

## ***Interagency Coordination: The GYRITS Perspective***

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Lisa Ballard is a registered engineer. We won't hold it against her that she came from California. She has a degree from Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo and has a Master's Degree from UC Irvine. She is working at Western Transportation Institute where she is primarily emphasizing one the GYRITS project.

The session today is focused on inter-state coordination. I'm going to make that a little bit wider and put it under interagency coordination. Looking at the perspective on the GYRITS projects, GYRITS stands for Greater Yellowstone Regional ITS project.

First I'm going to look at some of the generic perspectives challenges of interagency coordination. Then I am going to give a description of the GYRITS project and the different components of that project and how some of those challenges that we talk about, first, will apply to those projects and some of the successes and challenges within GYRITS that is related to interagency coordination. And finally some conclusions.

From a generic perspective, here's a look at challenges that actually came from a presentation that was done a couple years ago. These challenges are for state DOTs, and are especially important to rural-based communities. The key ones that I see there is limited multi-agency or multi-state experience. Also, your stakeholders in a rural area are not going to provide [?] for national park and incident management people.

Based on those challenges, here are, theoretically, ingredients to success. You are going to have more success in interagency. Your project or your process will include research, planning and outreach. Another one I highlight there is the cost...

Another way for us to have success is to use a steering committee to help with outreach and partnership and to help in identifying the problems not just for one state but for the whole region and it helps to share success stories within the different agencies on the steering committee.

Finally, it really helps with organization so the project has not been started then to learn about how it works well and how it didn't work well through the steering committee deployment. Also, project selection criteria - through the steering committee's use of criteria to select projects that may be just in one state but maybe to all the states that will help build [partner] regions.

Here's a list of selection criteria. Another way to look at it though is you come up with this nice analytical way of developing projects where you rank them according to regional needs, timeliness, scalability, and recognition. It's a good academic approach and it also works to have different people to go up there and then vote on a process. I think that works just as well.

The slides that I just went through [listed the selection criteria]. Now I'm going to move into [my hypothesis]. Roads are comforted by a scale between lowest comfort and high comfort and the agencies with the highest level of comfort tend to be the states with the larger urban areas such as areas of Los Angeles that have had ITS from the ground floor. Other organizations with high comfort and ITS are the University applications, [DOTs], and consultants. A large city will probably have slightly lower comfort than the safety of the urban area. Then, below that you have the rural areas of the state, with special applications in the urban area, they have a higher comfort level than those states that do not have [special

applications]. Finally, probably the lowest level is local agencies in those rural states that don't have the ability, the background ability to...

So that leads us to my hypothesis. My hypothesis is that the ability to have successful interagency coordination requires a history of success in one or all of these points here. A successful working relationship with your partner on ITS projects, or successful application of ITS by at least one agency involved in the partnership or maybe we just need somebody who is a successful risk taker. If you do not, you [cannot succeed]. Taking those things that I just talked about, I'm going to see really how these items have applied to Greater Yellowstone projects.

Just some background on those projects, for those of you who may not be familiar with it, the project involves the state of Montana, the state of Idaho, the State of Wyoming, Yellowstone National Park, INEEL and Western Transportation Institute. The project has three phases. The first phase of the project was develop a strategic deployment plan and that's where we first got the group of people around the Yellowstone area together, sitting in the same room and starting to talk with each other and that made a big difference and it felt good to do that. That phase has been completed.

The second phase was to Deploy Early Winners. We are currently working on that phase. The third phase is Greater Yellowstone Regional Traveler and Weather Information System. On Phase I and Phase II Pat McGowen is the Principal Investigator and I am the PI for Phase III.

Now in Phase II, I'm going to just go through a list of some of the projects, actually all of the projects that have been done. These projects are touch screen Kiosks, Dynamic Warning Signs, Automated Vehicle Identification Systems, and an Incident Management Plan. There

are 22 kiosks planned with all but one or two of them being in Montana.

The Dynamic Warning Signs – what happened here is basically there were three projects related to Dynamic Warning Signs, one for each state. The state of Wyoming chose to do the applied application of warning, or, actually, dangerous conditions with high-speed locations. The state of Idaho ended up with taking the approach they wanted to...in various locations throughout Idaho. The state of Montana chose to do four kinds aimed at Montana. The Montana and Wyoming signs are really thought applications. The Idaho signs can be used for non-applied applications...

