



Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative

Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative Pooled Fund Study

2010 Webinar

Final Report

Introduction

Since the inception of this pooled fund study in 1999, the Board of Directors has concluded that periodic conferences to present results of research funded under the program would be desirable. A conference was conducted in 2001 and another in 2005, the latter a multi-day event with vendors also invited to participate. Both of these conferences were judged to be successful and it was planned to schedule another such conference in 2009. This activity was approved as an item in the 2009 work plan with a budget of \$10,800. Due to travel restrictions imposed by many state agencies, it was decided to delay the conference a year. Travel restrictions for many Board of Director members continued in 2010 and rather than continue to delay a potentially valuable presentation of important research results, it was proposed that a webinar format be adopted in lieu of a conventional conference. This proposal was approved by the Board of Directors and a webinar was included in the 2010 work plan, again with a budget of \$10,800.

Planning and Development

Planning for a webinar began in April followed by another discussion in May 2010. The planning committee for the event consisted of Jerry Roche, Federal Highway Administration, Dan Sprengeler and Mark Bortle of the Iowa Department of Transportation, and Tim Morris and Tom McDonald from the Institute for Transportation. Input was also sought from Tracy Scriba, FHWA and Sandra Larson, Iowa DOT. It was recognized that a webinar format, while being considerably less costly than a conference, would also present potential exposure to a nationwide audience and much broader participation than would be expected from a regional conference.

Jerry Roche advised that the internet conferencing center at the FHWA could be used for this purpose and the actual webinar could be hosted from the FHWA Division Office in Ames. A length of approximately 4 hours was recommended, which would allow sufficient time to present research results from 4 recently completed smart work zone funded projects. A date of July 26th was selected for the webinar, to avoid as many potential conflicts as possible.

The Institute for Transportation publications staff developed a descriptive flyer, added to the smart work zone website, and arranged for on-line registration. The flyer was widely distributed to state DOTs, university researchers, consultants, local agencies, and selected associations. Assistance from the FHWA and Iowa DOT were sought in assembling the final distribution list.

Webinar Presentation

A practice session for the presenters was conducted on July 16th to address any broadcast and presentation concerns. Research reports for three projects were made from remote sites and one project report was presented from the FHWA office in Ames.

Following is the program for the July 26th webinar:

(Times shown are Central Daylight Time)

Program

10:00 am	Welcome-Introduction Description of format, agenda, chat line, polling questions, etc.	Jerry Roche, FHWA
	<i>Polling Question 1a: What is your agency or organization?</i> <u>Federal, State, Local, University, Consultant, Other</u>	
10:05 am	Description of SWZDI	Dan Sprengeler, Iowa DOT
10:10 am	FHWA Perspective	Tracy Scriba, FHWA
	<i>Polling Question 1b: How many are participating from your location?</i> <u>1-2, 3-5, 6-10, 10 or more</u>	
10:15 am	<i>“Micro-simulation of Freeway Work Zones to Assess Flow and Capacity”</i> Alan Horowitz, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Alex Drakopoulos, Marquette University	
	<i>Polling Question 2: How did you hear about this webinar?</i> <u>Association, Organization, Webpage, Associate, Other?</u>	
10:55 am	<i>“Feasibility of Visualization and Simulation Applications to Improve Work Zone Safety and Mobility”</i> Kelly Strong, Iowa State University	

Polling Question 3: Do you find work zone safety and mobility focused research is worthwhile and cost-effective?

Yes, No, Undecided

11:30 am

“Safety Investigation and Guidance for Work Zone Devices Subjected to Passenger Car and Truck Impacts with New Crash Standards”

Jennifer Schmidt, University of Nebraska

Polling Question 4: Does your state have any interest in joining the SWZDI pooled fund?

Yes, No, Maybe, Already a member

12:00 pm

“Examining Driver Behavior in Response to Work Zone Interventions: A Driving Simulator Study”

Michelle Reyes, University of Iowa

Polling Question 5: Would you be interested in participating in another research-oriented webinar in the future?

