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Editor’s note: The “news” bits on the cover of this issue were adapted from several resources, including The New York Times online archives; first four issues of Technology News, 1983; and monthly issues of Iowa DOT’s 1983 employee newsletter TransTopics (thank you, Tracey Bramble, editor, Iowa DOT).

25 years of service for Iowa LTAP

What were you doing 25 years ago? Here’s a little context from spring 1983:

AN UNUSUALLY HEAVY invasion of mayflies gives street and road crews along the Mississippi River headaches. At least one bridge is closed due to pileups of the sticky, stinky, inch-long pests.

THANKS TO increased federal fuel taxes, dollars for bridge replacement and rehabilitation in Iowa double this year. From 15 to 35 percent of the $37.3 million must be spent on structures not on the federal-aid system.

Funded by the U.S. DOT, Iowa studies the connection between tough drunk-driving laws and number of crashes [in 1983 lingo, “accidents”] linked to alcohol.

RAGBRAI XI CYCLISTS prepare to test their mettle along southern Iowa’s hilly terrain from Onawa to Dubuque.

SHOTBLASTING a pavement surface to prepare it for a bonded overlay is one of three pavement projects showcased on an Iowa tour. More than 400 people from 26 states and Canada attend this one-day event.

ELIZABETH DOLE becomes U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

NEW, PORTABLE SCALES (handheld and trailer-mounted) help Iowa’s motor vehicle enforcement officers crack down on overweight trucks traveling the state’s highways.

Bob Given begins what will be a four-year stint as director of the Iowa DOT’s highway division.

AN IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY study suggests ways to reduce counties’ potential liability from the use of low-water stream crossings on unpaved, rural roads.

Iowa’s farmers hope for a rebound in the farm economy after several years of low commodity prices and plunging land values.

ROUSED FROM SLEEP at 3:30 a.m. by the sheriff, equipment operators from Iowa DOT’s Manchester garage check and re-check a section of Highway 13 in the dark using magnets to pick up nails found scattered on the pavement. It cannot be determined who dropped the nails or when, or if they were dropped deliberately.

NORTHWEST IOWANS say goodbye to one of the state’s largest cottonwood trees, a longtime landmark along Highway 10 near Sutherland. Carefully preserved during road construction in 1971, but suffering the combined toll of lightning hits and ice and wind storms, the proud old giant is felled.
In 1983, ISU was introducing its new RTAP center to towns and counties throughout Iowa.

Due to the success of pilot RTAPs in Iowa and nine other states, FHWA eventually funded technology assistance centers in every state, plus regional tribal centers. The “rural” in RTAP was later changed to “local.”

As we begin 2008, Iowa’s RTAP-now-LTAP has been helping local jurisdictions address their transportation-related challenges through training and technology transfer for 25 years.

During those years, LTAP has seen many changes. For example, Iowa LTAP has been housed in at least six different office spaces on and off the ISU campus. During its first year, Iowa LTAP offered fewer than a dozen workshops. In 2007, it offered 144 training opportunities, including 55 related to safety topics.

One thing that’s remained constant, however, is the staff’s loyalty to the program. With the exception of newcomer Bob Sperry (see page 4), everyone on staff has been with LTAP for at least 10 years.

Jan Graham has been Iowa LTAP’s bean counter and whatever-needs-to-be-done right-hand-woman almost since the program’s beginning. Duane Smith has been director and Marcia Brink has been newsletter editor for more than half the program’s 25-year history. Together, Graham, Smith, Brink, Tom McDonald (safety circuit rider), Georgia Parham (secretary and event coordinator), and Jim Hogan (librarian)—are personally invested up to the eyeballs in Iowa LTAP, and Sperry promises to be equally dedicated. We care about helping you make a difference in Iowa.

Iowa LTAP was the foundation program that eventually grew into CTRE, a major university transportation research and outreach center. Today LTAP is one of several long-term funded programs managed by CTRE, but many people in Iowa’s towns and counties know CTRE best for its LTAP workshops, newsletter, and library.

Throughout 2008, Technology News will cover various aspects of Iowa LTAP’s history. We’ll highlight some achievements and point to future goals. We’ll ask you what LTAP services you find useful, and what kinds of additional help you need.

While telling you a little about LTAP’s past, we hope to encourage you to take advantage of its present and help plan its future.

With the construction and maintenance season approaching, now is a good time to assess your shop’s personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE is defined by OSHA as any equipment worn to minimize workers’ exposure to hazards.

To maximize the effectiveness of PPE, both employers and employees have roles to play.

According to OSHA, employers are responsible for
- Performing a “hazard assessment” of the workplace to identify and control physical and health hazards;
- Identifying and providing appropriate PPE for employees;
- Training employees in the use of PPE;
- Maintaining PPE, including replacing worn or damaged PPE, and
- Periodically reviewing, updating, and evaluating the effectiveness of the PPE program.

To ensure their own safety, employees should
- Properly wear PPE;
- Attend training sessions on PPE;
- Care for, clean, and maintain PPE; and
- Inform a supervisor of the need to repair or replace PPE.

Following is a brief overview of OSHA’s guidelines on the use of personal protective equipment.

**Eye and face protection**

Employees exposed to eye or face hazards from flying particles or harmful chemicals should wear eye and face protection. Adequate eye and face protection should fit properly, be reasonably comfortable, and provide unrestricted vision and movement.

**Head protection**

Head protection, such as hard hats or protective helmets, should resist penetration by objects, absorb the shock of a blow, and be water-resistant and slow burning. Protective headgear should fit properly and should be worn by all construction and maintenance workers.