

Country Roads & City Streets

WV Transportation Technology Transfer Center

Summer 2004

College of Engineering & Mineral Resources

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ROAD CRASHES REDUCED 42% IN MENDOCINO COUNTY, CA

By Gib Peaslee, Coordinator, NLTAPA Product Demonstration Showcase Program

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Get your travel
expenses paid!

MENDOCINO COUNTY ROAD
SYSTEM TRAFFIC SAFETY REVIEW
(RSTSR) SHOWCASE
BEING HELD
September 28-29, 2004
in Ukiah, CA.

See next page for scholarship info.

program has been delivering this benefit for more than 10 years; and, the program cost is within every county's reach, including even the most sparsely populated farm-to-market county, parish, or township.

Learn how they did it

You and your road safety management team are invited to experience the entire MCDOT process, from start to finish, at the Mendocino County Road System Traffic Safety Review (RSTSR) Showcase in Ukiah, CA, on September 28-29, 2004.

At this Showcase, MCDOT staff will share every detail including all the start-up, roadway selection, field review, and deficiency correction processes as well as their subsequent treatment evaluation, treatment selection methodology and cost-benefit measurement process details.

An integral part of this Showcase experience will be guided visits to previously improved field sites. Each field site will be clearly defined showing the previous condition factors and the corrective measure implemented. Participants, as a group, will review and evaluate prior conditions and the applied corrective action. Upon returning to the Showcase auditorium, each team will share reports and their proposed corrective actions, and discuss the potential solutions.

Mendocino County lies on the coast of California, about one hundred miles north of San Francisco. Mendocino County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is responsible for just over one thousand centerline miles of roadway and serves a population of 87,000 people inhabiting an area of 3,510 square miles. By implementing a simple yet thoughtful program, they have achieved a 42% reduction in low-volume road crashes.

While this figure may appear to be beyond the realm of believability to many safety professionals, let's stretch plausibility even further by mentioning this



There are no excuses. Now every agency, large or small, has an equal opportunity to participate in this learning experience and have professional support all through their own RSTSR program implementation process.

WV AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES: YOU SHOULD ATTEND IF...

- You are responsible for a large number of low-volume roadway miles
- You are responsible for signs and markings of your roadways
- You think safety is important
- You are a public official concerned about roadway safety

travel expenses paid to CA

Country Roads and City Streets is a quarterly publication of the West Virginia Transportation Technology Transfer Center (T² Center). The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information that is beneficial to highway construction and maintenance personnel.

The material and opinions contained in this newsletter are those of the West Virginia Transportation Technology Transfer Center, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Highway Administration or the WV Department of Transportation. Material contained in *Country Roads and City Streets* is a combination of original and borrowed material. Every effort has been made to ensure the integrity and accuracy of this material.

However, the WV T² Center does not assume responsibility for any incorrect material.

This Showcase is committed to providing all the information and post-showcase support that agency personnel will need in order to return home and immediately begin implementing an RSTSR program. To meet that commitment, these key additional support items will be included:

1. A **post-Showcase support group** will be available to all participating agency teams for “on call” assistance throughout their entire implementation process.

2. An easy to use **Sign Management System (SMS) software package**, developed by the New Hampshire LTAP Center, will be demonstrated and distributed at no cost to interested participants. Post-showcase user support is available through the New Hampshire LTAP Center.

3. An **Asset Management software package**, developed by the Utah LTAP Center, will be demonstrated and distributed to interested agency participants. Post-showcase user support is available through the Utah LTAP Center.

4. Michigan LTAP will explain how local agencies in Michigan banded together to fund and develop a **Crash Analysis and Reporting System** that is integrated with their local agency Road Surface, Sign, Guardrail, and Pavement Marking management systems.

5. A **Grant Resource Specialist will be available during the Showcase to discuss potential grant sources** such as HES Sign Replacement Programs and others. Each participating agency team will be able to schedule a one-on-one meeting with this specialist.

6. A **Travel Stipend Program** is available for rural agencies with populations under 50,000—see box to the right.

There are no excuses. Now every agency, large or small, has an equal opportunity to participate in this learning experience and have professional support all through their own RSTSR program implementation process.

Registration Information

The Showcase will convene at the Mendocino College in Ukiah, CA. The registration fee is \$125 per person for the two-day Showcase. This

includes lunch during the Showcase, a buffet dinner Tuesday night—perfect for renewing or establishing relationships—a complete manual containing illustrations and text of all presentations, and MCDOT sample final report tables. Registration fees are not refundable but substitutions are welcome. AAA Travel is available (800-881-6707 ext. 2234) to assist with airline and hotel accommodations for this Showcase. Area location maps for Ukiah, CA, will be provided upon registration.

