Western States
Rural Transportation
Consortium

Partnership Technology Research Education

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Western Transportation Institute

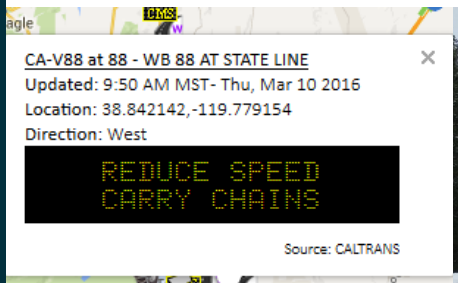
SYSTEMS ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION PROGRAM

Western States Rural Transportation Consortium

The Western States Rural Transportation Consortium (WSRTC) facilitates and enhances safe, seamless travel throughout the western United States. The WSRTC promotes innovative partnerships, technologies and educational opportunities to meet these objectives. Additionally, it provides a collaborative mechanism to leverage research activities in a coordinated manner to respond to rural transportation issues among western states. The Consortium focuses on technology transfer/education and incubator projects centered on the pillars of technology, operations and safety. Incubator projects are small scale research projects intended to serve as a "proof of concept" for larger subsequent efforts. Such projects have included:

- Regional Integrated Corridor Management Planning (Operations)
- Survey of Western States Safety Warning Devices (Safety)
- Radar Speed Trailer Deployment Warrants (Safety/Operations)
- Chain-Up Delay Tracking with Bluetooth (Technology)
- Evaluation of the Fredonyer Summit Icy Curve Warning System (ICWS) – Before and After Study of Long-Term Effectiveness (Safety/Operations)
- Data Quality for Aggregation and Dissemination of DOT Traveler Information: An Analysis of Existing System Best Practices (Technology)

Successful incubator projects may lead to expanded research initiatives. A number of successful, on-going Caltrans research projects have been extended through WSRTC efforts including the One-Stop-Shop for Rural Traveler Information, WeatherShare and the Automated Safety Warning Controller.



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Rural Research Matters

Innovation - Integration - Implementation

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Challenges Addressed

As agency and research budgets are tightened, fewer opportunities are available to conduct technology, safety and operational research aimed at improving rural transportation. A project that is pursued must be thoroughly justified, which often means an initial proof-of-concept is required. Additionally, multi-agency research is likely of interest and transferable to other entities. However, no mechanisms are in place for sharing results and developed products from such research. There is a need for agencies to partner with one another to leverage research funding, share technical findings and products, and promote educational opportunities. The WSRTC was created for these purposes.

Membership

Chartered in 2010, the WSRTC is a continuation and broadening of the California/Oregon Advanced Transportation System (COATS) project. It is a pooled fund comprised of the California, Oregon, Washington, and Nevada departments of transportation and is facilitated with help from the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University.

Benefits and Project Impact

The WSRTC is a collaborative mechanism to leverage rural research activities. Its impact on the member agencies and the rural transportation field include the following benefits:

- Technology transfer activities through venues such as the Western States Rural Transportation Technology Implementers Forum.
- Leveraging of research resources for technology, operations and safety related to rural transportation.
- A framework for promoting collaboration and leveraging resources to solve rural transportation issues.
- Recycling and reusing existing research for application to rural challenges among multiple states.
- Regular training and transfer of technology solutions to rural areas.

For further information, please visit www.westernstates.org, or contact

Sean Campbell, P.E.
Caltrans
sean_campbell@dot.ca.gov
(916) 654-8868

Ian Turnbull, P.E.
Caltrans
ian_turnbull@dot.ca.gov
(530) 225-3320

Galen McGill, P.E.
Oregon DOT
galen.e.mcgill@odot.state.or.us
(503) 986-4486

Ron Vessey, P.E.
Washington State DOT
vesseyr@wsdot.wa.gov
(360) 705-7948

Thomas Moore, P.E.
Nevada DOT
tmoore@dot.state.nv.us
(775) 888-7566

Douglas Galarus
WTI
dgalarus@montana.edu
406) 994-5268

Nathaniel T. Price
FHWA Resource Center
nathaniel.price@dot.gov
(503) 316-2566