



# CENTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE ENGINEERING STUDIES

## Missouri Local Transportation Center 2006

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# 2006 LTAP/TTAP CENTER ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Overview

Welcome to the 2006 LTAP/TTAP Center Assessment Report. Center directors should answer the following questions in the spaces provided below. The issues in each section are intended to be addressed at the executive management level.

- **Section One** asks for three responses by focus area for one specific question regarding the successes and challenges your Center faced over the past year as it worked to promote the national LTAP/TTAP
- **Section Two** focuses on the internal operations of Centers, posing differing questions that address performance reporting and measurement
- **Section Three** is an opportunity for Center directors to give an overall view of your work over the past year, including an open-ended opportunity to relate your opinions on the state, direction, and health of LTAP/TTAP

Attach additional sheets as needed; however, generally limit your Sections One and Two responses to a short-answer format, and your Section Three responses to around three total pages.

Completed reports are due to FHWA **no later than January 31, 2007**. E-mail your completed CAR in **MS Word format only** to [clark.martin@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:clark.martin@fhwa.dot.gov). In the subject line of your message, indicate the full name of your state or tribal region; for example, Wyoming LTAP CAR or Alaska TTAP CAR.

## Helpful Hints

- **Your responses are confidential and secure.** FHWA staff alone will review your responses; they will not be shared with anyone outside the FHWA LTAP/TTAP office, and the results presented in the Program Annual Report will capture general national themes from the responses without revealing any Center-specific information.
- **Be as honest and frank as possible about the challenges or issues you faced.** FHWA will be unable to manage the Program effectively without honest, impartial and accurate information about the state of the program at the Center level. Your position at the “front-line” closest to our customer insures that you are best placed to assess the local effectiveness of the Program.
- **Strive to be original and discursive in your responses.** Do not cut-and-paste lists or bullets of completed Center tasks, yet fail to discuss what it all means or the impact these efforts had.
- **All CAR questions are designed to be open-ended.** CAR questions should spark your imagination and invite you to think critically about your Center. Do not doggedly respond to each specific item within a question without addressing the “big picture.” Remember, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to CAR questions.
- **Do not hesitate to share your vision and ideas for the future of LTAP/TTAP.** The CAR represents an opportunity for your voice to be heard by decision makers at the national Program level. Your input is critical to insuring our continued success.

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### Section One: Specific Successes and Challenges

Discuss the successes your Center created this past year that promoted national program efforts in the three external focus areas. Discuss how you managed resources, any challenges faced along the way, and what you might do differently in the coming year to address these challenges and meet new ones.

#### Safety

Missouri LTAP increased the number of safety-related training sessions from 14 sessions in 2005 to 35 sessions in 2006. We are working closely with MoDOT's "Blueprint for Safety Coalition" and worked with this team to put on an LTAP-sponsored Safety Fair at Rolla Junior High School in October 2006. The fair was aimed at 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who are preparing to earn their drivers licenses. The students heard from an exceptional guest speaker, Ms. Penny Light of "Think First Missouri", and then rotated through stations set up in the school parking lot. Representatives from the Missouri State Highway Patrol provided demonstrations of the "Seatbelt Convincer" and the "Rollover Simulator". The fair was very well received, and we have had requests for similar fairs at other schools. We are also working closely with the MoDOT Highway Safety office to help promote their programs, and specifically those programs aimed at rural roads. This office has contributed articles to our quarterly newsletter, and they have promised additional articles for the upcoming spring issue.

#### Workforce Development

Workforce development of the current workforce has been a challenging area for the former MLTRC. With new leadership coming into the center, workforce development is one of our key target areas for improvement in the coming year. We have identified the workforce development classes we plan to teach as part of a new "Roads Scholar" program at Missouri LTAP. We are partnering with the University of Missouri Rolla office of Distance and Continuing Education to access their workforce development workshops, and offer them to our constituents. We are doing the same with the UMR Center for Entrepreneurship and Outreach at UMR; and are working with our state chapter of APWA to piggyback onto some of their programs.

Workforce development of a future workforce has been provided through the management of the FHWA Summer Transportation Institute (STI) which has been provided by Missouri LTAP at UMR. We intend to provide a Summer Transportation Institute at UMR again this summer, but to offer two shorter term programs so that we reach more participants. We are also partnering with MoDOT, FHWA, University of Missouri Kansas City, US Army Corps of Engineers, National Institute for Construction Excellence (NICE), and several engineering and construction firms to sponsor a Construction Career Day event in Kansas City, Missouri on May 2, 2007. We hope that this will be the first of many annual Construction Career Day events targeted at area high school students.

#### Infrastructure Management

Missouri LTAP increased the number of infrastructure management training sessions from 14 in 2005 to 23 in 2006. We worked with our 10 MoDOT districts to put on applicable training at their facilities and targeted the counties located within each of the

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10 districts. We also hosted an APWA "Click, Listen, and Learn" session at UMR and invited local county road employees to attend. The success of this first session demonstrated to us that this is a practice that we should continue. We projected the information onto a large screen and provided hand-outs to participants. We also provided coffee and donuts for attendees, which made them feel more welcome at the event. We have several new training classes identified for the coming year, and intend to offer them at easily accessible locations across the state. Our desire is to develop consistency in the location, cost, timing, and quality of our training sessions so that people have plenty of time to schedule and budget for the training, and that they know that the training will be worth the time spent by their employees.

