

IOWA LTAP AT 40 YEARS THEN AND NOW



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Iowa LTAP Over the Years

Friday, January 28, 1983, was not all that notable of a day in the history of the United States. Here in Iowa, it was noteworthy as the official start date of the center that would ultimately become known as the Iowa Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP).

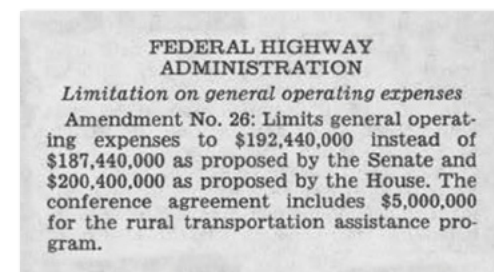
Throughout the years, Iowa LTAP and its associated transportation center have been known by many names: Technology Transfer (T2 or T-squared) Center, Local Transportation Information Center (LTIC), Iowa Transportation Center (ITC), Midwest Transportation Center (MTC), Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE), and the Institute for Transportation (InTrans).

Iowa LTAP's mission, however, has always been the same: to provide technical and management assistance to Iowa's local governments and thus improve traffic safety through locally coordinated multidisciplinary efforts built on trusted relationships. It's a mission that grew out of the very first federal references to "rural technical assistance."

RTAP IS BORN

The debate over H.R. 4209 – Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriation Act of 1982 did not necessarily lead to any viral moments in its day. However, for those in local public works departments, county engineering offices, and associated transportation groups, the fight may have been as riveting as *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington's* climactic moments.

The U.S. House had initially provided funding for "rural technical assistance" in its bill, but that language did not make it into its first passage of the legislation. The U.S. Senate version of the bill added back in funding for "rural transportation assistance." A conference committee made up of members of both bodies hashed out the differences in a little over a week in November 1981.



First mention of the rural technical assistance program in congressional record.

The resultant committee report with the agreed-to final bill changes not only included \$5 million for rural transportation assistance but also for the first time referred to providing such funding for a program. Thus, once the compromise legislation passed both chambers and got signed into law by then-President Ronald Reagan on December 23, 1981, the Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) was created.

The first centers were set up within a year in Oklahoma, Missouri, and Indiana. A year later, another 12 states added RTAPs, including Iowa. Today, local technical assistance programs exist in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

The funding for the program came from the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT's) general and operating expenses. Subsequent legislation, about a decade later, expanded the program to include urban areas, and the local technical assistance program became the program's official name as it's known today. It remains a program under the U.S. DOT's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Because the first centers got started in 1982, both the FHWA and the National Local Technical Assistance Program Association (NLTAPA) held their 40th anniversary celebrations in 2022. Because Iowa LTAP started in January 1983, we will be celebrating our anniversary this year.

Join us in taking a look back at how far we've come in 40 years and looking forward to the next 40 years of providing technical assistance to local agencies.

TECHNOLOGY NEWS

New funds mean new duties for ITC

Thanks to a change in federal funding, the mission of the Iowa Transportation Center and other technology transfer programs (known as T-squared programs) has expanded to include urban areas with populations up to one million.

The funding was provided by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. With this change, the Federal Highway Administration changed the name of the program to the Local Technology Assistance Program (LTAP). Prior to the funding increase, the T-squared programs focused on rural local governmental issues and the program was known as the Rural Technology Assistance Program (RTAP).

This change gave the ITC an opportunity to expand the LTAP advisory committee structure to allow for input from larger urban areas. Last fall an LTAP advisory committee was convened of transportation professionals with various local governments including large cities and regional transportation planning organizations.

In its first meeting, the advisory committee recommended that the Center develop three new programs – one on excavation safety, a program on asphalt and concrete pavement



The Iowa Transportation Center's Local Government Advisory Committee includes, from left in the first row Larry Stevens, Oskaloosa City Engineer; Del Jespersen, Story County Engineer; James Thompson, Director of Transportation Planning, Des Moines; and Ralph Speer, Director of Public Works, West Des Moines. Members from left in the back row are: Robert Sperry, Wester County Engineer; Brian Parker, Assistant Planning and Research Engineer, Iowa Division of the FHWA; Lowell Richardson, Director, Office of Local Systems, Iowa Department of Transportation; and Kevin Gilchrist, Transportation Planner, Des Moines Area Transportation Planning Committee.

maintenance, and assist the Iowa Chapter of the American Public Works Association with a program on equipment operation and safety. Urban members of the committee

agreed to help the Center's new traffic engineer, Joe Henderson, develop traffic engineering and traffic planning related training programs.

March 1993 Technology News article announcing expansion into urban areas and the program's name change to LTAP.

The ISU technology transfer center celebrates its third birthday

In just three years, Iowa State University's Technology Transfer Center (T2) has reached literally thousands of Iowans through its workshops and conferences, newsletters, and consultative services. The center observed its third anniversary January 28.

In those three years, nearly 4,000 people have attended different workshops developed by the center and more than 14 issues (50,000) of *Technology News* have been mailed to local public works employees. The newsletter "reaches people in the trenches," making information available on "how to do things better," according to Stan Ring, project manager and ISU civil engineering professor.

