TECHNICAL SUMMARY

LOUISIANA CVO/ITS BUSINESS PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

Commercial Vehicle Operations/Intelligent Transportation Systems Louisiana's (CVO/ITS) Business Plan provides a long-term strategic vision and implementation program for meeting Louisiana's CVO/ITS needs.

CVO are the various activities in which public agencies and motor carriers engage to credential or permit commercial vehicles, to clear vehicles through weigh stations; to assure motor carrier, vehicle, and driver safety; and to manage the flow of commercial vehicle traffic. ITS are the application of advanced technologies to surface transportation needs. CVO/ITS activities involve automating existing CVO processes such as credentialing, clearance, or safety assurance to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these processes, for both motor carriers and the state.

The State of Louisiana plays a vital role in commercial vehicle operations in three primary functional areas: regulatory and administrative functions, safety assurance and enforcement, and infrastructure/mobility provision and maintenance. The state plans, builds, and maintains the state highway system that provides the primary thoroughfares for the motor carrier and motor coach industries. It manages the commercial driver licensing, commercial vehicle registration, fuel tax licensing and related reporting and auditing functions, and oversize/overweight permitting services.

The Louisiana Business Plan is a tool for change. The Plan provides a roadmap for changing the way the state and motor carriers do business together and a framework for implementing that change, with the expected result of decreasing costs for both the state and industry, improving productivity and compliance, and decreasing unsafe/illegal carrier, vehicle and driver operations.

PLAN OBJECTIVES

Louisiana seeks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of CVO business and operational functions in the state. This overall mission includes three discrete elements designed to address priority needs as identified by state and industry stakeholders. These elements, in order of priority, include: 1) increasing administrative productivity of both t the private and public sectors; 2) maximizing CV operational safety and productivity through improved compliance and targeted enforcement; and 3) improving freight flows by increasing CVO operational productivity. ITS are viewed as one of several key tool sets available to the state to help implement its overall vision of improved efficiency/effectiveness.

Louisiana's CVO/ITS Business Plan includes a coordinated set of "no-tech," low-tech, and technology-based initiatives to move from the current way of doing business to the planning scenarios.

RESEARCH APPROACH

A Business Plan organized in six sections was developed:

1.0 Introduction: Provides background on the plan's purpose, context, and contents.

2.0 Commercial Vehicle Operations in Louisiana: Provides an overview of the role of trucking in the state's economy, the state's role in CVO regulation, enforcement, and service delivery.

3.0 Commercial Vehicle Operations Mission, Goals and Objectives: Details Louisiana's strategic vision for CVO and defines specific goals and objectives associated with this vision.

4.0 Strategy for Achieving Louisiana's CVO/ITS Mission: Defines current and proposed processes for CVO credentialing, clearance, safety assurance, and supporting information exchange.

5.0 Plan and Program Summary: Highlights the program of projects required to deploy and implement Louisiana's strategic vision for CVO; defines program costs and benefits, and provides an overview of the proposed deployment schedule.

6.0 Implementation Strategy: Identifies the management activities required to implement the program and alternative funding strategies.

CONCLUSIONS

The initiatives outlined in Louisiana's CVO/ITS Strategic Business Plan require an investment of almost $16 million over the next four to five years. Almost ten percent of the required investment is programmed within existing budgets; 90 percent remains to be funded, meaning that the state must identify funding sources for $14 million additional dollars over the next five to six years. In addition, these initiatives will require investments for system and facilities maintenance and upgrade for many years into the future. Potential funding sources for these activities include Federal ITS/CVO deployment program funding, special legislative appropriations, revenues which may be generated from redirected dedications of existing highway user fees. Specifically, each of these potential funding sources following is:

- Federal Transportation Trust funds;
- State Transportation Trust fund;
- TIMED funds, a special fund created from an increase in fuel taxes to finance the Transportation Infrastructure Model for Economic Development;
- State General Fund;
- General obligation bonds under the Capital Outlay Program; and
- Special legislative appropriations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure adequate funding availability for deployment and to ensure successful project/program implementation, it is critical to build a broad base of support for the state's CVO/ITS program. This involves education, information and outreach at the agency, legislative, motor carrier, and general public levels, and is described as follows.

Agency Support Base. This support base has largely been built at the policy and decision-maker level within the various state agencies responsible for CVO/ITS program implementation. Within many responsible organizations and divisions, there is also considerable understanding and support at the staff level as well. However, additional informational, educational and outreach efforts need to be initiated and expanded at the staff level, where a large share of the ultimate responsibility for successful program implementation resides.

Legislative Support Base. There have been a number of transportation and CVO initiatives successfully passed through the state legislature in recent years. As such, there is a core group of concerned and informed legislators with some level of awareness, providing a greater understanding of the potential for ITS to reduce state and carrier costs, while improving CVO operational safety and compliance.

Motor Carrier Support. The motor carrier community is very diverse, including large, national firms and smaller regional and local operators. Some portions of the carrier community are highly sophisticated in terms of computer applications and understanding of ITS/CVO opportunities and limitations. Other segments of the industry are less aware. Some types of ITS initiatives have broad industry support--initiatives to increase the efficiency of administrative processes; to target safety assurance activities toward higher risk carriers and to improve freight flows by improving operational efficiencies for example. Other types of initiatives--automated clearance, for example-- are viewed with some skepticism. Industry support and buy-in to the state's overall CVO/ITS program is critical to its long-term success.

General Public Support. With few exceptions, the general public has very limited awareness of CVO/ITS activities or their potential to affect CVO and general traffic operational safety.

The Motor Carrier Advisory Committee (MCAC) is responsible for defining and implementing an ongoing, multi-faceted outreach program to build the base of support required for successful implementation of and investment in the state's CVO/ITS program.