



Transportation Focus is a quarterly newsletter published by the Nick J. Rahall, II Appalachian Transportation Institute.

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Read *Transportation Focus* online at www.marshall.edu/ati/news/newsletter.htmlx.

Upcoming Events

Conferences March 2007

National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council Conference, Huntington, W.Va.

Technology Transfer Activities

Jan. 16-17, 2007

Level 1 GIS Training - WVDOT, Charleston, W.Va.

Jan. 31-Feb. 1, 2007

Level 1 GIS Training - WVDOT, Charleston, W.Va.

Feb. 6-7, 2007

Principles of Writing Highway Construction, Charleston, W.Va.

Feb. 6-7, 2007

Level 2 GIS Training - WVDOT, Charleston, W.Va.

Feb. 8-9, 2007

Level 2 GIS Training - WVDOT, Charleston, W.Va.

March 1, 2007

Truck Driver Training for WVPSD, Charleston, W.Va.

March 7-8, 2007

Level 3 GIS Training - WVDOT, Charleston, W.Va.

April 18-19, 2007

GPS Training - WVDOT, Charleston, W.Va.

K-12 Outreach

SPRING 2007

LEGO Robotics Pilot Testing of *Robotics Engineering Vol. I and Vol. II*, Tri-State Area Schools, W.Va.

Register online at www.marshall.edu/rti or call Sandra Jones at (304) 696-7098.

Upcoming Events



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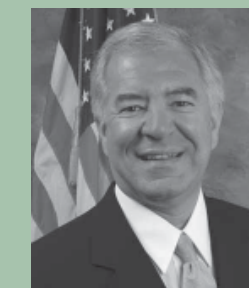
RTI Technology Program Assists W.Va. Law Enforcement

RTI has been awarded a \$493,614 grant from the United States Department of Justice to assist the West Virginia State Police (WVSP) in installing a mobile, paperless, data-reporting and responding system in 600 vehicles used throughout the state.

U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall announced the project Dec. 29, 2006, in Beckley, W.Va. Federal funding for the project was secured by Rahall as part of the Department of Justice appropriations bill last year.

"By bringing GPS technology to our law enforcement personnel, we will provide them with some of the most modern crime-fighting equipment available," Rahall said.

"Our police have the difficult job of protecting our communities and fighting crime. Providing state-of-the-art technologies like GPS will give them a leg up on catching criminals and responding quickly to emergencies



"West Virginia residents deserve the same police protection that is already being used in many parts of the country. Better technologies for our courageous officers make everyone safer."
U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II
(W.Va. -3rd)

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USACOE Awards \$605K to Develop Computer-Based System to Aid 911 Centers, First Responders

System to Help Identify Hazardous Cargo during Emergencies

The United States Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District, recently awarded RTI a \$605,000 contract to develop a computer-based system, for demonstration purposes, that will allow county 911 centers and first responders to input towboats and barges identification numbers to obtain pertinent information regarding the vessel and its cargo.

The system will provide information about commodities involved in navigation accidents and methods for responding to hazardous commodities to protect public health and safety. It will also assist with locating such accidents. The system, which is to be developed in cooperation with the Operation Respond Institute in Washington, D.C., will provide real-time state of the art

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Plymale's Perspective The Director's Report



Information about Transportation Issues Presented at Fall Activities

For many of us, swirling leaves, shortening days and cooling weather not only signal the onset of fall, but also the beginning of the busiest time of the year.

From the start of the academic year to the beginning of seasonal celebrations, a safe, secure and smooth-running transportation system is essential to the many fall traditions West Virginians have come to embrace.

RTI is fortunate to have been present this fall at regional activities, which have allowed us to stress transportation issues to students, parents, educators, government leaders, businesspersons, commercial drivers and many other individuals.

By providing information at public events, such as Bridge Day in Fayetteville, the West Virginian Pumpkin Festival in Milton and First LEGO League tournaments in Huntington, students, parents and educators learn valuable transportation safety tips and how to achieve careers in transportation.

We are also proud to help develop and disseminate some of the newest technologies that assist local, state and national regulatory and service agencies in preparing for and responding to emergencies on our roads, rivers and rails.

