Implementing the COLD, HARD DATA. That’s what the Iowa legislature has asked for in regard to the effects of implements of husbandry—specifically, their axle weights—on Iowa’s roadways.

The Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE) has contracted with the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) to provide such data to the General Assembly by January 1, 2000. CTRE will investigate the effects of grain carts and tank wagons on flexible and rigid pavements. CTRE will also determine how flotation tires or tracks on such implements affect the distribution of axle weights to the roadway.

Background
As the size of Iowa’s farms has increased, so have the sizes and weights of implements of husbandry. Like tractor-trailers, today’s multi-ton tractors and combines distribute their weight over multiple axles, minimizing their stress on roadways. Other implements...

continued on page 2
To help the legislature answer additional questions, and give equipment manufacturers and farmers time to respond to the new legislation, weight embargoes on bridges or with regulations regarding axle-weight limitations on roadways. The approximate response of shoulders (limited to deformation in the vertical direction only) will be analyzed by examining very thin pavements under different loads. Although of great interest to counties, the response of gravel roads to various loads is beyond the scope of this study.

This analytic study will be validated by a field study. Test sections of two roadways under construction this fall, a portland cement concrete (PCC) road in Jones and Jackson counties and an asphalt cement concrete (ACC) road in Crawford County, will be instrumented with strain gages, thermocouples, and deflection-measuring plates.

The Jones-Jackson County road was instrumented in late August, and researchers hope to conduct tests in September. The Crawford County road will be instrumented and tested later in the season. Data will be collected using a high-speed, 16-bit data logger while vehicles are driven across the test sections at various velocities.

Legislators, manufacturers and distributors of implements of husbandry, agriculture association representatives, county engineers, and members of the Iowa State Association of Counties provided input regarding issues to be addressed in the research. A variety of these stakeholders are participating in the project. For example, Firestone Agricultural Tire Division (Des Moines, Iowa) is providing technical data about flotation tires. Eldon C. Stutsman, Inc. (Hills, Iowa), Kinze

The opinions, findings, or recommendations expressed here are those of the Center for Transportation Research and Education and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Highway Administration or the Iowa Department of Transportation.

The preparation of this newsletter was financed through the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). LTAP is a nationwide effort financed jointly in Iowa by the Federal Highway Administration and the Iowa Department of Transportation.

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To foster a safe, efficient, environmentally sound transportation system by improving skills and knowledge of local transportation providers through training, technical assistance, and technology transfer, to improve the quality of life for Iowans.

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Thanks to Larry Schmidt, street superintendent for the City of Manchester, for tipping us off to this story when he sent in his reader survey this summer. (For a brief report on the reader survey, see page 12.)

OCTOBER is baling season in Manchester, Iowa. That’s when the city’s reconfigured hay stacker travels the streets, scooping up leaves raked there by residents and baling the leaves in large, loaf-shaped bundles for composting.

A couple years ago street superintendent Larry Schmidt and his crew adapted a rented hay stacker, intended for picking up and baling corn stalks and hay, to collect leaves. Their first modification involved clamping rubber skids underneath the stacker to pick up leaves. Eventually they replaced the skids with rubber gathering wheels mounted on the front of the stacker. Then they supplemented the scooping action of the rubber wheels by adding a flipper bar that kicks leaves under the stacker to enhance its intake capacity.

The redesigned stacker “gobbles up the leaves,” Schmidt says. He is working on a patent application for the design modifications.

Schmidt estimates the modified stacker can compress eight or ten five-cubic-yard dump truck loads of leaves, maybe more, in each stack. The stacks are deposited at the city compost site, where they are mixed with other yard waste.

Schmidt’s final design works so well that the City of Manchester has purchased its own hay stacker—a Heston Model 10 “Stack Hand”—just for leaf collection. Drawn by a tractor, the modified stacker replaces four dump trucks and two loaders that the city once required for leaf collection during the autumn. Leaf pickup operations are now accomplished by the stacker followed by a street sweeper, generating significant savings for the city and freeing other crew members and equipment for other city maintenance projects.

For more information contact Larry Schmidt, 319-927-4011.

The City of Manchester’s baler “gobbles up” leaves on the streets.

