



Technology Exchange

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Back to Basics with LTAP's Roads Scholar #1

By *Steven Strength, PE, PTOE*

Beginning in January 2020, LTAP will get back to basics by presenting our newly revamped “Roads Scholar #1: Basics of a Good Road” course at eight locations around the state. Ideal for local road employees and supervisors with all levels of experience, “Basics of a Good Road” will provide an overview of issues related to road construction and maintenance to help you to better manage and operate your road network. Topics will include: design considerations; materials and methods; maintenance techniques for flexible and rigid pavements; and

discussion of road features such as shoulders, ditches, culverts, and bridge approaches. The course will also cover factors affecting good road performance, such as: weather, drainage, geometry, and traffic, along with basic traffic control and roadside safety principles. Finally, since roads are without question the most expensive asset owned by local government agencies, attendees will be introduced to basic concepts of asset management.

As instructor for the course, Nicholas “Nick” Verret, Jr., will bring his wealth of practical experience to the class discussions. Nick spent over 31 years with DOTD, including positions in construction and design and as district administrator in the Alexandria District. He served as program manager for Louisiana LTAP prior to joining local government as director of public works in Natchitoches Parish and currently serves as city engineer in Natchitoches where he has developed a pavement management program for their street network. Nick also served as an instructor for LTAP's Roads Scholar classes in “Maintenance of Asphalt Roads” in 2018 and “Pavement Preservation and Road Surface Management” in 2019.

Registration for “Basics of a Good Road” is now open, and more information can be obtained on LTAP's website at www.louisianaltap.org. Sign up now, and get your 2020 training off to a great start!

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Visit www.louisianaltap.org
for our current classes,
training requests,
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LPESA Calling for New Memberships & Renewals

The Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA) is calling for new members to sign up and current members to renew their membership to take advantage of the training and workforce development opportunities that the association offers. Email Courtney.Dupre@la.gov for more info.

Fond Farewells and New Beginnings

By Steven Strength, PE, PTOE



For Louisiana LTAP, 2019 has been a year of monumental change—change that included the retirement of Bob Breaux after more than 20 years; promotion of our faithful training coordinator, Courtney Dupre, to the position of business

manager; replacement of Courtney's position with the arrival of Olivia Phelps as our new training coordinator; and new directions for our Local Road Safety Program with the support of Leo Marretta. We have also seen significant changes at DOTD, including the retirement of Ann Wills and the appointment of Tanya Moore as LPA Programs mManager, both of whom we have depended upon to coordinate important activities related to DOTD and their steadfast support for our local agencies.

Of course, the most significant change at LTAP was the retirement in July of our LTAP director of the past 16 years, Dr. Marie Walsh. Marie's retirement, which we are still learning to accept as reality, has marked an opportunity to celebrate her legacy of commitment to local agency issues, including her dedication to road safety, not just in Louisiana, but nationwide. Marie demonstrated the power of applying energy to a cause, the insight to ask the right questions, the ability to express optimism, and an unwavering determination to bring together the right people to make good things happen. She is an example for us all, and the impact of her efforts on behalf of the locals will be felt for years to come. While we celebrate that legacy by building on the considerable foundation Marie has left us, we are reminded of her commitment as she asks about LTAP and her friends in the local agencies whenever we trade email or calls, even as she now has more time to pursue well deserved recreation and the interests of her family that "rode for the brand" with her every mile of the journey.

Inspired by Marie's leadership and her constant striving for excellence, it was a particular honor for me to be named the new LTAP director and assume the very considerable challenge of running an LTAP center that is widely acknowledged as one of the best in the country. I am grateful for the opportunity, and I can see that my experience has led me to this point with great purpose. While a naval officer in the 1970s, I helped conduct on-the-job training and coordinate shipboard training exercises, similar to what we do at LTAP. What I really learned from this experience was that each member of the crew had value, from the newest recruit to the crustiest old salt. I learned that you must respect each sailor because you never know who you might have to count on to keep the ship afloat. Later, during my career at DOTD, I had the privilege of participating in many landmark projects and in implementing exciting technologies at the district level, but what I learned was that you have to develop a network of sympathetic individuals and encourage collaboration with them in order to achieve meaningful results. I learned that the best conceived plans, without the support and encouragement of local agencies and stakeholders at many levels, would go nowhere. In my six short years here at LTAP, I have been involved in many interesting training and technical assistance activities, but what I have learned is that you, representing a local road agency, must first recognize how important you are in making our roads and other transportation systems work for the public that we all serve. If we can help convince you of that importance and coincidentally give you some new tool or technique to help you do your job better, then we at LTAP have succeeded.