Yes, No, Undecided

12:35 pm

General Questions and Comments Jerry Roche, FHWA

12:45 pm

Summary and Closing Jerry Roche, FHWA

In addition to general questions at the end of the webinar, each researcher answered inquiries regarding their specific project immediately following each presentation. Following the webinar, most power point presentations were posted for downloading.

Results

A total of 150 incoming telephone lines were made available for potential participation in the webinar. A list of actual participants totaled approximately 110 from many agencies and several different states.

Poll question responses are listed below:

Polling question 1a: What is your agency or organization?

<i>Federal</i>	5	8.5%
<i>State</i>	36	61.0%
<i>Local</i>	2	3.4%
<i>University</i>	6	10.2%
<i>Consultant</i>	7	11.9%
<i>Contractor</i>	0	0.0%
<i>Other</i>	3	5.1%

Polling question 1b: How many are participating from your location?

<i>1</i>	32	55.2%
<i>2</i>	6	10.3%
<i>3-5</i>	17	29.3%
<i>6-10</i>	3	5.2%
<i>10 or more</i>	0	0.0%

Polling question 2: How did you hear about this webinar

<i>Association</i>	5	8.9%
<i>Organization</i>	37	66.1%
<i>Webpage</i>	6	10.7%
<i>Associate</i>	8	14.3%
<i>Other</i>	0	0.0%

Polling question 3: Do you find work zone safety and mobility focused research to be worthwhile and cost-effective?

<i>Yes</i>	24	42.9%
<i>No</i>	0	0.0%
<i>Undecided</i>	32	57.1%

Polling question 4: Does your state have any interest in joining the SWZDI pooled fund?

<i>Yes</i>	1	2.8%
<i>No</i>	7	19.4%
<i>Maybe</i>	16	44.4%
<i>Already a member</i>	12	33.3%

Polling question 5: Would you be interested in participating in another research-oriented webinar in the future?

<i>Yes</i>	46	85.2%
<i>No</i>	2	3.7%
<i>Undecided</i>	6	11.1%

Responses to the polling questions provided insight into the demographics of webinar participants, gauged interest in work zone safety research in general, and provided contact information in states with potential interest in joining the smart work zone pooled fund. Follow-up contacts with states who indicated interest will be made to provide additional information and issue an invitation to join smart work zone.

Problems encountered

Conducting this webinar was a first time experience for staff associated with smart work zone. Almost all presentations were conducted from remote sites; Iowa City, IA, Lincoln, NE, Milwaukee, WI, Washington, DC and Greece. Jerry Roche facilitated the event from New Orleans, LA. Despite these challenges the event proceeded quite well with most credit due to Jerry Roche and Julie Schinkel from the FHWA Division Office in Ames, IA. The following concerns were noted during the presentations and will need to be addressed for any future webinars.

- Closed captioning feature appeared to end working during the first research report
- Although the entire webinar broadcast was recorded, no sound was included
- Video clips embedded in some presentations did not broadcast properly
- Simulations could not be made to work properly

Despite these problems, the webinar appeared to proceed satisfactorily and presented a low cost option for displaying the work accomplished under the smart work zone pooled fund study to participants across the nation. The Board of Directors will consider this when deciding on the use of this format again in the future, possibly on an annual basis.

Cost

Access to and operation of the internet conferencing system did not result in cost to smart work zone. Distribution of notice flyers was accomplished electronically again at no cost. The Institute for Transportation incurred some staff charges for development of the flyer and handling of on-line registrations totaling \$640.00. Remaining budgeted funds for this activity could be returned to the pooled fund for supporting future research projects.

Recommendations

The success of this webinar and responses of participants would indicate that activities of this type are worthwhile and should be continued, especially considering the minor cost involved. It is recommended that one or two webinars be presented annually as a part of the smart work zone process and these efforts to share research results with other states will be presented to the Board of Directors for funding consideration under the 2011 program.