



Local

**Road
Research
Board**

**Minnesota LTAP Program and
Operational Research Assistance
Program (OPERA)**

**LRRB Investigation 668 and 998:
FY 2010 On-going “Base” and “Continued” Funding Requests**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
CENTER FOR **TRANSPORTATION** STUDIES
MINNESOTA LTAP PROGRAM



Minnesota LTAP Program

LRRB FY 2010 On-Going “Base” and “Continued” Programs Request

	<u>CY 2010</u>
LRRB LTAP Program Base (Local Match for FHWA Contribution)	\$185,000
<u>LRRB “Continued” LTAP Programs:</u>	
Circuit Training and Assistance Program (* \$74,500. to MnDOT Maintenance, * \$84,000 to U of M CTS)	\$158,500*
Transportation Student Career Expo	\$5,500
Minnesota Maintenance Research Expos (Fall/Spring)	\$26,000
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Total:	\$375,000
 INV. 998 LRRB OPERA (Operational Research Assistance Program)	 \$90,000

LRRB Investigation 668: CY 2010 On-Going “Base” Program Funding

Project Title: Minnesota LTAP Program

Principal Investigator: Jim Grothaus, MN LTAP Program Director

FY2010 Requested “On-Going” Annual Funding: \$185,000

Related LRRB Research Goals and Strategies:

Goal 5: Implementation Needs and Processes

Strategy 5D: Ensure that board-completed research projects are considered by the MN LTAP Center in assessing and identifying research implementation needs.

Strategy 5E: Continue to sponsor the MN LTAP Program that provides training and technical assistance.

Goal 6: Informed and Trained Employees

Strategy 6A: Sponsor LTAP activities such as courses, circuit rider, publications, best practices, and syntheses for local government personnel.

Goal 7: Technology and Product Development

Strategy 7D: Support technical assistance activities that help local employees implement new technologies and products.

Objectives:

To facilitate the exchange of innovative transportation practices and technologies.

To strengthen transportation-related skills and knowledge.

To promote agency application of transportation research results

Program Background:

Since 1993, through the support of Minnesota LTAP’s key partners -- the Minnesota LRRB, Mn/DOT, and the FHWA -- the Center for Transportation Studies’ Minnesota LTAP Program has facilitated the exchange and agency application of new transportation information and innovations through:

- State-wide training
- Technical referral and assistance
- Library reference assistance and instructor literature search support
- Quarterly newsletter, “*Technology Exchange*”
- Distribution and loan of videos and publications
- CTS/LTAP website
- “Best practices” handbooks
- Conference planning support

In addition, base program funds enable the creation and maintenance of the MN LTAP infrastructure including a comprehensive course catalog, course calendar, and a customer

database of over 6,000 participants. Customer evaluation and feedback surveys are also incorporated into the annual base program operations.

Highlights of the FY 2009 LTAP Base Program include:

- Delivered 30 workshops and 6 events serving 3253 participants.
- “New” course delivered on Storm Water and Erosion Control (for NPDES Permits)
- “New” course delivered on Mechanic Training: Allison Transmission Controls and Electronic Engines
- Delivery of 4 editions of the *MN Technology Exchange*. Maintain existing MN LTAP website.
- Delivery of 4 editions of the *MN LTAP Hot Topics* electronic newsletter.
- “New” LTAP Forum web page for the promotion of technology exchange and assistance
- Continued delivery of e-notifications for LTAP classes and new LTAP “Hot Topics”.
- Continued sponsoring MPWA “Click Listen and Learn” electronic training sessions and increased support with MPWA Fall Technical Workshop.
- Increased “Roads Scholar Program” participation to over 1900 enrollments and 23 graduates in 2008.
- Support of national LTAP initiatives including serving on the Executive Committee for NLTAPA.
- Developed a new “user friendly” LTAP “Family” brochure. This brochure is easily updated and can be duplicated on demand for specific outreach, events and workshops.
- New design and “look” to the annual LTAP Calendar Workshop Poster.
- Created an electronic survey for annual, county and city needs assessment. Participation was successful and the results were easier to identify.
- Students enrolled in the Roads Scholar program have a new option on the LTAP website, which is the ability to submit a request for a copy of their transcript and have it mailed or electronically delivered to them.