To register, or for more details, please visit www.pdshowcase.org or call Chris Ritch at the Florida LTAP Center, 352-392-2371 ext. 223, email: chris@ce.ufl.edu, or Daiana Mathis at the California LTAP Center, 510-231-5672 daianam@berkeley.edu.

TRAVEL STIPEND PROGRAM

Travel Stipend Program (TSP) scholarships are available for two rural agency teams per state or TTAP. TSPs will cover air travel, overnight accommodations and motor coach transportation fees directly related to this Showcase. Priority will be given to agencies meeting the following criteria:

1. Serving populations under 50,000.
2. Have extensive low-volume road miles or high crash rates on low-volume roads.
3. Have a restricted travel policy.

Upon registering, qualifying agencies will be provided further travel scholarship program details. For more information on the Travel Stipend Program contact Renee Curtis at the Florida LTAP Center, 352-392-2371 ext. 223, email: pdshowcase@ce.ufl.edu.

Showcase registration fees are not included in the Travel Stipend Program.

scholarships

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICING EMAIL ETIQUETTE

By Kim L. Carr - The following article was adapted from several sources.

Today, email is a common, and some even consider, essential communication tool - both for personal and business use. As with all communication tools, certain guidelines or rules of etiquette exist to help make this communication medium an effective asset to your organization. There is even a specific term for this type of communication, **Netiquette**, which is short for network etiquette. As defined on the website marketingterm.com, *netiquette is the code of conduct regarding acceptable online behavior*. More commonly, you may hear the term **email etiquette**.

Why Practice Email Etiquette?

There are many reasons why practicing email etiquette is important. The following are what I consider to be four of the most important.

1. Legality: To avoid legal risks for both you and your agency. Although email seems to be less formal than written correspondence, the same laws apply. Sending or forwarding libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist, or obscene messages can put both you and your agency at risk for lawsuits. Often, agencies can and will fire you if you are in violation of your agency's email policy.

2. Perception: Emails that follow the rules of etiquette will help reflect professionalism and be a positive communication and marketing tool for your organization. Additionally, following the rules will help you be a stronger communicator.

3. Communication: Email may be your sole form of communication with an individual. Or, you may use email as your primary communication tool. Do you email a co-worker, boss, or someone else down the hallway, instead of picking up the phone or walking to their office? Do you have individuals you correspond with via email but have never spoken to on the phone or met in person? You are at somewhat of a disadvantage in building rapport as the individual you are corresponding with can not rely on verbal or nonverbal body language cues. Remember, email is considered a flat medium. The recipient of your email can not see your facial expressions, hear voice changes or pauses, or rely on other non-verbal body language.

4. Relationships: Practicing good email etiquette will help build new relationships and strengthen old ones, whereas practicing bad email etiquette has the potential to destroy these relationships.

Email Etiquette Tips

There are many components of email etiquette that you can easily implement. The following tips will help you become email etiquette savvy.

1. Use upper and lower case.

You want to:

AVOID TYPING IN ALL CAPS. THIS IS THE EQUIVALENT OF SHOUTING! Typing in all caps is considered very rude and disrespectful. The recipient may perceive this as an angry email. Use *italics* or **bold** text to emphasize key words.

2. Proofread. Proofread. Proofread.

Use punctuation, correct grammar and spellings. Always proofread your email before sending and use spell check.

3. Watch message length and tone.

- Avoid long, rambling messages. The reader may quit reading before they get the main point or points. Long messages also are confusing to the reader.
- Avoid excessively short messages. Emails of this type may be perceived by the recipient as too blunt, rude, condescending, or uncooperative.
- Use bulleted items if you have several items relating to the same subject.
- Be more polite than usual.

4. Use detailed and specific subject line descriptions.

This helps the recipient quickly ascertain the point of the email, and may speed up their response time. Detailed subject lines also help you manage and locate emails. *Good rule of thumb: A quality subject line will let you know the bottom line of the email before it is even opened.*

5. Avoid cutesy email addresses.

Most agencies have standard email domain formats. Some people, though, may use a

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NEW ADDITIONS TO THE LENDING LIBRARY

NEW VIDEOS

291 - Sensible Wood Cutting: Tips From the Pros

Basic tips and techniques that can make wood cutting safer and more productive. The video covers the use of: personal protective equipment, safety features of chainsaws, making a cutting plan and various felling techniques.