Manufacturing, Inc. (Williamsburg, Iowa), and Balzer Inc. (Cedar Falls, Iowa) are providing equipment for the field tests.

For more information
For more information about the research, contact

Fouad Fanous, professor of civil and construction engineering at Iowa State, 515-294-9416, fanous@iastate.edu; or Brian Coree, CTRE’s materials engineer, 515-294-3973, bcoree@iastate.edu.
IT'S A TONGUE TWISTER, but Story County’s maintenance crew takes it seriously: Their stainless steel salt and sand spreader is a shining new tool in the county’s snow and ice-fighting arsenal.

Story County Maintenance Superintendent Jeff Biddle first encountered stainless steel spreaders during his 20-year tenure with the Iowa Department of Transportation. When he joined the Story County staff in 1996, the idea went with him. Now, stainless steel spreaders replace those made with mild steel.

“Longevity is the biggest benefit of stainless steel,” says Biddle. Salt and sand are hard on mild steel spreaders, even though they sport a coat of paint for added protection against chemicals. Stainless steel spreaders, however, are up to the challenge.

Other counties are also taking note of stainless steel’s resistance to chemicals, especially as they consider employing brine systems for snow and ice control. As opposed to older control methods, which rely on moisture from snow to activate chemicals, brine solutions are activated before application, exposing spreaders to increased wear.

Biddle says there are only two significant differences between stainless steel and mild steel spreaders: durability and cost. He believes stainless steel’s increased durability cancels out its higher cost.

Biddle explains that the initial cost of stainless steel spreaders is “a bit more,” but this cost is soon absorbed because the spreaders outlive more than one truck. In contrast, mild steel spreaders must be replaced frequently.

For more information, contact Jeff Biddle, 515-382-7364.

Stainless steel spreaders generally outlive snow plow trucks, according to Jeff Biddle, Story County maintenance superintendent.
Several million tons of used or waste roofing material end up in the nation’s landfills each year, with Iowa alone contributing 130,000 tons to the pile. Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) researchers estimate that 20 to 40 percent of the material in asphalt roofing shingles is liquid asphalt, and the remaining material consists of sand and other binding materials. Used or waste asphalt shingles are therefore prime candidates for recovery and reuse in roadway projects. Options for recycling shingles include melting them for crack filling asphalt pavements, and using ground shingles as a cold mix for dust control.

Iowa DOT tests of bituminous shingles demonstrate that their asbestos content is extremely low, typically two to three percent. The little asbestos present is generally encapsulated in asphalt cement, so crushing the shingles does not produce dangerous asbestos dust.

A 1995 abstract issued by Robert F. Steffes, Iowa DOT assistant research engineer, and Shane Tymkowicz, secondary road research coordinator, discussed an initial field test sponsored by the Iowa Highway Research Board (HR-207). The study evaluated the use of ground, recycled asphalt shingles for hot-pour crack filling in Spencer, Iowa. At that time, the authors stated that initial results were very encouraging; for a variety of reasons, however, the study was not completed.

The same year in Benton County, ground asphalt shingles were cold mixed on a quarter-mile stretch of roadway for dust control purposes. The ground shingles were spread on top of a crushed limestone surface and bladed to mix with the limestone, resulting in a surface of equal volume shingles and limestone. A year later, the “shingled” roadway remained nearly dust-free and workable. Two years after the initial application, the county had collected enough waste shingles to apply the dust control method to two more miles of roadway.

Benton County Engineer Myron Parizek says that visual inspection of the project revealed “much different dust patterns. Instead of that big, rolling ball of dust that’s kicked up by limestone, the dust from the asphalt mix doesn’t roll.”

“Our biggest obstacle is getting the nails out of the asphalt materials,” Parizek adds. “But each year the party who grinds the shingles has improved the methods for removing nails.” Parizek explains that hanging long bar magnets from maintenance vehicles also helps to remove nails from the roadway mix.

Dallas County has also joined the recycling movement. Recycled shingles are being used as dust control on three miles of bypass roadway this summer. Having witnessed the duration of Benton County’s dust control measures, Dallas County Engineer Jim George hopes that his county will experience similar success, consequently balancing out the project’s expense over several years.

