



LTRC Partners with a New Regional University Transportation Center to Support DOTD Research Needs

Louisiana Transportation Research Center will receive \$1.5 million in research funds over the next five years to tackle local infrastructure problems

LTRC

Created by the Louisiana legislature in 1986, LTRC's mission is to effectively merge the resources of the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD)/LTRC and state universities to provide transportation related research, education, and training in a manner that addresses the problems and needs of DOTD and the transportation industry, supports local government, advances transportation technology, benefits Louisiana's universities, and provides optimal return on taxpayers' dollars.

LTRC's functions and duties are to develop and conduct a nationally recognized research program in transportation systems; offer educational and training programs; develop and implement a technology transfer program; establish cooperative relationships with universities, associations, and agencies; and report and publish research findings.

Located on the LSU campus in Baton Rouge, LTRC provides researchers and students access to excellent laboratories and state-of-the-art research equipment. The unique position of LTRC provides access to virtually all of DOTD's and LSU's resources to pursue its mission.

(Baton Rouge, LA, December 8, 2016)—As one of the sites for the newly awarded LSU-led Transportation Consortium of South-Central States (Tran-SET)—a regional University Transportation Center (UTC) funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)—LTRC will receive approximately \$300,000 a year for five years to conduct research projects of interest and value to DOTD.

LTRC is one of 11 Tran-SET sites scattered across Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arkansas. "We will be receiving approximately \$1.5 million from the regional UTC [Tran-SET] over the next five years and will be able to fund approximately 15 or more projects valued at \$3 million over the same period. The excess funds will be generated through matching provided by participating universities and LTRC," said Associate Director of External Programs, Vijaya Gopu, Ph.D., P.E. "Tran-SET and its sites in Louisiana will be supporting research activities that will address some critical research needs of Louisiana DOTD in particular and of the region in general. The specific projects that need to be conducted will be identified soon and will support DOTD research needs and the theme of the regional UTC."

Awarded as a multimillion-dollar grant from USDOT, Tran-SET is spearheaded by LSU's Bert S. Turner Department of Construction Management Professor Marwa Hassan, Ph.D., P.E., and the LTRC site principal investigators are Director Sam Cooper, Jr., Ph.D., P.E., and Associate Director of Research Tyson Rупnow, Ph.D., P.E.

"The vision, in partnership with major state authorities in Louisiana and the region and organization, including experts from state authorities and the private sector, will allow Tran-SET to become a transportation focal point in the region," said Dr. Hassan. "The advisory board will guide the center's leadership in prioritizing local and regional problems.

DOTD Deputy Secretary Dr. Eric Kalivoda has graciously agreed to serve as the chair of the Tran-SET's advisory board."

Tran-SET will work to solve regional challenges resulting from tight economic conditions through an innovative approach focusing on cutting-edge materials, innovations, and construction methodologies as well as their applications to the different components of the transportation infrastructure (roads, ports, rails, and bridges). The center will address economic limitations by mainly considering research topics that carry out a viable plan to move the technology from research to implementation, including workforce training and specifications development.

"With limited funding and the downsizing of transportation agencies due to challenging economic conditions, the backlog of transportation projects in Louisiana and Region 6 as a whole has reached alarming levels and continues to grow. It is clear that addressing these challenges with a 'business as usual' approach will only cause the backlog to grow to unmanageable levels," said Dr. Hassan. "The vision of the proposed center is to tackle the accelerated deterioration of the different components of the transportation infrastructure in Louisiana and Region 6 through the development, evaluation, and implementation of cutting-edge technologies, novel materials, and innovative construction management processes in current and future transportation projects."

The consortium comprises Arkansas State University, Baton Rouge Community College, Louisiana State University (and LTRC), Navajo Technical University, New Mexico State University, Oklahoma State University, Prairie View A&M University, Texas A&M University, University of New Mexico, University of Texas at Arlington, and University of Texas at San Antonio.

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