



The Gulf Coast Center for Evacuation & Transportation Resiliency

NEWSLETTER VOLUME 2,
JULY 2010



Associate Director's Message



Dr. Billy Fields

This issue of the Gulf Coast Research Center for Evacuation and Transportation Resiliency's newsletter highlights our latest technology transfer and research activities. The Center has worked to actively promote important sharing of information on policy formation and implementation. In addition to co-hosting the seminar, *Linking*

Rail Systems in Southeast Louisiana, the Center co-hosted the *Urban Pathways to Livable Communities: Building Partnerships for Healthy Neighborhoods*. The two day conference, co-hosted with the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and Tulane and Harvard's Prevention Research Centers, brought together transportation, public health, and urban planning professionals to build dialogue on the key components of building livable neighborhoods. The Featured Article in this newsletter installment provides more information on this event.

The Center has also awarded several exciting new research projects in marine transportation resiliency and active transportation that will generate important results over the coming year. Look for more information on our research activities in coming newsletters. As always, for more information, feel free to contact us at the Center. We look forward to engaging your questions and comments.

For more information contact:

Billy Fields, PhD

Associate Director of The Gulf Coast Research Center for Evacuation and Transportation Resiliency

E-mail: wmfields@uno.edu

Phone: 504-280-6315

Featured Activity: Technology Transfer National Urban Pathways Conference

February 25 and 26, 2010 in New Orleans



Urban Pathways to Livable Communities

building partnerships for healthy neighborhoods

The Gulf Coast Research Center partnered with the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Tulane University's Prevention Research Center, and Harvard University's Prevention Research Center for *Urban Pathways to Livable Communities: Building Partnerships for Healthy Neighborhoods*.

The two-day conference in New Orleans brought together more than 100 transportation and public health professionals and advocates from more than 25 cities across the nation to engage in a discussion of integrating the best practices from transportation, public health, and planning to encourage the growth of healthy neighborhoods.

The first day featured a series of panels that highlighted project level work designed to foster the growth of healthy neighborhoods through the strategic use of urban greenways. Case studies from Cleveland, Milwaukee, New York, Richmond, and Washington, DC highlighted the key partnerships necessary to build successful programs. The day concluded with a tour of the Lafitte Corridor in New Orleans, a Hurricane Katrina recovery project designed around an active transportation corridor.





The second day featured a broader conversation about cooperation between professionals in the public health, smart growth, community development, transportation and environmental communities. The conference concluded with a keynote by John Robert Smith, president and CEO of Reconnecting America. A podcast describing the event is available through our conference partners at the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy at <http://community.railstotrails.org/blogs/trailblog/archive/2010/02/24/listen-learn-more-about-urban-pathways-to-livable-communities.aspx>. The podcast features interviews with the Gulf Coast Center's Associate Director Billy Fields, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy President Keith Laughlin, and Reconnecting America's CEO John Robert Smith.



University of New Orleans Transportation Institute Announced

The Louisiana Board of Regents recently approved the Merritt C. Becker, Jr. UNO Transportation Institute (UNOTI), which will direct all transportation research activities at the University of New Orleans. The Institute houses the Gulf Coast Research Center for Evacuation and Transportation Resiliency at the University of New Orleans.

The Institute is a means of organizing the diverse transportation research programs that currently exist at the University into a new structure that will allow for more efficient administrative oversight, greater funding opportunities, and a stronger position for UNO in the fields of transportation and sustainable development.

The Institute is under the direction of James R. Amdal with Dr. John L. Renne acting as Associate Director. "Establishment of this Institute reinforces UNO's mission to support the region's future, especially in light of the post-Katrina and post-oil disaster environments," Amdal said.

Recently Awarded Projects

Louisiana Intermodal Transportation Infrastructure Study: Feasibility Analysis for Inland Waterway Container Transport Systems within the Lower Mississippi Region and the New Orleans Metropolitan Area

Principal Investigator: James Amdal, Director, Merritt C. Becker, Jr. University of New Orleans Transportation Institute (UNOTI)

Stan Swigart, Research Associate (UNOTI)

The primary objective of this study is to conduct an analysis of successful inland waterway container transport in selected U.S. locations and to assess the feasibility of this transportation mode within the Mississippi River corridor. A "marine highway" initiative is being proposed by the USDOT to encourage a shift of cargo movements from traditional surface transportation modes to maritime systems. This research will be conducted in partnership with the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission (RPC). As a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the RPC has the distinct advantage of providing a regional perspective on transportation systems. This project will allow the RPC to expand their traditional perspective to include the region's extensive maritime transportation assets as well as a perspective of resilient freight transportation utilizing inland waterways as an alternate delivery system.

Incorporating the Ports and Waterways System Capabilities into the Local Emergency Response System

Principal Investigators: James Amdal, Director, Merritt C. Becker, Jr. University of New Orleans Transportation Institute (UNOTI)

Dr. Jay Jayawardana, Transportation Economist (UNOTI), Stan Swigart, Research Associate (UNOTI)

The primary objective of the research is to examine how the ports and extensive inland waterway network can be incorporated into the state emergency management systems currently in place. It will examine the physical facilities available at ports and the necessary agreements required to access these assets in times of emergency. The recent devastations caused by hurricanes in Louisiana and the oil spill currently impacting coastal Louisiana underscore the need for a more effective local emergency management system. A coordinated first response by emergency teams in the area using local resources is the most effective means to minimize loss of human life as well as property and environmental damage.