The center also helps sponsor and publicize workshops and conferences educating from 20 to 100 local transportation people per event. ISU civil engineering students are encouraged to attend as well. "We have trained many people in better ways to do things," said Ring. "There's a lot of high-level technology from national sources which needs to be transmitted."

The center provides personal advice to transportation workers by having a city engineer on staff to speak with people who need specific questions answered.

The ISU Technology Transfer Center, which is 100 percent federally funded, is gaining credibility in its third year, according to Ring. "People know what we're doing now. Most people look for, recognize, and wait for our information."

1986 Technology News article observing Iowa LTAP's third anniversary.

THE NEXT 40 YEARS

What might happen in the next 40 years, with technologies changing at the rate they currently are, is something to think about, but ultimately Iowa LTAP will continue to be in sync with local agencies' needs in terms of technical training and technical assistance and will adapt to those needs as demands change.

The previous 40 years have shown Iowa LTAP has advanced how it approaches its training and technical assistance offerings throughout the years it has existed. Staff members have often moved quickly to adjust to new technologies and new realities. Such was the case when, within a matter of a couple weeks, staff adapted to the impacts of a pandemic. The early weeks of COVID-19 led Iowa LTAP to offer more materials and trainings online; however, as weeks turned to months and beyond, it became clear that for the foreseeable future local agency staff would still like the human touch of instructors on-site and many of the subjects Iowa LTAP offers would still be best taught with an in-person "hands on" approach.

Another good example of how things have changed is the LTAP library. Once a physical space with a lot of printed books and videotapes that later collected CDs and DVDs for lending, the Iowa LTAP library is now a virtual space offering a streaming service for some of these materials and a search/retrieve service to acquire online documents that have replaced the physical copies.

Of course, the technologies that the local agencies in Iowa are working with have also continued to adjust and change. In keeping with its mission, as always, Iowa LTAP will continue to adjust and change as well to meet local agencies' needs as we look to the next 40 years and beyond.

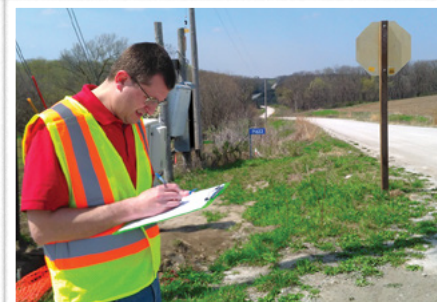
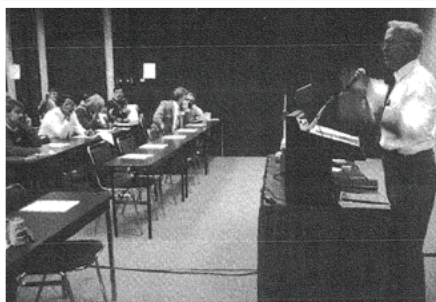
IT WAS 40 YEARS AGO TODAY

In many ways, talk around the water cooler hasn't changed—we talk about what's happening in culture and the world and occasionally all that's happening at home. It's only the specifics that have changed. Here's a brief glimpse into what might have made for small talk topics during the first day at the office of Iowa State University's T2 Center.

Pop culture aficionados may have chatted about the #1 song *Down Under* by Men at Work, the day's top movie *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* or plans to see the weekend's top flick *Tootsie*, or what to watch Friday evening—*Dallas*, *Knight Rider*, or the Fright Night Movie *The Fog* on television. Sports fans were likely worrying about the upcoming Cyclones vs. Oklahoma State men's basketball game Saturday or placing odds on the Super Bowl that Sunday between Washington and Miami. News followers may have been discussing the rising unemployment in the state or university building projects, or in national news they may have debated the \$848.5 billion federal budget proposed that day by then-President Ronald Reagan. If nothing else, staff may have fallen back on talking about the unseasonably warm day.

PROGRAMS & RESOURCES, THEN & NOW

Safety Circuit Rider



1989

Iowa LTAP launches the Safety Circuit Rider Program. The program was led by retired Ida County Engineer Ed Bigelow, who was the nation's first ever safety circuit rider. In its first year, the circuit rider focused on raising awareness about available programs that assist in reducing potential safety risks, a work zone flagger instructional program, and a program to outline methods used to inventory and assess signage needs.

The first program was held in Webster City for both city and Hamilton County employees.

Iowa's Safety Circuit Rider Program presents transportation safety-related workshops to local governments and other groups and offers suggestions for improving roadway safety.

1990

The FHWA's Biennial Safety Award Competition recognized Iowa's Safety Circuit Rider Program in the "Best Overall and Most Efficient Use of Resources" category. The national competition honored only eight programs.

"The circuit rider is a conduit for information to organizations and individuals that may not have access to safety information unless it's delivered in their own community. I am sure Ed is having a positive impact on safety, and I am glad the center is used as a delivery mechanism for local safety training," said LTIC Program Manager Tom Maze.

1999

A decade into the program, then-led by Tom McDonald, the circuit rider had crisscrossed the state many times over, holding workshops in break rooms, courthouses, work sheds, and anywhere a group of local government attendees could gather. It had served more than 7,000 people at over 400 workshops during its first 10 years.

