

Information is Our Seed Corn: An Overview of the Midwest Transportation Knowledge Network

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ABSTRACT

Professional engineers, planners, and administrators face incredible challenges in trying to meet the country's current and future need for safe and reliable transportation.

Fortunately research and innovation are hallmarks of transportation in the United State, thanks to the leadership of the Transportation Research Board, the U.S. Department of Transportation, universities, and state departments of transportation. Through their efforts, a continuous stream of time-and-money-saving technologies is flowing to transportation practitioners.

However, managing innovation and new information is a challenge in itself. How does the transportation community connect users to the new knowledge?

The mandate of the National Transportation Library is to increase access to and dissemination of information needed by federal, state, and local transportation decision-makers. A cost-effective approach to meeting this mandate is to help link the existing transportation libraries into a coordinated network that shares resources, services, collections, and expertise.

Toward this end, the Midwest Transportation Knowledge Network (MTKN) was formed. The MTKN is made up of cooperating libraries within AASHTO Region III that specialize in transportation-related information. The mission of the MTKN is to increase collaboration among the region's transportation libraries and information centers so managers, engineers and planners are better able to find and apply the most recent, credible, validated technical information to their current projects.

Goals of the MTKN include improving access to transportation information for every professional in the Midwest; educating transportation leaders on the importance of libraries to their missions; improving transportation systems nationwide by integrating libraries into the research process; and helping to preserve research funding.

Key words: knowledge network—information dissemination—transportation libraries

Note: Preparation of this paper was still in progress at the time of publication; final results will be presented at the symposium.