Initial FY 2010 New Base Program Plans:

The focus of the Minnesota LTAP base program will continue to provide high quality training and informational resources for local agencies; to serve as a resource for technical assistance/referral; to facilitate the exchange of best practices; to provide the transfer of new technology innovations and materials; and to promote the implementation of transportation research results. New and updated LTAP courses and resources to be delivered in 2010 include: delivery of new mechanic training workshops, updating the Motor Grader Operator training and delivering eight sessions around the state, and development and delivery of a workshop on culvert maintenance and installation. Additional development is underway for a new workshop on management and maintenance for signs and pavement markings, which will include a section on retroreflectivity requirements and compliance. MN LTAP plans to work with LRRB to deliver training on rural road safety issues. New developments and updates will take place this year on the LTAP website. The current design and navigation will be revamped to make it more user friendly. Currently a new process to document web updates is underway. LTAP staff is working with Continuing Professional Education at the University of Minnesota to research the possibility of developing a type of web-based product for workshops or resources appropriate for

adaptation. LTAP publication staff is working to coordinate the “look” of all marketing and training materials. A process to document these materials for future updating will be created.

Minnesota LTAP staff will continue to support its key partners through collaboration with Mn/DOT State Aid and other technical offices and training personnel, participating on the MPWA Education Committee, the LRRB Marketing and Research Implementation Committees, MCEA County Highway Safety Task Force and supporting conference sessions for the CEAM and MCEA annual meetings.

LRRB Investigation 668: FY 2010 “Continued” Program

Project Title: Circuit Training and Assistance Program (CTAP)

Principal Investigator: Jim Grothaus, MN LTAP Program Director *(In partnership with Mn/DOT Office of Maintenance Research)*

FY2010 Requested “Continued” Annual Funding: *\$158,500. (*\$74,500. to LRRB Administrative Account, \$84,000 to LTAP)

Related LRRB Research Goals and Strategies:

Goal 5: Implementation Needs and Processes

Strategy 5D: Ensure that board-completed research projects are considered by the LTAP Center in assessing and identifying research implementation needs.

Goal 6: Informed and Trained Employees

Strategy 6A: Sponsor LTAP activities such as courses, circuit rider, publications, best practices, and syntheses for local government personnel.

Goal 7: Technology and Product Development

Strategy 7D: Support technical assistance activities that help local employees implement new technologies and products.

Objectives:

To instruct local maintenance personnel--who are not easily reached through traditional classroom instruction--in the latest research results, proven maintenance practices, and current technologies for improved road and street maintenance

To engage maintenance personnel in their own learning through an interactive, hands-on, informal learning environment with their peers

FY 2009 Highlights:

In 2008 CTAP conducted approximately 30 workshops/short courses around the state reaching nearly 1,100 participants. The Township Association Tour was again delivered in spring 2008 providing 11 sessions and reaching over 3000 participants within the MN Association of Townships. The Roadside Vegetation Manual update is complete and work to develop a Best Practices Managing Roadside Vegetation workshop is underway and will be delivered in FY 2010. CTAP continued it's partnership with the MN Freshwater Society and Fortin Consulting to develop and deliver the 7th Annual Road Salt Symposium. The partnership also continued to provide training on Snow & Ice Best Practices for Winter Maintenance on Roadways. A new delivery format was tested in the fall of 2008 whereby 18 dates and locations were selected to conduct training. A brochure was created and participants were required to register. A minimal fee was charged help supplement the additional administration necessary to provide the training. CTAP is serving as a technical liaison on a number of technical advisory panels and committees including: Dust Control, Effects of Chlorides on Fresh Water, MN Workzone Field Manual, Storm Water Protection and MN Parking Lot and Sidewalk Winter Maintenance. CTAP is also serving as the National LTAP Association liaison to the Salt Institute.

FY 2010 Initial Program Plans:

Requested FY 2010 funding will help the CTAP program strengthen program quality and delivery and maintain its current level of service. In FY 2010 CTAP plans to continually update course materials to reflect the changes in technology and best practices. CTAP will continue to partner with the MN Freshwater Society on the 8th Annual Road Salt Symposium and seek similar partnering opportunities. The CTAP instructor will continue to present technical sessions at the Minnesota Association of Township annual statewide workshops, the Spring Maintenance Training Expo and the Minnesota Fall Maintenance Expo.

