



Technology Exchange

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Tractor/Mower Safety on Public Roads

By Haley Beason Ortiz

Spring roadside operations place tractors into regular use along public roadways across Louisiana. These activities support essential maintenance efforts while also increasing exposure to traffic-related risks. Tractors are not designed for roadway travel, which makes awareness and preparation critical during mowing season.

Collisions between tractors and motor vehicles remain a serious concern in Louisiana. Operators must recognize the limitations of tractors when operating near live traffic. Whenever possible, trailers should be used to transport tractors between locations, rather than driving equipment directly on public roads. Reducing roadway travel lowers exposure to fast-moving vehicles while improving overall safety.

Visibility also plays a key role during roadside operations. Proper lighting should be used when traveling during low light conditions becomes necessary. Front lighting and rear lighting alert approaching drivers. Reflectors and slow-moving vehicle emblems increase recognition of equipment traveling at reduced speeds. For additional protection, flaggers may be used to provide advance warnings to motorists approaching active operations.

Long-distance travel on busy routes presents an added risk. Escorts placed in front of and behind equipment create space between tractors and traffic. Police escorts may be appropriate for longer trips or groups of equipment moving through high-volume corridors. These measures support safer movement while improving driver awareness.

Equipment and safety features must also receive attention. Rollover protective structures paired with seatbelts significantly reduce the risk of serious injury during incidents. Ensuring these systems remain in good condition protects operators during both routine operations and unexpected events.

LTAP's tractor mower training addresses these topics through practical guidance focused on real-world conditions. Spring operations bring an opportunity for proactive safety practices that protect workers while supporting continued roadway maintenance. Preparation before peak activity remains one of the most effective tools available to local agencies across Louisiana.



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



A Collaborative Blueprint for Safer Local Roads

By Rudynah Entera Capone, MPA

At the 2025 AASHTO Safety Summit held in

New Orleans last July, Louisiana LTAP had the opportunity to share how collaboration, data, and grassroots engagement are transforming roadway safety. Together with Local Road Safety Program (LRSP) Manager Leo Marretta, I presented Louisiana's Collaborative Blueprint for Safer Local Roads—a model grounded in partnership and built to save lives. I commenced my professional road safety journey when I worked for South Central Planning and Development Commission from 2010 to 2014 as the regional safety coalition coordinator for the South Central Region. A decade later, I am still advocating for safer roads in a different capacity, but with the same vision: Destination Zero Deaths.

Why does local road safety matter in Louisiana? In 2024, there were 753 fatalities, and about 20–25% occurred on local roads. Three-fourths (73%) of our roadway miles are locally owned and maintained, totaling 45,000 miles, compared to only 17,000 miles of state roads. Many serious crashes happen on these local systems, making local public agencies essential partners in reaching our shared vision of zero deaths.

Since 2010, Louisiana has taken a proactive, holistic approach to road safety. Through nine regional safety coalitions embedded within MPOs and Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), we've addressed driver behavior issues, such as distracted and impaired driving, while advancing infrastructure improvements that reduce roadway departures, improve intersection

safety, and protect pedestrians and bicyclists.

Our LTAP–DOTD partnership drives this mission forward. DOTD sets the statewide direction, while LTAP bridges the connection to our local partners, ensuring outreach, technical assistance, and training align with the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). With 37% of fatalities involving roadway departures, 20% at intersections, and 23% involving vulnerable users, our efforts focus where the data tells us they matter most.

To align with the SHSP's Infrastructure and Operations priorities, LTAP:

1. Provides training focused on reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries related to roadway departures, intersections, bicycles, and pedestrians on all public roads.
2. Develops project applications that promote proven countermeasures, such as rumble strips, signage, markings, and lighting.
3. Facilitates data-driven project selection ensuring resources target high-risk areas.
4. Assists locals in developing or updating Local Road Safety Plans that guide safety investments.

This critical partnership is both actionable and results-driven. Through the LRSP, funded by a dedicated HSIP set-aside, we help local agencies implement life-saving projects that do not compete with state-route priorities. As I shared at the summit: "Every time LTAP works with a local agency, it's not just about delivering a project—it's about building relationships and momentum toward a safer Louisiana."

LPESA Fall 2025 Scholarship Recipients

By Haley Beason Ortiz

The Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA) recently awarded scholarships to outstanding Louisiana students pursuing higher education. As secretary for LPESA, LTAP is proud to help support this program, which provides scholarships to Louisiana college students 1-2 times each year.

LPESA board members had the opportunity to personally present scholarships to several Fall 2025 recipients. These students were recognized for their academic achievements and commitment to their future studies:

- Jesse Le, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- Delaini Brou, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- Mackenzie Brashier, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- Trace Arnaud, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- Brant Courville, McNeese State University
- Jackson McKinney, Louisiana Tech University



We congratulate each of these students and look forward to sharing more about the scholarship process and the steps recipients completed to earn this recognition in an upcoming issue.

