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## Message from the President

**W**elcome to the late Fall newsletter of the ITS Rocky Mountain Chapter. There is fresh snow on the mountains, the remaining fall leaves are fading fast and what better time to deliver a new ITS Rocky Mountain e-newsletter to your inbox. The 2007 National Rural ITS Conference in Traverse City, Michigan was a huge success. Michigan did a tremendous job hosting the event and providing a showcase for Rural ITS applications and practitioners throughout the country. ITS Rocky Mountain was able to help provide a new RWIS training course at the conference. The course was developed through ITS Rocky Mountain by Keith Trimels and Ilse van Goth of IDT Group with the financial support of FHWA, ITS America and the chapter. Additional support for the course is also being provided by the Western Transportation Institute and Steve Albert's fine staff. Of course, none of this would have happened without the dedication and efforts of Traci Ulberg and her staff at Meetings Northwest. Conference proceeding are available at the National Rural ITS Conference website [www.nritsconference.org](http://www.nritsconference.org).



In addition to a wrap-up of the NRITS Conference, this edition of the newsletter includes articles on Montana's GIS program a description of the new RWIS course and other news and events in the region. The RWIS Course has already been provided in New Mexico, Nevada and Idaho in addition to Michigan and further regions have made requests for the course. If you are interested in hosting the course, see the contact information in the article.

Inline with our mission to "develop partners for the effective deployment of ITS across all surface transportation modes, thus providing a viable and sustainable system for the Rocky Mountain Region that will benefit all users" - we would like all members to become involved in the chapter and help get the word out about the quality of work being done in our region. Please phone or email any comments, suggestions and opportunities to me at [rmhodes@rmhodes.com](mailto:rmhodes@rmhodes.com) or to our Chapter web site [www.itsrm.org](http://www.itsrm.org).

**Richard Hodges**  
*President, ITS Rocky Mountain Chapter  
President, Hodges Transportation Consulting*

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## Submit an Article...

You can submit an article for publication in the ITS Rocky Mountain Newsletter! Articles must be no more than three pages in length and must contain contact information for the author. Graphics and photos are welcome!

**2008** submission deadlines are as follows:

*January/February/March 2008* - January 25, 2008

*April/May/June 2008* - April 25, 2008

*July/August/September 2008* - July 25, 2008

*October/November/December 2008* - October 31, 2008

## New Website to be Revealed!

After nearly 6 months and several unexpected software problems, the new and improved ITS Rocky Mountain website is about to be revealed! The new website - expected to be live by the end of the year - will feature easier navigation and a streamlined appearance. The new platform will also be capable of handling such things as blogs and interactive forums. We'll keep you posted as we approach the launch date and will be asking for feedback from our readers!

## Job Announcements

The Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas, Nevada, is currently recruiting for a Director of Freeway and Arterial System. This is an open-continuous recruitment and may close at any time with three days posted notice (opened 11/10/07).

This position directs, manages, supervises and coordinates the staff, programs and activities associated with the FAST system for the effective operation of the traffic control and freeway systems in Southern Nevada.

### **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS**

**Education and Experience:** A Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering or a closely related field and seven (7) years of full-time professional traffic engineering experience, two (2) years of which were in a supervisory/managerial role.

**Licensing and Certification:** Must possess a valid Nevada Class C driver's license at the time of appointment.

**Background Investigation:** Employment with the Regional Transportation Commission is contingent upon completion of an education/experience background investigation and a criminal history record check.

If you or another professional that you know is interested in applying for this position, please visit the website <http://agency.governmentjobs.com/rtc/default.cfm> to apply online.

If you would like an ad placed in the ITS Rocky Mountain Newsletter and/or the ITS Rocky Mountain website please email [employment@itsrm.org](mailto:employment@itsrm.org).

# Fast Tracked RWIS Training a Success

Keith A. Trimels, Principal  
IDT Group

Over the course of the last year, the ITS Rocky Mountain Chapter (ITSRM) surveyed member states about training needs. One recurring theme in those discussions was weather related issues, and particularly Road Weather Information System (RWIS) equipment and operations. As a result, ITSRM staff set out to see if we could develop and deliver this training to our members.