292 - On Again, Off Again: A Guide to Mounting and Dismounting Heavy Equipment

An informative (and quite hilarious) look at the correct ways to mount and dismount heavy equipment.



CD-ROMS

SA03.1 IHSDM: Interactive Highway Safety Design Model Preview

IHSDM is a demo CD. The actual program is a suite of software analysis tools for explicit, quantitative evaluation of safety and operational effects of geometric design on 2-lane rural roads. Prospective users include highway designers, planners and project managers, and safety and traffic engineering reviewers in State and local highway agencies and engineering consulting firms.

PV04.1: Recommended Use of Reclaimed Asphalt Pavement in the Superpave Mix Design Method

A video on DVD that would be of interest to those who are considering use of the Superpave Mix Design Method.

PB02.1 Pathways to the Future: The West Virginia Statewide Trail Plan

A CD that contains the WV Statewide Trail Plan in its entirety. A comprehensive look at the future of the WV trail network.

PV04.2 EZ Road, Inc

A manufacturer's demo CD that contains information on rubber temporary ramps. The manufacturer proclaims that these ramps are "...a safer, more cost-effective alternative to asphalt or cold-patch temporary ramps at milled butt joints, bridges, and end-of-day joints."

PUBLICATIONS

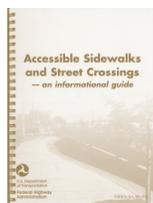
TS03.5 - Signalized Intersection Safety in Europe

BR04.1 - Bridge Design Manual: West Virginia Division of Highways

TS03.6 - Roadway Safety Tools for Local Agencies: NCHRP Synthesis 321

PV03.2 - Distress Identification Manual for Long-Term Pavement Performance

FREE STUFF- CALL TODAY



A limited number of the following informational publications are being offered by the T² Center. Both are good primers that focus on emerging accessibility issues and the design parameters that affect sidewalk and street crossing design and operation. Please contact Keith at 304-293-3031 x 2662 if you would like to request either of these items.

1. Accessible Sidewalks and Street Crossings: On the Safe Side – A fold-out poster containing the same information as the informational guide.

2. Accessible Sidewalks and Street Crossings: An Informational Guide – A spiral-bound pamphlet that contains a wealth of accessibility-related data, common problems that agencies deal with, and appropriate solutions to those problems.

The West Virginia T² Center is a part of the nationwide Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), which is funded by the Federal Highway Administration. The Center also receives funding from the West Virginia Department of Transportation.

Mission:

The mission of the West Virginia T² Center is to foster a safe and efficient transportation system. The T² Center's mandate is to improve the transportation system by improving the professional skills of those involved in highway design, construction and maintenance, and to act as a resource for them by keeping up-to-date training libraries and constantly seeking/developing new technologies.

Overall Goal:

The Center's overall goal is to improve the transportation system by focusing on professional training, technical assistance, and information dissemination.

To achieve this goal, the WVT² Center does the following:

- Provides on-site training and demonstrations
- Publishes a quarterly newsletter
- Maintains a video and publications library
- Provides technical assistance via e-mail, telephone, fax, mail, or site visits.

Email Etiquette cont'd

personal account for business purposes. Don't even think about using a cutesy name for business. Remember, people are forming an impression of you based on this address and your message.

6. Use "high priority" or "urgent" sparingly.

Only use these settings when absolutely necessary and when your message needs immediate attention. If you are someone who always sends out urgent messages, recipients may start to ignore those emails that are truly critical. *Remember the boy who cried wolf...*

7. Don't send chain letters, urgent virus warnings, or other hoax letters.

Many virus warnings are not legitimate warnings. Before forwarding these messages, check to see if they are legitimate. Make sure to check with your email administrator regarding the legitimacy of these warnings.

8. Don't use email to discuss confidential information.

Email is very accessible. Even after deleting the email from your machine, it can still be accessed by the email administrator both on your end and the recipients. Email is also easily printed out or forwarded to other users.

9. Do not reply to spam.

Even if you are trying to unsubscribe, by replying you are actually confirming that your email address is active. The result may be more spam. For those emails that get through your email spam software, delete, don't open.

10. Use common sense /common courtesy.

This is mostly what email etiquette is. Think of those things that annoy you – rambling emails, misspellings, no subject lines, etc. Chances are if they annoy you, they probably annoy someone else.