I am thankful for the things that have not changed – the tireless support of the DOTD Highway Safety Section, our awesome LTRC leadership and staff, our dynamic FHWA Louisiana Division office, our LPESA, APWA, and national LTAP leadership, and numerous friends and longtime colleagues within and outside DOTD who have offered their congratulations and encouragement. All are constant reminders that we do not approach this task alone. As to our vision for 2020 (pardon the pun), we have a significant slate of interesting courses and other activities scheduled, and you can read all about them elsewhere in this newsletter. In the meantime, we here at LTAP look forward to seeing you out on the road in the New Year!

Local Road Safety Project Spotlight: Mini-Roundabout at Nicholls State

By Rudynah Entera Capone, MPA

The first of the three new roundabouts in Thibodaux is now completed. This mini-roundabout, to be exact, is located at the intersection of Audubon Avenue and Ardoyne Drive on the Nicholls State University (NSU) campus.

Multiple challenges had to be overcome along the way, including getting the campus officials' buy-in, clarifying some feasibility concerns, validating a data-driven effort, and getting funding approved through the Local Road Safety Program (LRSP). LRSP is one of DOTD's Local Public Agencies (LPA) programs that provides parishes and municipalities access to federal-aid funds to spend for safety improvements on local streets.

Thanks to LRSP funding and the collaboration between the South Central Regional Safety Coalition's (SCRSC) stakeholders, this project came to life, and it is positively seen to help alleviate the flow of traffic around NSU as roundabouts are designed to do. Research has found roundabouts to be effective in reducing injury crashes by 75% at intersections where stop signs previously existed. Crash data for Audubon-Ardoyne will be monitored over the next five years to evaluate its impact on crash reduction.

An article in the campus newspaper, *Nicholls Worth*, shared that people might be confused how to use the mini-roundabout. As in many areas, it's apparent that this is a major concern, but local safety stakeholders also clarified that the project's goal is to address the bottlenecks, especially when nearby school drop-off and pickup times conflict. At the Louisiana Highway Safety Summit 2019, LTAP staff member Rudynah Capone asked Louisiana State Police Troop C Commander Captain Frank Besson, Jr. for a comment on this new development. "It was very difficult and challenging in the beginning. We saw cars driving over the roundabout itself, but now, motorists are slowly learning how to drive around it, not over it," the Captain informed. SCRSC Coordinator and SCPDC Planner Cassie Parker shared how the coalition partners are working toward implementing enforcement and education efforts that use the statewide campaign slogan, "Roundabouts Save Lives."

How It All Began

The beginnings of this project could be traced back to when Audubon was identified as a safety concern in the



Houma-Thibodaux region. A formalized "safety concern" sheet was submitted in 2010-2011 through the South Central Regional Safety Coalition, which is one of the nine multidisciplinary coalitions established as a mechanism to implement the statewide Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) at the local level. The South Central coalition is administered by the South Central Planning and Development Commission (SCPDC) in Houma.

The safety concerns on Audubon Avenue and its intersecting roads were then reviewed and deliberated by the coalition's stakeholders. After a series of discussions and crash data analyses, a Road Safety Assessment (RSA) was conducted in 2012 by the Louisiana LTAP Center, in partnership with the SCPDC, Thibodaux Police Department, LA State Police Troop C, DOTD Houma Sub-district, and the City of Thibodaux Department of Public Works.

The Audubon-Ardoyne intersection is at its busiest during early morning drop-offs and afternoon pickups where the NSU's daycare facility and a charter school also sit nearby.

The RSA team recommended some short-term treatments like speed enforcement, removal of eastbound parking, and restriping of turn, center, and edge lines. As a long-term countermeasure, the team suggested the installation of a roundabout, which came to fruition five years later. The short-term fixes were done (in the interim) while the roundabout idea went through the project development process.

The Thibodaux mini-roundabout is believed to be the first constructed in Louisiana using federal safety funds. The differences between a mini-roundabout and a standard sized roundabout include the size, allowing it usually to be constructed within the existing footprint of the intersection and, therefore, minimizing right-of-way requirements and the paved, traversable center island, which reduces the obstruction for the occasional large vehicle, making this solution ideal for locally owned roads.

See page 7 for more information on the "Roundabouts Save Lives" campaign.

Leadership Spotlight: Guy Cormier, Executive Director of Police Jury Association of LA

In this edition of Leadership Spotlight, we're honored to feature the executive director of the Police Jury Association of Louisiana (PJAL), Guy Cormier. This role also puts him in the position of serving as the administrator of the Parish Government Risk Management Agency (PGRMA), PJAL's group health and workers' compensation program.

Cormier previously served as parish president for 14 years and a councilman for 4 years in St. Martin Parish. Not only is he a devoted public servant, he's also an active member of the St. Martinville Chamber of Commerce where he's been recognized as Business Leader of the Year in 2003.

LTAP: What does leadership mean to you?