Furthermore, several training sessions with employees from industry, government and academia have allowed RTI to help make West Virginia a leader in adopting the newest, most innovative methods, rules and regulations into everyday practice.

Sincerely,
Robert L. Plymale

FINAL 2-DAY PASS TRAINING TAKES PLACE IN BECKLEY

by Pam Hamilton

RTI and the W.Va. Division of Public Transit (DPT) conducted four PASS training sessions in 2006. The PASS training ensures that drivers have current expertise in passenger assistance techniques plus sensitivity and safety skills appropriate for serving persons with disabilities. Parkersburg, Morgantown, Huntington and Beckley were selected based on access to the W.Va. highway system and proximity of facilities to urban and rural transportation providers.

Twenty transportation professionals attended the Two-Day PASS Driver Certification course Nov. 15-16 at the Raleigh County Community Action facility in Beckley. John Ball, P.E., RTI Research Associate and PASS instructor explains,

"Improved mobility for transportation-dependent populations, such as the elderly and disabled, is a crucial concern. In rural areas, community transportation drivers must know how to safely and efficiently serve passengers requiring mobility assistance.

"West Virginia has the third oldest population in the U.S., with a median age of 40.7 and 15.3 % age 65 years and older. The continuing increase in ridership, due to population density in general and elderly population in particular, demonstrates the vital need for paratransit and bus transportation. Upgrading skills, sharing solutions and networking with peers enhance the quality of community transportation services."



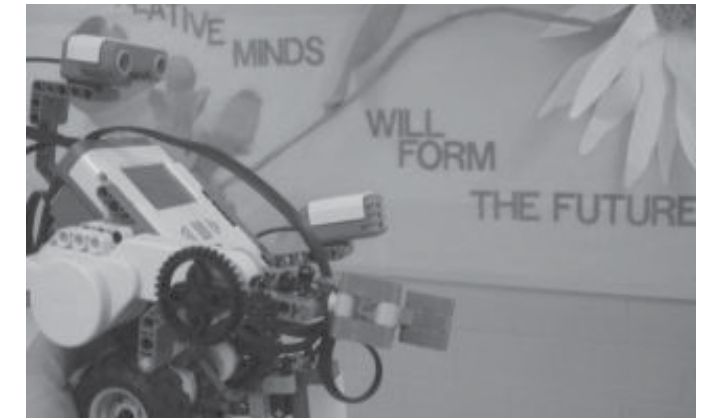
LEGO Gears Up For FLL Competition Season

By Kate Jordan

On Saturday, September 9, Linda Hamilton kicked off her LEGO season with what she called a "take-a-part day" that took place at Marshall's Morrow Library. FIRST LEGO League teams, as well as the general public, were invited to this event which consisted of taking apart just about anything the students could find.

From computers from 1982, fast food toys and archaic laptops, students embarked on discovering how things are made and how to disassemble them. Members of the Barboursville FIRST LEGO League Team brought this year's FLL field set, Nano Quest, to show to other students who were interested in FLL challenges. This particular Saturday, students were eagerly awaiting FLL's release of the actual challenges for Nano Quest so that they could begin working out the ways to solve the problems for this year's FLL challenge.

A new edition to Hamilton's plethora of students and schools this year was Tucker Valley Elementary/Middle



Top photo: Tucker Valley Elementary/Middle School received this robot with support from the West Virginia Space Consortium and RTI. Middle photo: During "take-a-part" activities, a student disassembles a 1982 computer to see what's inside. Bottom photo: Tucker Valley students studied nanotechnology during visits from Linda Hamilton.



School, which is located in Parsons, West Virginia. Under the direction of Eileen Poling, Hamilton introduced students to LEGO Robotics and FIRST LEGO League, and the students quickly ordered

their materials and formed a team to compete in FLL events. Upon receiving their robot, the students decided to name him Homer and then experienced an interesting turn of events.

Homer Hickam, West Virginia native and author best known for his autobiographical novel, *Rocket Boys*, wrote to the students of Tucker Valley, wishing them the best of luck in their upcoming FLL season and thanking them for keeping his name alive with the robot.

