



Technology Exchange

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

Louisiana LTAP Expands Roads Scholar Catalog with New Classes for 2025

By Haley Beason Ortiz

Louisiana LTAP is excited to announce the addition of three new courses to its Roads Scholar Program, reflecting the evolving needs of local agencies across the state. These updates are a direct response to feedback gathered through a recent LTAP survey, aimed at aligning training opportunities with the priorities of our public works and transportation partners.

New Courses Include:



RS#11 Road Safety Topic

This rotating class will spotlight a different safety focus each year. For 2025, the topic is Road Safety 365, which emphasizes integrating safety into daily operations and long-term planning across all aspects of rural and local road activities. Participants will learn how to identify safety concerns and apply low-cost countermeasures through practical, real-world exercises.



RS#12 Trenching & Excavation Safety

(In Development)



RS#16 Roadway Construction Focus Four & Heat Hazards

(In Development)

LTAP's Roads Scholar Program delivers practical, cost-effective training focused on roadway maintenance and safety, tailored specifically for local transportation and public works agencies.

Classes are held at convenient locations throughout Louisiana and offer 6 PDHs unless otherwise noted.

Stay tuned as we roll out these new offerings in the coming months.



LTAP Presents at LMA Annual Convention: Turning Potholes into Pavement Plans

By Rudynah Entera Capone, MPA

At the Louisiana Municipal Association's annual convention in July, held at the Lake Charles Civic Center, the Louisiana LTAP Center delivered an

insightful session titled "From Potholes to Pavement Plans: How Local Agencies Can Stretch Dollars and Save Roads." This session brought together local leaders and infrastructure professionals to share practical, cost-effective strategies for maintaining and improving road networks across the state.

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the LTAP team and guest experts, attendees left with actionable ideas and a renewed focus on sustainable roadway management tailored to the needs of their communities.

The panel featured:

- April Renard, Consultant to the City of Central and Principal of Grey Engineering
- Warren Abadie, Public Works Director, Lafayette Consolidated Government
- Nick Verret, LTAP Infrastructure Management and Road Safety Instructor

Together, participants emphasized a preservation-first approach, demonstrating how communities can make the most of limited resources through proactive planning, data-driven decisions, and technical support. Real-world case studies and lessons learned provided a solid foundation for attendees to apply these strategies in their own agencies.

April Renard (Consultant, City of Central):

"Preservation isn't just about cutting costs—it's really a shift in mindset. When local leaders start planning ahead, the long-term savings and benefits to their communities speak for themselves."

Nick Verret (LTAP Instructor): "If you think of your roads as valuable assets, everything changes. With the right tools and a little support, even small agencies can create pavement programs that actually work and last."



Top photo, from left: April Renard, Nick Verret., and Warren Abadie discuss strategies to help local agencies maximize their budgets and prolong the lifespan of their road infrastructure.

Warren Abadie (Public Works Director, Lafayette Consolidated Government): "We've seen how powerful data can be when it comes to maintenance. Using it helps us stretch our resources and ultimately give our citizens better roads."

Need Help Getting Started?

LTAP offers hands-on technical assistance to help local governments jump start or strengthen their Pavement Management and Preservation Programs. Our support can include:

- Onsite pavement condition assessments
- Mini-workshops and staff training
- Presentations tailored for elected officials
- Help with data collection and analysis

Whether you are starting from scratch or refining an existing program, we are here to guide your community toward better, longer-lasting roads. Reach out to LTAP to schedule a visit or learn more! Email LTAP@la.gov to send in your request.

South Central Planning & Development Commission Receives 2025 Excellence in Regional Transportation Award

The South Central Planning and Development Commission in Houma, Louisiana, has been awarded a 2025 Excellence in Regional Transportation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for their Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Plan.

NADO is a Washington, DC-based association that promotes programs and policies to strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through regional cooperation, program delivery, and comprehensive strategies. The Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards showcase organizations for noteworthy projects and practices in rural and small metropolitan transportation planning, program delivery, and special initiatives. The winners received national recognition at the National Regional Transportation Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, on July 15-17.