These ten tips are not an all-inclusive list of email etiquette, but hopefully will get you on your way to sending appropriate and professional email messages. Many resources exist on the web that can be very helpful in continuing to develop email etiquette skills. If you are a supervisor or manager, encourage your employees to practice good email etiquette, and make sure that your agency has a written email policy that all employees can easily access.

ROADS SCHOLAR I RECENT NEWS

From June 7 to June 10, Mike was on the road traveling to Beckley, Martinsburg, Clarksburg, and Huntington offering two Roads Scholar I workshops at each location. This round of courses included Work Zone Traffic Control and Risk Management/Tort Liability.

The participation by state and local roadway agencies was terrific, with 136 individuals attending the Work Zone Traffic Control sessions, and 124 individuals attending the Risk Management/Tort Liability sessions.

We are also especially proud of our recent graduates who are shown below. Congratulations to each of you for continuing your education on surface transportation issues and graduating from the Roads Scholar I Program.

We know there are many more of you who are close to graduating and are wondering when we will be back with additional Roads Scholar I training. Our plan is to be back on the road in October, so mark your calendars and we'll see you this fall.

June 04 Roads Scholar grads



Cynthia Mannon Lucas
WVDOH D-2



Sharon Fluharty
WVDOH D-6 &

William Shumaker
WVDOH D-4



David Ruff
City of Oak Hill

Billy Myers
City of Oak Hill

James Kirk
WV Parkways Authority

Larry Moore
WV Parkways Authority

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Philippi, WV

Donald Williams
WVDOT
Clarksburg, WV

Gary Winter
WV Governor's Highway
Safety Program
Charleston, WV

TIPS ON EFFECTIVE LISTENING

By: Larry Alan Nadig, Ph.D.

Brief Theory of Communication

Expressing our wants, feelings, thoughts and opinions clearly and effectively is only half of the communication process needed for interpersonal effectiveness. The other half is listening and understanding what others communicate to us. When a person decides to communicate with another person, he/she does so to fulfill a need. The person wants something, feels discomfort, and/or has feelings or thoughts about something. In deciding to communicate, the person selects the method or code which he/she believes will effectively deliver the message to the other person. The code used to send the message can be either verbal or nonverbal. When the other person receives the coded message, they go through the process of decoding or interpreting it into understanding and meaning. Effective communication exists between two people when the receiver interprets and understands the sender's message in the same way the sender intended it.

Sources of Difficulty by the Speaker

- Voice volume too low to be heard.
- Making the message too complex, either by including too many unnecessary details or too many issues.
- Getting lost, forgetting your point or the purpose of the interaction.
- Body language or nonverbal elements contradicting or interfering with the verbal message, such as smiling when anger or hurt is being expressed.
- Paying **too much** attention to how the other person is taking the message, or how the person might react.
- Using a very unique code or unconventional method for delivering the message.

Sources of Difficulty by the Listener

- Being preoccupied and not listening.
- Being so interested in what you have to say that you listen mainly to find an opening to get the floor.
- Formulating and listening to your own rebuttal to what the speaker is saying.
- Listening to your own personal beliefs about what is being said.

- Evaluating and making judgments about the speaker or the message.
- Not asking for clarification when you know that you do not understand.

The Three Basic Listening Modes

1. Competitive or Combative Listening happens when we are more interested in promoting our own point of view than in understanding or exploring someone else's view. We either listen for openings to take the floor, or for flaws or weak points we can attack. As we pretend to pay attention we are impatiently waiting for an opening, or internally formulating our rebuttal and planning our devastating comeback that will destroy their argument and make us the victor.

2. In Passive or Attentive Listening we are genuinely interested in hearing and understanding the other person's point of view. We are attentive and passively listen. We assume that we heard and understand correctly, but stay passive and do not verify it.

3. Active or Reflective Listening is the single most useful and important listening skill. In active listening we are also genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting or what the message means, and we are active in checking out our understanding before we respond with our own new message. We restate or paraphrase our understanding of their message and reflect it back to the sender for verification. This verification or feedback process is what distinguishes active listening and makes it effective.

Levels of Communication

Listening effectively is difficult because people vary in their communication skills and in how clearly they express themselves, and often have different needs, wants and purposes for interacting. The different types of interaction or levels of communication also add to the difficulty. The four different types or levels are:

- 1. Clichés.**
- 2. Facts.**
- 3. Thoughts and beliefs.**
- 4. Feelings and emotions.**

As a listener we attend to the level that we think is most important. Failing to recognize the level most relevant and important to the speaker can lead to a kind of crossed wires where the two people are not on the same wavelength. The purpose of the contact and the nature of our relationship with the person will usually determine what level or levels are appropriate and important for the particular interaction. Note the different requirements in the following situations:

You're lost, and you ask a stranger for directions.