Hamilton hosted a FLL Nano Quest Challenge as a local event December 2, 2006, at Marshall University's Morrow Library in Huntington, W.Va. The West Virginia State Tournament took place December 9, 2006, in Wheeling W.Va., at Wheeling Jesuit University.

For more information on FLL visit www.firstlegoleague.org, and for further information on local events in the Huntington area, visit Linda Hamilton's LEGO Robotics page at www.marshall.edu/lego.





OL Welcomes Autumn with a Handful of Events

By Kate Jordan

Welcoming fall turned out to be quite an event as the months of October and November proved busy for RTI's West Virginia Operation Lifesaver (OL) presenters.

First, the West Virginia Pumpkin Festival took place in Milton. This year's festival ran October 5-8, 2006, and attracted visitors from West Virginia and neighboring states. RTI's Kim Baker, John Ball, Errin Jewell, Kate Jordan and LeAndria Reed attended the event and handed out engineering hats and train safety literature to thousands of students.

Two weekends later, Jewell and Jordan found themselves aboard the New River Excursion Train, stressing the safety precautions one should take when around trains. The train has been an autumn tradition in West Virginia since 1966 and this year marked its 40th running year. The Collis P. Huntington Railroad Historical Society sponsors the excursion train. The train boards in Huntington, travels to St. Albans, where it again boards and then stops in Hinton, where tourist and train enthusiasts disembarked to enjoy Railroad Days, a train/arts and crafts festival put on by the town of Hinton. Later in the day, tourists again boarded the train to make the trip back to Huntington. Along the way, the train passed over the New River Gorge where other OL representatives were present for the 28th annual Bridge Day celebration.

Bridge Day takes place annually in Fayette County, W.Va. and is known as "the largest extreme sports event in the world." For 28 years, people from all over the world have come to the New River Gorge to BASE jump, rappel and highline. This year's event was expected to attract nearly 200,000 spectators, and OL was present not just



as spectators, but as providing a service to the community by informing children and adults alike of the importance of train safety. From RTI, Reed represented WVOL at this year's Bridge Day.

Next, Jewell and Baker joined OL volunteers from other organizations to provide safety information at the Appalachian Model Railroad Show in Hunting-

ton on November 24-26, 2006, at the Veterans Memorial Field House. The show featured model railroad layouts, railroad books, memorabilia, hand car and motor car operating displays and sales of new and used model equipment. OL's mascot, Sly Fox, made an appearance to shake hands with youngsters and help presenters hand out train safety information.

OL events wrapped up in December with a board meeting, which took place at RTI headquarters. During the meeting, West Virginia OL Director John Perry informed board members that nearly 500 presentations or activities reached more than 180,000 contacts in 2006. Members also discussed strategies for reaching underserved areas and expanding OL activities in 2007.



CONTINUED PAGE 3: COPS GRANT
that may arise."

The project is part of the United States Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services Program (COPS) program, a program Rahall has fought to keep alive despite Administration efforts to cut funding.

"This project is a perfect example of why we need to keep the COPS program alive and well," he said. "West Virginia residents deserve the same police protection that is already being used in many parts of the country," Rahall said. "Better technologies for our courageous officers make everyone safer."

Traditionally, highway and criminal incidents are recorded at the scene on paper and then entered into the state system at a later time. However, the new system allows information to be transferred into the vehicle-based equipment, which uses global positioning satellite technology to transmit information faster and easier to WVSP headquarters and other WVSP vehicles, at the scene of the incident. Through this project, new GPS-based communication equipment will be installed in WVSP vehicles and given to division officers. The technology allows WVSP to report data, including criminal and highway incident records, without the use of paper. Criminal background checks can also be conducted with the equipment, and police can communicate with other West Virginia agencies during emergencies on and off state highways. RTI will assist in the technology selection, deployment & training aspects of the project.

"RTI has long championed the deployment and testing of GPS technology along the railroads and the major highways," Rahall said. "This funding will help RTI expand the ongoing GPS deployment efforts to assist the law enforcement agencies in acquiring the appropriate GPS technology for their special needs."

