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# Transportation Division

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# TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

The Transportation Division promotes the exchange of knowledge and information in transportation, both in general or in one of its many subdivisions including air, highway, rail, and water transport, and multimodal transportation.

## FROM THE CHAIR

What a great summer it was!

It is quite fitting that I find myself writing this column on the first day of fall. The students are back on campus and there is a nip in the air we have not experienced in Chicago since last April. Let me take a few minutes to share with you my summer.

I have always associated summertime with travel, opportunities to do something new, or visions of kicking back and coasting for a while. I am glad to report that I did plenty of the first two and not much of the third.

Last December, under the sponsorship of the National Transportation Library (NTL), state department of transportation libraries from Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas, plus university transportation libraries from Northwestern University and the University of Michigan, agreed to participate in a pilot project to develop a Midwestern Transportation Library Consortium. Since late May, I have been working part-time for the NTL as the facilitator for the consortium.

As with all pilot projects, some of our goals are pretty straightforward: increase access to transportation information by working with OCLC to develop a union catalog, provide faster delivery of hard copy by working with members to set up ILL policies, develop some form of distributed reference and acquisitions mechanism, raise the library's profile within its own DOT or agency by providing good public relations, and provide support and training to member libraries and librarians.



## ROBERTO SARMIENTO

However, these are just intermediate goals. All the lessons we learn in the Midwest in the next couple of years will be used to develop a National Transportation Library Consortium, which should provide at least the already mentioned services, coast to coast and border to border. Some division old-timers and young whippersnappers agree that the time is right to push for such a goal. It is a goal that will benefit us all, locally and nationally. It is a product for which there is a need, and fortunately we have the most important resource for success already in place: transportation librarians willing to share their collections, resources, and knowledge.

In my travels this summer, I have experienced a deep sense of pride and satisfaction during my visits and been humbled by the sharing of my colleagues. In all my visits, spending about a day and a half with the librarians, taking a deep look at their collections and services, I have come away with the realization that we do our jobs as a labor of love, that we believe in what we do, that we are willing to share and learn from colleagues and we are all trying to make our little part of the world better. All this makes me proud to be associated with such great individuals, but it is also a sobering experience. Some state DOT libraries are doing well under harsh economic conditions, some are struggling to keep pace, and a couple are experiencing a renaissance of sorts, one by creating a brand-new library and another by investing in the cataloguing of their collection. I feel fortunate to be a part of and witness to all this.

This summer was also busy because of the work toward completing the programs for the SLA 2003 annual meeting. Although the program is still in a rough draft, things are looking good and it looks as if we will have several international transportation librarians as presenters at GTRIC and at the Wednesday international program. One thing I can honestly tell you is

that the meeting in NYC is going to cost the division a bundle. So, I encourage you all to make a call or send an e-mail to try to get more corporate sponsors for the annual meeting. We could really use your help.

In addition, as if working for the Consortium and SLA was not enough, I still kept my day job as head of my library. My colleagues and staff at Northwestern University Transportation Library deserve all the credit for affording me the opportunity to embark on these projects.

Finally, I did kick back. I spent a week in a Boy Scout camp in northern Wisconsin and on a backpacking trip in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Which paradoxically brought to my attention that I prefer nature to roads or bridges and that although on a sunny day it may look like the Caribbean Sea, Lake Superior is still pretty cold in August.

Hope you all had a good summer also.

Saludos,  
Roberto

## **Kaleidoscope – Transportation Division November 2002**

### **New Site to Improve Access to Wisconsin DOT Reports**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation Library has teamed up with the department's Research Coordination Section in creating a robust Research and Library Web site, a subset of an Internet redesign being performed at the department.

The Research and Library site will have Wisconsin DOT research reports in full text, a carefully selected list of transportation research resources on the Internet, and a section devoted to archiving all of the department's online publications. In addition, the site will contain sections on transportation law, transportation-ready reference, and links to other online transportation library catalogs. Launch of the new site is slated for late October or early November.

