



Technology Exchange

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LTAP Goes Virtual in COVID-19

By Steven Strength, P.E., PTOE

With Louisiana's response to the coronavirus pandemic, major changes to LTAP's approach to training and technical assistance have occurred. Beginning in mid-March with the postponement of the popular chainsaw safety class and the cancellation of our LPESA spring conference, LTAP has been working remotely and planning for new ways to serve local agencies.

In order to determine if our programs would reach the correct audience, LTAP conducted a survey to gauge stakeholders' interest and ability to attend web-based training. According to the survey findings, over 50% of Louisiana's local agencies were partly telecommuting and partly working on-site. *Nearly 75% of the respondents said they were interested in online training* with a preference for morning classes. In response, LTAP began to work converting our planned training for the spring to provide an interactive experience as valuable as the live classroom. This meant engaging the learner every few slides with questions, chat pod interaction, and more discussion items to keep the presentations interesting for remote delivery, while also splitting a typical full-day class into modules of approximately two hours each to avoid computer fatigue.

After several weeks of modification, we successfully hosted our first-ever, web-based training, *Roads Scholar #15: Safety for Public Works First Responders*, on April 28-30. Originally scheduled for live presentation, we were fortunate to have a flexible and tech-savvy instructor, Justin Hill, who went the extra mile to adjust to the new virtual format and maintain the interest of the audience with many humorous anecdotes. Hill currently works as a Hazardous Materials Officer for the Baton Rouge Fire Department and was able to teach relevant lessons on safety from his own personal experience. As part of National Public Works Week, LTAP offered an encore performance of the same course on May 19-21, with an earlier start time in order to reach more of our locals.

In this course, participants learned the importance of having an emergency plan and supplies, mental preparation, and strategies for dealing with the stress and aftermath of an emergency situation. Hill described a variety of potentially hazardous situations, including: chemical leaks, flooding, hurricanes, and associated risks to responders, including public works personnel. He also discussed selection of the proper PPE for a hazard and other strategies for maintaining personal safety and health when responding. Topics were presented in the context of the "Safety Triangle" – working through an event by understanding the risks and hazards, analyzing the needs of the situation, and preventing further damage and/or hazards while working to restore the scene to normal operation.

We thank Justin for all the valuable information and hope the lessons can keep us safe amidst the many challenges we may face. *Read more about preparing your family and your workplace on page 3.*

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Director's Corner
- 3 Hurricane Preparedness
- 3 Lafayette Roundabout
- 4 Leadership Spotlight
- 4 LPA Training Offered Virtually
- 5 Tailgate Talks: Chainsaw Safety
- 5 Highway Safety Road Shows
- 6 Innovation: Build a Better Mousetrap
- 7 Calendar of Upcoming Events

Visit www.louisianaltap.org
for our current classes,
training requests,
free resources,
and much more...

By Steven Strength, P.E., PTOE



The Louisiana LTAP team is in the process of transitioning back to our office at LTRC under Phase 2 of the governor's reopening plan. I spent my first full week back in the office starting June 1 after 11 weeks of telecommuting, and the rest of the LTAP team is working every other day in the office while telecommuting on the other days. It feels good to get

back to some sense of normal, although it won't really be normal until we can get back on the road and interact with you, our local agency heroes! As you all have continued to serve your communities during the pandemic, LTAP has been busy learning how to keep in touch and serve you in new ways.

I hope you all had the opportunity to participate in the virtual version of our **Roads Scholar #15: Safety for Public Works First Responders** class in April or the encore presentation during Public Works Week in May. We learned a lot about training in the virtual environment from this experience and will be posting class resources on our website very soon to help you get ready for the peak of hurricane season. In spite of all the technology available to us, the well-being of our people—employees and citizens alike—remains the top priority. Keeping yourself and others safe while performing the essential functions of a local agency remains a basic requirement of your job.

While the current emphasis statewide and nationally is on staying healthy and slowing the spread of the coronavirus, we still face hazards on the road whether as a vehicle occupant or working in the rights-of-way. LTAP's Tailgate Safety Talks are a great way to keep your agency staff tuned in to the safety message without a huge commitment of time. We recommend a team meeting at least once a week to discuss a key safety topic, especially when undertaking a procedure that you haven't performed in a while. Go to our webpage at www.louisianaltap.org and click on the Resources tab to access the Tailgate Talks page. They even have instructions on "How to Give a Tailgate Talk" for your crew!