RTI Director Bob Plymale said, "We are pleased to facilitate our state police and first responders with the technology to help make our roads and rural areas safer for West Virginians. By securing the funding for this program, Congressman Rahall has provided a way for emergency personnel to respond to emergencies and protect West Virginians more safely, quickly and efficiently."

Eventually, other law enforcement agency vehicles, such as city or municipal law enforcement agencies, and select first responder vehicles, such as ambulances, tow trucks or fire trucks, will be equipped with compatible vehicle-based technology to expand the number of agencies that may benefit from the new system.

CONTINUED PAGE 3: USACOE

information to the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and local communities along the Ohio River in the vicinity of the Hannibal Lock and Dam. The National Maritime Enhancement Institute at RTI, along with a team from the Operation Respond Institute, will move forward in a progressive series of development actions and demonstrations together with major waterway interests on the Ohio River.

Dr. Jim Boone, Vice President of the Operation Respond Institute said, "We are confident that the results and outcomes of this unique pilot program will lead to the clear, cost-effective definition of the benefits of a fully deployed system for the Ohio River and navigable tributaries, and establish Operation Respond System as a major enhancement for safety and security on this critical waterway."

Dana Robertson, director of the National Maritime Enhancement Institute at RTI, said, "Emergency responders and their dispatchers require certain data and information in order to properly 'size-up' the situation and start the proper response actions. Dispatchers must make immediate judgments regarding the nature of the emergency whether it happens to be an on-board or shoreside fire, medical emergency, criminal activity, man overboard, spill, theft, terrorism, or hazardous cargo incident. Once having done so, the exact location of the incident will determine the jurisdictions to be involved and the status of available units. In many cases, the dispatcher and responding units may need supplemental information on how to reach the incident scene, in terms of road access to the river shoreline and obstacles/dangers to equipment or personnel, if any. This project will provide the Coast Guard, the Corps of Engineers and 911 centers critical information they need to respond to such situations."





Staff and Student Spotlight: Bryan Helmer

Birthplace: Weston, West Virginia

Title: Trails Specialist

Education: B.S. Parks, Recreation, Conservation and Leisure Services from Marshall University



Projects with RTI: Layout, design and construction of trail systems in southern West Virginia.

Amber Huggins

Birthplace: Price, Utah

Title: Student Assistant

Education: Pursuing a degree in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering with a minor in computer science from Marshall University



Projects with RTI: K-12 Outreach using LEGO Robotics

Emergency Responders Attend 12th Annual Conference

By Kate Jordan

On September 25-27, 2006, the Charleston Marriot hosted the 12th annual Emergency Responders Conference. The conference was geared towards Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC).

Over the course of three days, the emergency responders in attendance went through a series of different sessions that dealt with scenarios in which they would be called upon. Some of those sessions included things like mine rescue, hazmat, school safety and pandemic flu.

RTI representatives attended the conference to distribute information to attendees on Operation Respond and Operation Lifesaver. Operation Respond Institute is



a not-for-profit corporation which is designed to protect the safety of first responders in emergency situations that involve hazardous materials by allowing them to quickly access information via the Internet concerning hazardous materials being

carried by truck, rail or river. Operation Respond works closely with the Federal Government, transportation carriers and the emergency response community to develop real-world solutions for emergency responders.

Operation Lifesaver is also a not-for-profit organization which is designed to prevent injuries and fatalities at highway-rail grade crossings in our state and to prevent injuries and fatalities to those who trespass on railroad property. Operation Respond, which is made possible by RTI and Operation Lifesaver, which has a chapter in West Virginia, are both organizations which are useful and important to emergency response employees.

For more information on Operation Respond visit www.marshall.edu/ati and follow the links provided or contact Dana Robertson at roberstson@marshall.edu. Information on Operation Lifesaver may be accessed at www.wvol.org.