In order to streamline the decision-making process as to how these resources can best be utilized, a preplan will be developed based on the particular characteristics of each of the selected ports.

Active Transportation Measurement and Benchmarking Development Extension: Minneapolis Case Study

Principal Investigator:
Billy Fields, PhD, Director, Center of Urban and Public Affairs, University of New Orleans

This project is an extension of the current Gulf Coast Center project, the Active Transportation Measurement and Benchmarking Study: New Orleans Case Study. The New Orleans Case Study examines the impact of improved bicycling and walking facilities installed following Hurricane Katrina. The Minneapolis Case Extension takes advantage of another unique research opportunity to examine a large scale environmental intervention in Minneapolis where \$20 million in active transportation improvements are being implemented as part of the federal Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program. Bicycle count data from over 40 locations around Minneapolis have been collected both before new facilities were installed and after their completion. This longitudinal data set, supplied to researchers by Transit for Livable Communities, provides an important opportunity to utilize a pre/post design to test the impact of environmental change. This unique data set presents an important opportunity to longitudinally evaluate change in built environment on bicycling usage.

Additional Technology Transfer Activities

Linking Rail Systems in South East Louisiana
Wednesday, June 23, 2010

Co-sponsored: ASCE-T&DI Louisiana Chapter; the UNO Transportation Institute (UNOTI);
APA New Orleans Metro Section and LA Chapter

Speakers:
Randy Carmichael, AICP, Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc.
Kevin Keller, PG, CGWP, Vice President,
HDR Engineering
Stefan Marks, AICP, New Orleans Regional
Transit Authority
John L. Renne, PhD, Associate Director, UNOTI

Approximately 50 professionals attended this special workshop on the new Loyola Avenue Streetcar and the planned rail linkage between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. This workshop offered attendees detailed presentations on these two projects: the histories of their development and current status, related improvements to the New Orleans public transportation system, and issues affecting their implementation.

Mr. Carmichael, project manager for the Baton Rouge – New Orleans Intercity Passenger Rail study, reviewed the history of the Baton Rouge to New Orleans rail project, the methodology used to estimate construction and operating costs, various ridership projections, and the current status of the project. He also reviewed the three-speed variations and their implications for both construction cost estimates as well as ridership projections. Mr. Carmichael pointed out that this project continues to have very complex institutional issues associated with its financing and operating feasibility. He noted that identifying a source for the annual operating costs of the system continues to be a challenge, although this was not part of the project's scope of work.

Mr. Keller, an environmental specialist with HDR, reviewed the intricacies of the economic impact analysis associated with not only the BR – NO project, but with many new passenger rail projects being proposed for corridors nationwide. Mr. Keller stressed that today no standard methodology exists for doing a benefit/cost analysis for these types of projects. Therefore, for TIGER 1 grants, no standards were stipulated. Now, with TIGER II grants, prescriptive standards have been developed.

Mr. Marks is Director of Planning and Scheduling for the RTA. He has been charged with integrating the new Loyola streetcar service into the overall public transit system as well as redesigning the entire system for today's reality. He began by reviewing the RTA's recent efforts to secure federal funds for new streetcar expansions within and adjacent to the CBD. "Several months ago we were awarded \$45M for the construction of the Loyola Streetcar, a 1.5m service linking the Union Passenger Terminal and Canal Street," he said.





This is just the first of three streetcar expansions the RTA hopes to construct in the next few years. Future goals for the RTA include growing the ridership, minimizing transfers, creating cross-town lines, consolidating routes where appropriate, and enhancing the overall network.

Finally, Dr. John Renne, Associate Director of UNOTI, presented his recent research on Value Capture as a financing tool for passenger rail systems. Using the proposed NO – BR passenger rail system as a model, Dr. Renne reviewed various Transit-Oriented Development projects that have been planned or constructed along passenger rail corridors both within the United States as well as abroad. He also presented findings from various national real estate sources, including the Urban Land Institute, that indicate a strong demand for TOD in emerging national forecasts. His research offers a new financing option for transportation infrastructure investments and illustrates its potential along the subject corridor.



(Left to Right: MURP Student Cole Judge, Gulf Coast Center Associate Director Billy Fields, MURP Student Laura Phillips, and MURP Student Nicole McCall)

Student Involvement Spotlight

The Gulf Coast Research Center actively supports student involvement in transportation research. The Center currently has three graduate assistants engaged in hands on research with transportation faculty. Cole Judge, Carl Seifert, and Tara Tolford work on a variety of projects from transit finance to active transportation measurement.

In addition to the direct research experience offered to our students, the Center has a conference scholarship program that provides an opportunity for students to travel to important transportation-related research conferences. This year the Center awarded three scholarships for travel to the Active Living Research Annual Conference in San Diego. Laura Phillips, Cole Judge, and Nicole McCall engaged transportation and public health researchers in this unique multi-disciplinary conference.



The Gulf Coast Center is also hosting Laurence Ringenbach, a visiting research intern from Paris, France. Laurence is focused on the Post-Katrina recovery progress in the New Orleans region. Her research centers on the risks associated with living in disaster prone areas and what can be done to minimize those risks. The study will use Post Katrina New Orleans as a case study to identify resilient transportation patterns

as well as best practices among the projects being developed by various entities: the Regional Planning Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, private business, environmental groups etc. In addition, she is assisting with research on other transportation related studies, such as intercity and regional rail projects. Laurence is working toward a Masters in Urban Engineering from the University of Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallée.