A couple of other resources worth your attention right now are Louisiana LTAP's "Local Connections" e-mail news bulletin, which we have shifted to weekly publication since the onset of the pandemic, and our national LTAP website's calendar, featuring free online training available from LTAP centers across the country. Check it out at <https://nltapa.org/calendar> for all

LTAP Program Manager Receives Paper Award, Will Present at ITE Annual Meeting in August



LTAP Program Manager, Chris Melson, was selected as the first place winner of Southern District Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) "Young Member Technical Paper Award" for his entry, "Perception, Awareness, and Importance of Preparing for Connected and Automated Vehicle (CAV) Technologies:

A Survey of Louisiana Organizations." The paper presented the development, results, and analysis of an electronic survey distributed to 273 Louisiana organizations.

Melson will present the results of the survey at the 2020 ITE Annual Meeting and Exhibition to be held virtually on August 11, 2020, at 10:00–11:30 am. *See Page 7 for meeting information.*

The purpose of the survey was to engage these organizations under the context of CAV planning and gauge their awareness, perception, and viewed importance of planning for CAV technologies. The survey identified potential areas of concern: low awareness and perception by economic development, freight, and transit organizations, low levels of perceived impact and importance of planning by freight and transit operators, and wide variability in which organizations are currently preparing for CAV technologies. The survey is part of a larger research project on "Analysis, Modeling, and Simulation (AMS) Case Studies of CAV Implementations Specific to the South-Central Region."

Please e-mail Christopher.Melson@la.gov if you would like to learn more about the research study. Additional information can also be found at www.melsatron.com/cav-la.

the great activities our partner centers have available. There are a number of recorded webinars that provide professional development hours (PDHs), as well as videos and other materials on the Resources page.

With all the uncertainty of reopening the economy, medical challenges, budget issues, and so much more, it is easy for the average citizen to forget how important our local agency transportation and public works agencies are to the future prospects of our state and nation. For LTAP's part, and until we have the opportunity to thank you all in person, please accept our sincere appreciation for the work you do every day to keep our communities functioning smoothly. Stay safe out there!

Get a Gameplan for Hurricane Season

Louisianans are known to be resilient. Lessons learned from major hurricanes and floods have certainly taught us to be more vigilant, taking our tactics and methods for hurricane preparedness to a whole new level.

LTAP recommends you get a good game plan in the event of a hurricane or emergency that includes these important steps:



If you complete your Family Emergency Communication Plan online at ready.gov/make-a-plan, you can print it onto a wallet-sized card. Make sure everyone carries a copy in his or her backpack, purse, or wallet.

- 1** Put together an emergency kit that includes essential supplies and important documents. Emergency resources are available through getagameplan.org or emergency.la.gov.
- 2** Fill out a Family Emergency Communication Plan. FEMA has developed easy-to-fill-out sheets that your families can use as communication plans for parents and for kids. They are available on ready.gov/make-a-plan or fema.gov.
- 3** Prepare for a personal evacuation plan and electrical outages. Choose several places—a friend's home in another town, a hotel, or shelter—in case an evacuation is necessary. Keep the telephone numbers of these places as well as a road map of your locality.
- 4** Know what to do when a hurricane watch or warning is issued. A warning is more serious because conditions are actually expected in an area. A watch means that conditions are possible.
- 5** Protect your home and valuables. Bring things indoors and shelter your pets, especially when there's a chance the weather may get worse or flooding may happen.
- 6** Stay informed!
 - Download the mobile app Get a Game Plan provided by the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.
 - Check out 511la.org or dial 511 for traffic information.
 - Visit alertfm.com for evacuation routes and road closures.
 - Catch the Doppler radar on the National Weather Service weather.gov or on radar.weather.gov
 - Contact Louisiana State Police at lsp.org for any suspicious activity.
 - Call 911 in any situation that requires immediate assistance.