Coal Mitigation: Prospects for Environmental and Economic Benefits Symposium Takes Place at Marshall University, Hosted by RTI

On Saturday, Oct. 14, 2006, U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall and RTI hosted a public symposium entitled, "Coal Mine Mitigation: Prospects and Progress for Environmental and Economic Benefits," at Marshall University. During the symposium, representatives from economic development organizations, government regulatory agencies, non-profits and industry met to explain West Virginia's coal mitigation process and explore how mitigation can improve communities.



Coal companies are required to 'mitigate,' or lessen the impact of coal mining on the environment, by state and federal governments. Mitigation is usually achieved through the replacement or restoration of affected aquatic resources and habitats, by monetary compensation paid to the state's Department of Environmental Protection to fund stream restoration, by constructing or enlarging new sewers or waterlines, or creating aquatic recreational facilities.



Rahall said, "the rules governing coal mining are constantly changing and need to be addressed often and in-depth by officials and citizens alike to make sure mining communities get the maximum benefit.

"I want to see the money targeted back into the counties in which mining occurred, and where there is possible harm, to help coalfield residents achieve clean water," he said.

Rahall presented opening remarks, and RTI director Bob Plymale moderated the symposium. Panel members included Ginger Mullins, Chief, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District; Randy Huffman, Deputy Secretary, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection; Jason Bostic, Vice President, West Virginia Coal Association; Kasey Russell, Executive Director, West Virginia Land & Mineral Owners Council; Terry Sammons, Esq., Chairman & Mike Whitt, Director, Mingo County Redevelopment Authority; and Richard Mogensen, Director Mid-Atlantic Region, EarthMark Companies, on behalf of National Mitigation Banking Association.

Visit www.marshall.edu/rti to view the panelists' presentations, additional photos, the agenda and the official media release from the Office of Congressman Rahall.





Research Associate Addresses Eastern Region Railroad Crossing Conference



Above: John Ball, research associate, discusses "Workforce Issues/USDOT University Transportation Centers," with attendees.

by Pam Hamilton

The Eastern Region Federal/State Highway-Rail Crossing Conference was conducted Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 2006, at the Holiday Inn in Martinsburg, W. Va. The annual conference was hosted by the Railroads and Utilities Unit Technical Section—Engineering Division of the W. Va. Dept. of Transportation Division of Highways.

Content experts provided legislative and industry updates. State reports on crossing programs in Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia were reviewed. The potential impact of hot button issues was considered.

John Ball, P.E., RTI research associate, discussed "Workforce Issues/USDOT University Transportation Centers."

"RTI is working in tandem with WV DOT DOH to develop and deliver cost-effective professional development workshops and seminars that will advance transportation safety, services and technologies. The urgency to recruit manpower and close gaps in workforce skills and competencies is apparent in both the DOTs and the Class 1 railroads. The rapidly changing global environment presents challenges and opportunities to train a different type of workforce by different means," Ball said.

FHWA/NHI Appraisals Courses Take Place

When property owners are displaced from their homes, business or farms to build public transportation programs using Federal funds, appraisers must follow guidelines set by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Policies Act (Uniform Act).

In October 2006, RTI offered two courses designed to help meet these needs. Appraisals for Federal Aid Highway Programs, Instructor Led (FHWA-NHI-14103), was a two-day course that took place Oct. 16-17, 2006. It helped transportation professionals understand and conform with the appraisal requirements of the Uniform Act.

The course was for experienced appraisal personnel and focused on preparing, presenting and understanding appraisal reports in conformance with the Uniform Act. Additionally, the course addressed the appraiser's role in the overall project development process and how an appraiser's expertise can assist in completing a transportation project effectively and efficiently. Participants earned 1.6 Continuing Education Units, pending course approval, from the West Virginia Real Estate Appraiser Board.

The second course, "Appraisal Review for Federal-Aid Highway Programs (FHWA-NHI-41044)," was a review course that took place Oct. 18, 2006. This course focused on the applications of appraisal review principles and how they fit within the Uniform Act and 49 CFR Part 24, as related to transportation project development. Focusing on larger parcel, uneconomic remnants, cost to cure, and severance damages, the course discussed qualifications, roles and responsibilities of the review appraiser from pre-to post-appraisal activities.