After months of working the phones and email, ITSRM obtained a grant from ITS America (courtesy of FHWA) to develop and deliver RWIS training for ITSRM states. The catch was that ITSRM had to find a 100% match for the grant, and even with the grant, the funds were not sufficient for a professional-level course. ITSRM staff found 60% of the match from states; in return, they each were entitled to have the course delivered at no cost to them. The remainder of the match was provided by Western Transportation Institute (WTI) in the form of staff expertise for the course development.

ITSRM executed a contract with IDT Group for development and delivery of RWIS Equipment and Operations, an RWIS course directed toward putting front line and management personnel on the same page working toward successful deployment and operation of an RWIS



RWIS photos courtesy of the Western Transportation Institute.

system. The contract required the IDT Group/WTI team to develop the course to pilot delivery stage within 12 weeks. For those familiar with the typical transportation training development cycle, this is an extraordinarily aggressive schedule having compressed the time by 75% - 90%. IDT Group agreed to contribute several hundred hours of unpaid staff time to prove such an aggressive schedule was within reason, and WTI agreed to

provide additional support services above their staff match if necessary to meet the contract. The result?

On June 18, 2007, ITSRM and IDT Group signed a contract to develop a 1½ day course including ½ day workshop. IDT Group delivered the pilot course in Denver, CO on August 15-16, 2007; the goal was met within 8 weeks! The course was developed with front line personnel in mind, focusing on the needs of the system users and managers rather than the designers. With the comments from the pilot course incorporated and the course materials finalized, IDT Group delivered the full 1½ day course to NMDOT and Nevada DOT during the week of September 25-28, 2007. As part of the agreement with ITSA, ITSRM agreed to deliver the 1-day instructional version at the annual National Rural ITS (NRITS) meeting in Traverse City, MI; IDT Group delivered this course as well on October 10, 2007.

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## ITS Training Course



### RWIS Equipment and Operations

Participant Workbook  
October 2007



**IdT** group

Providing Instructional Design and Training Solutions for the Transportation Industry  
www.idt-group.com

Overall evaluations from the courses were outstanding, with the ratings averaging 4.5 (1-5 scale with five the highest) on a variety of questions related to both the course and the instructor. Narrative comments from the courses included, "I wish I would have had this course 2-3 years ago," "The RWIS course was the best part of the NRITS," and "Thanks for bringing this information to us. It will help further our program."

The numerical ratings coupled with the narrative comments demonstrate the course was well developed in spite of the extraordinarily accelerated development time. In fact, ITSRM has received inquiries regarding additional course offerings from throughout the country and is currently arranging to provide for future deliveries.

This development/delivery project represents the culmination of significant effort for the ITSRM staff. For several years, they have worked to provide additional value for the chapter's membership. This demonstrates the commitment ITSRM has shown toward the chapter members and the willingness of chapter members to contribute to ITSRM's goals. ITSA stated this was a pilot project for them and for FHWA; the results would largely determine the

viability of similar future efforts. With the partnership of chapter members WTI and IDT Group, ITSRM was able to successfully execute a first-of-its-kind project and set the stage for similar future efforts from ITSRM and other ITSA state chapters.

If you and your organization would be interested in the course, please feel free to contact ITSRM at [admin@itsrm.org](mailto:admin@itsrm.org). ■

# Montana DOT's Strategic Plan for GIS Success



Marlin Sander & Don Kiel  
Originally published online in  
Directions Magazine

For many transportation agencies, the prospect of implementing or expanding enterprise GIS capabilities or applications can trigger more questions than answers. Where do you start? What are your current capabilities, and where do you want to go? What will work at your agency? How do you set realistic deadlines?

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) GIS Section tackled those important questions in its efforts to expand its GIS. Enhanced GIS capabilities would streamline and support MDT's asset management, environmental studies, safety analysis and intelligent transportation systems (ITS).

## MDT Goals

MDT officially began its strategic planning process in June 2006 when it partnered with GeoDecisions, an information technology company specializing in geospatial solutions.