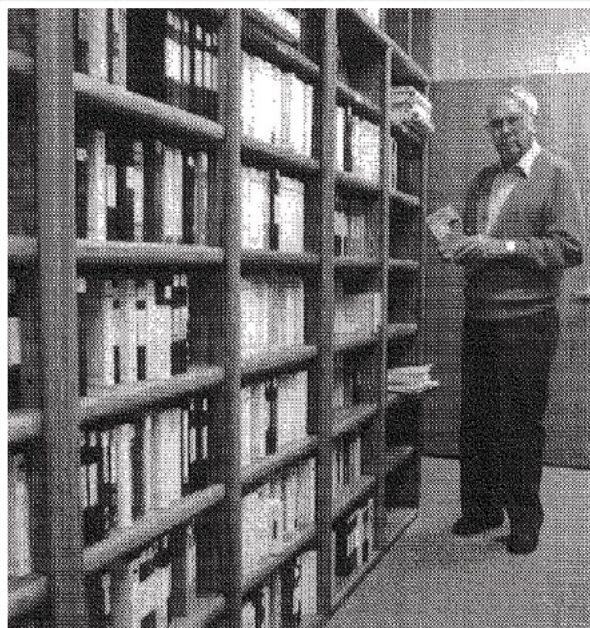
2008

Two decades after Iowa led the way on the Safety Circuit Rider Program, 17 other LTAPs had followed suit, with more under development, thanks to a 2004 initiative under the FHWA to provide funding for safety circuit riders that was modeled on Iowa's program.

TODAY

Iowa's Safety Circuit Rider Program presents transportation safety-related workshops to local governments and other groups and offers suggestions for improving roadway safety. The workshops are on topics ranging from work zone safety to *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways* (MUTCD) signing to retroreflectivity to roadside safety to low-cost safety improvements. The safety circuit rider also coordinates the road safety assessment (RSA) efforts in Iowa, which includes a proactive review of roadway sites to identify improvements that can be made to address potential safety issues. Finally, the program oversees the equipment loan program, which offers local agencies the free use of various devices that assist in managing aspects of roadway and infrastructure safety. Learn more at <https://iowaltap.iastate.edu/safety-circuit-rider/>.

Stan Ring Memorial Library and Its Transition to Online Resources



1988

From its earliest iterations, Iowa LTAP's mission of technology transfer meant it provided and pointed to publications that could assist city and county employees. However, no sooner had Iowa LTAP's first director Stan Ring retired than he became the Iowa LTAP library's first coordinator, albeit on a part-time basis.

1994

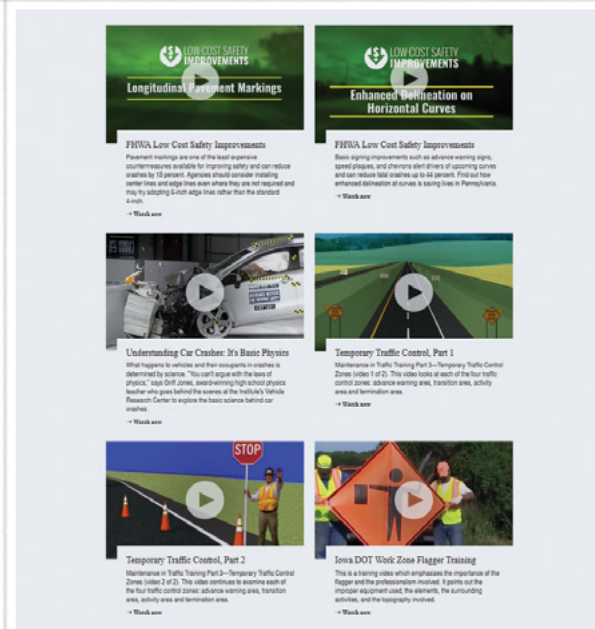
The program had an officially designated "lending library" by the time it became a part of the Iowa Transportation Center. The library had nearly 1,000 print publications, more than 350 video tapes, and 16 sets of slide presentations available for borrowing.



2000

After Stan Ring died suddenly on Sept. 14, while still serving as library coordinator and technical advisor for CTRE, the LTAP library that Ring had fostered for so many years got the name it still carries to this day.

"Ring oversaw the library as enthusiastically as he had built the LTAP center. He stocked the shelves with an up-to-date collection of slideshows, videos, and publications and sent them, on request, to towns and counties across the state. He oversaw the transition from a paper catalog of holdings to a user-friendly online electronic catalog," reads a 2008 tribute to Stan Ring as LTAP celebrated its 25th anniversary.



TODAY

In an effort to free up space and recognize the limited use of physical documents that are now almost entirely on the internet, Iowa LTAP held a VHS giveaway in 2021 to get rid of its remaining video tapes, and the paper copies of publications were removed in favor of resources available online. Still, the mission remains the same: "to seek and share information with local agency professionals about solutions to transportation-related problems, recent innovations, and new technologies." The program now provides a document search service, DVDs when available, and online streaming training content resources. Learn more at <https://iowaltap.iastate.edu/online-library-and-document-search-service/> and <https://iowaltap.iastate.edu/videos/>.