Upon completion of that course, participants were able to: explain how and why the appraisal review is used in establishing just compensation; apply federal-aid appraisal review requirements; apply appraisal review techniques to Federal aid-highway program, including quality assurance, review changes, divergent values, valuation consistency, non-compensable items, appraisal review report, property owner appraisals and appraisal updating; and describe the role of the review appraiser in the land acquisition process.

For completing this course, participants were eligible for .6 Continuing Education Units.



SmartRivers 2006 Conference Addresses Maritime Solutions to Highway and Rail Congestion in Europe, U.S.

NMEI Director Participates in Panel

Dana Robertson, director of the National Maritime Enhancement Institute, participated in the SmartRivers 2006 Conference in Brussels, Belgium, Nov. 7, 2006.

SmartRivers 2006, an international joint conference on synergies for an efficient waterway system in Europe and the United States, was attended by 90 personnel representing industry and government organizations affiliated with inland marine navigation.

Robertson participated in a panel, which consisted of European and American maritime professionals, that identified future areas for collaboration between partners from the United States and Europe.

Key subjects discussed during the conference included:

- Presentation of the European Common Transport Policy and the importance of American-European partnership in transport;
- Institutional challenges to improving United States' Waterways;
- The United States' role in inland waterway transportation;
- Viewpoints of the shipping industry from the United States and Europe;
- Need for understanding the social and environmental benefits of inland waterway transportation;
- Development of partnerships and creating "win-win" situations in waterborne transportation and;
- Developing strategies for an efficient water system in Europe and the US.

Robertson said, "It is evident Europe has recognized the value of the inland waterways towards easing congestion on crowded highways and railways.

"Container ships from all over the world unload their products onto barges at the Ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp, and from there they are transported to intermodal facilities throughout the length of the Rhine and Danube Rivers. Environmental organizations support the use of the inland waterways because they recognize that shipping by barge is an environmentally friendly mode of transportation."



Above: Container ships from all over the world unload their products onto barges at the Port of Rotterdam, Robertson said.

Robertson said Americans can learn to alleviate highway and rail congestion problems by utilizing inland waterways, but there are challenges to using intermodal transportation that must be addressed.

"American attendees learned that transferring the containers from ocean-going container ships to rail, road or barges for distribution to their final destination is a great challenge. The intermodal system must ensure containers are rapidly and efficiently shipped from the port en route to their final destination. Short sea shipping is an increasingly important mode for the large-scale transport of freight within Europe, whether freight is dry bulk, containers, automobiles, other general cargo or project cargo."

American attendees visited the Port of Brussels and Port of Antwerp, Belgium; the Port of Rotterdam, Netherlands; the Port of Mannheim, Germany; and the Strepv-Thieu Lift in Belgium.

SmartRivers 2006 was organized by the European Federation of Inland Ports, Brussels, Belgium, in collaboration with the Port of Pittsburgh, Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment (TINA) Vienna, Austria and Via Donau, Vienna, Austria. Attendees plan to work on joint issues between now and the next conference in 2007.

"We left the conference with the knowledge that together, we can better address these issues," Robertson said.



Geospatial Day Activities Take Place in Cabell, Kanawha Counties

High school students, college students and professionals received information about educational opportunities and career options in the rapidly expanding Geospatial industry during Geospatial Day activities presented by RTI, Nov. 15, 2006.

Geospatial Day is designed to inform and promote fields of study and occupations incorporating global positioning systems (GPS), geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing systems. To celebrate this day, research associates presented to high school students in Cabell and Kanawha counties.

First, Pete Dailey spoke to a group of approximately 20 junior and senior physics students at Sissonville High School in Kanawha County. Using GPS technology, he located the school's global address and installed GPS marker, which was supplied by Marshall University College of Information Technology and Engineering. This activity also took place in conjunction with the school's celebration of International Education Week.

Next, Robin White, Sissonville High international studies coordinator, said, "[Dailey] was recognized at our entire school assembly by our principal, Calvin McKinney, as Dailey displayed our global address for the dedication of our courtyard. We will also have a plaque by our front door denoting our global address and its location in the center of the courtyard. This is part of our international studies program and hopefully will be a daily reminder to students they are part of a bigger community than Sissonville.

