2007 CHARLEY WOOTAN AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The recipients of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) 2007 Charley V. Wootan Award for the outstanding paper in the field of policy and organization are Abolfazl Kouros Mohammadian of the University of Illinois, Chicago; Yongping Zhang of Wilbur Smith Associates; and Michael L. Pack, Phillip Weisberg, and Sujal Bista, all of the University of Maryland (UMD), College Park. This award, which may be conferred annually, was established in memory of Wootan, who served as Director of the Texas Transportation Institute, Texas A&M University System, from 1976 until his retirement in 1993. He continued to be active in the university until his death in 2001. A 1984 W. N. Carey Award recipient, Wootan also served as Chairman of the TRB Technical Activities Council and chaired the TRB Executive Committee in 1980. The award will be presented on January 14, 2008, at the Thomas B. Deen Distinguished Lecture and Presentation of Outstanding Paper Awards during the TRB 87th Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

The first of the award-winning papers, prepared by Mohammadian and Zhang, is titled “Investigating the Transferability of National Household Travel Survey Data.” The paper has been published in the Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, No. 1993.
Traditionally, metropolitan planning organizations are required to have their models calibrated on a continuing basis using new data. However, in most urban areas, the lack of new survey data makes it difficult to calibrate existing models or develop new travel demand models using emerging modeling techniques. It was critical to be able to assess potential approaches and develop knowledge on how to transfer information collected in one context for use in another. The award-winning paper describes the process of developing a model that can facilitate household travel data transferability, which can reduce or eliminate the need for large data collection in the application context.

Kouros Mohammadian is an Assistant Professor of Transportation Systems at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Prior to that, he was on the faculty of the California State University in Sacramento. He is an internationally recognized expert in transportation data analysis, travel behavior modeling, and in the development of state-of-the-art activity and travel demand models for implementation in practice. Active in TRB, Mohammadian has published extensively in the field and his work has been covered in several international journals. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto.

Yongping Zhang is a Senior Transportation Analyst with Wilbur Smith Associates in Illinois. He holds master’s and bachelor’s degrees in civil engineering from Tongji University in Shanghai, China, and is a Ph.D. candidate in transportation planning in the Department of Civil and Materials Engineering at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Zhang has authored several publications and presentations on the transferability and simulation of the household travel survey data.

The second award-winning paper, prepared by Pack, Weisberg, and Bista, is titled “Four-Dimensional, Real-Time, Interactive Transportation System Visualization.” This paper was included in the Compendium of Papers CD-ROM from the 86th Annual Meeting in 2007.

The paper described the development of a system for visualizing four-dimensional (the fourth dimension being time), “real-time” transportation data for the entire world. The four-dimensional, wide area traffic visualization tool provides incident management personnel, emergency management personnel, and the general public with the means to achieve situational awareness in as close to a real-world setting as possible. In its initial stages, only the road networks of Northern Virginia, the state of Maryland, and Washington, D.C. have been uploaded; however, since the system uses standard GIS data and relatively standard transportation databases to derive traffic measures, it can be scaled to incorporate other states, agencies, or countries.

Michael Pack is the Director of UMD’s Center for Advanced Transportation Technology Laboratory (CATT Lab). Prior to that, he was at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory’s Center for Transportation Analysis and the University of Virginia’s Smart Travel Laboratory. Pack has extensive experience in the areas of intelligent transportation systems, data acquisition systems, database management systems, process control, and video image processing.

Phillip Weisberg is the acting lead software developer for research projects adopting traditional 3D video game methodologies at CATT Lab. He holds a B.S. degree in computer science from the University of Maryland. Weisberg is experienced in systems administration and open source project development for the National Institute of Standards and Technology.
Sujal Bista is the Visual Data Structures and Graphics Programmer for CATT Lab. He holds a B.S. degree in computer science from UMD and has more than five years of experience in computer graphics. Bista’s areas of expertise include visual data structures, operating system development, computer graphics, and network application development.

More than 10,000 policy makers, administrators, practitioners, researchers, and representatives of government, industry, and academic institutions are expected to attend the Transportation Research Board (TRB) 87th Annual Meeting, in Washington, DC, January 13-17, 2008. The meeting, held at the Marriott Wardman Park, Omni Shoreham, and Hilton Washington hotels, includes more than 3,000 presentations in 600 sessions, 85 workshops, and 400 TRB committee meetings covering all aspects of transportation.

The mission of the Transportation Research Board is to provide leadership in transportation innovation and progress through research and information exchange, conducted within a setting that is objective, interdisciplinary, and multimodal. A major focal point of TRB's activities, the Annual Meeting provides an opportunity for transportation professionals from all over the world to exchange information of common interest.

Organized in 1920, TRB is a division of the National Academies, which include the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, and National Research Council. The nation turns to the National Academies for independent, objective advice on issues that affect people's lives worldwide.

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