Roads Scholar Program



“
The Roads Scholar Program
provides a great mechanism
to give recognition to those
who continue their education
as transportation workers.
”



2002

The Roads Scholar Program that recognizes transportation workers who are committed to improving their skills and increasing their knowledge was “quietly kicked off.” Within less than a year, nearly 4,000 Iowans had received credit for qualifying workshops they’d attended. Notably, by this time, workshop attendees could register online (though not make payments yet!).

2003

The first Iowans to receive their Roads Scholar I certificates, reflecting at least 30 hours of participation in continuing education events since January 2000, were recognized at the Iowa Maintenance Training Expo. A total of 67 city and county employees were among the first class to earn recognition.

2013

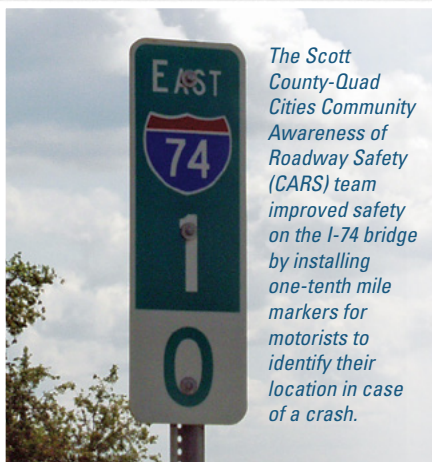
Iowa LTAP began a revamp of its Roads Scholar Program, starting with “debugging” the automation of its registration process so that it could track scholars’ training efforts. A year later, it had put forth its revamp plan and sought input to finalize the new and improved program.

“The Roads Scholar Program provides a great mechanism to give recognition to those who continue their education as transportation workers. Stay tuned as we complete this rebuild,” wrote Iowa LTAP Director Keith Knapp as the 2013 revamp got underway.

TODAY

City and county employees continue to receive credit hours for attending workshops and conferences, and supervisors can schedule ongoing staff training and better manage their training budgets. Roads Scholar participants must register to track their courses and achievements and will be asked to reconfirm their commitment every four years. Iowa LTAP staff assist with tracking hours on an individual basis, and those who achieve various scholar levels are recognized annually at the Iowa Streets and Roads Conference. Learn more at <https://iowaltap.iastate.edu/roads-scholar/>.

MDST



“
It’s challenging to bring everyone to the table, but any given safety issue is better solved when everyone’s providing their special expertise.
”



15 MDST GROUPS AND COUNTING



1991

Scott County forms the first Multidisciplinary Safety Team (MDST) with assistance from the Governor’s Traffic Safety Bureau (GTSB) and Bi-State Regional Commission. It focused on identifying traffic and pedestrian safety concerns and working together to solve or reduce safety problems in the Quad Cities and Scott County.

1997

Dubuque County forms its MDST with assistance from the GTSB and FHWA employees. It had the same mission as Scott County’s MDST but focused on Dubuque and Dubuque County.

2005

By this time, MDSTs exist in Clinton, Council Bluffs, the Des Moines area, and Sioux City, in addition to Scott and Dubuque Counties. Several other cities have had safety initiatives but had not yet formed a full MDST.

“It’s challenging to bring everyone to the table, but any given safety issue is better solved when everyone’s providing their special expertise,” said Lalit Patel, a transportation/traffic engineer with the Bi-State Regional Commission and member of the Scott County MDST, in 2005. “The hard part is seeing the issue from someone else’s perspective and working toward a solution everyone’s satisfied with. But it’s worth it.”

2015

Iowa LTAP helped begin a new Iowa traffic safety effort, the Statewide MDST, to better coordinate interagency activity and information exchange with the Iowa DOT and the GTSB. Theresa Litteral was hired to serve as the Statewide MDST facilitator, a position she still holds today, to assist state and local transportation agency safety partners with the development, application, and implementation of local road safety improvements and to facilitate communication among the partners.

TODAY

The joint effort—which brings together team members with in-depth knowledge of their discipline, previous experiences, and/or unique perspectives—continues to support opportunities to help facilitate the development and operation of local traffic safety groups that aim to identify and resolve local crash causes and enhance crash response practices. There are currently 15 groups led by local traffic safety advocates, and the number of teams continues to grow. Learn more at <https://iowaltap.iastate.edu/mdst/>.

Other Notable Programs, Trainings, and Resources



Equipment Loan Program

Though officially part of the Safety Circuit Rider Program, this equipment “lending library” is notable in its own right for its growth over the years. Devices for watching training videos were available for loan all the way back in 1994, but the actual Equipment Loan Program began around 2017 when it included two items: a retroreflectometer and a digital ball bank. Today, just over five years later, it has six different pieces of equipment, now also including a wood piling test set, two speed feedback signs, two radar recorders, and two cellular signal boosters.



Motor Grader Operator (MoGO) Training

Iowa LTAP first offered a motor grader training course in 1989. Like now, the course was led by a long-time operator who welcomed the opportunity to train new and refresh experienced operators on the equipment’s capability and improved grading techniques. The training continues to be held annually, with the recent re-addition of one-on-one field training as well.

Within its first seven years, the Work Zone Safety and Flagger Training course held 234 workshops with over 4,700 total attendees.



