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## UM Alumnus Discusses Intelligent Transportation System

**MDOT engineer Acey Roberts emerges as leader with innovative safety technology**

NOVEMBER 21, 2014 BY EDWIN SMITH



UM alum Acey Roberts (second from left) shares the ITS Hall of Fame award with (from left) John Gilligan, MDOT Traffic Management Center Operations Manager, Jim Willis, MDOT Assistant State Traffic Engineer, Melinda McGrath, MDOT Executive Director, James Sullivan, MDOT State Traffic Engineer and Mike Stokes, Former ITS Program Manager (Retired).

OXFORD, Miss. – A University of Mississippi civil engineering alumnus Thursday (Oct. 30) shared details of an internationally recognized intelligent transportation system he helped design with others in the traffic control industry.

Acey Roberts, intelligent transportation systems engineer with the **Mississippi Department of Transportation**, moderated and presented during the daylong active traffic management workshop at the **Inn at Ole Miss**.

MDOT, in conjunction with the states of Arkansas and Louisiana, designed an ITS system on four shared Mississippi River bridge crossings. The project received the Best New Innovative Practice – Partnership Deployment award at the Intelligent

Transportation Systems World Congress last month in Detroit.

"We installed traffic sensors, cameras and message boards to communicate with surface roadway traffic and river traffic to communicate any potential impacts to travelers," said Roberts, president of the Gulf Region Intelligent Transportation Society. "This project won the international award for the Americas in 2014. It was a great opportunity to represent our state on the same stage as other international traffic systems winners London, England, and New Zealand."

The award goes to the organization with projects that can demonstrate specific and measurable outcomes and show innovation by establishing a "new dimension" of performance.

Roberts, who also earned graduate hours at Mississippi State University and Northwestern University, has been with MDOT since 2008. His group plans and implements roadway sensors and computer networks to help make the interstates safer and reduce traffic congestion.

"Our website, MDOTTraffic.com, highlights the video and communication systems we have in the state to allow the traveling public to make better decisions on traveling around and through construction zones, traffic accidents scenes or other incidents they may encounter," he said. "All of this work is focused on reducing accidents and injuries and improving your travel times on the state highways and interstates."

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#### Students Learn 'Real Politics' in Washington, D.C., Winter Session

OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates'

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OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve's

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About 40 people representing public and private sectors of the transportation systems industry attended the workshop. Participants praised Roberts' leadership of and service to the organization.

"Acey was part of the steering committee, served as treasurer and ascended through the ranks by volunteering his personal and professional time," said Chris Hilyer, ALDOT operations manager and immediate past president of GRITS. "This organization wouldn't be where it is without his contributions."

Roberts acknowledged Waheed Uddin, UM professor of civil engineering and director of the **Center for Advanced Infrastructure Technology**, as playing a pivotal role in his career trajectory and success.

"Dr. Uddin was one of the professors I worked with the most, and I still work with him today," he said. "He allowed me to work for him in research and in the classroom, so I got a little taste of what engineers did for a living."

Uddin remembers Roberts as one of the top students in his transportation course who was destined to excel in his profession.

"Early on, he was willing to take challenging assignments," Uddin said. "He demonstrated this when he worked on my NASA/Mississippi DOT-funded project in his senior year to evaluate airborne laser terrain survey technology for highway design. He worked with professional survey teams who collected topographic survey data that I later used for 'ground truthing.'"

The UM School of Engineering is also indebted to Roberts, Dean Alex Cheng said.

"He has been instrumental in bringing MDOT equipment that includes a high-speed fiber optic line, a TV wall and other equipment into Dr. Uddin's transportation lab that allows the real-time monitoring of traffic throughout the state wherever there is a traffic camera," Cheng said. "The facility can be used not only for Dr. Uddin's research, but by the university to monitor game day traffic around Oxford."

Roberts said he is grateful for all his UM engineering education has helped him achieve.

"I really believe in the benefits of ITS systems and it was very fulfilling to get recognition for the work we do in Mississippi," Roberts said. "Even though Mississippi doesn't have the largest population and the worst traffic problems, we provide a big safety benefit to our commercial and local commuters in the region, not to mention it is a very cost effective solution to traffic problems."

For a view of the MDOT project, go to <http://www.msrits.com>

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