“The total cost of processing the shingles, hauling them for 25 miles from Des Moines, and applying them is around $11,000 per mile, while the material used in more traditional dust control, such as calcium or tree sap, runs around $1,500 per mile,” George explains. He adds that a county can avoid some of the expense by establishing its own recycling center rather than trucking the materials from a distant location.

Ground shingle material may be an effective substitute for aggregate in asphalt paving mix and has in fact been used for this purpose in trials in Nevada, Minnesota, Nova Scotia, and elsewhere. Mark Dunn, research engineer at the Iowa DOT, says the department is tentatively planning to produce an experimental lab pavement mix using recycled asphalt shingles. The mix will conform to Superpave standards, which limit recycled materials to no more than 10 percent of the mix.

For more information contact Mark Dunn, 515-239-1447; Jim George, 515-993-4289; or Myron Parizek, 319-472-2211.
Spin your web: helping users navigate your site

This is the fourth article in a series about web site development for local transportation agencies. The first three articles covered planning a web site, acquiring the tools for creating it, and choosing and organizing content.

Choosing and organizing content for a web site is a big job. To make sure the visitors to your site appreciate what a great job you’ve done, you need to label things clearly and well, and provide an easy way for visitors to navigate your pages.

What are good labels?
- Labels are the names you give to sections of your site and to links within it. See the City of Des Moines web page below. Clicking on the “City Clerk’s Office” button, an example of a link label, will take you to a page with the same label. Labels are part of a whole labeling system that should be consistent throughout your site.

The City of Des Moines’s web site presents a good example of a clear, consistent navigation system.

- Good labels are specific and descriptive from the perspective of the site’s users. “Employment Opportunities” and “Breaking News!” are specific, descriptive labels that visitors to your site would readily understand. “Engineering Division” may be meaningful to people in your agency, but it doesn’t tell outsiders much. Would that link allow users to contact the engineering division or learn more about what the engineering division does? Ambiguous labels can generate confusion, which doesn’t help create a positive impression about a site.

Problem labels
One great thing about the World Wide Web is how much we can learn (and borrow) from other sites’ strengths and weaknesses. One metropolitan public works department we found has developed a well organized site chock-full of helpful content for its public. Some labels, however, are a little confusing.

For example, the label “Index” on the department’s main page sets up specific web user expectations—mainly that the index is an alphabetical listing of main topics or ideas within the department’s web site.

But the index doesn’t fit users’ expectations because it is neither alphabetical nor a consistent listing of main topics. At the time of this writing, the index looked like this:

Mission/Vision Statement
Services at a Glance
Street Closings
[___] Road EIS Executive Summary
Snow Emergency Info
Recycling
Other Public Works
[___] Bridge Opening
News
Director’s Greeting
Street Construction

If the list were alphabetical, two related ideas such as “Street Closings” and “Street Construction” would be next to each other in the list.

As to the link labels themselves, some are specific and descriptive, giving users a clear idea of where the link will take them. “Snow Emergency Info” and “Director’s Greeting” are two examples.

Other labels are more ambiguous. The bridge opening sounds like a news item. Will the general public...
New training opportunities through Iowa LTAP

Duane Smith, Associate Director of Outreach

Two important items have come together at Iowa’s Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) center that will ultimately support exciting new training opportunities for local governments.

The first item is the completion of an intensive three-month training program for new transportation technicians—Cool Careers—which was sponsored by the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) and facilitated by Iowa LTAP. During the summer, trainees took 40 hours of classes each week at Iowa State University.

The second item is a new computer training lab at the Center for Transportation Research and Training.

Train... continued on page 8

Web... continued from page 6

Know what an EIS executive summary is? “Other Public Works” is also unclear; the link takes you to a list of national organization’s web sites rather than nearby cities’ public works departments, as users might guess.

Even when you think your labels make perfect sense and can’t be misunderstood, it may help to get some feedback on them, especially from people outside your agency.

Navigation systems

A user dealing with ambiguous labels will have problems navigating the site. Effective labeling systems work together with navigation systems to help users develop a mental map of a site so they can find the information they’re seeking.