Developed in coordination with local governments, transportation partners, and community stakeholders, the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Plan provides a data-driven framework to improve non-motorized safety and connectivity across the Houma-Thibodaux Metropolitan Area. The plan identifies high-risk corridors, proposes infrastructure improvements, and offers policy recommendations tailored to the needs of vulnerable users such as children, seniors, and transit-dependent populations. With a focus on equity, accessibility, and local implementation, the plan reflects the region's commitment to safer, more inclusive active

“The data tells one story—and it’s a good story—but what’s often missing is local context. Through our public outreach process and conversations with on-the-ground stakeholders, that data came to life. It helped us understand where infrastructure was falling short, how people actually moved through their neighborhoods, and where safety investments would make the biggest difference. That collaboration transformed a technical document into a community-driven strategy.”

—Joshua Manning, Planner IV, South Central Planning and Development Commission

transportation options.

“The Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards program showcases effective and creative transportation initiatives that improve accessibility, mobility, safety, and quality of life in regions around the United States,” shared current NADO President and Executive Director of Region XII Council of Governments Rick Hunsaker. “Programs and projects like the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Plan foster community and economic connections and promote effective transportation networks.”

For more information about the award-winning project, contact Joshua Manning of the South Central Planning and Development Commission at (985) 851-2900.

SAFETY UPDATES

Louisiana DOTD Presents ADA Transition Plan Update at Spring LPESA Conference

By Haley Beason Ortiz

At the Spring LPESA Conference in Lafayette on May 7–8, Cynthia Douglas and Paula Roddy of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) delivered an insightful presentation on the agency's efforts to update its ADA Transition Plan. The plan is a critical component of DOTD's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which require public agencies with 50 or more employees to self-evaluate their services, identify accessibility barriers, and develop a plan to remove them.

The ADA Transition Plan is a roadmap that helps DOTD find and fix things that make it difficult for individuals with disabilities to access public roads, buildings, and services. This includes items like sidewalks that do not meet current standards, missing or steep

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Leadership Spotlight: Nicholas “Nick” Verret, Jr., P.E.

By Haley Beason Ortiz



In this edition of Leadership Spotlight, LTAP highlights Nicholas “Nick” Verret, Jr., P.E., a registered professional engineer in Louisiana since 1984. Following a 31+ year career with the Louisiana DOTD in the areas of highway construction, design, and administration, he served as the LTAP Program Manager from October 2011 until December 2012. He was later appointed as Director of Public Works for the Parish of Natchitoches until stepping down from that position in July 2017. Mr. Verret currently serves as the City Engineer for the City of Natchitoches. He has developed pavement management programs for both the city and the parish, and since 2018 has taught numerous LTAP classes on pavement and roadway safety.

What is your definition of leadership?

To me, leadership, whether it’s leading oneself or dozens of others, simply means making things happen. It’s doing whatever it takes to make a positive difference. As public sector employees, we’re often maligned, but through the years, I have seen many great examples of those who do these things on a daily basis, whether or not their work is appreciated.

What we accomplish as leaders, however, is never due strictly to our own efforts, and we need to recognize the valuable contributions of those who have helped us make things happen. Many years ago, I heard this quote and it has stuck with me — “When you see a turtle on a fence post, you know it didn’t get there by itself.”

When it comes to how we relate to those whom we lead, we would do well to heed the words of Dale Carnegie: “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

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

I highly recommend “Developing the Leader Within You”, “21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership”, “The 360-Degree Leader”, or any of John Maxwell’s dozens of other books to those who want to become more effective leaders

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

Those who lead face constant challenges, be it staffing, equipment, or finances, which forces us to seek creative ways to solve problems. Roger von Ouch’s “A Kick in the Seat of the Pants” and its follow-up volume, “A Whack on the Side of the Head,” have been helpful to me in this regard, and I highly commend them to anyone looking for innovative ways to analyze and solve problems, so that we can “do the best we can with what we have” as we try to meet the needs of those we serve.

Who do you see as your model leader?

