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In my last President’s column, I wrote much about the Bush Administration’s new National Transportation Policy and suggested its major potential effect to be a shift of cost to the State and local levels. I should have said a further shift of costs to the state and local levels. The APWA REPORTER in its June issue commented on a new report from the U.S. DOT. The report, titled “Federal, State and Local Transportation Statistics, Fiscal Years 1978-1998”, notes that over this ten year period the Federal share of funding for total transportation has declined from 45% to 31%. The report also states that transportation funding represented approximately 3.5% of government revenues and less than 5% of its expenditures. The questions that come to mind from all this are, what is an appropriate Federal participation level in transportation funding, will it continue to decline and can the State and Local agencies continue to assume a greater cost burden if Federal funding does continue to decline? A recent report from the National Governor’s Association may provide some of the answers. Twenty states in FY 1990 cut budgets in order to address revenue shortfalls. Transportation and the economy of our country are very much interdependent. For us to be competitive in a world market we must maintain efficient and effective transportation systems. If we allow these systems to decline and do not invest in new and improved systems, then the economic viability of this nation we live in will suffer greatly. This, if allowed to happen, will affect all of us in a decline of standard of living. Our elected representatives must be made aware of the need for efficient and advanced transportation systems and their importance to the economies of our national, state and local levels.

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MICHIGANITE is published quarterly by the Michigan Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers. It is distributed to more than 300 ITE members and over 100 cities and counties in Michigan. Address communications regarding the Michiganite to the Editor, Michael F. Kobran, 1312 Kings Coach Circle, Grand Blanc, Michigan 48439; 313/695-8942. Send change of address to: Barton-Aschman Associates, 27600 Northwestern Highway, Suite 100, Southfield, Michigan 48034-4704.
President...Continued P. 1...

Staying with national issues, but shifting gears just a bit, I'd just like to remark here on national tax issues. I'm sure you've all heard by now that budget negotiators are still considering recommending to Congress an increase to the Federal gas tax which would be used for deficit reduction. The Federal gas tax is a tax which is more appropriately a user fee. In the past, revenues from this user fee have been dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of our transportation systems. I believe the concept should continue. We all know that our need for funds to finance transportation projects far exceed any of our abilities to pay for such. Why not think about contacting your Congressmen and letting them know the needs you see in your everyday work and that something needs to be done. Perhaps if enough of us follow through on this the message will get through that yes, a Federal gas tax increase is needed, but needed to fund improvements to our deteriorating transportation systems and not to reduce the Federal budget deficit. Users are paying gas taxes for their transportation systems and Congress must not use this method of budget deception in order to avoid having to deal with the budgeting items which have caused this deficit situation in the first place. I will propose to your Michigan Section Board that a letter be sent to Washington expressing our concerns in this very regard.

I want to extend a special thank you to one of our members, Joe Meszaros, for his dedicated efforts over the past several years, serving as our "MICHIGANITE" editor. This is no easy job, it's time consuming and I think a lot of us just assume the newsletter will happen. Believe me, it's not that simple. Joe has made it happen, but along the way he's also racked up several national ITE awards for our newsletter. Joe, thanks for a job well done.

As I'm writing this, our July section meeting in East Lansing is tomorrow. I'm hoping to see and meet with many of you there. Further, our national meeting in Orlando is now less than one month away. Again, I hope to see many of you there. Have a safe and enjoyable summer.

---

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Secretary Skinner attended a portion of each working groups discussion.

At the end of the conference, comments from non-law enforcement attendees were invited. I indicated that the Institute of Transportation Engineers was very pleased to see a renewed emphasis on traffic safety. I noted that this was one of the goals for the Institute during 1980, and the U.S. Department of Transportation has certainly brought the traffic safety issue to the attention of the American Public with the Traffic Safety Summit. I also commented that the problem of speed and speed law enforcement is partly related to the speed law itself. Unless the speed limit is set with the aid of traffic engineering studies and the guidance of traffic engineering principles, motorists are unlikely to obey. I noted that the traffic laws and ordinances should be so obviously reasonable that they are, in effect, self enforcing. It is important that law enforcement agencies be directed toward the small minority of drivers (approximately 15%) who drive in an unsafe manner. A traffic law which results in a violations rate of 50% is detrimental to the credibility of both the legislative body and the enforcing officer.

Conclusion

The Traffic Safety Summit was directed to law enforcement officials. It was, in fact, organized by the National Association of Chiefs of Police. Therefore, the Conference focused primarily on the driver portion of the drive vehicle roadway equation of traffic safety. Although Federal Highway Administration, Thomas Larson, made some mention of the importance of modern highway design to facilitate traffic safety, there was very little mention of the role of highway design in traffic safety after that statement. All things considered, however, the Traffic Safety Summit was a success in that it brought attention to the traffic safety problem, particularly within the law enforcement community. Both law enforcement officials and engineers made the point that cooperation between the engineering and enforcement communities is important to promote traffic safety.