In the project's early stages, MDT and GeoDecisions identified the following goals:

- Build high-level buy-in and budgetary momentum for advancing GIS as an enterprise solution
- Update and replace existing legacy data management systems
- Incorporate new spatial management technologies, approaches and tools into IT initiatives
- Promote GIS awareness, education and training
- Streamline and upgrade the department's GIS organizational structure

## A Step-by-Step Approach

With its goals established, MDT initiated discussions on the scope and budget, benefits, expectations, risks, roles and procedures involved in the strategic planning process.

A visioning workshop with key MDT personnel helped to set GIS policy, vision, goals and objectives. This workshop developed consensus among the participants and stimulated support from, and visibility to, upper management.

A needs assessment task then followed, including internal and external interviews, data gathering and evaluation, and consideration of MDT's current GIS capabilities.

Throughout this stage, various staff members held discussions to determine what internal business systems worked and which ones needed increased

functionality. GeoDecisions reviewed MDT's existing systems, data and infrastructure, identified the needs of its current and future customer base, determined priority efforts for the next five years, and explored the factors likely to affect future success, given MDT's specific



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needs.

These needs were then addressed with specific recommendations for GIS actions and applications. Each recommendation was assigned a priority for implementation based upon available budgets, personnel resources, schedules, complexity, agency impact and usefulness, and ease of use.

### **MDT's GIS Needs**

For MDT, the highest priority challenge was to refocus its management and staff structure to support expanded GIS initiatives. GeoDecisions recommended the creation of a GIS staffing plan and the appointment of a GIS coordinator and steering committee.

It was also important to identify projects that were “early winners” - projects with a high probability of success and usage. For MDT, these shorter-term, lower-cost initiatives included:

- Automated Road Log Book (Straight Line Diagram) application
- Summer road construction viewer
- Data locator and integrator application

MDT also defined foundation modules needed to support actions and applications. These actions would help to support streamlined field data collection, location referencing and relational database management. These foundation modules included:

- Updating the location/linear reference system (LRS) environment
- Evaluating (and improving) GIS data storage methods
- Developing formal data collection processes and standards

Finally, enterprise modules were defined that would provide longer-term, more comprehensive benefits as a result of integrating GIS with MDT's existing management systems. These recommendations included:

- Update TIS (Transportation Information System)
- Integrate GIS with environmental mitigation tools
- Integrate GIS and ITS
- Integrate GIS with the Maintenance Management System
- Develop a Safety viewer/reporting application

Another important benefit realized early in the strategic planning process was that GIS could assist MDT in addressing the requirements in the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) legislation. Greater GIS functionality would help MDT promote data integration/sharing between state and metropolitan planning organizations, enhance visualization techniques, and provide Web-based public access to transportation information. A GIS/LRS-compatible road network inventory would also provide the basis for SAFETEA-LU target areas of asset management data integration, analysis and decision support.

### **Pulling it All Together**

These prioritized GIS actions and applications formed the basis for a multi-year action plan that included a modular, integrated work plan. All of this information was incorporated into a final GIS strategic plan report that featured discussions on practical keys to success, organizational and administrative recommendations, and plan update strategies. The project concluded with a high-level management presentation that served as a transition

