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Technical Tour Management

ITSA 2003 Annual Meeting in Minneapolis

Prepared for:

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Introduction

This report concludes a successful outreach project under the auspices of the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) at the University of Minnesota. The project objective was to showcase Intelligent Transportation Systems' Institute research and technology to a national audience. The basic approach was to work with the Intelligent Transportation Society of Minnesota committees and CTS staff in preparing for and supporting the 13th ITS America Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, May 2003. The focus to achieve the objective was to plan and conduct tours of the three ITS Laboratories: Intelligent Vehicles, HumanFIRST, and ITS Laboratory.

The very positive post-tour feedback from tour participants measured the success of these tours. There were many, many comments "An excellent tour," "These vehicle technologies are amazing," and "I actually sat in the drivers seat while the bus steered itself."

Outreach activities performed under this project in preparation for May 2003 were:

- 1) Setup and staffing of a CTS display booth at three local events:
 - a. The 2002 ITS Minnesota Annual meeting, March 2002.
 - b. The 2002 ITS Minnesota Fall Forum, October 2002.
 - c. The 2003 ITS Minnesota Annual meeting, March 2003.
- 2) A February 12th 2002 Planners Emeritus tour of the ITS Laboratory and the HumanFIRST Laboratory was planned then conducted at the request of CTS Director, Bob Johns. Tour results were reported via e-mail communications with the CTS staff involved.
- 3) A Local Technical Assistance Program class was coordinated in response to a support request from Laurie McGinnis, CTS Associate Director. A report to the CTS LTAP Engineer, Jim Grothaus, documented the March 12th 2002 Class, "Planning and Designing for Older Drivers – Pedestrians."

The remainder of this report discusses the general ITSA 2003 planning, the ITS Laboratory Tour hosted at CTS and the Intelligent Vehicle demonstration sponsored by the ITS Institute using the Minnesota State Fairgrounds' Midway facility.

General Tour Planning and Results

In general, total participation in the tours was less than anticipated. The primary reason, in the opinion of this author, is that the annual meeting attendance total was about a 1,000 persons less than expected due to:

- a) Hundreds of Asian cancellations because of the SARS travel restrictions and
- b) Hundreds of state DOT non-registrations because of budget restrictions.

The Local Arrangements Committee chairperson for Technical Tours was Ms. Janelle Monette of ADDCO, Inc. The Technical Tour committee submitted a dozen candidate tours to ITS America for their consideration. A general description of each tour was included in the ITSA submittal including the two University candidate tours. After a June 2002 telephone negotiation with Sandra Fitzgerald, the ITSA coordinator, the following technical tours were selected for detail planning, advertising, and coordination with the Annual Meeting technical and business agenda: Committee representatives from each facility provided tour descriptions and duration information.

- Ford Motor Plant
- Hawthorne Transportation Center
- Hiawatha Light Rail Corridor
- Intelligent Vehicles Demonstration (2 times)
- ITS Laboratories at the U of M
- Local ITS Manufacturers: ADDCO and 3M
- Metro Transit Control Center
- Metropolitan Airports Commission - Airside and Landside
- Regional Traffic Management Center (2 times)
- Rochester TOCC and Mayo Hospital Dispatch Center

The Ford Motor Plant Tour was cancelled before the Annual Meeting because of low pre-registration. A couple of the tours had many no-shows the day of the tour.

In support of the ITS Technical Tour planning committee Mr. Benson:

1. Represented CTS at the Technical Tour Committee meetings.
2. Drafted the first set of tour site candidates.
3. Drafted the Technical Tours advertising brochure for distribution at the Chicago 2002 ITS World Congress.
4. Drafted U of MN tours' text for use in ITSA publications and their WEB site.
5. Scheduled all tours into the available time slots in the Annual Meeting agenda.

ITS Laboratories at the U of MN

There were fifteen participants in this tour, advertised as a 22-person capacity. This tour was planned and conducted similar to the Planners Emeritus tour of ITS Laboratory and HumanFIRST Laboratory, February 12th, 2002.

First, Lowell Benson gave the group a CTS overview using a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Gina Baas. Then the group was split, David McLaughlin took half to the HumanFIRST Laboratory and Lowell took half to the ITS Laboratory. ITS Lab Manager, Ted Morris, and several research-assistants demonstration their facility and research projects. Dr. Michael Manser and the HumanFIRST research-assistants presented their driving simulator facility and research initiatives. After 40 minutes the two group halves switched places so that all participants could see and hear about both laboratories before returning to the Minneapolis Convention Center.



In hindsight, this joint laboratory-tour should have been planned for another 10 minutes each because of the many questions and the variety of on-going projects.

