

LTAP 25th Anniversary

Focus on special events and programs

Unique programs and special events have made Iowa's LTAP well known throughout the state. These programs give Iowa workers the opportunity to showcase their skills and hard work, and to earn recognition for their achievements.

Showcasing skills: The Snow Plow Roadeo

In October 1990, Iowa LTAP began working with the Iowa Chapter of the APWA to hold an annual Snow Plow Roadeo that consisted of a written test, a visual equipment inspection test, and a five-event driving course.

The Snow Plow Roadeo was initiated by Clive Public Works Director Willard Wray, who was familiar with a similar program in Colorado, and saw the opportunity for Iowa drivers to compete as well.

"Willard was a very educationally minded public works director who wanted his people to be the best at what they did," says Jim Cable, retired ISU associate professor of civil and construction engineering, who coordinated the Snow Plow Roadeo for many years.

"A lot of the things going on today at LTAP—the Maintenance Expo, Motor Grader Roadeo—those grew out of the Snow Plow Roadeo and Willard's hard work on it."

The Snow Roadeo expanded over the years. A Motor Grader competition was added in 1998 and a Loader competition was added in 2006.

Building on success: The Iowa Maintenance Training Expo

The success of the Snow Plow Roadeo and the demand for winter maintenance training led to the development of the first Winter Training Expo in October 1997. The three-day event consisted of the traditional Snow Roadeo and two days of educational sessions. The expo also included displays and demonstrations of equipment, materials, and services by vendors from around the country.

In 1999, the expo transformed into the all-season Iowa Maintenance Training Expo. Educational sessions at the expo have included deicing, tree trimming, propane safety, and more. The expo is now held every other year, with a Winter Maintenance Training workshop held in the off years.

In 2001, the "Build a Better Mousetrap" competition was introduced at the expo. "Better mousetraps" include tools, equipment modifications, and systems that public agency personnel have created to make their jobs safer, easier, and less costly. Six winners are selected each year.

Recognizing achievement: The Roads Scholar Program

In 2002, Iowa LTAP implemented the Roads Scholar Program, a new training tool to recognize transportation workers who demonstrate a commitment to continuing education.

"Roads Scholar is the only program for non-professionals at the local level that recognizes them for their accomplishments," says Iowa LTAP Director Duane Smith. The program gives participants credit for each LTAP training session or workshop they attend.

Snow Roadeo and Winter Maintenance Training

This year's Snow Roadeo and Winter Maintenance Training workshop will be held on September 10-11, 2008 at the Iowa Speedway Complex in Newton.

For registration information, contact Georgia Parham, 515-294-2267, gparham@iastate.edu.

More than 14,000 Iowa employees have participated in the Roads Scholar Program since its inception. Participants can visit the Iowa LTAP website to track their progress through the program. This also provides supervisors with a tool to help them schedule and track employee training.

To make training sessions even more convenient, Iowa LTAP has partnered with Engineering Distance Education at Iowa State University to offer some Roads Scholar courses online. Supervisory Skills and Techniques, the first course to be offered online, is now available.

For more information

For more information about the Snow Roadeo, Maintenance Training Expo, or Roads Scholar Program, contact Duane Smith, 515-294-8817, desmith@iastate.edu.

Visit the Roads Scholars Program at www.ctre.iastate.edu/roadscholar/. For more information about the online Supervisory Techniques and Skills course, visit www.ede.iastate.edu/Non-Credit/Management/Supervisory-Techniques-and-Skills.html. ■



Participants in the Snow Plow Roadeo compete in a five-event driving course.