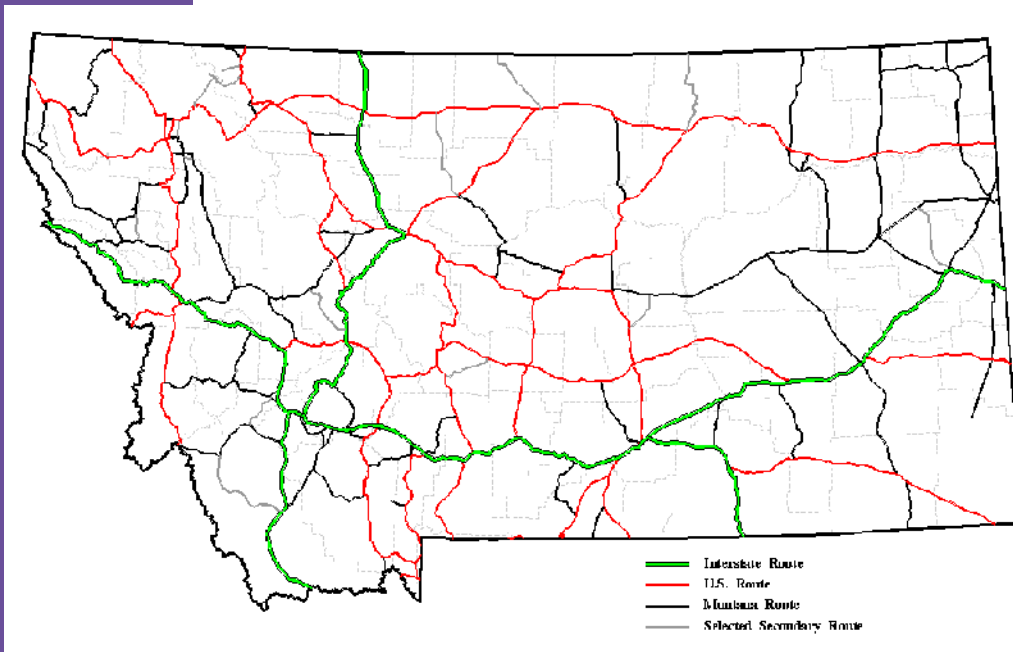
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point for implementing the recommendations.

### Practical Recommendations

From the start of MDT's GIS strategic plan project, it was important to the agency that the actions and applications generated by the plan be realistic and achievable. This goal was

achieved by modularizing and/or phasing projects, and offering practical ideas for cost-sharing among business units or external agencies. It was also essential to provide specific and early milestone targets and tangible results. Benchmarks were established to measure and document progress. Spreading out these milestones maintained buy-in and support at high levels during the planning period.



### Looking Ahead

At the conclusion of the project in January 2007, MDT had a customized “game plan” of detailed recommended actions and applications. To date, the organizational recommendations have been approved and implemented, and the focus has shifted to foundational modules. When MDT has studied recommendations for upgrading its location referencing environment and the actual upgrades are complete, the emphasis will shift to developing GIS-enabled applications and GIS integration with MDT's enterprise business functions and systems.

MDT's comprehensive strategic plan for GIS is already helping the agency perform business functions more efficiently, save time and money, and integrate data for improved sharing and understanding. Following the strategic plan, and keeping it current, will enable MDT to meet changing agency business needs in a responsive, agile manner. ■

# Sensors to Detect Big Game Animals



Originally published in the  
Montrose Daily Press  
Lisa Huyn

Without seeing incoming wildlife, drivers on a mile-long stretch of southwestern road will soon get ample notice that big-game animals are nearby.

An electro-magnetic field sensor the length of a mile will be installed east of Durango, between mile markers 95 and 96 on U.S. Highway 160, as part of a Colorado Dept. of Transportation pilot program to prevent collisions between wildlife and vehicles.

The test site for the Perimitrax System has a very high number of wildlife-vehicle collisions — they make up more than 65 percent of the area's total accidents, said Nancy Shanks, CDOT Public Relations.

"This will prove that by changing driver behavior we can reduce accidents without adverse effects to wildlife movement," Shanks said. If successful, the program has widespread implications for the prevention of wildlife-vehicle accidents and for minimizing impacts to wildlife behavior and habitat. Piloting time for the project will last at least three years — enough time to measure any trends — before the technology is introduced to any other area.

CDOT expects to award a project contract in late December and begin a 45-day construction period in Spring, Shanks said. The sensor system would cost about \$800,000 and consist of a cable buried about 30 feet from the road and one foot below the surface.

The cables have been calibrated to detect animals of a particular size so smaller mammals, such as mice or raccoon, would not trip the system, Shanks said.

Once an electro-magnetic field is detected, a reading will go to the computer system, which will turn on an electronic variable message sign to alert drivers along the roadside, she explained.

The system also includes monitors that collect data on vehicle speed before and after an alert is flashed. No other vehicle information, such as drivers' licenses, will be collected, Shanks said.



