



Technology Exchange

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LTAP Director Steven Strength Retires

LTAP Director Steven C. Strength, P.E., PTOE, whom everyone calls Steve, has exited the work zone after 42 years of state government service, 10 years with LTAP, and 32 years with Louisiana DOTD.

Before becoming LTAP director, Steve served as program manager from 2013-2019. He was promoted to director in 2019 following the retirement of former LTAP director Dr. Marie Walsh. He began his career in the 1960s working as an Engineer in Training (now referred to as an Engineer Intern or EI) in the Traffic Section of DOTD's District 02 in Bridge City. He spent 32 years with the Louisiana DOTD District 02 in New Orleans, including 22 years as district traffic operations engineer.

When asked about what he is most proud of in his time with LTAP, Steve remarked, "It's maintaining and expanding our collaborative relationships with parishes, cities, DOTD headquarters, DOTD districts, metropolitan planning organizations, professional organizations, and private industry partners to make Louisiana a better place to live, work, and raise a family by helping people and goods to get from point A to point B safely and efficiently."

He also shared that he is proud of having fostered so many new friendships across the state and other parts of the country, while being able to keep and nurture the ones already had before he worked for DOTD and LTAP.

Steve is a distinguished leader and a subject matter expert in the field of engineering, public works, traffic control, work zone safety, and workforce development. This is, without a doubt, recognized by his peers across the country. In fact, the National Local Technical Assistance Program Association (NLTAPA) granted him the NLTAPA Excellence Award in 2021 for his dedication, leadership, and effectiveness in promoting the goals and purposes of the local and tribal assistance programs service to the NLTAPA. Steve once served as NLTAPA's Liaison to the National Association of County Engineers (NACE) and Secretary of the Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA). He has also participated on many NCHRP Research Panels, including NCHRP 17-65 "Improved Analysis of Two-Lane Highway Capacity;" NCHRP 05-21 "Safety and



Happy Retirement, Steve!

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for our current classes,
training requests,
free resources,
and much more.

Strength retires

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Performance Criteria for Retroreflective Pavement Markers” (Panel Chair); and NCHRP 17-76 “Guidance for the Setting of Speed Limits.” His participation on these national research panels, as well as many research projects in Louisiana, has helped ensure the technical integrity of the research and its applications, particularly as it can be applied at the local level.

A major advocate of Louisiana’s road safety initiative, Destination Zero Deaths, he served as a statewide co-chair of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan’s (SHSP) Infrastructure & Operations Emphasis Area for many years.



At his retirement party hosted by LTRC, Steve is flanked by LTRC’s Technology Transfer and Training Associate Director Mary Leah Coco, Ph.D., and his wife Cathy (left photo). His dynamic LTAP team (right photo) bid him adieu in a lively way with props and smiles.

In Steve’s own words...

Who would play you in a movie of your DOTD/LTAP career?

Either Tom Hanks because his diversity of talents fits the role of Traffic Engineer, or Kevin Costner, reprising something like his role in Wyatt Earp, always pushing the envelope and trying to do right but having trouble never far behind!

What’s the most unusual thing in your desk drawer?

An eraser shield from my freshman year mechanical drawing class in the Fall of 1972. Still in use today.

What’s one thing you want to accomplish now that you are retired?

Fix up the 1975 Triumph TR-6 roadster buried in my garage, along with the 1949 Chevrolet coupe that I also have somewhere in that garage.

If you could spend a week anywhere in the world, where would it be?

That’s easy—Sorrento, Italy and the Amalfi Coast, also very close to Pompeii, Vesuvius, Naples, and the Island of Capri. OK, maybe two weeks!

If you were to write a book about yourself, what would you name it?

Traffic Control is an Oxymoron: Compliance, Chaos, and Contrivance in a Post-Apocalyptic Society

Now that you no longer have to work, who would you most like to swap places with for a day?

Rip Tompkins, our LTAP Chainsaw Safety instructor. He hangs out, literally, in trees.