Work Zone Safety and Flagger Training

First begun as simply the Flagger Workshop, the Work Zone Safety and Flagger Training course was first offered in 1992. By 1999, it was described as the Safety Circuit Rider Program’s most popular course, with over 4,700 people attending 234 workshops since its start. The training remains one of Iowa LTAP’s most attended with an average of about 700 attendees each year, though hitting a single-year peak of about 1,400 attendees in 2022.



Jones County secured 2nd place in 2022 with the cold-mix placer.

Build a Better Mousetrap

In 2001, Iowa LTAP first put out the call for “all inventors of better tools and handier equipment” to submit their innovations for the Build a Better Mousetrap Competition as part of the Iowa Maintenance Training Expo. However, since the second edition of *Technology News* in June 1983, the newsletter regularly highlighted local agency innovations as part of its “Tips from the Field” section. The competition continues to this day, with year-round applications available on the Iowa LTAP website along with Innovations web pages that include the Iowa winners back to 2018 and the national entries back to 2009.

TECHNOLOGY NEWS: SHARING INFORMATION SINCE LTAP'S START



1983

Within three months of the T2 Center being established at Iowa State University, the staff had put together and printed its first *Technology News* newsletter, a publication that has been printed on a regular basis ever since.

"Most of you are painfully aware of the major transportation problems facing our small urban and rural areas. Streets and roads are in disrepair or are obsolete, with no improvement funds available. Bridges require a large capital investment. The new construction and reconstruction funds needed have not been available for the past few decades," reads part of the page 1 story introducing the LTIC that would go on to become Iowa LTAP.



1988

Technology News got its first "new look." The program converted to a new desktop publishing system to reduce production cost and time.

"Since 1983, the center has provided regular newsletters, workshops and conferences, publications and other reference materials, and answers to questions from the field. Hopefully these activities benefited those involved in municipal transportation services," reads a page 1 note to municipalities alongside a story announcing LTAP's second director, Tom Maze, after the retirement of Stan Ring.



1989

After the technology updates that revamped the look, *Technology News* also got a redesign and new logo a year later.



1991

The ITC published the 50th issue of *Technology News*, and once again advances in technology meant it was also the first edition to use computer-scanned photographs rather than being transformed into halftone prints by the printer, which often took several days.

"As we move toward the twenty-first century, in an era of declining resources, it is likely that professional staff members in charge of secondary roads will find themselves working with less flexible budgets for the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges. The challenges presented to them will demand greater expertise in prioritizing resource allocations for the rehabilitation and maintenance of the network of roads for which they are responsible," said Kathleen Waggoner, a principal investigator on a project that examined the county engineer profession that was highlighted on page 1 of the 50th edition.



Technology News continued on page 11



1995

Technology News gets its second “facelift” with another redesign.

“Most local agencies are familiar with our programs, recognize our newsletter, and know the individuals who produce the programs—Stan Ring, Ed Bigelow, Duane Smith, Marcia Brink, Mike Bugenhagen, and Jan Graham. During the last twelve years, however, our center has undergone several identity changes,” reads a page 1 note from the then-director Tom Maze.



2005

Technology News is redesigned once again and gets the look it still has today.

“The change in CTRE’s logo prompted changes in the Iowa LTAP logo too And like a snowball rolling downhill, that suggested changes for *Technology News*,” reads a page 1 note on the redesign.



2020

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 led all of us, not just at Iowa LTAP, to realize how quickly things can change. This caused staff to re-evaluate the frequency with which *Technology News* reaches LTAP’s core audience, and thus the LTAP Weekly Resource was born as a supplementary electronic newsletter to the quarterly print edition.

“We are reviewing each of our existing events and will be postponing some and evaluating how to go virtual through various methods with as many as we can. We’ll also be adding and sharing, on a weekly basis we hope, some new resources and opportunities for technical materials and training in the short term,” Iowa LTAP Director Keith Knapp wrote in the January–March 2020 *Technology News* that came out just as the pandemic began to impact Iowans.

The Resource Pages continue today on a biweekly basis where subscribers can get updates on LTAP’s continuing virtual offerings, its now-resumed in-person events, and partner events that may be in person in Iowa or available virtually.



Technology News is still printed quarterly and sent to about 1,500 readers.

It is also available online or through an electronic newsletter.

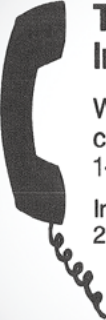
TODAY

Technology News is still printed quarterly and sent to about 1,500 readers. It is also available online or through an electronic newsletter. However, given the costs associated with printing, staff members are considering a transition to electronic-only editions and a complete merge with the Biweekly Resource.

For now, though, anyone can read the latest edition online or click on the subscribe button to choose whether to receive a print and/or electronic version at <https://iowaltap.iastate.edu/technology-news-new/>. For more regular updates from Iowa LTAP, sign up for the Biweekly Resource or read it online at <https://iowaltap.iastate.edu/ltap-resource-biweekly/>.