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PAGE 10
Recent Court Decisions of Interest to ITE Members

By Michael Kobran

The law firm of Fraser Trebilcock Davis & Foster, P.C. in Lansing periodically updates issues on recent court decisions. The following summaries are excerpted from 1989 Michigan Appellate Court decisions that are thought by the editor to be of interest to ITE members. Special thanks to Michael K. Cavanaugh of Fraser Trebilcock Davis & Foster for permission to reprint this article. The office is located at 1000 Michigan National Tower in Lansing, Mich., 48933.

Lain v. Beach

The two parties to the suit were involved in a fatal traffic accident at the intersection of a state highway and a county road. A traffic signal had recently been installed at the intersection and Beach ran a red light, striking the other car. The victim was a county road commission employee. The suit was filed by the victim's relatives. The court held that the county road commission was not liable for the accident.

Kilien v. Department of Transportation

The Governmental Tort Liability Act allows recovery of damages from a governmental agency that fails to keep a highway under its jurisdiction in reasonable repair and safe and fit for travel. A county road was transferred to MDOT for redesign and reconstruction and, after completion of the work, was transferred back to the county road commission. Ten years later a traffic accident on the road led to a man being killed. His estate claimed the accident resulted from the road not being reasonable safe and fit for travel as a result of design and construction deficiencies by MDOT.

The court held that MDOT is liable for any loss resulting from deficient design and construction while the State had jurisdiction over the road. The State is not released from liability by a transfer of jurisdiction over the deficient road, but the county is liable for any failure to thereupon maintain the road to reasonable acceptable standards of renovation, repair, or reconstruction."

Isabella County v. State of Michigan

A person was injured in a auto accident in Isabella County when his car was struck at an intersection by another car. The stop sign supposed to be posted at the intersection was missing and the other car did not stop. The sign had been knocked down one week earlier. The State Police were aware of the knocked down but did not report it to the county road commission. When the injured person sued the road commission, they filed a claim for indemnification and contribution against the Department of State Police and the individual officers. The court of Appeals dismissed the road commission's claim against the state police and the individual because of governmental immunity.

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ITE District 3 Annual Meeting:  Dayton, Ohio  
By Ken Johnson  
Oct. 19, 1990

The ITE District 3 Annual Meeting will be held in Dayton, Ohio on October 18 and 19, 1990. The tentative technical program has been announced and is listed below for the member's information.

Thursday, October 18, 1990:

- National transportation policy: federal, state, and local views
- Intelligent vehicle highway systems in Michigan
- Transportation education in the 1990’s: consultant, state, and educator views
- Older drivers

Friday, October 19, 1990:

- Freeway incidents and special events: consultant, state DOT, and police
- 65 mph speed limit in Michigan and highway safety
- GM air bag test center
- The success of toll roads and bridges-Ohio Turnpike; public/private partnership

More information will be forthcoming in a special mailing from the District.
New Members: Michigan Section I.T.E.
By Michael F. Kobran

Six new members were approved at the May 5, 1990 Michigan Section I.T.E. Board meeting following a review of their applications. The new members and some information about each of them is listed below as an introduction to the rest of the membership. Welcome to I.T.E. and may your profession and your career benefit!

Yvette D. Ware is the Supervisor of Traffic and Safety Engineering for the Washtenaw County Road Commission in Ann Arbor. Yvette is a graduate of Bradley University and lives in Ann Arbor. She is also a member of the International I.T.E.

John Phillip Reid is a Transportation Engineer IX for the Michigan Department of Transportation in Lansing and also lives in Lansing. He is registered as a professional engineer in Michigan and lives in Lansing. John has also applied for membership in the International I.T.E.

Abd Ihami is a Senior Transportation Planner II for the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission in Grand Rapids and also lives there. Abd is a graduate of the University of Florida and is a member of the International I.T.E.

Christian R. Luz also works for the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission. He is the Transportation Program Manager and lives in Grand Rapids. Christian is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin at Madison and is a member of the International I.T.E.

Carolyn Saunders is a Transportation Planner for the Southeast Michigan Council Of Governments in Detroit and lives in Grosse Pointe Woods. Carolyn has also applied for membership in the International I.T.E.