RESOURCES

New Tailgate Talk Resources Now Available

By Haley Beason Ortiz

LTAP is excited to announce the release of new and updated safety resources available to all readers. The Tailgate Talk library now includes more than 20 short safety talks covering a wide range of topics that support daily operations in public works.

A Tailgate Talk is a brief training session focused on one safety topic. These sessions are designed to take place in a convenient location, such as near a work truck or job site, and typically last 10 to 15 minutes with a small group of workers. A Tailgate Talk provides an easy way for supervisors and crews to discuss safety topics during the workday without the need for long or formal training sessions.

Current topics range from chainsaw safety to general workplace safety and other subjects relevant to field operations. Each Tailgate Talk is developed with Louisiana public works professionals in mind and focuses on safety concerns that impact local agencies and crews. These resources are intended to support safe work practices and promote consistent safety conversations across parishes and municipalities.

LTAP plans to continue expanding the Tailgate Talk library over time. Agencies are encouraged to share ideas for future topics by using the Tailgate Talk Development Worksheet Form found in the QR code above. Submissions from local agencies help guide the development of new Tailgate Talks that can benefit others across the state. Approved topics will be developed into Tailgate Talk brochures and shared online for use by Louisiana agencies and other LTAP programs nationwide.

To view the full Tailgate Talk library or to submit a topic suggestion, visit the LTAP website (<https://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/ltap/tailgate-talks.html>)! These resources are provided to support safety, training, and daily operations for public works professionals across Louisiana.



Scan for Tailgate Talk Development Worksheet Form

FFY 2024-2025 Summarized Report

Throughout the 2024–2025 federal fiscal year, Louisiana LTAP delivered a dynamic slate of training courses that reached a broad spectrum of local agency personnel statewide. A total of 50 classes and 5 conferences engaged more than 1,500 participants in over 14,000 contact hours of hands-on, safety-focused learning—90% of whom represented local agencies.

Local Project Delivery & Safety Initiatives

- LPA CE&I Training prepared 63 participants to manage federally funded projects.
- LRSP implementation workshops and a virtual call engaged 25 local partners in advancing Destination Zero Deaths.
- Statewide collaboration strengthened through participation in the AASHTO Safety Summit.

Operational Training

- Basics of Work Zone Safety and Flagger Training served 152 workers.
- Chainsaw Safety trained 283 participants statewide.
- APWA-supported Heavy Equipment Training served 94 Baton Rouge personnel and remained a high-demand offering.

Roads Scholar Program

- RS#5A trained 243 employees.
- RS#15 reached 198 participants.
- RS#11 Road Safety 365 launched with 96 participants.

Partnerships & Outreach

- LTAP strengthened partnerships through the LPESA Spring Conference and APWA National Public Works Week Training.
- LTAP played an active role in the 2025 Louisiana Transportation Conference.



INNOVATION

Sharing Practical Innovation Through Build a Better Mousetrap

By Haley Beason Ortiz

The Build a Better Mousetrap program serves as a powerful opportunity for local transportation professionals across Louisiana to share practical innovations that solve everyday challenges on local roads. Through this nationally recognized program, local ideas gain visibility while helping peers across the state and the country save time, effort, and resources.

Build a Better Mousetrap highlights locally relevant solutions created by those who understand the realities of public works operations. Submissions often focus on simple improvements that lead to meaningful results. These innovations may involve new approaches to planning, design, construction, operations, maintenance, tools, equipment, processes, or

workflows. The program exists to celebrate creativity rooted in real-world experience while strengthening the transportation community through shared knowledge.

Louisiana participants submit entries through the state portal for consideration at the national level. The submission deadline is March 31, 2026. Local agencies of any size are encouraged to participate. Prior experience with the program is not required. First-time submissions are welcome.

Louisiana winners receive meaningful recognition. The Grand Winner receives free LTAP training inclusive of lunch, an Innovator of the Year certificate, and recognition in the national Build a Better Mousetrap booklet. A Peoples Choice Award is also presented based on community engagement through Facebook likes.

The 2025 Louisiana winner was the Ouachita Parish Public Works Department for Dye-Assisted Leak Detection. The department faced a persistent challenge involving underground water system leaks. Traditional detection methods required significant time, cost, effort. The team developed a simple approach using concentrated blue dye introduced into a suspected reservoir system. Visual inspection quickly revealed leak locations. Repairs followed with greater precision. This practical solution earned top honors, proving that effective innovation often begins with straightforward ideas.

Local innovation deserves recognition. This program provides the opportunity to share it.

Build a Better Mousetrap offers a platform for sharing solutions that benefit communities statewide while contributing to national progress. Local agencies are encouraged to explore resources, review past submissions, and submit an entry through the Louisiana LTAP website.

More information is available at <https://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/ltap/build-a-better-mousetrap.html>.