LPESA Virtual Showcase Learner Shares Testimony

LTAP asked our attendees what value they get out of our eLearning opportunity. One says...“The Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA) Virtual Showcase that LTAP hosts quarterly provides the latest information with respect to technology in various areas related to roadway projects, such as surveying, drainage pipe, overlays, and repairs. The presenters are very knowledgeable on the topics they are discussing. We see these virtual training opportunities as valuable in assisting engineers, surveyors, and parish employees with resources to perform our jobs more efficiently. Thank you, LTAP, for providing such a great service!” – **C.J. Roth**

Timely Safety Briefings: Dealing with Stress

The purpose of this is not to lay out a list of complaints, but to come up with an effective plan for managing the stressors you've identified, so you can perform at your best on the job.

Though stress is a common occurrence that many of us are faced with every day, we might not know how to deal with it. It can occur not only from negative life experiences, but also from positive ones.

We react and deal with stress differently, but common symptoms include upset stomach, fatigue, tight neck muscles, irritability, and headaches.

How do you deal with stress in a positive way? Here are some tips:

Accept when things are beyond your control. Instead of worrying about things you have no control over, it may be helpful to think of positive thoughts such as, "Someday I'll laugh about this," or "It's a learning experience."

Focus on the positive side of the situation. Ask yourself, "What good can come out of this?" "What can I learn from this situation?" and "How can I handle this better when it comes up again?" Solutions come easier when you focus on the positive, and your stress level will be reduced.

Keep things in perspective. You can do this by asking yourself, "How important is this situation? Can I do anything about it? In five years, will I even remember it happened?"

Here is a suggested plan of action:

- Talk to your supervisor. Employee health has been linked to productivity at work, so your boss has an incentive or opportunity to create a work environment that promotes employee well-being.
- Design a plan to help you improve your skills in areas such as time management.
- Identify employer-sponsored wellness resources you can tap into.
- Clarify what's expected of you, getting necessary resources from colleagues.
- Enrich your job to include more challenging or meaningful tasks.
- Make changes to your physical workspace to make it more comfortable and reduce strain.



APA Coping with Stress at Work

<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/work-stress>

CDC Dealing with Stress and Violence in the Workplace

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/copingwith-stresstips.html>

Tailgate Talk Resources NLTAPA

<https://nltapa.org/information-exchange/nltapa-tailgate-talks/>

Louisiana LTAP

www.louisianaltap.org

Parishes, municipalities encouraged to share innovations that address local issues

**Deadline is May 20, 2024*

The FHWA-led Build a Better Mousetrap (BABM) initiative is now in search of innovative solutions for challenges that local and tribal transportation workers encounter in their day-to-day operations. With this, LTAP centers across the nation are working closely with local public agencies to collect project ideas that deserve to be shared and celebrated.

Louisiana LTAP is encouraging all 64 parishes and 304 municipalities to join the bandwagon and be recognized for any innovations that they have implemented at the city and parish levels. These innovations can be a newly developed tool, modified equipment, or a software that has increased safety, reduced cost, and improved efficiency of our transportation system.

There are four categories that your innovation may fall under, and they are:

- 1. Innovative Project**—A new idea addressing a project’s life cycle: planning, design or engineering, construction, operations and maintenance.
- 2. Bold Steps**— A locally relevant, high-risk project or process that shows a break-through solution with demonstrated high reward.
- 3. Smart Transformation**—A project with local relevance and significant change in any activity that is SMART (Smart, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timebound) in nature.
- 4. Pioneer**—A locally relevant product or tool that is among the first to solve a maintenance problem with a homegrown solution.

In the last five years, Louisiana has had local innovations recognized and celebrated through BABM. In 2019, Ouachita Parish Public Works Department was selected as the Winner in Louisiana BABM for its catch basin lid assist tool. The tool cost the agency less than \$100, including labor and materials. Crew members can use it to lift and lower catch basin lids for inspection. They no longer need to use brute force to lift and lower catch basin lids, thereby increasing overall worker safety and decreasing the incidences of finger- and toe-pinch injuries.