Perhaps none have been more influential than John Maxwell. Though I have never met him or interacted with him personally, through his dozens of books on the subject of personal growth and leadership, as well as his seminars and audio programs, he has helped to shape my leadership style.

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

Prior to my retirement from DOTD, I used several of Maxwell’s books to develop a mentoring program for up-and-coming leaders in District 08, and I am very proud of what these men have accomplished as they have taken on their leadership roles in the years since my retirement from DOTD.

From Conference to Construction: A Partnership Transforming Louisiana's Roads

By Chris Sundae, GoodRoads Inc., and Colby Moore, Material Resources, Inc.

Public roads are one of the most visible services a community provides, connecting people to schools, businesses, markets, and essential services. For local governments, however, keeping those roads safe and smooth is an ongoing challenge. Budgets are tight, materials and labor costs are rising, and the window for low-cost maintenance often closes before agencies can act. In Louisiana, this familiar challenge sparked an innovative partnership—one born not in a boardroom, but in a hallway conversation at the 2024 Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA) Spring Conference.

At LPESA, Material Resources, a Louisiana-based pavement preservation contractor, and GoodRoads, a modern road asset management and inspection platform, found common ground. Material Resources had long been more than a pavement preservation contractor for their clients; they were often asked to inspect entire road networks, identifying which streets needed sealing or paving, and producing reports agencies could use to manage the rest of their roads. GoodRoads brought a technology-driven approach to this same challenge: comprehensive, GPS-linked inspections, standardized distress classifications, scoring, treatment recommendations, and budget modeling delivered in an interactive, transparent format.

The conversation revealed an obvious synergy. Material Resources understood Louisiana's roads at a granular level: how local paving practices, Gulf heat, rain, and subgrade conditions affect performance, and which treatments work best in the local climate. GoodRoads could capture that knowledge at scale, producing consistent data agencies could rely on year after year. Together, they could create a closed loop—plan, build, verify, and refine—ensuring that data turned into real-world improvements and lessons learned fed directly back into future work.

Within months, the two companies were working together in the field, inspecting and planning for Livingston Parish, the City of Plaquemine, St. James Parish, and Iberville Parish. For each client, they delivered a full inventory of maintainable roads, condition surveys scored against consistent criteria, treatment recommendations tailored to local conditions, and interactive budget scenarios showing how different funding levels would affect network health over time. Material Resources validated the data in the field, refining recommendations to account for

local techniques, constructability, and other factors that raw data might miss.

The result for agencies is a clearer, more defensible roadmap for investment. Instead of reacting to visible failures, they can act proactively, sealing roads while they are still in good condition, using cost-effective surface treatments to delay expensive reconstruction, and packaging contiguous projects to minimize disruption. This preservation-first approach extends pavement life by years at a fraction of the cost of full rehabilitation.

For Livingston Parish, that meant a multi-year program protecting “good” roads now to avoid costlier work later. In Plaquemine, it meant sequencing work in neighborhoods to minimize impact on residents while addressing the most pressing needs. St. James Parish, with its mix of industrial and local traffic, could target heavier treatments which would hold up under heavy loads while preserving lighter-traffic roads for pennies on the dollar. Iberville Parish developed a data-backed plan to guide budget debates, complete with scenarios that showed the effect of increasing—or decreasing—funding over the coming years.

The communications benefit is just as important. Public Works directors and elected officials can now show residents interactive maps, scores, and before-and-after photos that explain why certain streets are prioritized. This transparency builds trust, helps the public understand the value of preservation, and reduces complaints rooted in the perception of favoritism.

From a governance standpoint, the process is procurement-friendly. GoodRoads handles the analysis and planning, Material Resources delivers the construction, and agencies can choose competitive bidding, cooperative purchasing, or task orders as appropriate. Post-construction verification ensures projects meet expectations, providing valuable documentation for finance directors and auditors.

The partnership is also resilient in the face of Louisiana's unique challenges. Sequencing work with storm seasons in mind reduces weather risks. Planning materials and crew schedules in advance makes projects less vulnerable to supply chain disruptions.

