Zach Zacharia says farewell....

I have mixed feelings as I write this article for what will be my last contribution to ROADTALK as the director of the Tennessee Transportation Assistance Program (TTAP).

As some of you know, for the past 5 years I have been working on my Ph.D. part time here at The University of Tennessee and (finally!) I will be graduating in August. After graduation, I will be moving to Fort Worth, Texas, where I will be an Assistant Professor in Marketing at Texas Christian University. I will continue to be involved with The University of Tennessee until December to assist in our International Truck and Bus Safety Research and Policy Symposium scheduled for November 7-9, 2001, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Knoxville.

During the past five years we have made a number of significant changes to the TTAP program in an effort to better meet the needs of local road authorities across the state. Some of the highlights include a new video catalog with descriptions for technology transfer, the Regional Representatives Program for technical assistance, the Circuit Rider Program and the Tennessee Academy of Transportation Engineering for training. I want to thank all of you who provided feedback as we developed new programs, and who supported our initiatives as we strive to meet your transportation assistance needs.

We have assembled a good group of individuals dedicated to meeting the requirements and expectations of the TTAP program. I am confident the TTAP program will continue to flourish and grow in the future. Two individuals who will be directly responsible for the TTAP program need to be mentioned specifically.

Frank Brewer, Assistant Director of Training at the Center for Transportation Research will be managing the Circuit Rider program as well as the TTAP training program. Please feel free to contact him about any training concerns you may have.

Matt Cate, Senior Research Associate, will be in charge of technical assistance and technology transfer for TTAP. Please feel free to contact him for any technical assistance and technology transfer needs.

I will miss the many good people here in Tennessee and across the country with whom I have been fortunate enough to work with during these past five years. Although I look forward to research and teaching in Texas, I know I will miss the people I am leaving behind. I am grateful for the many opportunities afforded me at the Center for Transportation Research at The University of Tennessee. Thank you for the many kindnesses you have shown me. I hope our paths may cross again in the future.
This will be my last Director’s letter for Roadtalk and as I said on page 1, I am leaving the TTAP program with a lot of sadness. We also have to say goodbye and wish all of our research assistant, Solomon Caviness, who has graduated and has joined the New Jersey Turnpike Authority.

Also in this issue, Frank Brewer writes about the County Highway Officials meeting that he attended in June. He also wrote about the new course evaluation tool which we feel will be a new way to capture your feedback. If you would fax the form back so that we can continue to improve our workshops to better meet your needs, we would appreciate it.

An article on the Regional LTAP meeting held in May in St. Petersburg appears on page 8.

If you need to reach me, my new e-mail address is z.zacharia@cte.edu

Once again, goodbye, good wishes and all the best.

Take care.

Zach

Congratulations and Goodbye

Congratulations goes to our research assistant, Solomon Caviness. Solomon graduated in May with a Master in Engineering from the University of Tennessee. He is employed by the New Jersey Turnpike Authority.

Zach Zacharia, our director, completed his PhD in Business Administration and will join the Texas Christian University at Fort Worth, Texas as Assistant Professor teaching Logistics and Supply Chain Management.

Congratulations and best wishes to both of them.
TTAP Workshops

by Frank Brewer

From January 2001 through June 2001 TTAP has conducted 27 courses across the state and three on-site. Through these courses, we have reached a total 805 participants — 426 TDOT participants, 242 city and county participants, and 137 others. Our courses covered topics such as Work Zone and Flagging Control, Geotechnical Engineering, Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, Planning for New Highways, and Surveying as well as many others.

These one, two and three-day courses are held in hotels in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, and Jackson. These formats are used to keep travel of the participants to a minimum. Not all courses are limited to lecture only; whenever possible, classroom and field exercises are utilized in the courses. The Work Zone participants use scaled maps to create actual work zone traffic control setups, and the Survey and GPS classes have the participants in the field working with the actual instruments. During the Planning for New Highways course, the participants used a topographical map of an actual corridor to lay out a planned highway with “real world” constraints. Dane Ismart, the instructor for the Highway Capacity Manual 2000 course, introduced the class to “Jeopardy” type competition that pitted State and Federal personnel against the other participants. Political correctness prevents the publishing of the results of this competition, but the City, County, and others did quite well. Regardless of the outcome, all participants enjoyed the game.

If you have the opportunity to attend a TTAP course, please give it some consideration. At the courses, you not only have access to a considered expert within the topic area, you are also able to meet with other transportation personnel who have similar interests. Check out page 6 or our website (http://ctr.utk.edu/ttpa) for a listing of up-coming titles with dates, location, and a brief synopsis of the course. We hope to see you at one or more of the courses.

Students get hands-on experience at a GPS workshop.