A mule deer jumps a fence from a farm pasture onto Ouray County Road 24.  
(William Woody / Daily Press)

Toward the end of fall, when big game animals make their way down the slopes to feed, public and private organizations remind drivers to exercise caution in known migration corridor areas, such as those between Montrose and Telluride.

The beginning of that migration is experiencing a delay owing to warmer temperatures.

The electro-magnetic field sensor system could eventually cut down what has been shown to be the number one cause of accidents in the southwest corner of the state, according to 2004 — the most recent — accident statistics

from CDOT's Traffic and Safety Division. There were 35,302 recorded incidents of wildlife-vehicle collisions along state and interstate highways between 1986 and 2004, according to CDOT.

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Aside from injury and death to human and wildlife, these collisions cause thousands in car damage that may not be covered by insurance. Without optional comprehensive coverage, drivers can expect to pay an average of \$3,000 to repair a deer-car collision, said Carole Walker, executive director of the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association.

According to CDOT, crashes with wildlife are on the rise. Factors cited by the department as contributing to the rise include expanding road networks to accommodate land development. Unless specific efforts are made to alleviate these collisions, the trend is likely to continue to increase.



Motorists are urged to use extreme caution while driving this time of year as deer and elk migrations are at a high. (William Woody / Daily Press)

The installation of sensors is an addition to another CDOT project that began in October and is expected to be completed in November to install deer guards on the entrance and exit roads of the Dutch Charlie access to Ridgway State Park, near mile marker 108. In 2006, the CDOT augmented its fencing program to include three 6-foot ramps as a means for wildlife to escape the barrier restrictions. As evidenced by images captured by cameras, wildlife frequently use the safety measures.

“We certainly wouldn’t endorse putting up fences everywhere in state to keep animals off the highways,” said Joe Lewandowski, Colorado Division

of Wildlife southwest region. But, he added that in areas where clashes occur frequently, fences and ramps are viewed as a long-term solution.

Some wildlife advocates said fences are only part of the solution to meeting the needs of both humans and wild animals.

“In order to provide permeability in the landscape so wildlife can move to meet their daily and seasonal needs, there needs to be a comprehensive suite of wildlife crossings tied together with fencing to allow multiple opportunities for safe passage for wildlife,” said Monique DiGiorgio, Director of Development and Communications for the Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project. “With just wildlife fencing (existing situation on 550), you move wildlife up and down the fencing and then they stack up at the end of the fencing with no safe opportunity to cross the highway.” ■

# Rural Transit Sessions Offer Lessons at NRITS

David Ridgley  
Program Coordinator  
Intelligent Transportation Society of America

Localities operating rural transit programs are all too familiar with the unique challenges posed by long distances, limited coordination, and increasing demand for mobility services. For each challenge faced, there are lessons learned and successes — such as those highlighted at the 2007 National Rural ITS (NRITS) Conference held October 7-10 in Traverse City, Michigan. This year's NRITS program hosted three sessions relating to rural transit issues. Where peers and colleagues learned about several initiatives being deployed across the nation and listened as speakers identified how and to what extent intelligent transportation systems (ITS) applications have contributed (or may contribute) to the improvements of overall system performance and quality of service in rural and frontier areas.

### Technology Leasing

**Lease Factors**  
(Lease Cost per Thousand Dollars)

	4 Years	5 Years
Monthly	24.0764	19.8626
Quarterly	72.7054	59.9681
Semi-Annual	142.2048	117.3337
Annual	282.4222	233.0536

(From Idaho State Contract Purchase Order CPO-01054-02)

**Lease Payment = Factor x Amt Financed**

For example, to determine the annual lease payment amount for a \$5,000 server using a 4 year lease in which payments are made monthly, calculate:  
 $\$5,000 \div 1,000 \times 24.0764 = \$120.382$

**Purchase Option**

Workstation Cost	\$1,200
Life	5 Years
Warranty	3 Years
Extended Warranty	\$150/Year
Cost of Ownership	\$1,200+(2x\$150) = <b>\$1,500</b>