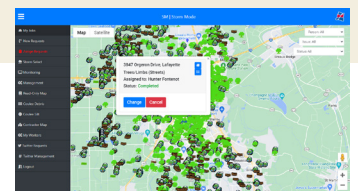
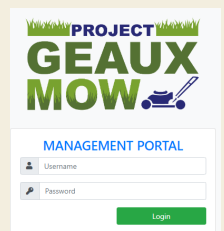


Ouachita’s catch basin lid assist tool and Terrebonne’s in-a-pinch salt spreader were featured as among the Honorable Mentions in the 2019 BABM Booklet (pages 18-19): https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/clas/pdfs/2019_mousetrap_entries_booklet.pdf



In 2022, Lafayette’s Storm Mode and Geaux Mow web applications were also featured as among the Honorable Mentions in the 2022 BABM Booklet (pages 24-25): https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/clas/pdfs/2022_mousetrap_entries_booklet.pdf

If you work for a local agency and you’ve implemented a tool, equipment or solution that is cost-saving, effective, and easily transferable, please submit it as an official entry into the Build a Better Mousetrap (BABM): Louisiana Local Innovations Program.



Share your local innovations by emailing rudynah.capone@la.gov. (Deadline is May 20, 2024.)



Kevin Greer, Project Manager of Tangipahoa Parish Government

By Rudynah Entera Capone, MPA

In this edition, LTAP had a chance to connect with an engineering and public works leader on the North Shore who emerged successfully through the ranks: Kevin Greer.

Greer works as a Project Manager of Tangipahoa Parish Government's Engineering Department. After earning his Construction Engineering Technology degree from Louisiana Tech University in 1991, he spent 26 years in the heavy highway construction industry. He worked his way through the ranks—from field engineering technician to roads projects inspector to project manager. During and after finishing his degree, he even served in the Louisiana Army National Guard for 8 years. Before joining Tangipahoa Parish, he spent 5 years in the oil and gas industry as a utility and environmental inspector. Greer and his wife Jamie have two children, Taylor and Courtney, and four grandchildren: Nora, Nixon, Tripp, and Harrison.

Greer shares his leadership insights and how he sees his job as an opportunity to make a difference in the community he serves.

How would you define leadership?

Leadership is the ability to guide people with different backgrounds, experiences, education, training, and thought processes to accomplish a given task with the talents that each person brings to the team. It requires communication, motivation, gratification, cooperation, discipline, and support so that everyone knows that they are a vital part of the team and its success. I was always taught to do my best at whatever I was given to do, whether someone was watching me or not.

What is a good leader to you?

A good leader should have the same attitude and pass it down to the team members. Also, a good leader is not afraid to train his or her replacement so that when time comes to move up in the organization, they know they have a strong team in place to keep succeeding.

Share with us some of your professional highlights that helped develop your leadership skills.

I grew up working hard in the logging industry where my parents taught me to be a God-fearing, hardworking, honest, and

trustworthy man of integrity. Along with this experience, serving in the military and advancing through various roles gave me a good foundation in managing people and projects.

Growing through the ranks of the construction companies I worked for over the years promoted me to greater leadership roles, which helped me to develop the skills I needed to be successful and respected as a leader.

What three leadership traits should a leader possess to be effective?

First, a leader must know how to set as an example that others want to follow because they trust you and see you as someone whose actions portray what they should expect from others. None of us are perfect, but we can learn from our mistakes. Second, a leader must be open and available; he must be willing to listen and appreciate others' ideas. Give credit where credit is due! It takes the whole team! The leader only succeeds if everyone on the team succeeds. Last, a leader must have compassion and understanding. Viewing team members as people and not just resources to accomplish a task is what I'm getting at. Great leaders help their team members reach their goals by providing the necessary training and tools to accomplish their tasks.