Throwback Tech

Technology News has always sought to offer information about the latest technology and do so while using the latest technology. However, the latest technology ultimately becomes obsolete as new innovations emerge. The newsletter's archives provide good reminders of all that has changed since Iowa LTAP began 40 years ago. Here are a few blasts from the past:




Transportation Info-Line

When you need answers
call toll-free
1-800-262-8498

In Ames call
294-7834

roads bridges transit

Appearing in the June 1983 edition of Technology News, readers were instructed to clip this graphic and keep near their phones.



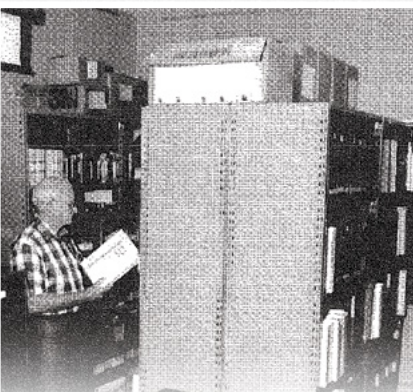
ITCBBS
main

- ITC Technology News is available for downloading.
- ICA CC members can also join ICACC conference for more options.
- You are in public conference with 36 minutes remaining time.

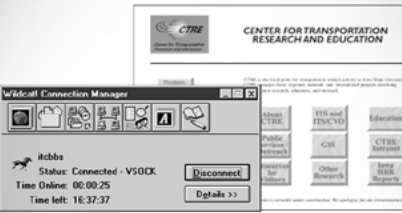
N ..LEAVE MESSAGE	N ITC NEWSLETTER
F ...UP/DOWNLOAD	N WELCOME SCREEN
B ..BULLETIN NEWS	C COMMENT TO SYSOP
Q ..QUESTIONNAIRE	ZHELP
J JOIN CONFERENCE	G GOODBYE & LOGOFF

==== COMMAND...? []

This screen greeted county engineers and their staff as they signed on to the bulletin board service in 1992.



From videotapes and CDs to the devices they played on, the ITC library housed many educational materials in the early 1990s.



CTR
CENTER FOR TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

WebSite Connection Manager

Robbs
Status: Connected - V500X
Time Online: 00:00:25
Time left: 16:37:37

In a 1997 article of Technology News, readers were given instructions on how to connect to the web through CTR's BBS.

1983

Toll-Free Info-Line

There were two options for getting in touch with the experts at the LTIC when the program first began: Mailing to its address in Marston Hall in Ames or calling the staff. To make the latter even easier, the LTIC established a toll-free Info-Line telephone number for local agencies to call without incurring long-distance charges.

1992

Electronic Bulletin Board Service

A joint effort among the Iowa State Association of County Engineers (and its Computer Program and Information Coordinating Committee), the Iowa DOT, and the ITC (Iowa LTAP) launched an electronic bulletin board service (BBS) to connect county engineers who had access to a computer and modem to share information. Iowa LTAP bid farewell to the BBS in 1998 as access to the World Wide Web became more common and much of the information on the BBS could be stored on the Iowa DOT website.

1994

Virtual Training through CATT

Prior to everyone becoming well-experienced with virtual trainings during the travel restrictions and social distancing of 2020's COVID-19 pandemic, Iowa LTAP offered a way to "take the travel out of training" through Computer Assisted Transportation Training (CATT). Compact Disk-Interactive (CD-I) players were available for loan through the ITC's library that could be hooked up to a television for viewing training CDs that were also available for loan through the library.

1995–2000

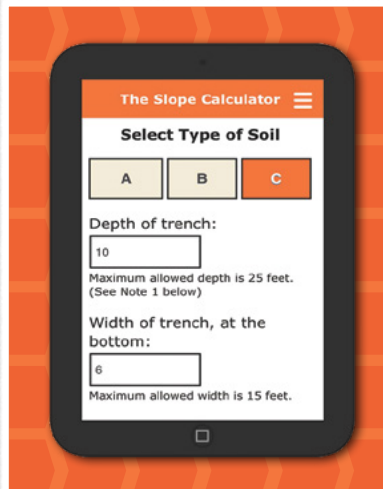
Introducing the World Wide Web

Starting in 1995 with an article titled "Modems: your computer's link with the world," *Technology News* began a series of articles about the modern web as we know it today as part of its ongoing Microtechnology section. Other articles included information on how to use electronic mail through "Cyberspace" in 1995, a primer on "The Web" for the uninitiated in 1997, and a recurring series on how to create a website in 1999 and 2000, along with articles about how to prepare for "Y2K" in 1998 and 1999.

Throwback Tech continued on page 13



As part of a multi-course series, Leadership Institute coordinator Bob Sperry conducted a finance training in 2010.



As in-person workshops regained their footing toward the end of the pandemic, social distancing measures were still in place.



The Motor Grader Operator Training offers an in-classroom workshop as well as field days.

2002–2012

Web-Based Virtual Trainings

Not long after the rise of the World Wide Web, people realized that training could take place online. Iowa LTAP and the American Public Works Association jointly launched their first virtual training, dubbed "Click, Listen, and Learn," in 2002 that utilized a phone for audio and the internet for video.