For more information, contact John Cherney, WisDOT Library, 608-266-0724, [john.cherney@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:john.cherney@dot.state.wi.us).

### **Online Catalog Provides Access to Wealth of Information**

The Center for Transportation Research library, the official depository for the Texas Department of Transportation library collection, contains nearly 28,000 volumes of transportation-related materials. It sup-

ports transportation research by providing for the information needs of students, researchers, and agencies and developing long-term partnerships in both print-based and electronic resource sharing. Library staff partner with the Texas DOT, the University of Texas community, and the general public to promote transportation research and the sharing of information. The CTR is a cooperative effort between UT and the Texas DOT.

Louise A. Rosenzweig of the library reports that in September, "the CTR library launched an online catalog that provides easy access to a global audience to the diversity of material available in our collection. The catalog features approximately 1,000 of the library's own published reports, with many recent CTR reports available in PDF format for download."

Visit <http://www.utexas.edu/depts/ctr/> and e-mail your reference questions and research materials requests to library staff at [ctrlib@uts.cc.utexas.edu](mailto:ctrlib@uts.cc.utexas.edu).

### **Northwestern Welcomes New Staff Member**

Transportation Division Chair Roberto Sarmiento reports that the Northwestern University Transportation Library has hired Rachel Sindelar as reference librarian for a one-year temporary assignment. Rachel recently completed her M.L.S. at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Northwestern is de-

lighted to have her on board. Rachel can be contacted at 847-467-0281 or [r-sindelar@northwestern.edu](mailto:r-sindelar@northwestern.edu).

#### DOT Library Gets New Tech Service Chief

Phyllis A. Bell recently started work as chief of technical services at the Department of Transportation Library, Washington, D.C. She is new to the world of transportation, having just come over from the Air Force Library system.

Phyllis and her family moved to Washington from San Antonio, Texas, where she was chief of library services at the Air Force Information Warfare Center. Phyllis has worked in public libraries (children and adult services and assistant director) and in several different Air Force libraries.

You can reach Phyllis at 202-366-0753 or [phyllis.bell@tasc.dot.gov](mailto:phyllis.bell@tasc.dot.gov).

#### New Jersey DOT Reorganization Creates Confusion

Carol Paszamant, librarian at the New Jersey Department of Transportation Research Library, reports that due to this year's change in administration, NJDOT has been undergoing reorganization: "The Division of Research and Technology is no more and the Bureau of Research and Development (of which the NJDOT Research Library is a part) now is under the Division of Systems Planning and Research, which reports to the Assistant Commissioner of Planning and Development. Confused? So are we."

#### New Librarian at VTRC

Ken Winter has arrived at the Virginia Transportation Research Council (VTRC) following the recent retirement of Angela Andrews, who had run the VTRC library since 1978. Ken describes himself as "a greenhorn to transportation research—not librarianship," and he intends to maintain Angela's high level of service.

In the not-so-near future Ken hopes to help VTRC expand access to the library's holdings. Other plans include converting from BPR to LC classification,

joining OCLC and participating in ILL, establishing an online catalog of the library's holdings using InMagic, and using the catalog to link to full text of VTRC reports.

Ken reports that Virginia, VDOT, and VTRC are all facing severe funding problems, and VDOT seems to be in the early stages of a profound reorganization. Ken also said, "I have been lurking on TRANLIB for several months and am amazed by the generous and collaborative community you have established. I hope I can contribute to that community as time goes on. In the meantime I should warn you that I am not shy and I may have a lot of questions!"

You can reach Ken at 434-293-1959 or [Ken.Winter@VirginiaDOT.org](mailto:Ken.Winter@VirginiaDOT.org).

#### Briefly Noted...

Jerry Baldwin of the Mn/DOT Library has posted a page at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/library/access.html> that lists the most commonly requested items on transportation information resource management. Contact Jerry at [jerry.baldwin@dot.state.mn.us](mailto:jerry.baldwin@dot.state.mn.us) if you are aware of any other items that should be linked from the page.