Cormier: Leadership means convincing others to believe in a cause by way of your individual actions.

LTAP: How would you describe your leadership style?

Cormier: Hands off. I have always tried to assemble a trusting team that has the organization's best interest, so that I do not have to be involved in everyday decisions.

LTAP: In any of your current and previous leadership roles, what has been the most challenging task you've had to overcome? How did you handle it?

Cormier: In August of 2016, I was serving as parish president of St. Martin Parish when we received extensive damage from historical rainfall amounts. As residents went through the recovery process, we found it extremely beneficial to communicate with them every step of the way. Because of that, St. Martin

Parish is in the process of facilitating \$25 million in drainage infrastructure projects.

LTAP: What values are most important to you as a leader?

Cormier: I'd say being visionary, keeping an open communication, and having the ability to adapt to change.

LTAP: As the current executive director of the PJAL, what is that one thing you'd like for the association to accomplish, and how do you intend to achieve it?

Cormier: We must communicate to the public the importance of local government and its responsibilities. Our association will be rolling out a digital media marketing plan in 2020. We look forward to the results of it.

LTAP: How do you resolve conflicts between individuals or groups?

Cormier: Communication! Most conflicts arise when people are not communicating. A good leader recognizes the problem then pulls the team together to talk through possible solutions.

LTAP: Who is your favorite leader? Why?

Cormier: Drew Brees. Drew leads by example and works hard daily to make sure that he and his team members achieve success at the highest level. He is also a great communicator and is one of the best at adapting to changes on the field and in life.



Retired Brigadier General Roger Shields teaching the class in Baton Rouge

LTAP Teaches the Basics of Supervision

By Olivia Phelps

In the fall of 2019, LTAP taught nine classes of the "Roads Scholar #8: Successful Supervision for Local Road Supervisors," with retired US Army Brigadier General Roger Shields as the instructor. General Shields currently provides consulting services focused on leadership and management training. Additionally, he serves as an army senior mentor/subjectmatter expert in theater-level logistics helping to prepare military units for deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan as well as for emergency/homeland defense missions.

Approximately 100 participants completed the course that covered topics on effective communication, planning, delegating, and performance management. His classes were not void of entertainment. He shared many relevant stories and valuable reflections mostly from his army experience.

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Every Day Counts: Focus on Reducing Rural Roadway Departures (FoRRRwD)

One of LTAP's focus areas is innovation—at the local level. A number of current initiatives, including FHWA's Every Day Counts (EDC), provide opportunities to highlight successes and encourage innovative thinking. In this newsletter edition, we feature an EDC-5 innovation, Focus on Reducing Rural Roadway Departures or FoRRRwD. Safety stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) have identified the reduction of roadway departure crashes as among the priorities in order to reach Destination Zero Deaths. In Louisiana, approximately 60% of the fatalities in 2018 resulted from roadway departures, 24% of which occurred on locally owned roads. The Louisiana LTAP Center is working with parishes and municipalities in developing local road safety plans to help prioritize projects that address roadway departure issues on local roads.

Read more about it on the Louisiana Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Summary and Overview 2019:

https://issuu.com/ltrc/docs/lashsp_brochurebyltapv4

For more information on FoRRRwD, visit:

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc_5/roadway_departures.cfm



A local road in St. Tammany Parish



Innovation Exchange Webinars: Let's Talk Innovation

Through Innovation Exchange webinars, CLAS is bringing cutting-edge transportation leaders to the table to share ideas and out-of-the box innovative practices that have proven results. Learn more about it on <https://go.usa.gov/xyc6x>

Supervision, cont. from page 4

The attendees will never forget some of the “Roger-isms” (as I may call them), including my personal favorite about a friend whom he observed eating the crust off of his pie first. He asked him why, and he responded that he didn't like the crust so much, so he ate it first so that he could enjoy the rest of the pie. This was a reminder about how we must take care of the unpleasantness in life so that we can move on to the enjoyable things.

When teaching communication, General Shields stressed the importance of clarity. He shared the saying, “A woman without her man is nothing.” For obvious reasons, the discussion became lively, but the point was clearly made when the General added commas in the right places. It should read as “A woman, without her, man is nothing.” Along the same lines, he reminded us on multiple occasions that “If it can be misunderstood, it will be misunderstood.” The lesson in communication is clear. Anything can be construed differently by another when communication is ineffective.

While teaching planning, General Shields shared the story of one of his first supervisors teaching him that the work will continue, regardless of the person doing it. She would remind him often that “one monkey doesn't stop no show, and that includes you.” While we all feel that we are indispensable and our job will not get done without us, the fact is that the show will go on. The job will get done.

LTAP on the GEAUX!