The 2025 Louisiana winner: the Ouachita Parish Public Works Department for Dye-Assisted Leak Detection



Ouachita Parish public works director John Tom Murray (middle) receives the award given by (from left) LTAP Director Rudynah Capone, LTAP Program Manager Courtney Dupre, and LPESA President Alision Lognion.

Temporary Traffic Control: Hands On Learning Across Louisiana

By Haley Beason Ortiz

LTAP recently concluded Roads Scholar (RS) #4: Temporary Traffic Control, a course designed to strengthen safety practices for roadway workers and road users across Louisiana. The training focuses on practical decision-making and is used daily by local agencies working in active traffic environments.

RS #4: Temporary Traffic Control is based on Part 6 of the 11th edition of the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* released in 2023. This course covers the core principles of traffic control, layout of temporary traffic control zones, worker safety considerations, road user safety considerations, proper use of traffic control devices, common temporary traffic control activities, typical applications for local agency work, and traffic control strategies for incident response. Emphasis is placed on applying national standards within real-world, local conditions.



The course was taught by LTAP Instructor Nicholas “Nick” Verret Jr. Verret has decades of experience in highway construction, design, public works administration, and municipal engineering. His background supports instruction grounded in field experience paired with technical expertise, providing participants with insight drawn from years of practical application.

A total of 218 participants attended 7 classes held around the state between October and December 2025. Participants represented 35 local agencies, firmly reflecting a strong interest in training that directly supports daily public works operations focused on safety.

Hands on instruction served as a key component of the course. Magnetic traffic boards were used during interactive exercises to simulate real-world roadway scenarios. Participants practiced lane closures, traffic redirection, responses to planned traffic changes, and responses to unexpected conditions. These exercises allowed immediate application of course concepts using guidance from the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. The approach strengthened decision-making skills essential for safe work zone operations.

RS #4: Temporary Traffic Control is one of the required courses within the Roads Scholar Program. Through Roads Scholar, LTAP provides cost-effective training focused on road maintenance, bridge maintenance, roadway safety, and worker safety for local transportation agencies. RS #4 supports the program goal of improving safety knowledge while promoting the consistent application of standards in the field.

Temporary traffic control remains a critical element of roadway safety. Training opportunities such as RS #4 help local agencies create safer environments for workers while supporting safer travel for the public. LTAP remains committed to delivering practical training that meets the needs of agencies across Louisiana.



Local Public Agency Core and CE&I Training | To Be Announced

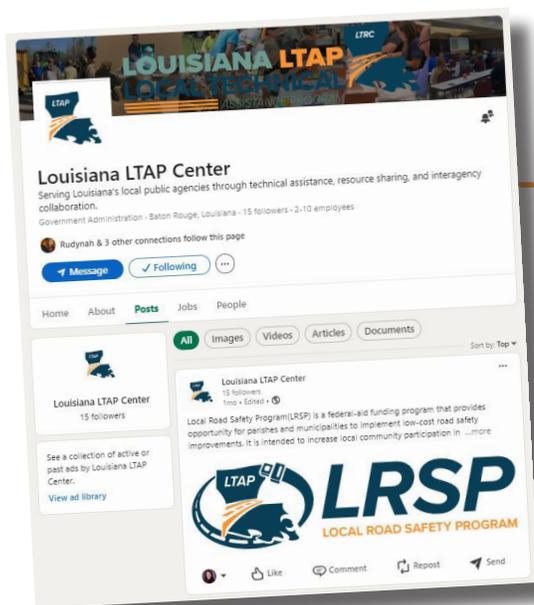
This essential program helps local agencies navigate state and federal transportation funding requirements. Subscribe to our LPA email subscription list to be notified about upcoming classes. Visit <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/mmsfY1f/LPA>. Construction, Engineering & Inspection training is available online through recorded modules. Visit <https://www.louisianaltap.org/lpa-training.html>. The **T4LA initiative (Transforming Transportation with Transparency and Teamwork)** is currently underway at DOTD. One of many initiatives will analyze DOTD's Local Public Agency (LPA) Program business processes and organizational structure to ensure the program complies with federal and state requirements and results in the LPAs delivering the projects programmed in the Highway Priority Program (HPP). All internal and external training needs will be identified based on the revised program and project delivery processes. **Important Note!** *Local Public Agencies (LPAs) and their personnel are granted a temporary waiver on the LPA Qualifications Core Training certification until the required training becomes available again.*

Roads Scholar 13 | April-May 2026

This course provides essential training for local agency personnel responsible for inspecting and maintaining off-system bridges in Louisiana. Participants will learn about standard bridge inspection requirements, as well as inspection elements unique to Louisiana's program.

Louisiana Parish Engineers and Supervisors Association (LPESA) Conference | May 13-14 | Mandeville, LA

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. Register here: <https://registration.ltrc.lsu.edu/courses/view?id=372>.



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Search "Louisiana LTAP Center" to learn more and catch behind-the-scenes moments from our classes, workshops, and real-time training updates.



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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.

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