ITRE’s increasing involvement in national-level research received significant exposure this summer as ITRE was centrally involved in two internationally broadcast webinars. The webinars featured two very different topics, with the first on Freeway Facility Analysis in the Highway Capacity Manual and the second on Accessibility of Complex Intersections to Blind Pedestrians. These webinars highlighted the diverse research activities of ITRE and its staff - in fact, both were taught by the same ITRE employee. The instructor, ITRE Senior Research Associate Dr. Bastian Schroeder, feels very fortunate to have had the opportunity to reach out to a broad online audience on both topics. “ITRE is involved in a lot of cutting-edge research”, says Schroeder. “Freeway operations and (blind) pedestrian accessibility are two of our areas of specialization. Having both webinars within just a few weeks of each other felt a bit unusual, but really this is similar to the very diverse research portfolio we have at ITRE.”

The first webinar, Freeway Facility Analysis in the Highway Capacity Manual, was offered in collaboration with the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and the Transportation Research Board (TRB) as part of a six-month webinar series highlighting the new 2010 Highway Capacity Manual. The Freeway Facilities Module taught by Dr. Schroeder represented one of the core modules in the series. Dr. Schroeder was invited as a speaker through his involvement in NCHRP Project 3-92 “Development of the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual”, and his role as a member of the TRB Committee on Highway Capacity and Quality of Service. The webinar attracted a total of 182 participating sites from the majority of US states, and several international participants.

The second webinar, Promising Practices and Solutions in Accessible Transportation: Crossing Solutions at Roundabouts and Channelized Right Turn Lanes for Pedestrians with Visual Impairments, was co-sponsored by the TRB and Easter Seals Project Action. In the webinar, Dr. Schroeder provided an overview of the recently published NCHRP Report 674, which is now available for free download on the TRB website (http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_674.pdf). In the presentation he was joined by Ms. Janet Barlow with Accessible Design for the Blind, Mr. Lee Rodegerdts with Kittelson and Associates, Inc., and Mr. Scott Windley with the US Access Board. The webinar drew a large audience for many US states, municipalities, and consulting companies, as well as international participation from Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. More details on ITRE’s research program on pedestrian accessibility is available on the ITRE Website: http://www.itre.ncsu.edu/ITRE/research/Pedestrian-Accessibility/index.html

For more information, email Bastian at bjschroe@ncsu.edu.

ITRE Selected for Task Work on “Dissemination of ACRP Research Results” (ACRP 11-05)

James Martin, Associate Director of the Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE) at the Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE), is the principal investigator on a new project to assist the Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) to implement their dissemination plan. ACRP is an applied research program that works to provide solutions to problems facing airport operating agencies.

Due to the unique makeup of the airport industry, the primary audience for the program is wide ranging. A project team has been assembled to work with ACRP in increasing awareness of and engagement with their airport-practitioner audience. A major part of the project will be an assessment effort which will be directed at those primary audiences identified in the plan as:

1. Airport employees/staff at general aviation airports, commercial air service airports, and air cargo airports.
2. Consultants and private entities that provide essential planning, development, management, maintenance, and operational services to airports.
3. Academicians who educate and train current and future airport-practitioners on subjects that are addressed by ACRP research.

The methodology developed for the assessment process will address three important areas of ACRP - product assessment, program assessment and participant assessment. The results of this project will assist ACRP with long-term dissemination of research results and products to the airport industry. For more information, email James at jbm@ncsu.edu.
NCL TAP Director James Martin Elected President of National Association

James B. Martin, director of the North Carolina Local Technical Assistance Program (NCLTAP) at the Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE), was recently installed as the president of the National Local Technical Assistance Program Association (NLTPA) at the LTAP/TTAP Conference held in Boston on August 4.

NLTPA is a non-profit organization that represents 58 Local Technical Assistance (LTAP) and Tribal Technical Assistance (TTAP) programs throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico. NLTPA supports the efforts of LTAP and TTAP programs in training, workforce development and technology transfer opportunities.

A long-time, active member of NLTPA, Martin is committed to working with the Federal Highway Administration to help guide and strengthen the LTAP and TTAP programs. He has been a member of the executive committee for the last two years as vice-president and president-elect, respectively. As president, he will serve a one-year term during which he will be leading the association in developing strategic initiatives and promoting the importance of the LTAP program as the federal transportation reauthorization is completed.

As one of the national LTAP programs, NCLTAP provides training and information on road maintenance, traffic control, and safety to local agencies as well as the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Martin has been director of the program since 1990.

ITRE Graduate Students Carry Traffic Bowl Team to International Championship and Win Silver Medal

Four graduate students from ITRE recently placed second in the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Traffic Bowl, a Jeopardy-style game in which college students from across the United States and Canada answer transportation-related questions. Thomas Chase, Tyler Fowler, Katy Salamati, and team captain Zachary Bugg advanced to the International Championship, held during the ITE Annual Meeting in St. Louis, MO, after the team won first place in the Southern District Traffic Bowl last spring—NC State’s first win at that level in six years of competition. In the first round at St. Louis, Chase, Fowler, Salamati, and Bugg defeated the University of Delaware and defending international champion Texas A&M University in the third overtime to reach the title game. They ultimately tied the University of Toronto for second place in the final round, losing to Brigham Young University. A total of 58 teams from across the US and Canada participated in this year’s Traffic Bowl, making NC State’s team a standout for reaching the top three. The students from ITRE enjoyed not only a competitive game in St. Louis but also attended numerous technical sessions, networked with students from the other teams, and met dozens of transportation professionals.

Sluder Provides Training at School Transportation Mini-conference

Bonnie Sluder, project leader for the Pupil Transportation Group at the Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) at North Carolina State University, conducted a training session on August 3 at the North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association District 9 Transportation 2011 Summer Mini-Conference held in Craven County.

Sluder works with the Transportation Information Management System (TIMS) which is part of the Pupil Transportation Group. TIMS provides support and consulting to the computer-assisted school bus routing and scheduling system used in secondary school systems in North Carolina.

Craven County Transportation Services hosted representatives from nine counties in eastern North Carolina. The mini-conference included sessions attended by participants involved in all aspects of school bus transportation services, including bus routing using TIMS.

During her session, Sluder briefed participants on recent updates to the software and focused on new processes that had been implemented. To assist participants with the upcoming reporting period, she presented a demonstration of the reporting process and showed the group how it can be integrated with Microsoft Office to create customized reports and presentations.

As a new school year gets underway, this training provides both management and operators the opportunity to understand the capabilities of the program and to use it to its fullest potential; thus improving the efficiency of bus routing and scheduling. Email Bonnie at bonnie_sluder@ncsu.edu for additional information or to answer any questions.