



# The NTC Today

The Biannual Newsletter for the Morgan State University National Center for Transportation Management, Research & Development

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## The NTC's Web Site: New Address, New Look

It's time to update your browser's bookmarks, if you haven't done so already. Since mid-October, visitors to the NTC's Web site at [www.eng.morgan.edu/~ntc](http://www.eng.morgan.edu/~ntc) have been redirected to [www.morgan.edu/soe/ntc](http://www.morgan.edu/soe/ntc).

This new site is easier to navigate, clearly defines the NTC, and reflects our presence at Morgan State University. All information has been transferred to the new site, and the home page contains an easier-to-follow news front. Because of the success of the transition, the old Web site will be taken down on Feb.1.



## A Message from the NTC Director

DR. ANDREW FARKAS

Recent statistics confirm the economy's uneven improvement. Gross domestic product grew significantly last quarter, but the unemployment rate increased. Employment is a lag indicator, and economists believe that we'll experience a jobless recovery for a while.

Uncertain economic conditions are also affecting modes of transportation, and it appears that 2009's stimulus legislation merely made a bad transportation situation less dire.

After two months of modest increase, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics' Freight Transportation Services Index fell 0.5 percent in September, indicating that less freight is being moved.

Public transportation systems, according to American Public Transportation Association, are experiencing ridership losses after a surge in ridership from high gasoline prices last year. This year's ridership losses are caused by high unemployment. At the same time, because tax revenues have plummeted, empty trust funds are constraining transit service, road reconstruction, and operations. Unsurprisingly, our students' employment prospects are not as good as they have been.

During the recent APTA webcast on workforce development, a transit official asked about the logic of an internship program when permanent employment is unlikely. My answer: The invaluable experience will pay off sometime for the student through employment in another organization. While it seems that the student gains the most, hiring well-trained student interns allows understaffed and backlogged agencies to meet

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## APTA Webinar Examines How Transit Industry & Students Must Change

Employers must change the way they recruit. Potential employees need technical competency, flexibility, and strong communication skills.

Universities and transit organizations

need to work together to build opportunities for students. Internships are critical to attracting well-educated employees and changing the transportation industry's image.

Those facts were discussed on Nov. 10 at the American Public Transportation Association's first Workforce Development Student Symposium. Hosted by the NTC and held in Morgan's Schaefer Building Library, the event was offered as a webinar on APTA's Web site in order to open the dialogue to the largest possible audience.

"Our goal is to provide some insights today on the challenges and strategies related to attracting the next generation of the [transportation] workforce," said moderator Doran J. Brooks in his opening remarks. "Those that are coming from Generation X, Y, and the millennial generation — we want to bring them into our industry and show them the many careers that are available in public transportation."

APTA has represented the transit industry since 1882. Its 1500 members include universities, government agencies, public transportation systems, and the private organizations that plan, design, construct, and operate transit systems.

On-site panelists for the symposium included the NTC's Dr. Farkas, U.S. DOT's DeVera Redmond, and the Research and Innovative Technology Administration's Lydia Mercado. Joining the conversation by phone were Dwight Brashear of MV Transportation, Ethel Roy of WMATA, Jeff Rosenberg of the Amalgamated Transit Union, Jill Hough of the Small Urban and Rural Transit Center at North Dakota State University, and Joel Volinski of the National Center for Transit Research at the University of South Florida.

In addition to publicizing their own workforce development efforts, the speakers emphasized what students can do to guarantee success. Marc Scott, a student at North Dakota State University who is pursuing his Ph.D. in transportation and logistics, provided the student perspective. Scott named a lack of awareness, the industry's image, and exposure to the industry as the three major obstacles to getting students to pursue transportation careers, but named internships as a major tool to fight back.

"When individuals, as I have done, come back from these experiences, the transit industry actually indirectly creates transit disciples," he said. "I consider myself a transit disciple, in terms of you have a strong position based on the experience and you are now able to go out and share and able to try and ignite the passion that exists."



The webinar's on-site panel included (from left to right) Lydia Mercado, DeVera Redmond, and Dr. Farkas.



## Do you know a grad student interested in transportation finance and planning who would like to attend the TRB's conference in *New Orleans?*

The conference, Transportation Finance: Forging a Sustainable Future -NOW!, is May 19-21, 2010. **The planning committee will provide participation grants to six graduate students, and applications are now being accepted.** Grants of up to \$1500 will cover the cost of registration, three nights at the conference hotel, and travel.

Grant recipients will be expected to attend all of the sessions and participate in conference activities. Detailed information on the conference is available at [www.trb.org/calendar](http://www.trb.org/calendar).

### **Eligibility**

An applicant must be a full-time student at a U.S. university and enrolled in a graduate program relevant to transportation. Preference will be given to students with experience in a topic related to surface transportation finance or who are preparing a thesis/capstone paper on a relevant topic.

### **To Apply**

Students should write a 1-2 page letter detailing their interest in transportation

system planning and finance, how attending the conference will further their educational goals, relevant coursework already taken and/or planned thesis/capstone topic, and any relevant research experience.

The application should also include

- student's full contact information;
- name of the university, department, and program in which currently enrolled;
- current degree program, program start date, and expected graduation date; and
- a letter of recommendation from their faculty adviser.

**Applications are due January 31, 2010, and should be e-mailed to:**

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## Naveed Shah is NTC's Student of the Year

Naveed Shah is a candidate for a master of science in transportation at Morgan State University. In 1999, he received his undergraduate degree in civil engineering from Mehran University of Engineering & Technology in Jamshoro, Pakistan. For nearly three years, he worked for Pakistan's federal government as a research engineer. In that time, Shah presented two research papers at the 2nd and 3rd International Civil Engineering Congress. His topics included the use of pit sand in structural members and irrigation channel lining with polymer mortar-coated bricks.

Since 2006, Shah has been a civil engineer for Harford County, where he is responsible for maintaining county roadway infrastructure, including roadways, storm drains, culverts, and safe traffic operations. He is currently developing a methodology to improve the county's old and deteriorating storm drain system. Shah is a recipient of the NTC Fellowship. He is also working with two of the NTC's principal investigators to examine highway drainage issues and the socioeconomic effects of urban transportation patterns.

As Student of the Year, Shah received an all-expenses paid trip to the Council of University Transportation Centers' annual awards banquet, a \$1000 stipend, and a certificate. Congratulations, Naveed!



## Research News

### Looking for a Research Topic?

The NTC will support projects that address subjects included in the TRB's database of research needs statements.

Found online at <http://rns.trb.org>, the database contains over 850 statements that address issues of national and global significance. Subject areas include, but are not limited to, data and information technology, design, highways, and operations and traffic management.

All statements have been reviewed and approved by the TRB's Technical Activities Division.

To receive monthly alerts when new statements are added, visit <http://rns.trb.org/subscribe.asp>.

### Poster Presentation

On Nov. 12, Dr. Young-Jae Lee presented at the poster session for the TRB's Developing a Research Agenda for Transportation Infrastructure and Renewal Conference. The final report for the project Dr. Lee presented, *Life-Cycle and Economic Efficiency Analysis for Pavement Marking Materials: Two-Year Data Collection for the State of Maryland*, is expected soon.

## Director's Message

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their responsibilities.

The NTC's signature internship programs with the Maryland Department of Transportation and Maryland State Highway Administration have survived trying economic times because the agencies recognize the programs' great value, and because the NTC, with its funding, supplements the number of hired interns. As we seek new ways to make other internship arrangements a reality, the NTC will continue to stand by these programs and make our small, but

vital contribution to improving the economy.