



IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Director's Corner
- 3 New LTAP Employee
- 4 Leadership Spotlight
- 5 NACE Conference
- 6 Smarter Pavement Planning
- 7 LPESA 2025 Spring Conference



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

Preparing to Be Prepared: Hurricane Readiness for Louisiana's 2025 Season

By Haley Beason Ortiz

As we enter the official start of hurricane season, residents and public agencies across Louisiana are urged to begin taking steps to prepare. With early forecasts predicting an above-average season for 2025, it is more important than ever to recognize this time of year as the critical window for readiness. As emphasized in our recent RS #15 Safety for Public Works First Responders class, preparation should never wait until a storm is on the radar. The most effective response begins long before warnings are issued.

Hurricane Ida struck Louisiana on August 29, 2021, exactly 16 years after Hurricane Katrina. It made landfall near Port Fourchon as a Category 4 hurricane, with sustained winds of 150 mph, making it one of the strongest storms to ever hit the state.

Each year, hurricanes pose significant threats to our communities, infrastructure, and public safety. Unlike tornadoes, which are more sudden and localized, hurricanes are large storm systems that can last for days and impact wide regions. While both can be devastating, hurricanes tend to produce prolonged effects, including storm surges, high winds, and heavy flooding. Understanding the risks we face is essential.

Hurricane Categories (Saffir-Simpson Scale)

- Category 1: 74–95 mph winds
- Category 2: 96–110 mph winds
- Category 3: 111–129 mph winds
- Category 4: 130–156 mph winds
- Category 5: 157+ mph winds

Another important aspect of preparedness is knowing the difference between watches and warnings. A “watch” means conditions are favorable for severe weather—it’s time to stay alert and monitor updates. A “warning” means severe weather is either imminent or already occurring, and immediate action is required. This applies to hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods. Recognizing these alerts and responding accordingly can save lives and minimize property loss.

continued on page 3



Ready to Work, Built to Last

By Rudynah Entera Capone, MPA

There is no denying that Louisiana's local public agencies are facing a significant workforce challenge, spanning from rural parishes to bustling city streets. With experienced professionals retiring and fewer workers entering the field, the urgency to recruit, train, and retain new talent has never been greater. As any employer would attest, an organization's greatest strength lies in its people, and

that is precisely where the solution should begin.

Grow Talent from Within

Louisiana is brimming with homegrown talent ready to serve. Through initiatives such as job shadowing, parish career days, and hands-on equipment demonstrations, we can inspire the next generation to view public service not merely as labor, but as an opportunity for leadership.

Train for Purpose and Progress

Through LTAP programs such as Roads Scholar, Work Zone Safety, and Local Public Agency Training, workers from towns like Opelousas and Ferriday are acquiring essential skills. In the next two years, LTAP will introduce professional skills training and leadership development to enhance communication, teamwork, and leadership in the field. Maintaining infrastructure is not solely technical; it is about fostering crews who trust and support one another.

Retain Through Connection and Recognition

In Webster Parish, when a drainage project successfully prevents a neighborhood from flooding, that achievement deserves celebration. Whether it is repairing signage in Abbeville or clearing debris in Plaquemines these acts of public safety pave the path toward zero deaths. Recognizing service milestones and supporting crew wellness not only helps retain talent but also deepens their pride in the job.

Foster a Forward-Looking Workforce

Innovation in infrastructure relies on different levels of skills and abilities of the workforce. Whether you are from rural Zwolle or urban New Orleans, your voice is important. By using modern tools, practicing fair hiring, and fostering forward-thinking leadership, we can create a workforce prepared for the challenges of tomorrow. **Visit www.louisianaltap.org to get involved.**



As a forward-thinker, here I am playing along with the rest of the digital communications world. Introducing—GRIT (Guardian of Resilient Infrastructure & Technology)

Gabrielle "GRIT" Thibodeaux was born and raised in a small Louisiana parish. She grew up watching her grandfather repair roads after hurricanes and her aunt teach welding at the local community college. Inspired by both grit and grace, she now leads the charge to recruit, train, and empower the next generation of public service heroes across the state.