After a spate of spam, Paul Hernandez of the Harmer E. Davis Transportation Library at UC Berkeley has announced that TranLib is now a "private" discussion list. As Paul explains, "This means that only people subscribed to the list can post to it. The disadvantage, of course, is that we may miss out on opportunities to obtain millions of ill-gotten U.S. dollars from relatives of former dictators."

If you're not already a subscriber to TranLib, you can sign up by sending a message to [listproc@listserv.it.northwestern.edu](mailto:listproc@listserv.it.northwestern.edu). Put in the body of the message:

Subscribe TranLib Paul A. Hernandez

Paul will then process your request and add you to this always-informative forum.

## **Information Users and Providers Gather in Madison to Discuss Current Needs and Future Trends**

**by Arlene Mathison,  
University of Minnesota, Center for Transportation Studies**

Building partnerships by bringing together users and providers of information and library services was the primary purpose of the "Midwest Conference on Library and Information Services for Transportation—Partners in Information." Held at the University of Wisconsin—Madison in August, the conference brought together transportation librarians, researchers, and practitioners from throughout the Midwest to identify needs and plan future steps to improve coordination and sharing of data and information.

Brad Mallory, secretary of PennDOT and president of AASHTO, emphasized that the nature of the transportation industry means that state DOTs and other transportation agencies must be "learning organizations." He believes transportation libraries are "more of an investment than an expense" in that effort, or a "force multiplier."

"Organizations fail rarely due to technological incompetence, but rather to established competencies that become rigidities. It's the role of libraries and information services to keep modern 'transportationists' from becoming rigid in (their) thoughts and practices."

### **Information Needs**

Several speakers talked about the knowledge and information needs of transportation professionals. Practitioners and managers have very little time available to keep up with new developments in the field, yet the need for both technical and planning/strategic information is high. There is also a need for current awareness services: "We don't know what we don't know."

Bob Johns, director of the Center for Transportation Studies, articulated university researchers' need for project-specific data, which can be very difficult to find. Librarians can help to synthesize, navigate, and translate information for researchers.

Dick Larson, engineer for Mille Lacs County, spoke about the challenges facing county engineers and stated that "information is an opportunity" to meet those challenges. He described the "friendly, smiling faces" at the Mn/DOT Library as one of the key sources of information for engineers, along with other engineers, experts at Mn/DOT, former professors, the "tremendous" LTAP program, and the Internet.

Gary Whited, administrator, Division of Transportation Infrastructure Development for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, spoke about the need for getting research results to the people who need to know. WisDOT's Research, Development and Technology Transfer program, under the leadership of Nina McLawhorn, is emphasizing the communication of research results through two-page research briefs, and dissemination of research findings via e-mail and the intranet.

Steve Andrie, director of the Center for Transportation Research and Education at Iowa State University, cited several problems with using information: lack of time, lack of awareness of available sources, a preference for locally produced research, a need for someone to filter and synthesize the information, and the need to be able to talk to researchers to get the true in-depth knowledge.

Sudhakar Kulkarni, Research Administrator, Construction and Technology Division, Michigan DOT cited the following challenges in obtaining information: staff have heavy workloads, and don't have time to keep up with research; libraries are not conveniently located; space is insufficient to hold all the required materials; and there is a need for training for new employees in how to use the library and the internet.

### **Information Tools**

Librarians and information providers can help by:

- Synthesizing, navigating, and translating information for researchers
- Providing summaries, digests, and syntheses on high-priority topics
- Pushing current, relevant information to the desktops of managers and technical experts
- Providing current awareness tools and access to current journals
- Creating and using easy-to-use databases of articles and reports
- Training professionals on how to use the available resources and the Internet
- Helping to find the experts via phone and e-mail
- Obtaining more international and local research
- Participating in discussion groups for engineers and other transportation professionals
- Seeking out customer input and acting on it
- Supporting your department's strategic focus areas
- Embracing peer review and measuring performance

Barbara Post, manager of Information Services for the Transportation Research Board, detailed the products and services of the TRB, most notably TRIS, the largest database of transportation resources, and the Research in Progress database, which contains statements of current research projects from state DOTs, FHWA, FTA, TRB, universities, and Canada.