Intelligent Vehicle Demonstrations

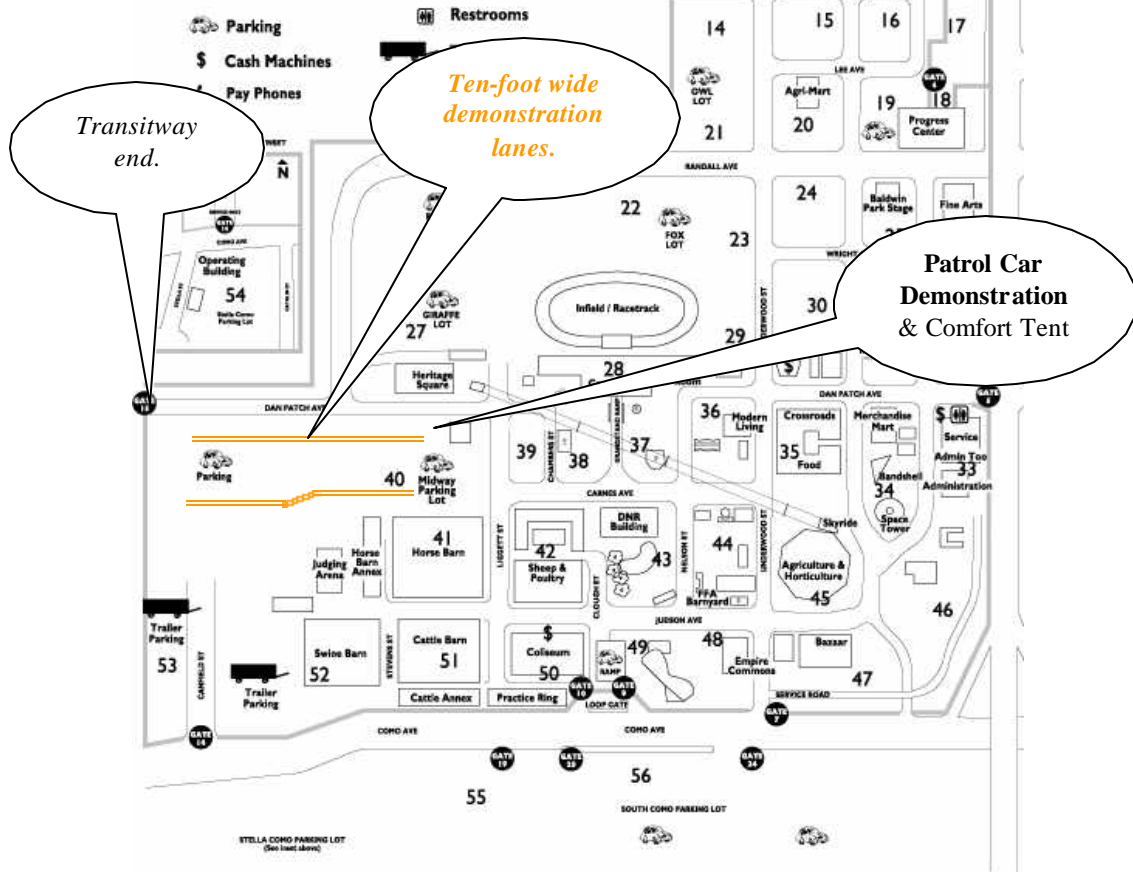
ITS researchers conducted these demonstrations four times, twice as annual meeting scheduled tours and twice as special invitation group presentations. All four demonstrations were almost full and went quite well; special thanks to the Metro Transit Driver-Instructor who had tour participants sit in the drivers seat at the test track to directly experience the visual and tactile technologies of the driver assist systems. The detail technology presentations by Dr. Craig Shankwitz were outstanding.



These demonstration tours began at the Convention Center with participants boarding the “TechnoBus” for a ride along the U of MN Transitway to the fairgrounds. At the fairgrounds participants observed driver assist technologies while riding in either the TechnoBus or a Mn/DOT snow plow on two ¼-mile 10-ft lanes marked with cones. A State Patrol car was setup to demonstrate driver assist systems as recorded along Minnesota state highway 7. An intersection-project radar-detector display was setup in the convenience tent. The facility is illustrated on the next page.

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

Non-Fair Events LEGEND



CONCLUSION:

These Technical Tours demonstrating Intelligent Transportation Systems research at the University of Minnesota were a success because of the cooperation and team work among the staff members of the Center for Transportation Studies and ITS Institute. The support of MnDOT, Metro-Transit, and the State Patrol in providing the three demonstration vehicles is much appreciated by the demonstrators and the CTS/ITS Institute staff.

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