Resources

Learn more about emergency preparedness by accessing the Resources tab (under Emergency Preparedness section) of www.louisianaltap.org

LOCAL ROAD SAFETY PROGRAM

New Roundabout in Lafayette

Lafayette has a new roundabout at Hospital Drive and Girard Park. This is one of the projects partly funded through the Local Road Safety Program (LRSP), in addition to the \$1 million in Surface Transportation (STP) funding plus other federal and state funds.

In the prior three years to the project's construction, this location had 24 right-angle and left-turn-right angle crashes, causing it to be ranked 7th in all of the intersections in DOTD District 03 by frequency of these crash types. These crash types can lead to fatal and serious injuries.

LTAP administers the LRSP, with project submissions accepted year-round and project selections done quarterly. To know more about how to apply for LRSP funding, email Leo.Marretta@la.gov or visit www.louisianalrsp.org.

What are roundabouts? Learn more at <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/pdfs/fhwasa17055.pdf> or visit www.louisianalrsp.org.



Leadership Spotlight: Mary Stringfellow, FHWA Program Delivery Team Leader

By Rudynah Entera Capone, MPA

LTAP is honored to feature Mary Stringfellow, Program Delivery Team Leader of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Mary has been with FHWA for 33 years, with two decades devoted to the Louisiana Division.

Stringfellow is instrumental to the success of LTAP's various efforts, including the promotion and implementation of Every Day Counts (EDC) innovations, delivery of the Local Public Agency (LPA) training program, and expansion of workforce development support for the Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA). Stringfellow has also been a prime mover in the overall implementation of the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). She strongly supports efforts that help Louisiana reach Destination Zero Deaths by implementing infrastructure safety projects through the Local Road Safety Program (LRSP) and the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP).

Tell us some highlights of your professional career, and how those roles helped you develop your leadership skills.

Over 10 years ago, I was given a work assignment that I did NOT want. I had to learn about this topic and all the federal requirements, and I had multiple new people come into to our office in this area. I had to learn and develop my leadership skills very quickly. Now, 10 years later, I have had several employees move on with promotions, who thank me for my leadership and career development assistance. This unwanted assignment has greatly helped me improve my leadership skills!

What does leadership mean to you?

Leadership is knowing enough about who you want to lead to be able to inspire them to action.

What competencies should a leader have to be effective in leading teams?

Good communication, honesty, accountability, cooperative decision-making, and emotional intelligence are important characteristics to possess to effectively lead teams. I value and

cont. on page 7



Local Public Agency Training Offered Virtually

By Olivia Phelps

Just a couple of weeks ago, LTAP conducted a virtual version of the Local Public Agency (LPA) Training Program "Core Qualification Module (3-Part Series)" on June 23-25, 2020. LPAs are required to undergo this training to be eligible to apply for state and federal highway funding. More than 60 participants attended the course, mostly personnel from parish and municipal government agencies. Participants learned the different federal highway programs available to them and what the requirements are. They also learned about entity-state agreement that governs the life of the projects.

The participants engaged in a breakout session on how to create an executive briefing sheet that is intended to be used as talking points for agency leaders and project coordinators. The sheet outlines the job description of a "Responsible Charge," who is a full-time employee of the LPA and serves as the primary point of contact of the project. It should emphasize that the Entity-State Agreement is a legally binding document, which must have all parts included, even if they are not applicable to a project. The project cannot begin unless the agreement is executed. Most of the federal-aid programs are reimbursable, and they must follow the DOTD and FHWA requirements for inspections and certifications.

In the course evaluation, participants shared they felt much more confident in their ability to navigate a federally funded project and the requirements they will need to meet. LTAP will offer Construction, Engineering & Inspection as well as the Project Development and Design Process for the LPA Responsible Charge in the coming months.

Learn more about LPA here: www.louisianaltap.org/local-public-agency.html

Tailgate Talk Series: Chainsaw Safety

It's summertime, and you know what that means: it's time to cut grass and trim trees. The use of chainsaws is much more frequent around this time. LTAP offers our *Tailgate Talk Series: Timely Safety Briefings* featuring tips to observe safety precautions when operating chainsaws. Chainsaws are incredibly powerful and dangerous tools. Here are tips to ensure your safety when using chainsaws:



- Never use with a dull blade. The blade should always be sharpened, and the chainsaw should always be oiled. If you fail to do these routine maintenance activities, you have more chances of getting injured.
- Use a chainsaw with standard safety features, including: a stop switch, chain catcher, spark arrester, and hand guards.
- Wear proper PPE which includes: safety glasses, a hard hat, hearing protection, face shield, work gloves, and chaps.
- Only cut at waist level and below. If you need to reach something that's over your head, you should use a ladder.
- Plan an escape route. Ideally, this is 45 degrees from the direction you expect the tree to fall. Make sure no objects are laying around that could trip you.
- Refuel your tool. If the chainsaw runs out of gas during operation, refuel it but let it cool down first before doing so. Also, do not smoke while refueling.