County Highway Officials Meet

by Frank Brewer

On June 14, I was invited to attend the Tennessee County Highway Officials for Better Roads, Region 2 meeting. The meeting was held at the Cumberland Mountain State Park in Crossville. The current officers are: President, Tom Frazier (Bledsoe County), 1st Vice-president, Tom Collins (Bradley County), 2nd Vice-

Sixty-one people attended the meeting. They included vendors, county superintendents, including Floyd Farrell (TDOT Region 2), Gary Hayes (CTAS Region 2 representative), and Harold Ralston (TTAP Region 2 field representative). A short meeting was held with several pertinent items discussed. John Woodall (Franklin County), John Graham (Marion County), along with some of their personnel cooked a “mess” of catfish, hushpuppies, and onion-rings. I would like to let you know “it don’t get much better than that!”

Region 4 held their Quarterly Meeting at The Old Country Store in Jackson on June 21. Nineteen counties were represented along with TCHOA Executive Director Jim Westbrook, TDOT Region 4 Director Winston Gaffron, TTAP Regional Representative Tommy Stuts, several local contractors, suppliers and consultants, and other TDOT representatives. During the meeting, out-going President Jeff Jones (Dyer County) announced the results of the election for new officers: President, Leon Davenport (Tipton County), 1st Vice-president, Jim Smith (Fayette County), 2nd Vice-president, Davis Sipes (Hardeman County), 3rd Vice-president, Greg McCarley (Haywood County), Secretary/Treasurer, Carl Stoppenhagen (Gibson County).

Similar meetings in Regions 1 and 3 have been conducted across the state. These gatherings provide an informal setting for the open discussion and networking that brings about a tight, efficient regional organization.
The National Wood in Transportation Program

by Lawrence Perry

Most of us have travel over paved roads frequently. Many people use interstates to get to their destination. Interstate travel is usually quick and direct. Along the interstate, some travelers will go over long bridges, possibly spanning over a river or a deep valley. Other people use less traveled local roads to get to where they need to go. The bridges along these routes are usually not quite as long or as expensive as the ones a person would find on the interstate, but these bridges still serve a useful purpose and still cost money. Since the spans of these bridges are not quite as long as interstate bridges, there is another material available for the cities and counties that build and maintain these bridges. The list of materials for smaller spanned bridges would include steel, concrete, and timber.

Concrete and steel bridges can be found throughout Tennessee’s interstate system. Interstate bridges that span longer than 160 feet generally call for steel structures. Most of Tennessee’s interstate bridges that are less than 160 feet call for concrete bridges. Concrete bridges are typically less expensive than steel bridges and, using today’s high performance concrete, concrete beam spans of close to 160 feet can be reached.

Local road bridges usually do not have to worry about great spans such as the ones a person would find on the interstate. This gives local authorities the option for using timber as a material. Timber bridges are typically less expensive than concrete bridges, and if the lumber is treated correctly, the timber bridge can have a long life.

Many local authorities are unaware of the benefits of timber bridges. That is why the Federal Highway Administration in conjunction with the Forest Products Laboratory and the National Wood in Transportation Information Center have put out a new CD-ROM entitled “The National Wood in Transportation Program.” This CD-ROM was created to help inform people of the usefulness of timber in bridge building.

The CD-ROM contains papers on timber bridges ranging from 1988 to 2001. The papers’ information ranges from abstracts on specific national and international bridges to maintenance practices for wood bridges to certain editions of the “Crossing Newsletter,” which is specifically about timber bridges. This CD-ROM contains a wealth of information that local authorities could use when trying to decide if timber is a possibility for them to use as a building material.

The CD-ROM is user friendly and it allows readers to view the articles using the Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Copies of this CD-ROM are available at no cost to any city, county, or state agency in Tennessee. Private organizations and out-of-state public agencies may obtain copies for a nominal fee. Please call TTAP at (865) 974-0289 or 1-800-252-ROAD if you are interested in a copy.
Is anything wrong with these signs?

Since we printed Christi Duncan’s article on Traffic Control Devices: Improper Use Can Cause Confusion for Motorists (Vol. 14, No. 4, Winter 2000), a lot of interest has been focused on signs. We thought we would share the pictures that she has taken while traveling the highways on assignment for her sign grant project.

If you are interested in learning more about the sign grant program, please call David Utlely (TDOT), 615-253-2422.
Education and training opportunities are available through the University of Tennessee Center for Transportation Research (CTR), Southeast Transportation Center (STC), and Tennessee Transportation Assistance Program (TTAP). This listing of courses currently available includes both TTAP and TATE courses that are offered in conjunction with the University of Tennessee Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the Tennessee Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Local roadway departments can benefit from all of the workshops. Because of this, we ask that you please share this listing with others who might be interested in our workshops. The Center for Transportation Research is always eager to meet your research and training needs. If you have a special course in mind or would like a course held on site especially for your employees, please contact Jean Spangler at 1-800-252-ROAD.