**Lease Option**

Workstation Cost	\$1,200
Lease Term	5 Years
Lease Factor	233.0536
Annual Lease Payment	$\frac{\$1,200}{1,000} \times \$233.0536 = \$279.66$
Cost of Ownership	$\$280 \times 5 = \mathbf{\$1,400}$

Note: Break/fix responsibilities covered by lessor

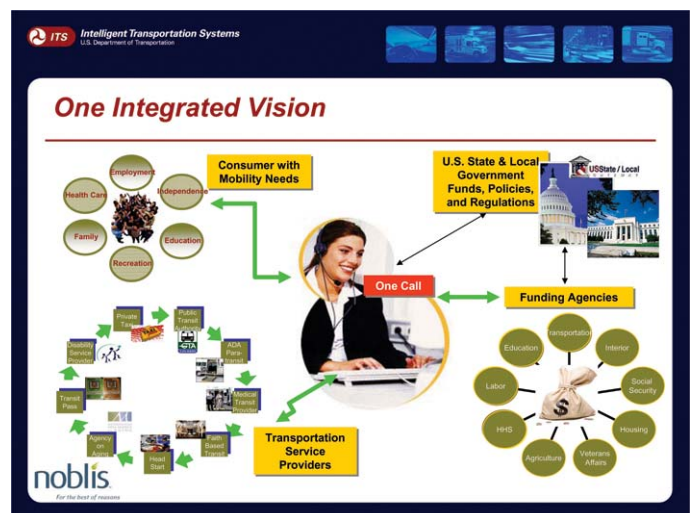
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In the first session — *Optimizing Your Funding to Create Success* — presentations were given by John Krause from the Idaho Transportation Department, Division of Public Transportation on *Applying Funding Strategies to Advanced Public Transportation Systems (APTS) Deployment Projects* and Dave Marsh of the Capital Area Rural Transportation System outside of Austin, Texas, presented on *the Development of the CARTS System*. Discussion focused on the strategies these two agencies utilized to obtain funding to implement ITS technologies in their rural operations. CARTS shared how they implemented a swipe card fare

payment system and the benefits over deploying smart cards.

The second session — *Rural Transit: Determining the Appropriate Technology* — hosted presentations from Gwo-Wei Torng of Noblis, who spoke about the *Demonstration of ITS-Enhanced Human Service Transportation in Rural Communities*; John Krause of the Idaho Transportation Department, who presented on *Selecting and Rightsizing APTS Technologies*; and Dustin Koch of RouteMatch Software who spoke about *how ITS Moves the Coordination Needle*. With one of the biggest challenges in rural transit being taking technology that is largely designed for urban areas and applying it in a meaningful and efficient manner to a rural transit system, this session presented attendees with a discussion of the different ways smaller transits are addressing this challenge.

Mr. Torng highlighted two smaller providers in the *Mobility Services for All Americans Demonstration Project*, both of which have strong leadership and strong evidence of stakeholder



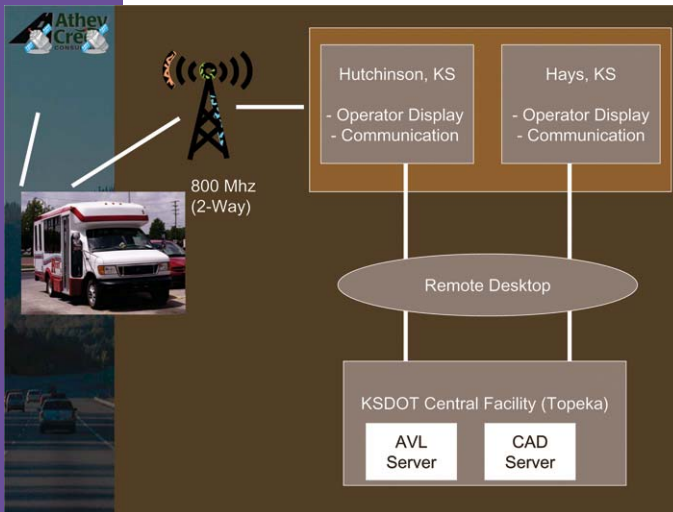
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involvement with the vision, much like urban systems, to improve customer service and enhance operating efficiency.

