to Communities, LTAP is expanding its services beyond training and technology transfer for public agencies to transportation-related analysis and advice services for communities, businesses, and organizations.

What kind of services?

Part of LTAP's mission is to foster development of an efficient transportation system that serves communities' economic and social needs. Extension to Communities provides a venue for LTAP staff to become acquainted with communities and organizations around the state, help them identify transportation-related challenges, and get them started in the process of developing solutions.

LTAP can provide preliminary analysis and advice, as well as general traffic monitoring and data collection. It can also develop transportation-related training events specifically designed for a community's or organization's needs.

"LTAP instruction and assistance is not limited to government agencies," says Duane Smith, Iowa's LTAP director. By providing advice and short-term services to communities, businesses, and organizations, "we can help them recognize potential [transportation-related] problems."

Current projects

Lakota. When a company planning to build a new ethanol plant in the small roadway town of Lakota asked for advice regarding roadway access to the plant, LTAP staff identified a potential problem: Each morning several large trucks delivering corn byproducts to the plant would have to turn left across a major highway and a rail line. This situation could result in traffic and safety problems. LTAP is working with the business to develop solutions.

Johnston. Johnston has asked LTAP to provide a strategy for measuring its transportation system. Specifically, the city is interested in performance measures for arterial streets, traffic signals, and emergency vehicle response time. The results will help the city decide which intersections or arterials to adjust or upgrade.

For more information

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New direction for LTAP advisory board

TO HELP Iowa LTAP better serve local agencies, the advisory board is assuming a more active role in determining LTAP's direction and activities, acting as a conduit of information between constituents and LTAP, and setting LTAP's annual program.

Why the change?

Traditionally the advisory board, representing LTAP sponsors and customers, has met twice a year to review LTAP's activities, budget, and plans. As LTAP's funding and programming partnerships have evolved, however, so has representation on the board.

Today the board includes representatives of the Iowa DOT, Iowa Division of FHWA, Iowa Highway Research Board, Iowa chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA), Iowa County Engineers Association, and consultants, all of whom are committed to improving training and technology transfer for their constituents.

What's new?

To take full advantage of the board's breadth of representation, expertise, and experience, Duane Smith, LTAP director, has asked members to become a working, rather than a review, board.

Policy. With the help of the Iowa DOT, the board has established policies regarding travel times for LTAP workshop participants, registration fees, and curriculum (for example, the Roads Scholar program).

Communication. Board members now disseminate information about LTAP activities to their constituents through organizational meetings and other venues, then provide feedback to Smith and the board.

They also champion training needs. For example, when a city maintenance worker died recently while cleaning sewer lines, an APWA liaison on the LTAP advisory board suggested an LTAP workshop about sewer line cleaning. Two, two-day certification workshops were held.

Budget and programming issues. The slowing economy will likely affect Iowa's transportation agencies, making it critical that LTAP resources be carefully targeted to provide the most benefit. The advisory board is now helping to plan LTAP's annual program and budget.

Structure. To facilitate a more systemic approach to fulfilling its new responsibilities, the board has elected its first chair, Wally Mook, director of public works in Bettendorf, and a vice-chair, Bob Sperry, Story County engineer. Each year a new chair and vice chair will be elected from different organizations. Board members serve at least one three-year term and may serve multiple terms.

Up to the challenge

The board's expanded responsibilities are strengthening Iowa's LTAP and its partnerships, according to Smith. "There can be a risk in giving a committee a more active role," he says. "You may get different ways of solving a problem. For us, however, we all work well together."

For more information

Board members and contact information are listed on page 3. For more information, contact Duane Smith, Iowa LTAP director, 515-294-8103, desmith@iastate.edu. •