AVI is a project at Yellowstone National Park. It is for automatic reduction for [vehicle wait times] first for the people who work for the department and ultimately [visitors]. That project is being run by Yellowstone.

The incident management plan is probably the project, which has the most [support]. All the other projects have been [implemented] by their own agencies....

I think the first success is its steering committee. Just setting that committee up in itself has gotten people to start talking together. It is also serving the foundation for interstate partnerships. The steering committee also allows everybody to learn what's happening in the other states.

Successes in the methodology to select the projects. The steering committee chose the projects, but really, the state agency or the national park have control of the project so that they have final say...

Some of the challenge-probably the first one I have up there is staff turnover. [It is pretty hard to start a project] when there are so many staff changes. So, that is an issue. All of the states involved really have a low comfort level with ITS. ITS does not feel comfortable doing that because ITS is

building roads, that is really what you think of. I think that really is a challenge for the project.

The final note I have there is that the project, in order to succeed, has to have buy-in at all levels, not just those people who get around at the steering committee meetings, but those people who are going to have to exploit it, those people who are going to have to keep it running.

The third phase of the project is GYRTWIS Regional Traveler and Weather Information System. This is really the power information for the state of Montana.

Taking the foundation coming from North Dakota, South Dakota and Eastern Montana. This involves actually changing the #SAFE that is used in North Dakota and South Dakota. We have some other things which I'm not going to go into detail right now because I'm not prepared with the information. But it's the Traveler Information Telephone. Also, having the information available there for the other components of the GYRTWIS project. Maybe we can do that sometime in Idaho, that is something that I would like to see.

Project participants on the third phase, the GYRTWIS phase are, WTI, University of North Dakota/Meridian, Montana Department of Transportation and from the integration perspective, the other GYRITS partners.

This project is signed [starting] July 1<sup>st</sup> and they're just getting going so these successes are really from the perspective of, "How do we get the project going?" We have multiple partners WTI, Meridian and North Dakota and Montana Department of Transportation is really forced to deal with coordination of interstate with another agency. So they have to deal with the Department of Administration. They call it DLA but it is also called DOA. In order to get the 511 number they are going to have to be able to deal with the bureaucracy involved with that. Lessons learned from

North Dakota and South Dakota have a share in Montana projects working better and from the traveler's perspective, the traveler will be able to get this information across state lines from Montana into [other states].

Challenges for this project. Initially this project was conceived to include Idaho and Wyoming but something happened between the time of entertaining the idea and the time we started really working on the scope of work which goes back to that buy in table. So we were not able to get the support of Wyoming and Idaho for this project.

In summary of challenges-multi-state coordination is time intensive, successes within an agency should help success between agencies. We need to recognize institutional issues early and projects will not require a champion. That is it. Any questions?

Attendee Comment: From Wyoming's perspective, a lot of it has to do with the fact that, WyDOT right now does not know where they want to go with their ATWIS or RWIS system. They have an existing RWIS system and they have a supplemental forecast that they do use and they have a plan to improve their RWIS system. They do not know whether going with the ATWIS system out of Meridian/North Dakota is the way they want to go. It may be they're just not ready to make that decision right now. What they decided is, that they do not know which direction they want to go. We are going to pull back and then we'll decide which direction we want to go and go that direction. They'll probably have it decided in the next year or so...

Attendee Comment: One of the biggest things, and now I'll speak strictly from Wyoming's perspective, is that there are a lot of things going on and the state is so small, the DOT is so small and the resources are so very limited compared to some of the larger states, they really have to be very careful about where they choose where those

resources are spent. If they are going to deploy an ITS project, and they are going to spend money on an ITS project, they are about 95 percent certain that project's going to work. They are not very high risk because they do not have the ability to do that, they don't have the dollars to be high risk. I think that is one of the major driving things. They tend to be a – "They'll pack us around and we'll be in this group and we'll deploy it if it makes sense, but we're not going to go out there and figure out all the bugs and kinks, we're going to let California or Colorado do that, then we know that it's OK."