Mr. Krause discussed how the systems in Idaho have one focus — to simplify the point of access for all. The main challenge with his systems is how to optimize APTS project funding through rightsizing of technologies to providers. They have devised a plan that places transits into three categories with each being assigned technologies according to the size of the agency.

Finally, Mr. Koch presented on how technologies for rural transits have improved in recent years. One low cost and low barrier to entry discussed was that of drivers using GPS enabled cell phones that can act as an automatic vehicle locator (AVL) and a mobile data terminal (MDT), allowing for real time vehicle coordination and historical route playback.

The final session — Rural Transit - Examples and Case Studies from Successful Programs — consisted of presentations from Gwo-Wei Torng of Noblis presenting on Case Studies of Two Human Service Transportation Systems Using ITS, Dean Deeter of Athey Creek Consultants presenting on Kansas Rural Transit AVL Evaluation and Pam Couch of the Modoc County Transportation Commission presenting on Defining and Deploying ITS Solutions for Coordinated Rural Transportation.



Mr. Deeter explained how the experiences of two small communities in Kansas. While one embraced ITS, the other believed it distracted the employees and there was no trust in the routes or schedules the software generated. Ms. Couch explained the challenges of a frontier transit system and how to overcome issues such as: absence of data exchange standards, staff with limited technical knowledge, long travel distances, remoteness, settlement patterns, scare budget, scant communication infrastructure and how to deal with the lack of a brokerage system.

From these valuable sessions it was clear that rural transit has a long way to go to come up to speed with its urban counterparts

in how ITS helps overall operations and reduces costs. Whether one works directly in transit or not, the rural transit sessions at NRITS offered lessons for everyone.

Full copies of the presentations mentioned in this article can be viewed online at <http://www.nritsconference.org/Proceedings2007.html>. ■



# News and Notes...

## Emergency Call Box Installed on Beartooth Pass

MONTANA -- An emergency telephone was recently installed at a rest stop along Beartooth Pass. Not long ago a snowboarder lost his life while recreating near there because the authorities could not be reached before his injuries became fatal.

Cellphone coverage is sketchy at best and with many hikers, bikers, and skiers travelling along the pass MDOT was persuaded to install a call box southwest of Red Lodge. For the full story go to <http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2007/10/18/news/state/24-pass.txt>

## World Congress coming to New York

NEW YORK -- **ITS America's 2008 Annual Meeting to Combine with the 15<sup>th</sup> World Congress on ITS with the theme of "ITS Connections: Saving Time, Saving Lives."** the 15th World Congress on Intelligent Transport Systems & ITS America's 2008 Annual Meeting and Exposition will be the largest event in the world for ITS leaders, policy makers and other industry professionals. An expected 10,000 transport executives and ITS professionals from around the globe will come together at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City from November 16-20, 2008.

Delegates to this combined event will have access to more than 200 extraordinary policy and technology sessions, exciting tours, a 200,000 square foot exhibition hall, and virtually limitless opportunities to connect with an international audience in one of the great cities of the world.

A broad range of technical tours will also be available to delegates. These tours will feature both state-of-the-art facilities including the New York State Department of Transportation's INFORM Center on Long Island, as well as transport facilities of extraordinary significance, such as the George Washington Bridge, "the busiest vehicular crossing in the world."

This combined event will feature the largest fully-integrated demonstration of deployed and marketable ITS technologies ever. Vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-roadside communication technologies and applications will be highlighted. This demonstration will include innovative mobility solutions operating on the streets and highways of New York and will build upon the success of the Innovative Mobility Showcase that proved to be of enormous interest at the 2005 San Francisco World Congress. Live demonstrations will showcase advanced ITS technologies that provide effective management of public facilities, protect public investment in transport infrastructure, and enhance and expand mobility options.

## Highlights of 2007 NRITS Conference

MICHIGAN -- Set against the beautiful autumn colors of Michigan in America's Cherry Capital – Traverse City – Michigan DOT, ITS Michigan, U.S. DOT, and ITS America sponsored the 2007 National Rural ITS (NRITS) Conference October 7-10 at the Grand Traverse Resort. With more than 228 ITS professionals from 38 states and 3 Canadian provinces, 29 vendors, 18 poster displays, one sold out training course, and 28 technical sessions hosting more than 70 presentations on a variety of rural ITS topics, this year's conference was ripe with information, learning, and partnership opportunities.

