A team of US Department of Transportation Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) team conducted their field visit to the Nevada University Transportation Center (NUTC) on September 25, 2009. The RITA team consisted of Ms. Robin Kline, Amy Stearns, and Denise Dunn.

The field visit started with a breakfast meeting with NUTC administrative team consisted on Dr. Pushkin Kachroo, Dr. Ken Peck, and Dr. Vinod Vasudevan. After the breakfast meeting, the team were welcomed by the College of Engineering Dean. Dr. Kachroo made a presentation on NUTC educational initiatives, which includes development of new courses, hosting workshops and technical meetings. The team, then met with co-sponsors of the NUTC. Co-sponsors were represented by various administrative and technical directors of agencies such as Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) of Southern Nevada, Freeway and Arterial System of Transportation (FAST), and Nevada Department of Transportation. This provided an opportunity for RITA officials to identify the positive working relationship the NUTC keeps with its co-sponsors. Immediately after this meeting, the RITA team met with Ms. Erin Breen, the director of Safe Community Partnership, NUTC’s outreach program. Ms. Breen explained various programs her center initiates to address various issues associated with drinking and driving, teenage drivers, occupant protection programs. The RITA team members were taken on a tour of the Science and Engineering Building (SEB), which houses the NUTC by the Manager of the SEB.

During the working lunch session, the RITA team met with various grant administrative team of UNLV including administrative representatives from the College of Engineering, Office of Sponsored Programs, and UNLV President’s Office. The following session provided an opportunity for the RITA team to meet with present and past students of the center. The past students included first generation students and the last generation graduates of the program. First generation students consisted of Dr. Kenneth Ackeret, who is the current Vice President of Las Vegas office of transportation consultants Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc, Mr. Rich Romer, the principal of another consulting firm Orth-Rodgers and Associates, Inc. Both these gentlemen are highly active in the transportation industry and have served as international directors of Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). This event provided a platform for the RITA team to evaluate the success of the existing transportation program at UNLV. During the next session, the UNLV administrative team and the College of Engineering presented an overview of the facilities and existing programs at the university and how the center and the university and the center work together for greater success. The current research team presented the findings of the researches during the next session and answered the RITA teams questions. The tour concluded with a field visit to the FAST facility and RTC transit services.
Although one day is a short period to show all the activities going on at the center, we believe that we were able to showcase some of the important programs.

NUTC Tech-Day 2009
The NUTC hosted its second annual “Tech Day” at the Science and Engineering Building (SEB) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas on September 8, 2009. Similar to previous year, the purpose of the event was to showcase the project progress and present the interim results to the local agencies and stakeholders. Government agencies, private consultants, and University researchers were invited to the event.

Over 25 participants attended the Tech Day. Participants came from organizations, such as, Nevada Department of Transportation, Nevada Office of Traffic Safety, Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada, Cities of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, and Henderson, Nevada Motor Transport Association, and private consultants. Research presentations were divided into two sessions: technical presentations and interactive sessions. During the interactive sessions at the SEB lobby each research team used their prepared posters and take-away brochures to explain their work to the enquiring guests. The event also included lab tours and exhibition of research equipment.

In addition to the NUTC sponsored projects, selected research projects from the Transportation Research Center and the Safe Community Partnership were also displayed. This event was a great venue to discuss pressing transportation issues and research opportunities that might be mutually beneficial.
Fall Transportation Conference

UNLV-TRC, along with Nevada Chapters of Institute of Transportation Engineers, American Society of Civil Engineers, and Intelligent Transportation Society of America, host Annual Fall Transportation Conference every year. In 2009, it was hosted at Cox Pavilion, UNLV on September 24-25, 2009. Over 200 delegates and vendors from all over the U.S. participated in this 2-day conference. Attendees include transportation professionals from local, and state agencies, and private consultants from all over the U.S. Students and faculty/staff from the NUTC made several research presentations during this event. During the conference, a bowling competition was organized by UNLV-ITE Student Chapter, the profits from which were used for student chapter travel funds.

Transportation Forum Series on High Speed Trains

NUTC initiated a transportation forum series this fall. The topic of the initial series was selected as “High Speed Trains.” This topic was finalized after listening to public interests. The purpose of this forum was to provide a neutral platform for various competitors to present their concepts of the proposed California-Nevada high speed train service. Four major consortiums made presentations on their technology. They are:

Desert Express, LLC, August 31, 2009 at SEB Auditorium, UNLV

AVT SolaTrek, ASBE, and Tubular Rail, October 19, 2009 at SEB Auditorium, UNLV

Central Japan Railway Company’s Bullet Train, December 7, 2009 at SEB Auditorium, UNLV

These events were co-sponsored by Ward 5 Chamber of commerce. This participation and the media publicity it received ensured strong participation from general public and various stakeholders.
News from the Center

NUTC hosted Transportation Forum Series on High Speed Train services

Fall Transportation Conference

New Course on Transportation Networks using Mesoscopic Simulation

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