"Our department thinks that this is an excellent format since you can train several employees at once on site. We also feel that it is cost effective," said former City of West Des Moines Street Superintendent Bret Hodne, though he added that one drawback is the more limited back-and-forth interaction.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials launched virtual trainings the same year, with options becoming "plentiful" by 2007. Also, from 2008–2011, Iowa LTAP staff established the web-based Public Employees Leadership Institute series, which remains a popular online training option.

2015–2016

Social Media and Smartphones

In late 2015, as smartphones had become more common, *Technology News* ran an article about the importance of using social media and incorporating new technology into a "communications toolbox."

The following quarter, the newsletter introduced the "Iowa LTAP Tech Corner" that highlighted smartphone applications (apps), such as The Slope Calculator and PaveCool, that could be useful for city and county employees.

MARCH 2020–2021

COVID-19 Era

When the pandemic required us to socially distance ourselves and restrict our travel, Iowa LTAP wasted no time in promoting its online resources, establishing near-weekly live webinars, and making those newly offered virtual trainings available online afterward for those who could not attend at the scheduled time.

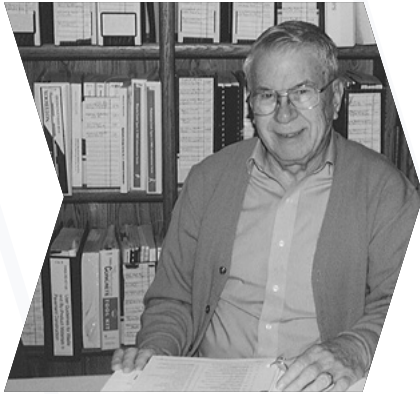
"In the mindset of embracing change and the 'I don't know,' Iowa LTAP will be attempting to offer some training alternatives. We will continue with some virtual efforts but also phasing in some small group, limited attendance, regional offerings of trainings we have done annually for many years," Keith wrote in March 2021, a year into the COVID-19 pandemic.

TODAY

Iowa LTAP continues its philosophy of meeting people where they're at whatever the newest technology. That means being adaptive to everyone's needs, leading Iowa LTAP to continue in-person trainings across the state mixed with monthly virtual offerings—remembering the reach and accessibility of online events at the peak of the pandemic—as well as to provide a robust range of resources offered online 24/7.

STAFF

Past Staff



STAN RING: Stan Ring was responsible for the creation and development of the LTIC that would go on to become Iowa LTAP. As Iowa LTAP's first director, Ring oversaw the early years of the program's development.

He semi-retired in 1987 after establishing the program and after 20 years teaching in Iowa State's civil engineering and extension programs.

"You just don't replace a person as experienced as Stan. Stan has been a super person to work with in the department, and he spent a lot of time with students," said Richard Dague, the then-chair of the Civil Engineering department at Iowa State.

However, Ring continued to serve as the library coordinator for Iowa LTAP and technical advisor for CTRE up through his death at age 77 on Sept. 14, 2000.

"Stan was the role model in how to serve others. I know many of you reading this message have had the same experience: Stan serving and helping you with whatever was important to you. I am sure that my story of Stan Ring is not much different from many of yours. We will miss Stan as a colleague but mostly as a friend," Duane Smith, Iowa LTAP associate director for outreach wrote in a tribute to Ring in *Technology News*.

His commitment to the program was such that he had dismantled an LTAP display he had hosted at Iowa's annual road maintenance expo before going home to rest and ultimately passing away that afternoon.



TOM MAZE: Tom Maze served as the second director of Iowa LTAP, taking over after Stan Ring's semi-retirement. Maze also oversaw the first iteration of what would become InTrans, the ITC, and the management of the large research and education grant that is the MTC.

Maze retired from Iowa LTAP and CTRE in 1999, leaving behind the legacy of the Mid-Continent Transportation Research Symposium that was hosted by InTrans in partnership with the Iowa DOT and held biennially until 2022 to provide a Midwest venue for disseminating national transportation research.

"Through ongoing activities like the symposium, as well as the extensive body of work he leaves behind, Tom's accomplishments will continue to have an impact across Iowa, the country, and beyond for a very long time," read the page 1 *Technology News* note about Maze's passing on June 8, 2009. "His presence and contributions to the transportation and education communities will be greatly missed."

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TOM MCDONALD: Tom McDonald served as Iowa LTAP's second safety circuit rider after the retirement of Ed Bigelow in 1996. Like Bigelow, who had retired as a county engineer before becoming the circuit rider, McDonald retired after 30-plus years with the Iowa DOT and then went on to join LTAP.

He served as the safety circuit rider for 15 years and helped develop the program into a model for other transportation centers around the country. In addition to the trainings and technology transfer in the form of responding to individual calls from local agencies, McDonald managed and/or participated in almost two dozen safety-related projects at InTrans.

"Through all these activities, Tom's professional efforts made life better and safer for Iowans," read the page 1 *Technology News* tribute after McDonald lost his battle with cancer on Oct. 28, 2013.



Tom McDonald presenting at a safety workshop in 2007.



DUANE SMITH: Duane Smith was named LTAP director in fall 2001, shortly after Tom Maze's retirement. In all, he had a 15-year career with Iowa LTAP, joining as its associate director of outreach in 1994 and retiring at the end of 2009.