Resources and References

- Working Safely with Chainsaws https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/chainsaws.pdf
- OSHA Quick Card <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/326910N-05-english-06-27-2007.html>

For more Tailgate Talks, check out the "Resources" section of www.louisianaltap.org or visit the Information Exchange section of www.nltapa.org

DOTD's Highway Safety Road Shows

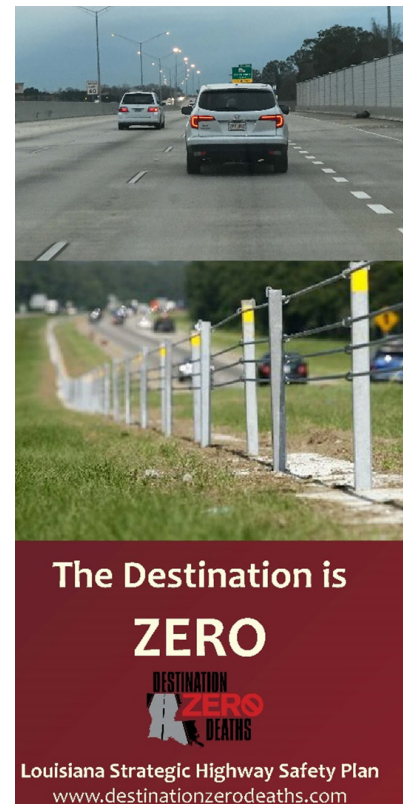
The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development's (DOTD) Highway Safety Section conducted the annual Highway Safety Road Shows in May and June 2020. Representatives from the DOTD district offices as well as the SHSP coalition coordinators and staff from the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) participated.

These road shows were held in conjunction with the SHSP Infrastructure and Operations (IO) Emphasis Area Statewide Meeting. DOTD emphasized the Roadway Departure Implementation Plan, which local public agencies are encouraged to use as a tool in developing potential safety projects and/or project applications to address roadway departure crashes.

The SHSP IO Team also reviewed the IO Action Plan, which drives the overall work that Louisiana is doing to reach the SHSP goal of Destination Zero Deaths.

LTAP Director Steve Strength and DOTD Program Manager Laura Riggs provided updates on LRSP and the Safe Routes to Public Places Program (SRTPPP) with information on current and future LRSP/SRTPPP programming, project application changes, and future call for projects.

The feedback provided at these road shows will be used for next year's planning of the Highway Safety Improvement Program. For more questions, you may email DOTD-HighwaySafety@la.gov or reach out to the coalition coordinators in your area on destinationzerodeaths.com.



Ouachita, Terrebonne Featured in Build a Better Mousetrap Booklet of Best Practices

FHWA recently released the 2019 Build a Better Mousetrap (BABM) National Entry Booklet that highlights local agency innovations nationwide. LTAP is proud to share that two of the featured innovations are from Ouachita Parish Public Works Department and Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government (TPCG).

Both innovations were selected as Louisiana's BABM 2019 winners at the state level. Ouachita's catch basin lid assist tool was the overall winner, while Terrebonne's salt spreader won the People's Choice Award (having earned the most number of "likes" on Facebook). They were consequently entered into the national level in the same year, hence included in the official 2019 BABM booklet.

Both parish agencies were awarded with a free training to any LTAP class and a plaque of appreciation during the LPESA Spring Conference 2019.



Ouachita's Catch Basin Lid Assist Tool

Ouachita's Public Works Department needed a lightweight mechanical means of lifting and lowering catch basin lids during inspection. Their solution was the Catch Basin Lid Assist Tool. It is efficient, lightweight, and inexpensive. It helps workers lift and lower catch basin lids for inspection without having to use brute strength to lift and lower catch basin lids. The tool increases overall worker safety and decreases the likelihood of finger-and-toe-pinch injuries. There's no need to purchase an expensive electro-magnetic dolly! The agency utilized their shop labor to construct the tool from steel bar stock, resulting in an overall cost of under \$100 including labor and materials.