#### Next Steps

Library and information services within the transportation industry need leadership, coordination, and funding at the federal level to meet the growing needs of transportation professionals. A potential model is the national LTAP program. Roberto Sarmiento is working with the National Transportation Library to create the Midwest Transportation Library Consortium, which could prove to be a model for a national transportation library consortium, under the leadership and coordination of the National Transportation Library, headed by Nelda Bravo.

If you would like further information about the conference or the Midwest Transportation Library Consortium, visit the MRUTC Web site at [www.mrutc.org/libraryinfo/](http://www.mrutc.org/libraryinfo/) or contact Jerry Baldwin, Mn/DOT Library (651-297-4532, [jerry.baldwin@dot.state.mn.us](mailto:jerry.baldwin@dot.state.mn.us)) or Arlene Mathison, CTS librarian (612-624-3646, [amathison@cts.umn.edu](mailto:amathison@cts.umn.edu)).

The Midwest Regional University Transportation Center, WisDOT, CTS, and Mn/DOT were among the co-sponsors of the conference, which was attended by practitioners, librarians, and researchers from nine state DOTs (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Kansas, and West Virginia). The National Transportation Library, the Transportation Research Board, FHWA, AASHTO, the LTAP Clearinghouse, and the Texas Transportation Institute were also key participants and sponsors.

## Information Exchange Eased with New Research in Progress Web Site by Barbara Post

The Transportation Research Board has a new Research in Progress (RiP) web site at <http://rip.trb.org>. The RiP site contains the RiP Database which contains more than 6,600 new and recently completed project statements, and a data-entry system to allow authorized users in state Departments of Transportation to add, modify and delete information on their current research projects.

The new RiP web site allows users to:

- Search the entire Research in Progress file by keyword or various fields
- Link and perform a RiP search in the TRIS database
- Browse project records by subject
- Use a look-up to locate projects by individuals and organizations
- Subscribe to receive email notification of new

RiP records in specific subject areas

- Submit current research projects to TRB for entry into the system

Authorized individuals in state DOTs will be able to:

- Add, modify, and delete State's RiP records
- Submit Research in Progress records using a data entry form (batch load of records will be available soon)
- Access detailed contact information in Person Directory

TRB hopes the RiP Web site will facilitate the exchange of information on transportation research. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions on the RiP web site, please contact Barbara Post, Manager, Information Services at TRB at 202-334-2990 or [bpost@nas.edu](mailto:bpost@nas.edu).

## Bibliography Appears in Web Format

Go to <http://199.79.179.78/ref/biblio/index.html> to explore and revel in the new, 5th edition of *Sources of Information In Transportation*.

Compiled by members of the Transportation Division of the Special Libraries Association and published by the National Transportation Library, this bibliography attempts to list and evaluate sources of information for the whole field of transportation. Hyperlinks are provided for direct access to listed Web sources. Coverage includes print and electronic information sources in Aviation, Maritime and Inland Water Transportation, Intelligent Transportation Systems, Trucking, and Highways.

This is the first new edition since 1990, and the first time the entire bibliography has been published in

electronic form. (The afore-mentioned chapters on Highways and ITS have also appeared in print as "Sources of Information in Highways" and "Sources of Information in Intelligent Transportation Systems." Electronic publication allows for direct access to web-based sources, and will enable easier and more frequent updates to the bibliography itself.

Susan Dresley, Librarian at the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, served as series editor. She said, "I would like to thank all the compilers for your hard work and patience. I also want to thank the folks at BTS for converting our files, ensuring the links are still active and for an overwhelming desire to get it right. This was a tremendous effort and I am eternally grateful to you all."

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