A popular and useful method of helping users get around a site is a navigation bar. A navigation bar is a set of related links that presents the basic information hierarchy of a site. Using navigation bars consistently throughout your pages helps users understand where they are and where they can go from there.

The City of Des Moines’ web site (www.ci.desmoines.ia.us/) uses graphic and textual navigation bars to show users the main categories of information that can be linked from a given page. For example, clicking “Mayor and Council” on the home page will take you to a page with a photo of the mayor and city council and another navigation bar with links such as “Leave a Message,” “Meeting Agendas/Info,” and “Request to Speak.”

The navigation bar on the “Mayor and Council” page is a completely new set of links. Each link in this bar is the same color as the “Mayor and Council” button on the home page. This color consistency is a subtle hint to users that all the links with the same color are related.

The graphic navigation bars are repeated as simple text links at the bottom of each page. This kind of redundant navigation system is helpful for a couple of reasons: 1) users who have graphics turned off in their browsers can still get around the site, and 2) visually impaired users who have screen readers to read aloud the contents of a web page also have full access to the site.

No matter who designs your site—someone in-house or an outside professional—your inside knowledge and input about the consistency, and especially the specificity, of labels and navigation systems will make all the difference to the user friendliness of your site.

The next article in this series will discuss web site design. •
Education (CTRE), the home of Iowa’s LTAP. The lab is equipped with 20 Gateway workstations and can accommodate up to 40 students at a time for hands-on training.

How are the technician training program and CTRE’s computer training lab related?

The technician training program provides a framework of new training modules that can easily be adapted for local transportation agencies. For example, we now have modules for math fundamentals, roadway design, surveying, and Micro-Station. Some of these new modules are heavily computer based, which is where the new computer lab comes in. For the first time, we can regularly offer convenient computer-based training for local governments via CTRE’s computer training lab.

To help us take advantage of these unique training opportunities, we have recently sent a workshop interest survey to Iowa’s local agencies and Iowa DOT shops. The survey describes possible workshop offerings for the upcoming year. These include tried-and-true safety workshops, many of which can be brought to your shop. Other possibilities include new modules from the technician training program.

Categories of workshops described on the survey include

- **engineering elements for technicians** (math, surveying, bridge inspection, highway design)

- **writing that gets results** (business writing, proposal writing)

- **safety training for local governments** (flagger training, signing practices, roadside design, chain saw/excavation/backhoe safety, traffic calming, ALAS)

- **World Wide Web for transportation personnel** (intro to the web, web-based services for county engineers, web site development)

- **computer applications training** (word processing, database, GIS, CAD, other)

Some of these workshops would be offered in CTRE’s new computer training lab in Ames.

Help us tailor our training program to meet your agency’s needs by completing and returning the workshop interest survey. Let us know what we can do for you.

If survey responses indicate sufficient interest in a new topic, we will assemble an advisory committee, design the curriculum, and schedule the course.

If you need a survey, contact Georgia Parham, LTAP secretary, 515-294-8103; georgia@ctre.iastate.edu. Or you can download the survey from CTRE’s web site, www.ctre.iastate.edu. •
Iowa’s LTAP has new home

THE BOXES ARE UNPACKED, the computers reconnected, the library reorganized and improved. Iowa’s Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), housed in the Center for Transportation Research and Education, has moved.

We’re still located in Iowa State University’s Research Park south of Highway 30 in Ames. We just picked up our gear and moved across Airport Road to a brand new building on South Loop Drive. The move gives us more space for conducting workshops (we now have an in-house computer training lab and a videoconferencing classroom) and more parking space for workshop attendees and visitors to our transportation library.

Only our address is new; telephone numbers and web and e-mail addresses remain the same.

Center for Transportation Research and Education
Iowa State University Research Park
2901 South Loop Drive, Suite 3100
Ames, Iowa 50010-8632
515-294-8103 (voice)
515-294-0467 (fax)
www.ctre.iastate.edu/

Stop by and see us when you’re in Ames. Iowa’s LTAP center is here to serve you.