Terrebonne's Salt Spreaders

Terrebonne had record days of deep freeze in 2016, leading to icy roadways and bridges. They had a large amount of calcium chloride for dust control and decided to use it as a deicing agent. However, they did not have a method to dispense the pellets. Their solution was to convert a grass seed spreader into a salt spreader. Since they needed a wider distribution area with less pellets per square foot, they had to fabricate a modified caster increasing the distributing radius from 20 degrees to 40 degrees. This then restricted the feeder plate to allow for less pellets per rotation. They managed to reopen the roads and bridges when the needed equipment was unavailable. This innovation only cost approximately \$250 for the modified casters and 4 hours of labor.

For more information, visit the "Build A Better Mousetrap" section under the "Innovation" tab of LTAP on www.louisianaltap.org.

Submit for BABM 2021!

Do you have a local innovation that increases safety, reduces cost, and improves efficiency? Share it with us at LTAP. It can be anything that you have utilized under any of the four categories: (1) inspection and data collection, (2) asset management techniques, (3) maintenance tools, and (4) facilities improvements.

We're soliciting for 2021 BABM: LTAP is now accepting BABM entry submissions in time for the LPESA Fall Conference.

More details will be posted on www.louisianaltap.org.

Calendar of Events

LTAP Classes

- **Roads Scholar #13: Inspection of Local Bridges**
Fall 2020 (Dates & Locations TBD)
- **Roads Scholar #3: Drainage: The Key to Roads That Last**
Fall 2020 (Dates & Locations TBD)

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

Joint ITE International and Southern District Annual Meeting and Exhibition (Virtual)

August 4-6, August 11-13, and
August 18-20, 2020

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, ITE is virtually hosting their Annual Meeting and Exhibition. Attendees will have access to more than 30 technical sessions, 40 poster presentations, 8 workshops, and several social hours. Visit www.ite.org for more information.



NLTAPA Virtual To You (V2Y) Conference

July 28-30, 2020

10 am - 1:30 pm (CDT)

Our LTAP staff members will participate in the NLTAPA Annual Meeting, which has been converted into Virtual To You (V2Y) conference. This three-day meeting will cover general sessions, technical sessions, state sharing, and hot topics. For more info, visit www.nltapa.org.



LPESA Fall 2020 Conference

LPESA cancelled its spring conference but will meet in the fall with dates to be determined. LPESA's mission is to educate members, encourage professionalism, and promote public safety through the exchange of ideas while fostering communication on the parish, state, and federal level. Additional conference information will be posted on www.lpesa.org.



We Need Your Help! Update Your Information

LTAP is updating our contact database. We want to make sure that you are getting the tools and resources you need. Email Courtney.dupre@la.gov if you need to update your contact information.

Leadership Spotlight

cont. from page 4

care for my team members, and I want to see them succeed.

How do your colleagues view your leadership style?

I lead by example—willing to roll up my sleeves and do the work with my colleagues. I motivate and inspire employees to achieve their goals.

Do you think technical knowledge is key to being a great leader?

Yes and no. Yes, you need to have some technical knowledge about the mission of the team you are leading in order to be credible. No, you don't need to be a technical expert on the topic as long as you realize when you need to get assistance and advice and whom to get it from. You must be willing to listen to those technical experts.

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

When two of my team members were not able to work together due to personality conflicts, I had to do something to bridge a lot of communication issues.

What techniques, approaches, or strategies did you utilize to handle the situation?

I met with each of them separately and listened to the issues they were having. I asked questions like "Why do you think this is?" and "What would you like to see changed?" Then, I revised and clearly defined their respective work assignments based on their input and strengths.

Who is your model leader? Why?

Mother Teresa. She was willing to do it all, and her bravery inspired so many others to also help others. I saw her speak in person once, and I was in awe! When this tiny lady started speaking, everyone went silent, so we could hear every word she said. She changed the world by being willing to do the work herself while inspiring others to do more than they ever thought they could.



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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.