Parish Pride Jacket

- Canvas-like feel with soft, removable plastic
- Safety orange with reflective stripes
- Colorful map of Louisiana with embroidered-style parish patches

Work Pants

- Durable cargo style with visible knee pads
- Utility belt molded with mini tools (flashlight, radio, drone controller)

Bayou Boots

- Tread detail includes roadways and floodplain patterns
- Clear soles show inner "tech circuitry" glowing softly

One of the first steps in preparation is to revisit and update emergency plans. Whether it is for a family's guidance or agency usage, evacuation routes and shelters should be identified while communication plans need to be clear and current. At the same time, securing equipment and property should not be overlooked; inspect roofs, windows, and doors for vulnerabilities, and consider storm shutters or impact-resistant materials to minimize wind damage. Public works departments should ensure that all equipment and resources are accounted for and properly stored in the event of high winds or flooding.

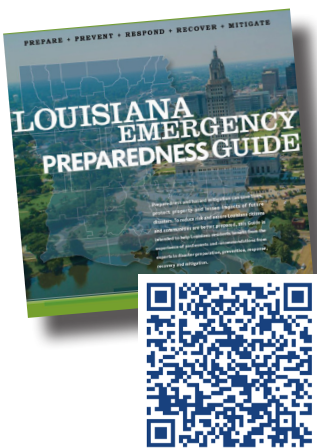
Equally important is assembling a well-stocked emergency supply kit. This should include essentials like water, non-perishable food, medications, batteries, flashlights, hygiene products, and any necessary items for children, elderly family members, or pets. Having these items on hand can prevent panic and reduce the burden on local resources when a storm is approaching.

Staying informed is one of the most important steps in staying safe. Weather can change quickly, and having access to timely updates from trusted sources like the National Hurricane Center, local emergency management, and reliable news outlets can make all the difference in making informed decisions when every minute counts.

It is encouraged to sign up for parish emergency alerts. LTAP is committed to supporting you before, during, and after a storm. The center provides helpful resources, funding opportunities, and information to assist you in the aftermath. ***Stay connected and receive the latest updates at bit.ly/LTAPSignUp.***

In addition to physical preparedness, having a strong communication plan is essential. Every household and team should establish clear "go/no-go" criteria; knowing when to evacuate or when to hunker down is not a decision to make in the moment. Identify meeting points, evacuation routes, and alternative transportation options ahead of time. Maintain an updated list of contact information and store essential documents—such as identification, insurance policies, and medical records—in a safe and easily accessible location.

For a more in-depth look at the risks, evacuation plans, shelters, and supply checklists, **the Louisiana Emergency Preparedness Guide** is an essential resource. It's available through the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), and it covers every step of emergency planning—from prevention to recovery. LTAP highly recommends downloading it and keeping a copy in your home. Take the time to go through it with your family or team each year to make sure everyone is on the same page. While this guide is often associated with hurricanes, it is a great tool for preparing for any type of emergency. Having this resource handy can give you peace of mind, knowing you are ready for anything.



LTAP Welcomes New Teaching Associate

LTAP is thrilled to introduce the newest addition to the team, **Genevieve Amick**, serving as a Teaching Associate.

In her role, Amick will be coordinating training classes, developing course content, and teaching courses identified as part of LTAP's workforce development priorities. She will work with subject matter experts and conduct additional research to prepare course content, while developing resources that address programmatic focus areas of road and worker safety, infrastructure management, workforce development, and organizational excellence. She will also facilitate soft skills training and leadership development program designed for the local public works, engineering, and planning communities.

Amick brings a wealth of experience in human resource management and instructional design, making her a valuable addition to LTAP. Prior to LTAP, she served as a Training and Organizational Development Specialist at Louisiana State University's Office of Human Resource Management where she facilitated New Employee Orientation and Management training sessions, developed campus-wide courses, and created effective learning programs. Her background also includes coordinating professional development for faculty and integrating technology into learner-centered environments during her time as an Instructional Design Assistant at LSU Online.