LTAP Director Steve Strength facilitating a panel discussion with DOTD's team of experts sharing information about overcoming challenges in flood management.

for bridge inspection. Visit www.lpesa.org to upload the full agenda and conference presentations. View more photos on Louisiana LTAP Center's Facebook page.

LPESA Fall Conference 2019. Approximately 120 attendees engaged in presentations and conversations at the LPESA Fall Conference October 2-3, 2019, at the Cypress Bayou Casino Hotel in Charenton. The session topics included winter weather response, flood management, local road safety plans, procurement code and bid law, municipal separate storm sewer systems, qualifications-based service selection, specs for scrub seals, and drones



Day of Trees. LTAP assisted in the 2nd Annual "Day of Trees" free presentation organized by St. Landry Parish and AOK Services, Inc. on October 15 at the Yambilee Building in Opelousas. Around 50 participants learned about the general care of Live Oak trees, including proper pruning of trees over roads, highways, and city streets.



Back-to-Back in Montana and Washington. LTAP Director Steve Strength (left, with retired South Dakota LTAP Program Manager Ken Skorseth) participated in back-to-back conferences in the Northwest region in September. He attended the TRB Low Volume Roads International Conference held in Kalispell, Montana, September 15-18, and then presented a 3-hour workshop on "The Road to Better Signing" at the Washington Road and Street Supervisors Conference in Yakima, Washington on September 24.



Destination Downtown. LTAP's Technology Transfer Manager Rudynah Capone exchanged best practices with the Main Street planning professionals from Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi during the Destination Downtown Regional Conference held in Hammond this past September 11-13. The conference gathered over 250 attendees.



Coushatta Tribe's Road Planning Meeting. LTAP's Local Road Safety Program Manager Leo Marretta (leftmost) attended the Road Planning, Transportation and Safety Meeting put together by the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana. He provided insight on the local road safety planning efforts that parishes, municipalities, and tribal communities are encouraged to be involved in.

Calendar of Events

LTAP Classes

- **Roads Scholar #1: Basics of A Good Road:** January 22 to March 12 in eight locations; registration available online at <https://registration.ltrc.lsu.edu/login>
- **Roads Scholar #15: Safety for Public Works First Responders:** April-May 2020
- **Roads Scholar #13: Inspection of Local Bridges:** Summer 2020 (Dates & Locations TBD)
- **Roads Scholar #3: Drainage: The Key to Roads That Last:** Fall 2020 (Dates & Locations TBD)
- **Chainsaw Safety, Precision Felling and Maintenance Classes:** Spring 2020 (Dates & Locations TBD)
- **Local Public Agency Training:** June 23-25, 2020, at the New Orleans Regional Transportation Management Center (RTMC); registration coming soon

Email Olivia.phelps@la.gov for more information on any of LTAP's current or upcoming classes.

Partner Conferences

- **Police Jury Association of Louisiana (PJAL) Convention,** February 12-14, 2020, Shreveport Convention Center, www.lpgov.org
- **Louisiana Transportation Conference,** March 1-4, 2020, Raising Cane's River Center, Baton Rouge, www.ltrc.lsu.edu/ltrc_20/registration.html
- **National Association of County Engineers (NACE) Conference ,** April 19-23, 2020, Baldwin County, AL, www.naceevents.org/



- **Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA) Spring Conference,** May 6-7, 2020, Natchitoches, www.lpesa.org

Local Road Safety: "Roundabouts Save Lives"



Every year, the Louisiana DOTD partners with the Destination Zero Deaths (DZD) regional coalitions and infrastructure teams to conduct a statewide awareness campaign called "Roundabouts Save Lives" to educate motorists on how to safely navigate around roundabouts. Roundabouts are designed to improve safety for all road users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, and big truck drivers. Roundabouts reduce crashes by decreasing stop-and-go traffic, and slowing traffic down to reduce the severity of crashes when they do occur.

The golden rule is that one must slow down when approaching a roundabout and yield to traffic.

Here are some pointers you should keep in mind when driving a roundabout:

- Slow down.
- Share the road.
- Yield to traffic.
- Proceed slowly to the right.
- Follow directional signs.
- Exit carefully.

Campaigns

- **Superbowl Safety: "Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk"** February 2, 2020, www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov
- **National Work Zone Awareness Week,** April 20-24, 2020, www.nwzaw.org
- **National Public Works Week,** May 17-23, 2020, www.apwa.net





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The purpose of the Local Technical Assistance Program is to provide technical materials, information, and training to help local government agencies in Louisiana maintain and improve their roads and bridges in a cost-effective manner. To accomplish this purpose, we publish a quarterly newsletter; conduct seminars, workshops, and mini-workshops covering various aspects of road and transportation issues; provide a lending library service of audio/visual programs; provide technical assistance through phone and mail-in requests relating to transportation technology; and undertake special projects of interest to municipalities in Louisiana.