Perhaps most importantly, the collaboration shifts the mindset from a yearly scramble to a portfolio-based

approach. Roads are seen as assets with optimal intervention points, not just projects to be addressed when they become politically urgent. By balancing preservation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction in a multi-year plan, agencies can stretch budgets further and improve overall network condition.

The fact that this partnership began at LPESA is no accident. The conference creates a space for practical problem-solving, where engineers and service providers share what works in Louisiana's specific conditions. In this case, a contractor with deep local experience and a software company with modern asset management tools found a way to align their strengths. The result is a replicable model any city or parish can adopt, whether they start with a small pilot or jump straight into a full network assessment.

Looking ahead, Material Resources and GoodRoads plan to expand their reach to more communities in Louisiana and neighboring states. Annual re-inspections will track progress, refine strategies, and maintain momentum. The model could

also integrate with other infrastructure programs, from drainage to striping and safety, for even greater impact.

For agencies considering the approach, the advice is to start with a clear baseline: inventory and assess your roads, even if the data isn't perfect. Use a treatment library suited to local conditions. Model different budget levels to see the trade-offs. Prioritize preserving good roads before they slip, and bundle projects to make construction efficient. Share results publicly, and update the plan annually.

Roads are a shared responsibility: owned by the public, managed by agencies, and built by private contractors. The Material Resources–GoodRoads partnership shows how aligning these roles can save money, improve transparency, and deliver better results for everyone. It turns road management from a reactive cycle into a proactive, data-driven process that produces stronger, longer-lasting networks—and it all started with a conversation in the halls of a conference center.



ADA Transition Plan continued from page 3

curb ramps, outdated pedestrian signals, and buildings and transit stops that are not easy to get into or around. During the presentation, the DOTD team shared that the last full evaluation was done over 10 years ago, and at that time, they found accessibility issues along 844 miles of pedestrian routes. That included problems with sidewalks, curb ramps, railroad crossings, connections to transit stops, and even items like

parking lots and public buildings. Presenters emphasized that when they talk about “facilities,” they are not just talking about the physical structures—they are also thinking about the services and activities that happen there, like getting to a bus stop or enjoying a park or trail.

The Transition Plan includes several important steps:

- **Identifying Accommodations:** Detailing what modifications are needed to bring facilities into compliance.
- **Cost Estimation and Scheduling:** Prioritizing improvements, estimating their costs, and setting a schedule for implementation.
- **Ongoing Modifications:** Improvements have been happening for decades, but continual assessment is necessary.
- **Tracking and Evaluation:** Monitoring the progress of improvements and assessing their effectiveness.
- **Regular Updates:** The plan should be updated periodically, ideally every 10 years or as needed.
- **Collaboration Is Key:** Input from DOTD's GIS team and District staff plays a crucial role in accurately identifying and prioritizing accessibility barriers and in supporting data-driven decision-making.

Douglas and Roddy highlighted that accessibility is not just a legal requirement; it is about equally ensuring that all individuals, regardless of ability, can access public infrastructure safely and efficiently. The updated Transition Plan is part of DOTD's broader commitment to making Louisiana's transportation network more inclusive for all.



UPCOMING TRAINING AND EVENTS

Local Public Agency Core and CE&I Training

To Be Announced Soon

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 <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/mmsfY1f/LPA>.** Construction, Engineering & Inspection training is available online through recorded modules. **Visit <https://www.louisianaltap.org/lpa-training.html>.**

Roads Scholar #11

September 16–30

This workshop focuses on processes for incorporating safety into all aspects of local and rural road activities, and on making safety a priority through inclusion in the traditional decision-making process, 365 days a year.

Roads Scholar #4

October 29–December 11

This course is based on Part 6 of the 2023, 11th edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, (MUTCD).

Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA) Conference

October 8–9 | Toledo Bend

Engineers and road supervisors can earn 8+ PDHs while learning best practices in engineering, maintenance, and public works. Don't miss this opportunity for professional development and networking.

Chainsaw Safety Precision Felling and Maintenance

November 18–21

This is a great introductory course for personnel and supervisors who regularly use the chainsaw, as well as a novice or occasional user.



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