Robert M. King is an account representative for the 3M Company and lives in Kentwood. Robert is a commercial affiliate of the Michigan Section.
Once they select destinations, drivers will be offered alternate routes that reflect the shortest travel time. In addition drivers can view services available in the area such as service stations, hotels, motels, restaurants, or tourist attractions on a map display or as textual information. Drivers may also place a call to a listed establishment via a dedicated cellular telephone.

The cost of the TravTek system, including operations for a one-year period beginning in 1990 and subsequent evaluations is estimated to be $8 million to be shared by the partners.

A pilot system in 28 square kilometers in western Tokyo, known as Comprehensive Automobile Traffic Control Project or CAC, has been in operation since October, 1977. The system consists of a two-way exchange of digital information between instrumented vehicles and roadside equipment to provide the drivers with a visual display of routing information based on current traffic conditions. Drivers of instrumented vehicles are given routing information over road side displays and through use of a roadside radio system.

The Berlin field trial of a beacon-supported route guidance system started in operation in June, 1989. A total of 250 (out of 12000) intersections with traffic lights and 10 freeway locations have been equipped with infra-red beacons for communications with 700 specially equipped vehicles. Autoguide is the name given to the United Kingdom by an in-vehicle dynamic route guidance system. A small scale demonstration scheme in London has been successful and in April, 1988, the Secretary of State for Transport launched a proposal for a major Autoguide pilot system, also in London, to be followed by an application for full scale commercial availability in the United Kingdom. The medium of communication between roadside equipment and vehicles was infra-red. A year later, in 1989, two proposals were received for development and installation of the London pilot system and an award may have been made by now, although I do not have that information handy.

The European automobile, electronics, and vehicle components supply industries, with specialists from basic research institutes, have formed a team to undertake the research program Prometheus. This program, which has been underway for a few years, has an operational aim of providing an intelligent on-board computer system which, on the basis of the inputs perceived by the traffic environment, the vehicle conditions and the inputs given to the control system, supplies the driver with optimum support for safe, effective and convenient vehicle operation.

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R = REGULAR MEMBER  T = TECHNICAL AFFILIATE  S = STUDENT  C = COMMERCIAL AFFILIATE  L = LIFE
Other suggestions in the paper included the addition of reflectors to railroad crossing stock to make crossing trains more visible during night crossings at very dark rural crossings. Brian also pointed out the danger of conditioning at crossings with infrequent rail movements and urban drivers at rural crossings where passive devices are more prevalent.

The second place winner was Jack Wheatley on "The Relationship between Accident Occurrence and Clear Vision Non-Signalized Intersections on Rural Michigan Trucklines. Jack's paper tried to determine if the State money spent on constructing and maintaining clear vision triangles in all quadrants of State Truckline intersections resulted in increased traffic safety. It was patterned after a 1973 paper studying the same relationship for signalized intersections.

Mr. Wheatley looked at trucklines in mid-Michigan with volumes ranging from 2,000 to 10,000 vehicles per day and looked at right-of-way documents to determine whether or not clear vision existed in all quadrants. Photoglos were used to verify the records. The clear vision triangle was defined as a minimum of 250 feet along the truckline and 150 feet along the cross street.

The results indicated that property damage, injury, and total accident rates for clear vision intersections were not signifi cantly different than the rates for non-clear vision intersections. This unexpected result was attributed to the small sample size (49 and 56 intersections, respectively), the focus only on two classes of intersections ( ADT's less than or greater than 5,000 vehicles), and a possible lack of maintenance at clear-vision intersections.

The third paper was by Timothy R. Drews of Stev ensville on "The Aspects of Frictional Forces". The purpose of Timothy's paper was to show what friction is, how coefficients of friction are determined, what kinds of applications friction has in the design of highways, and to discuss some controversy surrounding the coefficient of friction.

The methods of measuring the coefficient are from tables, from skid tests, and from drag tests with the skid test being the most common in accident investigation procedures. Mr. Drews points out some of the problems associated with skid tests including improper measurements and not keeping the test vehicle at a constant speed.

The friction coefficient is used to determine stopping sight distances with wet pavement conditions used to give a factor of safety. The paper found that accident investigators use higher values for the coefficient than highway designers. This leads to the controversy surrounding the issue especially with regards to the determination of vehicle speed before an accident by measuring skid marks.
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The Southfield Office of Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., is seeking applicants for a position as a traffic engineering consultant. A bachelor’s degree in civil engineering with 0-3 years of experience is preferred. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience. Barton-Aschman has a competitive fringe benefit package that includes stock ownership, hospitalization, disability insurance, life insurance, paid sick days, etc. Letters of interest and resumes should be sent to: Michael J. Labadie, P.E., Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., 27600 Northwestern Highway, Suite 100, Southfield, Michigan 48034-4704, or call (313) 350-3040.

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