### **Section Two: General Program and Center Management**

**Describe your specific annual performance goals and the methods you use to identify them. Discuss the outcomes you are trying to achieve through your goals and how your Center effectively targets its efforts to insure that Program resources reach intended beneficiaries.**

Because the Missouri LTAP center at UMR was just awarded a new 2-year contract in January 2007, we used the proposal process as a means of identifying our goals for the coming year. Our goals include the implementation of a Roads Scholar Program; the development of strong relationships with other LTAP centers, MoDOT, APWA, Missouri Association of Counties (MAC); Missouri Association of Councils of Government (MACOG), Missouri Association of County Transportation Officials (MACTO); dramatic improvement of our library resources; and improvement in our ability to quickly provide technical assistance to our customers. We have already received a great deal of feedback from our partners at MoDOT and Federal Highway as well as many of our customers, on how we can improve the LTAP services. We are taking this feedback very seriously as we develop our future programs and services. We have scheduled our first Advisory Committee meeting to follow the Transportation Engineers Association of Missouri (TEAM) annual conference in St. Louis. We intend to present our draft strategic plan to the committee for their review and input.

**Next, provide details on the timely and credible performance information you collect to manage these efforts for your Center. Describe any management tools or processes you use to coordinate your efforts.**

We collect evaluation surveys from participants at all of our training sessions. As we issue new contracts for training services, we are including the requirement that our trainers engage in Kirckpatrick Level I and II questioning to ensure that their audience has learned the intended information. We have implemented a new database package called the Program Assessment Database (PAD) with the help of our Information Technology staff at UMR. This software package maintains all of the information required for our PAR reports, and provides immediate data on our performance as needed. We will also be implementing a standardized training package that will include a checklist for our instructors and basic guidelines that will insure that the quality of our training is consistently high.

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Finally, discuss how your Center evaluates its effectiveness and relevance. Give specific details regarding your internal review process, including how you manage the trade-offs between costs, resources and rewards, and how you adjust to emerging problems, interests and opportunities.

Given that the Missouri LTAP at UMR was just awarded a new 2-year contract, and that there has been a complete change of leadership, we have the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of the past and to implement positive changes that will demonstrate a commitment to success in the future. We rely on the input of our customers, their attendance at our training sessions, their responses on our surveys, and their willingness to contact us when they have a technical question or concern. We are very adaptable to emerging problems, interests, and opportunities and have demonstrated this through the classes we are offering, the newsletter articles we are providing, the expanded list of qualified instructors we are developing and our willingness to provide presentations about our program on short notice at various venues across the state. We are looking forward to implementing a "Roads Scholar" program and intend to reward participants for completion of the program through public recognition at annual MACTO and MAC conferences. Our partnership with these organizations has given us an excellent method to gain access to our customer base. The ability to partner on conferences, and then to use the conferences as a method to provide training sessions and to recognize "Roads Scholar" graduates, will only improve participation in our program.

### Section Three: Overall Program and Center Assessment

Provide a qualitative assessment of your overall efforts to improve and expand the work of your Center over the past year. Address the overall "state of the Program" from the perspective of your Center, and include your perception of how your Center performed during the year and what impact your work may have had on our customers and the Program. Include as much specific information as possible, and share both challenges as well as successes. Attach additional sheets as needed; however, limit submissions to no more than three total pages.

The Missouri LTAP at the University of Missouri Rolla is at a crossroads. We were just awarded a two-year contract with some trepidation from MoDOT and Federal Highway leadership, based on previous mediocre performance by the MLTRC team. The majority of the previous leadership and staff have left the University of Missouri, and are no longer involved in the delivery of LTAP services. The new team at Missouri LTAP is extremely excited about the opportunity to exceed everyone's expectations in program delivery. We have already established strong relationships with partners that will not only provide venues for workshop and training opportunities, but will also give us direct and useful feedback on our performance. We changed our name from the "Missouri Local Transportation Resource Center (MLTRC)" to the Missouri LTAP because we felt that there was little name recognition or association with the strong National LTAP organization with the MLTRC name. We want to learn from and partner with our fellow LTAP centers, and we want to be part of the team. We updated our look, our name, and our logo; but most importantly we have updated the energy and focus of our center. We have an amazingly dedicated team now, and are constantly seeking ways that we can reach our customers, and help them in the delivery of their important services in the maintenance and repair of Missouri's local roads. We have dramatically improved the

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quality of our quarterly newsletter and have received many positive comments about the look and the content. We are constantly seeking high quality articles that are relevant to our customers, and through our partnership efforts, have received exceptional input for future articles. We are in the process of updating our library, and have already added some extremely well-received guidebooks, manuals, and DVDs. We are partnering with key organizations across the state to include: MoDOT, FHWA, University of Missouri Kansas City, US Army Corps of Engineers, National Institute for Construction Excellence (NICE), and several engineering and construction firms to sponsor a Construction Career Day event in Kansas City, Missouri on May 2, 2007. We hope that this will be the first of many annual Construction Career Day events targeted at area high school students. The Missouri LTAP also intends to continue to host an annual Summer Transportation Institute (STI) program in coordination with FHWA and MoDOT. This program allows us to encourage young people to consider careers in the transportation industry. This year, we intend to break the 4-week program into two 2-week programs, and will target one of the programs toward female high school students. Our partnership with the MoDOT Traffic Safety Division has already proven to be a positive relationship for both organizations. We are looking for opportunities to bring information on grants and other funding opportunities to our rural communities. Working with the MoDOT Traffic Safety Division, we are getting the word out on such programs as "Safe Routes to School" and "High Risk Rural Roads". We have also facilitated a relationship with the Missouri Association of Councils of Government (MACOG) which is an association of the regional planning commissions across the state. These organizations often are engaged in planning of transportation improvements for their communities. By forming a partnership with Missouri LTAP, MoDOT Traffic Safety and the MACOG, the latest information of safety improvements, techniques, and funding mechanisms can be quickly shared with the local communities. The future of the Missouri LTAP looks very strong, and we look forward to providing a very positive Center Assessment Report for 2007!