*CEU and PDH credit hours available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basics of Road Construction</td>
<td>May 21-22</td>
<td>Knoxville</td>
<td>Hearne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basics of Road Construction</td>
<td>May 23-24</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Hearne</td>
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<td>Highway Capacity Manual 2000</td>
<td>Jun 5-7</td>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>Ismaili</td>
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<td>GPS Usage for Roadway Construction</td>
<td>Jun 1-12</td>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>Garrett</td>
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<td>Urban Transportation Planning</td>
<td>Aug 7-9</td>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>Wegmayer/Chapman</td>
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<td>Aug 15-16</td>
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<td>Kervin</td>
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<td>Aug 29-30</td>
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<td>Sep 19-20</td>
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<td>Bridges</td>
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<td>Sep 25-27</td>
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<td>Beckworth/Robson</td>
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<td>Wegmayer/Chapman</td>
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<td>AASHTO Roadside Design Guide</td>
<td>Dec 12</td>
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*Changes:
Highway Design for Older Driver Nov. 27 (Knoxville)
Highway Design for Older Driver Nov. 29 (Nashville)
Utility Accommodations Manual Cancelled

-course Evalutation Tool-

by Frank Brewer

In an effort to gauge the effectiveness of the courses that TTAP offers, participants are requested to fill out a short questionnaire at the completion of each course. This level one evaluation (as defined by Kirkpatrick's Four Level Evaluation Model) provides immediate impressions of the course content, the instructor(s), the meeting location, and other bits of information. Generally speaking, it reviews the participant's satisfaction of the time they spent attending the course. The evaluations are reviewed and tracked. This information is useful but it does leave questions unanswered.

To get a more useful picture of the effectiveness of the course, TTAP has developed a post course evaluation form. Approximately 3-months following the course all participants who attended are mailed a one-

continued on page 7
Evaluation Tool, continued from page 6

page fax-back form. The form has questions referencing the course attended. Included on the back of the form is a copy of the course agenda to refresh the participant’s memory of the course and its topics. The most critical question asked is, “… has what you learned been helpful to you on the job?” This is a question that cannot be answered until the participant has returned to the job. On the questionnaire it is followed by an “If yes, how” type check list of the following qualifiers: “improved safety”, “improved job performance”, “improved decision-making ability”, “cost savings”, and “other, please specify.”

We also ask if the reference materials, procedures, and or techniques have been used. In addition, we provide a space for comments, future topics, and request if the respondent would like to discuss their particular suggestions. A four-point Likert rating scale is included for an over-all satisfaction opinion with a rating of four being the highest level quality perceived.

The returned forms are reviewed and an attempt is made to contact those who have marked that they would like to discuss suggestions. One of the goals of successful training is to transfer the skills and ideas covered during the training to the job. From this post course evaluation review, we hope to accurately evaluate our courses to ensure that we are meeting this goal.

Our new evaluation program started with our August 31, 2000, course. Approximately 90 days following each course, the evaluations are mailed. We are currently experiencing a 16.8 percent return rate. Ninety-five percent of the respondents agree that the course was helpful. Of these respondents, 65.5 percent stated that they were able to use the techniques, procedures, or reference materials introduced at the courses. On the question regarding the overall quality and satisfaction of the course, we have been given an average rating of 3.39 from a possible 4.0.

We at TTAP are pleased with the response to our new survey technique. The additional data gathered will improve the accuracy of our evaluations of the utility of our courses. With the data gathered, we will be able to make informed choices on whether to offer any given course again during the next year.

We are always looking for your comments, ideas and suggestions to help make the TTAP program more useful to you.

1. Please send me more information on the following articles mentioned in this newsletter.

2. Please list any additional training workshops you would be interested in attending.

3. Please list topics for videos you would like TTAP to obtain.

4. Please list any other ideas or suggestions on how TTAP could assist you.

5. Please list your name and organization to verify for TTAP’s mailing list.

Name __________________________
Address __________________________
Title __________________________
Organization __________________________
Phone __________________________ Fax __________________________
Email __________________________
Are you currently on TTAP’s mailing list? _____ yes _____ no

Please fax your form to TTAP at (865) 974-3889 or mail to TTAP, Suite 309 Conference Center Building; Knoxville, TN 37996-4133.

FROM: __________________________

The North Carolina LTAP Center was the host for the Region IV LTAP Meeting in St. Petersburg, Florida. The conference was held May 16-18, 2001. Region IV is made up of representatives from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. Also invited to the regional meeting were representatives from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Department of Transportation (DOT), American Public Works Association (APWA)/Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) Clearing House, city and county representatives from the states in the region. Attendees from Tennessee included Zach Zacharia, Frank Brewer, Matt Cate, Jenny Jones and Mike Presley, Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT).

The agenda covered in this conference was different from the past regional conferences. Besides reports from the LTAP Clearing House from Nina Barker, Florida LTAP, and the report from FHWA by Bill Evan, the schedule included the planning meeting for the Transportation Technology Transfer and National LTAP Conference scheduled for July 29 till August 2. We toured the symposium site (Hilton Hotel, St. Petersburg) and went over the program, and the responsibilities of each center for the upcoming conference. If interested in finding out more about the conference, please go to the website http://www.ltapt2.org/ltapconf.htm

We would like to take this opportunity to thank North Carolina LTAP Center for doing a great job and for providing the perfect weather for the meeting.