LRRB Investigation 668: FY2010 “Continued” Program

Project Title: Transportation Student Development / Career Expo

Principal Investigator: Jim Grothaus MN LTAP Program Director

FY2010 Requested “Continued” Annual Funding: \$5,500

Related LRRB Research Goal and Strategy:

Goal 8: Participation

Strategy 8D: Sponsor outreach projects to communicate board activities and accomplishments.

Objectives:

To promote transportation career opportunities within Minnesota's counties and cities and to attract the best transportation students to local agency employment and internships.

To expose transportation students to transportation career alternatives, information on career preparation strategies, networking and employment seeking opportunities.

To create a stronger recruitment pool of transportation graduates.

Program Background and FY2009 Highlights:

Since 1995, the LRRB--in cooperation with the Minnesota chapter of Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS), the ITS Institute at the Center for Transportation Studies, and the CTS Education/Outreach Council--has sponsored the “Annual Transportation Career Expo” for students in transportation-related areas of study. The programs original format included interactive panel discussions for both general and concurrent sessions addressing topics such as transportation career opportunities and alternatives, resume presentation, interview skills, desired entry-level candidate qualities and job requirements, etc. An exhibitor reception follows the sessions during which students can speak one-on-one with practitioners and learn more about employment and internship opportunities

Over the years, the general and concurrent sessions have benefited from the participation of local agency panel members who have shared their employment experiences and offered career-planning advice. Shannon Tyree, City of St. Paul, was one of a 4-person panel discussion.

To promote the awareness of available city and county summer-time internships and full-time positions, MN LTAP staff summarized local agency career opportunities into a booklet distributed to each participating student. Also included in the participants materials are: Exhibitor Contact List, Participant Contact List, Speaker Bios, Company Bio Booklet, Evaluation Form, Scholarship list and a Networking Tip Sheet. Additionally participants are encouraged to drop off resumes at registration desk. Resumes are critiqued during the event and students are able to pick up their reviewed resumes before they leave.

The Annual Transportation Career Expo was held in February 2009. This year's format combined the breakout sessions into one general session offering an interactive panel discussion and Q & A with transportation professionals. Exhibitors had an opportunity to introduce

themselves and talk about their organization following the panel discussion and before the reception and networking begins. Exhibitor introductions helped promote a more comfortable atmosphere and encourage students to approach representatives during the exhibitor and networking reception. The exhibitor reception and resume critiquing remained following the general session. An earlier date in February contributed to increased participant numbers. 2009 attendance was 85 students and 25 outside vendors.

FY 2010 Program Plans:

It is the center's goal to continue reaching out to as many students and new graduates as possible and connecting them with multiple employers and professional organizations. The 2010 Career Expo will be held in February 2010.

LRRB Investigation 668: FY2010 “Continued” Program

Project Title: Minnesota Fall and Spring Maintenance Expos
Principal Investigator: Jim Grothaus, MN LTAP Program Director

FY2010 Requested “Continued” Annual Funding: \$26,000

Related LRRB Research Goals and Strategies:

Goal 5: Implementation Needs and Processes

Strategy 5D: Ensure that board-completed research projects are considered by the LTAP Center in assessing and identifying research implementation needs.

Goal 6: Informed and Trained Employees

Strategy 6D: Support special conferences and events that feature new transportation technologies and innovative practices.

Goal 7: Technology and Product Development

Strategy 7D: Support technical assistance activities that help local employees implement new technologies and products.

Objectives:

To promote the transfer and exchange of new maintenance research results, technology/innovations, and practices among maintenance personnel from local and state government; to receive a greater return on maintenance research investments by promoting the practical application of research results; to recognize maintenance innovators/champions and provide them with an opportunity to share experiences and practices with their peers; to recognize maintenance workers who have completed the Roads Scholar program.

FY2009 Highlights:

Event: 2009 Spring Maintenance Expo, April 14-15, St. Cloud Civic Center

Format: General and concurrent sessions, equipment exhibition and technology display, and hands-on demonstration area

Attendance: Approximately 550 participants anticipated

Features: General session featuring Job Site Hazard Prevention, The Healthy Tree 10-Step Program. Concurrent session presentations & topics included: Street Sweeping, Truck Weight Compliance Updates, Sun Safety for Outdoor workers, Superior Customer Service, Building Winning Work Relationships. Over 50 indoor equipment displays will be housed in the exhibition hall for participants to view, operate and ask questions.