White said, "Everyone at Sissonville High School would like to thank Pete Dailey, Barbara Roberts and the Rahall Transportation Institute for the wonderful help we were given to establish our global address. It was important to us to 'mark our spot' in this literal way to symbolically acknowledge our place in the world."

Roberts, RTI program coordinator, said this was RTI's first educational outreach activity with Sissonville High School.



Above: Hugh Bloemer, Assoc. Professor Emeritus, Ohio University, spoke to students about the role of cartographic designs in GIS. (Photo courtesy of The Herald-Dispatch.)

In Huntington, Geospatial Day activities kicked off at 9 a.m. in the Memorial Student Center with map and vendor displays. Students from Spring Valley, Tolsia and Wayne high schools in Wayne County, Cabell Midland High School in Cabell County and Dawson-Bryant High School in Lawrence County, Ohio, were present for a welcome at 10 a.m. by RTI Director Bob Plymale. Opening remarks began at 10:10 a.m., and the keynote address was given at 10:30 a.m. by Dr. Samuel Purkis. Geospatial professionals from academia, industry, government and non-profit organizations participated in a panel discussion from 11 – 11:30 a.m.,

and four speaker sessions took place from 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Dr. Randall Jones, Marshall University Community and Technical College Professor, said, "Geospatial knowledge and skills are being implemented and sought after by a large number of fields. These may include business, cartography, communications, conservation, defense, education, engineering, government, health and human services, disease demographics, forensics, criminal justice, natural resources, transportation and utilities."

The Huntington Geospatial Day event was sponsored by Marshall Community and Technical College, Marshall University College of Information Technology and Engineering, Marshall University College of Liberal Arts and College of Science; and the Nick J. Rahall, II Appalachian Transportation Institute.

Vendors represented academia, federal government, state government and private/nonprofit groups and included: various Marshall University Colleges, Marshall Community and Technical College; Appalachian Regional Commission; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; WV Department of Agriculture; WV Department of Environmental Protection; WV Department of Transportation; WV Geological and Economic Survey; WV Health Care Authority; Charleston Blueprint; Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI); GPS Innovations; Hatfield and McCoy Trails; Rahall Appalachian Transportation Institute; Strictly Business; Thrasher Engineering; Triad Engineering; and WV Society of Professional Surveyors.



RTI Helps W.Va. Become First State to Utilize Paperless, Electronic Commercial Driver's License Testing

by Errin Jewell

On Oct. 3, 2006, West Virginia became the first state to utilize a paperless, electronic system for commercial driver's license (CDL) testing, thanks to help of RTI and a \$77,500 grant from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

In August, 2006, Research Associate Pete Dailey assisted the West Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and West Virginia Department of Transportation by training the first eleven examiners to administer the commercial driver's license skills test using the new system.

Previously, CDL testing consisted of two sections: a knowledge, or written, section that was completed at a DMV office and a driving exam that was completed in the field. Results from the driving exam were then taken to a DMV office and keyed in by the examiner before being scored. To receive their results, applicants had to return to the DMV and wait for their final scores.

With the new test, the knowledge section is completed on an electronic kiosk in a DMV office, and certified examiners conduct the driving section in the field on a laptop computer, which is called a test tablet.

During training, Dailey taught the examiners how to record the location, date, time and test results on the test tablets, and how to use the tablets to transmit

the information to a DMV server using global positioning satellite technology.

Now, test results are available immediately, often before applicants could travel back to the DMV offices.

Dailey said he primarily provided training "as to the functioning of the program, mechanics of the laptop, basic WiFi use and basic website use.

"It was surprising that all of the participants, even those who had not used computers frequently before, were able to navigate the simplified layout and upload to the database using a wireless connection to the Internet."



Pete Dailey

Besides saving time and paper, he said the new testing system "decreases the opportunity for fraud and instantly tracks the CDL applicant's abilities in handling a commercial vehicle."

Research associates plan to make presentations to other states in using the new testing system and may also train their testers.