The 2007 NRITS began Sunday evening with the traditional Exhibitors Reception where more than 100 conference attendees reconnected with colleagues and partners, as well as visited with the 29 vendors with exhibits and booths spotlighting numerous technologies and systems ranging from regional data integration to road weather sensors, and from data systems to rural transit.

On Monday, October 8, the officially kicked off with an Opening Session moderated by Jim Barbaresso, Vice President of HTNB Corporation. Keynote Speakers included Leon Hank, Chief



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The affairs and business of the ITS Rocky Mountain Chapter are managed and controlled by its Board of Directors. This Board, made up of representatives or Senators from each of the six member states, delegates to the Chapter Officers the necessary powers to conduct Chapter business.

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Hodges Transportation Consulting, LLC  
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Montana Dept. of Transportation

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**Newsletter Editor:** Dara Wilson  
dwilson@meetingsnorthwest.com

Administrative Officer of Michigan DOT, who welcomed the conference attendees with thanks and highlights of ITS initiatives underway in Michigan effecting the states rural operations. Next, Steve Vaughn, Commander of the Enforcement Services Division of the California Highway Patrol and the Chairperson of ITS America's Commercial Vehicle and Freight Mobility (CVFM) Forum, thanked attendees for the opportunity to have commercial vehicle operations included as a rural ITS issue and expressed hope in continuing a newly developed partnership in addressing the mutually shared challenges for both the rural and commercial vehicle communities. The Opening Session's final speaker was Kate Hartman, CVO and Freight Coordinator and current Rural ITS Coordinator in the U.S. DOT ITS Joint Program Office, who provided attendees with news and the most recent restructuring of the U.S. DOT, as well as discussed the goals of U.S. DOT's ITS Advisory Board and the rural ITS community's opportunity to voice their issues through their representative Steve Albert, Director of the Western Transportation Institute and ITS America's Rural ITS Stakeholder Interest Group (Rural ITS SIG) Chairperson.

Technical sessions covered a diverse number of rural-related ITS topics, including road weather information, rural communications, rural transit, ITS partnerships and deployment, traveler information and data collection, commercial vehicle operations, border security, U.S. DOT's 511 Coalition and Clarus Initiative, and VII for non-urban areas, to name just a few. A full one-day training course on Road Weather Information Systems and two road weather related poster sessions rounded out this year's program. Technical session speakers ranged from both the public and private sectors, as well as academia, and provided conference attendees with ample opportunity for candid and robust discussion on the ITS technologies, systems, and real-life lessons learned in rural and frontier areas presented in the wide variety of presentations made available at the conference.

New to this year's conference was the inclusion of several ITS commercial vehicle operations sessions. These sessions, coordinated in partnership with ITS America's CVFM Forum, were designed and implemented to raise awareness of the mutually shared challenges and opportunities between the rural ITS community and the commercial vehicle industry, as well as provide a segue into the CVFM Forum's Fall Meeting conducted October 10-11, directly after the official adjournment of the NRITS Conference. Speakers from U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, Michigan State Police, Michigan DOT, and the Canadian Border Service Agency, among others, provided unique perspectives of commercial vehicle operations conducted and monitored in rural areas and border crossings.

As at every NRITS, the venue in Michigan allowed for a number of diverse networking activities, including Monday evening's dinner aboard a 1800s replica of a tall ship schooner excursion on Traverse Bay, wine tasting at the Ciccone Vineyard, and an onsite Monday Night Football event (sponsored by Open Roads Consulting). The conferences finale event was held at a local Traverse City favorite, Ranch Rudolph, where attendees had the choice of participating a number of activities, including horseback riding, fly fishing, a hayride, and canoeing, or where they could opt to lounge at the lodge listening to a local band providing musical entertainment – all this while the lodge staff put together a pig roast with all of the fixings for all to enjoy.