Event: 2008 Fall Maintenance Expo, October 1-2, St. Cloud Public Works Facility

Format: General and concurrent sessions, equipment exhibition and technology display, and snow plow driver “rodeo” competition, and skidster competition

Attendance: Projected registrations of 1,500-2,000 attendees

Features: General and concurrent session presentations focusing on winter maintenance issues such as *Snow fighting at the International Airport, Minnesota Airports:*

How Are You Handling Your Snow Removal Operations, Historical Perspective of Weather Forecasting in Relation to Road Maintenance, and What Makes Maintenance Workers Tick were among several educational topics offered. Over 150 indoor/outdoor vendors provided equipment for hands-on demonstrations, safety gear and information on new technologies and research.

FY2010 Program Plans:

The 2010 Spring Maintenance Training and Expo is scheduled for April 15-16, 2010 at the St. Cloud Civic Center and the 2009 Fall Maintenance Expo and Rodeo is scheduled for October 7 & 8, 2009. The continued MN LTAP partnership with Mn/DOT Office of Maintenance Research, MSSA, MPWA, MCEA and CEAM along with the involvement of local agency maintenance workers, ensures current maintenance research and practices are incorporated into educational sessions and meet the needs of city and county personnel.

LRRB Investigation 998: FY2010 Operational Research Assistance Program (OPERA)

Project Title: Operational Research Assistance Program (OPERA)

Principal Investigator: Jim Grothaus, MN LTAP Program Director

FY2010 Requested Annual Funding: \$90,000

Related LRRB Research Goals and Strategies:

Goal 7: Technology and Product Development

Strategy 7D: Support technical assistance activities that help local employees implement new technologies and products.

Objectives:

To promote innovations in operations and maintenance by stimulating and conducting research; to create an environment for intelligent improvements to maintenance operations with a safer, easier and more efficient environment for the worker; to provide the motoring public with a safer, user friendly, efficient and environmentally sound transportation network; and to facilitate the dissemination of operations technology through the RIC, Circuit Training and Assistance Program (CTAP), the publication of accurate reports and participation in the Spring and Fall Maintenance Expo and MN Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP).

GOALS: The Operational Research Program for Local Transportation Groups goals are as follows:

1. Enhance the level of transportation knowledge
2. Encourage involvement in research by local governmental employees
3. Support transfer of knowledge between State, county, and cities
4. Facilitate partnering between counties, cities and the State
5. Promote applied “hands on” research development at the local level

Program Background:

The Minnesota Local Road Research Board’s Operational Research Assistance Program, or the Local OPERA Program, helps to develop innovations in the construction and maintenance operations of local government transportation organizations. The local OPERA Program encourages maintenance employees from all cities and counties to get involved in operational or hands-on research. In particular, OPERA helps to develop their great ideas locally and share those ideas statewide. The Local OPERA Program funds projects up to \$10,000.

FY2009 Highlights:

In FY2009 an annual request for proposals and a time-line was created to streamline the process. The new RFP process was launched in mid-July and deemed quite successful. Following the deadline for submitted funding requests, proposals were reviewed by the approval committee and project leaders were asked to attend a committee meeting to justify or explain their project. The selection committee approved their choices and project leaders were notified of funding. Approved proposals are funded in two parts. The local agency receives 80% to begin the project

and the final 20% upon completion and submittal of a final report which can include pictures, a demonstration and/or presentation at the Spring or Fall Maintenance Expo. The length of the project may vary and terms may be negotiated. Since 2003 the OPERA Program has funded 44 different projects.

FY2010 Program Plans:

It is the goal of the Minnesota LTAP Program to continue to meet the ongoing management needs of the OPERA program on behalf of LRRB. Should LRRB choose to continue the Program Management Agreement, “contract”, with the Center for Transportation Studies of the University of Minnesota, we shall provide program implementation, policy recommendations, program record keeping, program financial management, and annual reporting to the LRRB. Research project management shall include research project solicitation, project development, application assistance, agreement execution, project oversight, final report editing, and project payments.