"After more than 15 years with Iowa LTAP, Duane Smith is retiring from Iowa State University on December 31, 2009. Come wish him well and celebrate his years of dedication at a retirement reception in his honor," read the retirement reception announcement in the November 2009 *Technology News*.

In addition to his role in Iowa LTAP, Smith had a long history of serving in leadership roles in the national organization. His NLTAPA leadership roles included serving as president/chairman from 1999–2001 and otherwise serving in various officer roles from 1998–2007 except the year following his time as chair.

Smith passed away at his home in Ames in February 2023 at the age of 79.



Duane Smith conducting a Leadership Academy module in 2009.

Current Staff

Technology News tries to include an article as new staff join Iowa LTAP. The following are short snippets from the articles written about current staff from when they joined the team.



KEITH KNAPP became Iowa LTAP director on June 1, 2010, replacing the retired Duane Smith. By the next quarter, he had written his first director's column on page 2 of *Technology News*, now a staple section of the newsletter.

"Well, like many of you, we are trying to 'do more with less' during some tight economic times and with a significant turnover in staff," Knapp wrote in that introductory column.

However, as is typical, he ended the column on a more optimistic note before describing upcoming trainings, noting, "Overall, our objective is to continue doing what we've always done well for you, while improving events and courses and responding to your needs in the coming years. As always, we need your input and feedback."

Knapp had also previously served as a researcher at CTRE and as an assistant professor at Iowa State starting in 1998.



PAUL ALBRITTON joined Iowa LTAP as technical training coordinator, a newly created position, in 2014.

"I knew this was a good organization to work for, I knew some of the people here already, and I wanted to see what I could do," Albritton said at the time, adding, "I hope to be a valuable resource for the cities and the counties that we deal with, and to be somebody they have confidence in."



LTAP staff during summer 2023.



Keith Knapp moderating a County Engineers Research Focus Group meeting.



Paul Albritton leading a work zone safety workshop.

Current Staff continued on page 17



DAVID VENEZIANO joined Iowa LTAP as the safety circuit rider in May 2015, finally staffing the program after an 18- to 24-month period of staff turnover due to retirements or deaths.

“I think the biggest thing I bring to county and local engineers is a desire to help in any way I can,” Veneziano said at the time. “Whether it is looking into a question someone might have and getting them the information they need or providing training to help them or their staff, my goal is to serve our clients.”



THERESA LITTERAL joined Iowa LTAP as program manager and the Statewide MDST facilitator, another newly created position within the program, in fall 2015.

“My objectives with the MDST are to facilitate interagency coordinated multidisciplinary efforts and cooperation in addressing traffic safety and mobility concerns as well as to identify and mitigate the cause of crashes on Iowa roadways and to improve crash response practices,” Litteral said at the time.



KORI MAHIEU is Iowa LTAP’s most recent addition, joining as its education and activity administrator in fall 2022.

“The people are definitely the best part about working at LTAP,” Mahieu said at the time. “My team and everyone at InTrans have been so welcoming and amazing to work with. I’m most looking forward to getting to know more of the local people we serve.”



David Veneziano and Paul Albritton demonstrating equipment and proper use of signage during work zone safety workshops.



Theresa Litteral promoting the MDST program with InTrans director Shauna Hallmark at an annual Iowa State University Day at the Capitol event.

BY THE NUMBERS

— 1986 —

Within the first three years of the program, “nearly **4,000** people have attended workshops developed by the program and more than 14 issues (**50,000** [copies]) of *Technology News* have been mailed to local public works employees.”

— 1999 —

Ahead of the new millennium, each year Iowa LTAP was providing **6** issues of *Technology News*, each distributed to about **3,000** people; delivering **61** workshops, serving **3,200** participants; making nearly **1,000** loans from its library; and helping with more than **300** instances of technical assistance.

— 2008 —

Twenty-five years into Iowa LTAP’s history was a good time to tally some figures of its efforts over the years and recently. During Iowa LTAP’s first year, it offered fewer than a dozen workshops, and nearly 25 years later, in 2007, it offered **144** training opportunities, including **55** related to safety topics. It was also estimated that more than **5,000** motor grader operators had participated in its MoGO training in two decades and more than **14,000** Iowa employees had participated in the Roads Scholar Program in the just over 5 years since its inception.

— 2018 —

Iowa LTAP had a record number of participants in its Work Zone and Flagger trainings, with **712** people attending at least one of these Iowa LTAP events as of August 1, 2018, which at the time was already more than 200 over the yearly average for this particular training.


— 2020 —

The COVID-19 pandemic that started in March 2020 required Iowa LTAP to take all of its efforts online. This was accomplished very quickly and resulted in attendance for the year of about **4,600** at what were almost entirely online events. This attendance included those who attended online and those who took advantage of the recordings of those live online events after they were held. Iowa LTAP has continued to track our impact online more closely due to this shift.


— 2022 —

A combination of new local agency staff, a backlog in training needs, and options for both in-person and online events meant LTAP’s impact grew from about 4,500 attendees pre-COVID-19 to a record **5,800**. The record number in 2022 also doesn’t include website usage (nearly **14,000** users with more than **40,000** page views) or the staff’s personal technical assistance (offered to about **40** individuals).





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