Amick holds a Master of Science and a Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Education from LSU. Her accomplishments include developing a course on Moodle, revising the campus time management series, and redesigning the Customer Service Excellence course. With skills in training development, project management, communication, and problem solving, her expertise and dedication will greatly benefit the LTAP team and the transportation community overall. ***Welcome to LTAP!***





Leadership Spotlight: Ashley Moran, MPO Manager, Acadiana Planning Commission

By Haley Beason Ortiz

In this edition of Leadership Spotlight, LTAP highlights Ashley Moran AICP, MPO Manager of Planning and Programming at the Acadiana Planning Commission. Ashley is a transportation planning professional who brings both technical precision and community-centered leadership to her role. With a focus on data-driven decision-making, interagency collaboration, and capacity building at the local level, Ashley's leadership reflects a deep commitment to advancing transportation safety, efficiency, and equity throughout the Acadiana region.

With over 15 years of experience in transportation planning and a professional certification since 2007, Ashley leads regional initiatives focused on long-range planning, safety, and project implementation. Before joining the Planning Commission, she worked in the Traffic and Transportation Department at Lafayette Consolidated Government, where she gained valuable experience in urban traffic operations and interagency coordination. Ashley's leadership has earned national recognition, including the AASHTO Environmental Excellence Award and the National Roadway Safety Award. Her work reflects a strong commitment to public service, collaboration, and improving transportation systems across Acadiana.

What is your definition of leadership?

I'm a strong believer in servant-leadership. By serving as a resource for assistance and empowering staff and community members, people feel invested and excited about making improvements to their community. Leaders should always be available to step in and help out, no matter how small the task, to make sure that the job gets done.

What other previous jobs or community roles did you have that shaped your leadership skills?

Working in Lafayette Consolidated Government's Traffic and Transportation department provided me with the training and skills to bring a divergent group of staff and stakeholders together for a common goal.

In any of your past and present leadership roles, what has been the most challenging task you have had to overcome?

Developing Local Road Safety Plans for all eight parishes in the Acadiana Regional Transportation Safety Coalition. By partnering with LTAP and the Local Road Safety Program, we were able to showcase the wonderful resources that Louisiana has available for safety improvements to our local governments. We didn't develop a plan to sit on a shelf; we developed projects for funding and implementation of safety improvements in all eight parishes.

Who do you see as your model leader? Why?

My last two supervisors, Melanie Bordelon and Sara Gary. They exemplify servant-leadership through hard work, loyalty and empowerment through delegation. I would not be here without them!

If you could implement one major improvement or innovation across all Louisiana municipalities, what would it be?

The conversion of local government asset and project data into GIS files. It is such an important resource in the decision making process for elected officials and federal funding agencies.

What advice would you give to young professionals entering public service or engineering?

Yes, I love providing training and assistance to our young community members. The best thing I can recommend to anyone is learn GIS and how it fits into your role. The ability to analyze data geospatially is incredibly helpful for project development. It also allows for the development of Virtual Public Engagement platforms, such as dashboards and StoryMaps, which are amazing resources for showing the public the investments that your local government is making in the community.

People-Centered Solutions Shared at 2025 NACE Conference

By Rudynah Entera Capone, MPA



Louisiana NACE Representative Joan Schexnayder (left) and LTAP Director Rudynah Capone (right) team up for a future of innovation in transportation at the NACE Conference.



Clinton County Engineer Jeff Linkous shares key achievements in Local Road Safety Plan and Safety Action Plan implementation in Ohio.

At the 2025 National Association of County Engineers (NACE) Conference in Schaumburg, Illinois, public works professionals from across the nation gathered to share strategies for improving infrastructure, safety, and organizational effectiveness. The unifying theme across sessions was clear: real progress in public works begins and ends with people—both the communities served and the teams delivering the work.