How do your colleagues view your leadership style?

Hopefully, they view me as a servant leader who is not afraid to jump in the trenches with them, and who clearly communicates the goals of the team and the expectations required of each individual member. Also, I take it that they see me as a leader who will take the time to train and help them reach their goals and tasks. I try to lead by example and have the mindset that if I expect someone to perform a task, I must be willing to do my part and provide the information and tools needed to accomplish the task.

Leadership spotlight

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What do you recall to be the most challenging experience you've had as a leader?

Right out of college, I was hired by a large heavy highway construction company. After only a few months on the job, one of the seasoned foreman got too sick to work any longer and had to retire. I was chosen to take his place and was put over a large crew of experienced operators and laborers and tasked with completing a large highway project.

How did you tackle that challenge?

At that time, I was a young and new foreman with no construction experience supervising experienced guys much older than me. I had to learn their abilities, who needed more direction than others, how to let them do their job, and be trusting and patient until they completed (or almost completed) their item of work so that I could see if the end product was in line with the project plan, specs, and schedule. It took a little time, but as I learned to combine the crew's experience with my engineering background and planning skills, we became a productive team that used each other's strengths to excel and successfully complete the project.

TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Cheers to 100 years! During their 2024 annual meeting held in Lake Charles from February 28 to March 1, LPESA President Perry Holmes (left photo) presented a plaque to Police Jury Association of Louisiana's (PJAL) Executive Director Guy Cormier (left) in commemoration of the PJAL's 100th anniversary celebration. The LTAP team (right photo) shares the exhibition floor space with the rest of the vendors and partners at the convention.



Timber! This past March, LTAP held four series of Chainsaw Safety classes in Lake Charles, West Monroe, Baker, and Covington. Approximately 419 participants attended. Rip Tompkins, nationally recognized chainsaw operation and safety instructor from ArborMaster Training, Inc., instructed the course and did an onsite demonstration of how to safely use a chainsaw when cutting down a tree. Another round of classes will be offered in December. [Visit www.louisianaltap.org](http://www.louisianaltap.org) for more information.



Safety Summit 2024

Louisiana LTAP invites our local partners and peers to consider attending the Louisiana Safety Summit. At LTAP, we have a vested interest in road safety, particularly on locally owned roads. The LTAP team is part of Louisiana’s mission of reaching Destination Zero Deaths, with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) as the vehicle to reduce motor vehicle-related fatalities and serious injuries. The plan is multidisciplinary, data-driven, and constantly evolving. It is a living document updated every five years with input from a broad array of stakeholders and with leadership from the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), Louisiana State Police (LSP), and the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission (LHSC).

Visit www.destinationzerodeaths.com to learn more.



Upcoming LTAP training

Register at louisianaltap.org/training.html



Local Public Agency (LPA) Training Program in Baton Rouge

LPA Core Training on April 30 to May 1, 2024

LPA Construction, Engineering and Inspection Training on May 2, 2024

The primary goal of the program is to increase the efficiency of project delivery for local transportation projects that utilize state and federal funds by helping local agency personnel understand and implement requirements associated with these programs.



Roads Scholar #3—Drainage: The Key to Roads that Last

May 14 to June 13, 2024 in 8 locations

For roads that last, proper drainage is critical in much of Louisiana which can be difficult for road owners given the nature of our climate, soils, and topography. This course is a review of problems caused by improper drainage and some of the ways to solve those problems.

Additional Training Opportunities

On a case-to-case basis, LTAP offers classes on the following topics: Work Zone Safety with Basic Flagger, Pavement Preservation, Local Road Safety Assessment...and many more!

To request a training, please email Courtney Dupre at courtney.dupre@la.gov.

To request technical assistance, visit our website www.louisianaltap.org. Go to “Contact Us” tab, and then click “Request Technical Assistance” button.



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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.