Your child comes to you crying.

You are in trouble and someone offers to help.

Your spouse is being affectionate and playful.

Opposing counsel is cross-examining you in court.

If we don't address the appropriate elements we will not be very effective, and can actually make the situation worse. For example: If your wife is telling you about her hurt feelings and you focus on the facts of the situation and don't acknowledge her feelings, she will likely become even more upset.

There is a real distinction between merely hearing the words and really listening for the message. When we listen effectively we understand what the person is thinking and/or feeling from the other person's own perspective. It is as if we were standing in the other person's shoes, seeing through his/her eyes and listening through the person's ears. Our own viewpoint may be different and we may not necessarily agree with the person, but as we listen, we understand from the other's perspective. To listen effectively, we must be actively involved in the communication process, and not just listening passively.

We all act and respond on the basis of our understanding, and too often there is a misunderstanding that neither of us is aware of. With active listening, if a misunderstanding has occurred, it will be known immediately, and the communication can be clarified before any further misunderstanding occurs.

Several other possible benefits occur with active listening:

- Sometimes a person just needs to be heard and acknowledged before the person is willing to consider an alternative or soften his/her position.
- It is often easier for a person to listen to and consider the other's position when

that person knows the other is listening and considering his/her position.

- It helps people to spot the flaws in their reasoning when they hear it played back without criticism.
- It also helps identify areas of agreement so the areas of disagreement are put in perspective and are diminished rather than magnified.
- Reflecting back what we hear each other say helps give each a chance to become aware of the different levels that are going on below the surface. This helps to bring things into the open where they can be more readily resolved.
- If we accurately understand the other person's view, we can be more effective in helping the person see the flaws in his/her position.
- If we listen so we can accurately understand the other's view, we can also be more effective in discovering the flaws in our own position.

Listening Tips

Usually it is important to paraphrase and use your own words in verbalizing your understanding of the message. Parroting back the words verbatim is annoying and does not ensure accurate understanding of the message.

Depending on the purpose of the interaction and your understanding of what is relevant, you could reflect back the other person's:

1. Account of the facts.
2. Thoughts and beliefs.
3. Feelings and emotions.
4. Wants, needs or motivation.
5. Hopes and expectations.

- Don't respond to just the meaning of the words, look for the feelings or intent beyond the words. The dictionary or surface meaning of the words or code used by the sender is not the message.
- Inhibit your impulse to immediately answer questions. The code may be in the form of a question. Sometimes people ask questions when they really want to express themselves and are not open to hearing an answer.

- Know when to quit using active listening. Once you accurately understand the sender's message, it may be appropriate to respond with your own message. Don't use active listening to hide and avoid revealing your own position.
- If you are confused and know you do not understand, either tell the person you don't understand and ask him/her to say it another way, or use your best guess. If you are incorrect, the person will realize it and will likely attempt to correct your misunderstanding.
- Active listening is a very effective first response when the other person is angry, hurt or expressing difficult feelings toward you, especially in relationships that are important to you.
- Use eye contact and listening body language. Avoid looking at your watch or at other people or activities around the room. Face and lean toward the speaker and nod your head, as it is appropriate. Be careful about crossing your arms and appearing closed or critical.
- Be empathic and nonjudgmental. You can be accepting and respectful of the person and their feelings and beliefs without invalidating or giving up your own position, or without agreeing with the accuracy and validity of their view.
- Become a more effective listener. Practice the active listening technique and make it one of your communication skills.

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Article is located on the web: <http://www.drnadig.com>.

The WV T² Center appreciates Dr. Nadig promptly granting permission to reprint this article for inclusion in this edition of Country Roads and City Streets.

UPCOMING WV T2 EVENTS **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Sign Retroreflectivity Course
August 10, 2004; 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM
James Rumsey Technical Institute, Martinsburg, WV

Pedestrian & Bicycle Accommodation Course
August 11, 2004; 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM
James Rumsey Technical Institute, Martinsburg, WV

Snow and Ice Control Workshop
September 22, 2004
Jackson's Mill, WV Building, Weston, WV

2004 Mendocino County Road System Traffic Safety Review Showcase
September 28-29, 2004
Ukiah, CA

2005 WV Equipment, Technology, & Design Expo
March 23-24, 2005
Charleston Civic Center, Charleston, WV

2005 Roadway Management Conference
March 30 - April 1, 2005
Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, PA

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