People-first approach to unpaved roads

Linn County, Iowa was spotlighted for its people-first approach to unpaved road treatments. Their method, based on traffic volumes and material suitability, emphasized transparency, responsiveness, and public trust. Counties in Ohio and Illinois echoed the value of integrating community input with data-driven planning, reinforcing that sustainable safety outcomes require consistent engagement and equitable processes.

Human factors guide latest edition forthcoming

Federal updates focused on how road users interpret infrastructure. Resources like the Human Factors Guide 3, NCHRP Report 600, and the forthcoming NCHRP Report 1148 emphasize that roads function as communication tools. These publications offer guidance on sight distance, signage, speed perception, and designs for vulnerable users, including older adults and pedestrians. With new chapters on Complete Streets and updated recommendations, these tools aim to reduce roadway complexity and enhance usability.

Investing in teams for long-term impact

A standout session on team engagement underscored the importance of internal culture. Presenters outlined four essentials for high-functioning teams: equity, trust, clear communication, and organizational support. By cultivating leadership, mentoring, and a shared mission, agencies can better retain talent and drive results.

Core takeaway: progress starts with people

From rural gravel roads to strategic planning efforts, the message was consistent: strong teams and informed, inclusive communities form the foundation of effective public works. The conference underscored that the most successful agencies are those where purpose guides priorities, and people remain at the heart of every decision. Whether you're patching a pothole or planning a five-year vision, the lesson is clear: it's all about building with people in mind.

How Local Governments are Managing Pavement Smarter

By Rudynah Entera Capone, MPA

A Pavement Management Program is a strategic approach to maintaining roadway networks efficiently while reducing costs and improving safety. Local governments in the City of Central and Lafayette Parish have had successes in this realm.

April Renard from Grey Engineering, who is a consultant for City of Central, shared that in Central's Pavement Management Plan (PMP), they have identified several roads that are in dire shape, but that fixing them will take time and money. On the other end, there are also roads that are still in good condition, and the goal is to keep them that way for as long as possible. "As we rebuild the roads that really need it," explained Renard, "we're also planning ahead. Once those roads are fixed, they'll go into a preventive maintenance cycle—things like surface treatments—to keep them smooth and safe. That way, we won't need as many full reconstructions down the road. And remember, this program is funded by your local tax dollars, so when you shop and support businesses in your community, you're helping make this happen!"

Warren Abadie, Public Works Director for Lafayette Consolidated Government, shared how they've been using software to take a more proactive approach in planning. "By developing a Priority Program, we were able to zero in on the areas that need the most attention," he explained. "We look at things like pavement condition, how the road is classified, traffic volume, and even safety data to help us decide where to focus our resources first."

Safety is another key advantage. Poor pavement conditions contribute to vehicle damage, accidents, and hazardous driving conditions. A PMP helps identify safety concerns, such as potholes and rutting, before they become severe. Addressing these issues early improves road conditions and enhances overall public safety.

LTAP's Pavement Preservation class instructor Nick Verret, Jr. shares that by systematically assessing pavement conditions, parishes and municipalities can make data-driven decisions about maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. "One of the primary benefits of a PMP is cost savings. Preventive maintenance, such as crack sealing and resurfacing, extends pavement lifespan and reduces the need for expensive repairs."

LTAP offers a half-day workshop and onsite technical assistance for governments who might be interested in starting their own PMP. Email LTAP@la.gov with question.



LTAP instructor Nick Verret, Jr. (right) co-presented with April Renard (at the podium) and Warren Abadie (not pictured) at this year's Louisiana Transportation Conference, encouraging local governments to improve the overall condition of their road network by implementing a Pavement Management Program.



Verret, joined by Livingston public works director Robert Dugas and his team, recently conducted an onsite technical assistance and pavement condition assessment in Livingston Parish.