Iowa’s LTAP crew, from left to right:
Stan Ring
Librarian
Marcia Brink
Editor
Jan Graham
Account Manager
Tom McDonald
Safety Circuit Rider
Georgia Parham
Secretary
Duane Smith
LTAP Director
Diane Love
Account Clerk
Sharon Prochnow
Workshop Coordinator
Missing:
Michele Regenold
Assistant Editor
(Shes taking the photo!)
New size, reflectivity requirements for street signs

by Tom McDonald, Safety Circuit Rider

ATTENTION cities and counties responsible for maintaining street-name signs, including those commonly called “911” signs: Just a reminder that Federal Highway Administration rules now include new minimum size and reflectivity requirements for these signs.

Section 2D-39 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) now recommends a minimum of six inches in height for uppercase letters, four and a half inches for lowercase letters, and three inches for street abbreviations or city sections.

These minimum size requirements apply to street-name signs on any streets or roads with speed limits greater than 25 mph. For lower-speed streets, the option remains to use four-inch uppercase lettering on street-name signs.

Additionally, in the future all street-name signs must be retroreflectorized.

These changes don’t become effective until January 2012, allowing sufficient time to correct any current signing deficiencies during your normal sign replacement cycle. Whenever you replace any street or road signs, take the new FHWA requirements into consideration.

Handmade forks do heavy lifting

STEVE DRISCOLL, the building and grounds supervisor for the City of Asbury’s public works department, developed a simple tool to do heavy lifting. He created handmade forks for a tractor loader bucket.

The forks are made of worn-out snow plow cutting edges from 11- and 8-foot plows. The two sizes are welded together for strength. The forks slip under the edge of the bucket and tighten down from the top. They are adjustable to any width.

The forks save the public works department valuable time and help prevent back strain among employees. Driscoll says, “We can now carry loads of lumber, steel pipe, road sign posts, picnic tables, and many other items. This project cost us nothing but the time it took to weld them together.”

For more information about the forks, contact Steve Driscoll, 319-556-6410.
Iowa Winter Training Expo
September 27–28, 1999
Scheman Building/Hilton Coliseum
Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa

10th Annual Iowa Snow Plow Roadeo
2nd Annual Motor Grader Roadeo
September 29, 1999
Scheman Building Parking Lot
Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa

City, county, and state winter maintenance personnel: these events are for you.

Expo participants will select from 16 sessions on chemicals and abrasives, anti-icing strategies, weather forecasts, snow removal equipment, customer service, and overseas winter operations. They will view displays of technology, equipment, materials, and services by vendors from around the country, including hands-on demonstrations. They will also enjoy an old-fashioned hog roast and social.

Roadeo contestants will challenge their ability to maneuver a snow plow and/or grader. This year the grader roadeo will be judged and awards given. It requires frame and moldboard positioning that simulates the many different job requirements operators face daily.

For registration materials, contact Carole Seifert, 515-294-1400. Or download the on-line form: www.ctre.iastate.edu/
Reader survey responses help save your LTAP dollars

Readers responded in droves to a recent Technology News survey. Thanks to the heavy response, particularly about address changes and deletions, Iowa’s Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) has corrected dozens of inaccurate addresses on the Technology News mail list. We’ve also trimmed the list by several hundred names. The savings in printing and postage costs for each issue will provide more LTAP services for you, our customers.

Respondents who wanted addresses deleted generally gave one of three reasons: (1) the address was a duplicate, (2) they have changed jobs and no longer work in the transportation field, or (3) they are retired.

Several survey respondents provided suggestions for future articles. If you sent a suggestion with your survey, thank you; we will be contacting you soon for more information.

We also learned that respondents prefer, approximately three to one, the catalog-insert format of our lists of new library acquisitions. We appreciate your feedback, and we’ll continue the new format.

Thanks to readers who helped us streamline our mail list. We also appreciate your comments and suggestions; they help us serve you better.

Update your mailing address

☐ Please add the following name/address to the Technology News mail list.
☐ Please correct the name and/or address below on the Technology News mail list.

New or corrected mailing information:
Name _______________________________________________________
Title _______________________________________________________
Address _____________________________________________________
City/State/Zip ________________________________________________
Organization _________________________________________________

☐ Please delete the name/address below from the Technology News mail list.

To make a change to the Technology News mail list, please complete the information at left and mail this entire page (including mailing label) to the address below.

Thank you!