LPESA 2025 Spring Conference Highlights Innovation in Public Works

The Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA) hosted its 2025 Spring Conference on May 7–8 at the River Oaks Catering & Event Center in Lafayette. The two-day event brought together public works professionals from across the state for networking, professional development, and shared learning.

Day 1 kicked off with opening remarks by LPESA President Alison C. Lognion, followed by a welcome from Rachel Godeaux, Chief Administrative Officer for the Parish of Lafayette. The technical program featured a preview of LTAP's Roads Scholar #15: Safety for Public Works First Responders by instructor Dwight Hutchinson. The day also included three associate members highlighting innovations on cost-effective pumping solutions, soil nail wall stabilizations, and roadway solutions, including AI resources. Day 2 opened with breakfast and booth visits before launching into a full technical agenda. Presentations included a NACE legislative update by Kevan Stone, a PJAL update from Debbie Henton, and recognition of conference sponsors. The post-lunchtime Build a Better Mousetrap Awards ceremony honored an innovation shared by Ouachita Parish Public Works Department, which was "Find a Leaking Pipe Using Dye."

Afternoon sessions addressed important topics such as the DOTD ADA Transition Plan, commercial development review, and updates on off-system bridge inspection and maintenance, with presentations by representatives from DOTD and Lafayette Consolidated Government.

Throughout the event, over 90 attendees had opportunities to engage with industry experts and peers as well as explore new tools, technologies, and approaches in the field of public works. **Details for the fall conference will be released in the next newsletter edition.**



From left: LTAP Director Dynah Capone, LPESA's NACE Representative Joan Schexnayder, LPESA President Alison Lognion, and NACE Executive Director Kevan Stone.

UPCOMING TRAINING AND EVENTS

Local Public Agency Construction, Engineering & Inspection (CE&I) Training | July 17, 2025

This essential program helps local agencies navigate state and federal transportation funding requirements. Subscribe to our LPA email subscription list to be notified about upcoming classes. Visit [bit.ly/LPASignUp](https://www.louisianaltap.org/lpa-signup). Construction, Engineering & Inspection training is available online through recorded modules. **Visit <https://www.louisianaltap.org/lpa-training.html>.**

Traffic Records Forum| Boston, MA | July 6–9, 2025

In support of Louisiana's Traffic Records Coordinating Council, LTAP is attending this forum which gathers data analysts, state and local law enforcement officials, engineers, motor vehicle officials, emergency medical services providers, judicial administrators, and highway safety professionals from across the United States and international communities. **For more info, visit www.atsip.org/trf/**

July is Vehicle Theft Prevention Month

LTAP supports the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in observing Vehicle Theft Prevention Month this July by calling attention to vehicle theft as a nationwide issue and urging vehicle owners to take preventive steps to keep their vehicles safe. In 2024, 850,708 vehicles were stolen representing a 17% decrease in vehicle theft totals from the previous year. Estimates show that approximately one vehicle is stolen every 31 seconds.



LOUISIANA LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

4099 Gourrier Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Pre-Sort Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 55
Baton Rouge, LA

www.louisianaltap.org

LTAP@la.gov

Need Technical Help?

Contact LTAP

(225) 767-9717
(225) 767-9156 (fax)
www.louisianaltap.org

Rudynah "Dynah" Capone, MPA
LTAP Director

Courtney Dupre, MA
LTAP Program Manager

Leonard P. Marretta, MURP
LRSP and LPA Program Manager

Victor Lockwood
LTAP and LRSP Business Manager

Haley Ortiz
LTAP Communications and
Technology Transfer Manager

Genevieve Amick
LTAP Teaching Associate

Publication Statement

Technology Exchange is published quarterly by the Louisiana Transportation Research Center. It is the newsletter of the Louisiana Local Technical Assistance Program. Any findings, conclusions, or recommendations presented in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of LSU, DOTD, or FHWA.

LTRC Publications Staff

Emily Wolfe, Public Information Director
Jenny Gilbert, Multimedia Specialist
Chris Melton, Photographer
Todd Blount, Editor

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.