

Looking Abroad

TRB's 'Action Plan' Aims to Expand International Activities Program

KENNETH B. JOHNS

Over a period of some three years, two task forces of the TRB Executive Committee have studied the involvement of TRB in international activities with the objective of making recommendations for improvement. The task forces were chaired by Marvin Manheim of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Richard Braun of the Minnesota Department of Transportation. [Other members of the two task forces included Robert N. Hunter, Missouri Highway and Transportation Department; John E. Steiner, Boeing Company; Richard A. Ward, Oklahoma Department of Transportation; W. Gerald Wilson, International Road Federation; Gerald Kraft, Charles River Associates; C. Kenneth Orski, Corporation for Urban Mobility; Alan E. Pisarski, Gellman Research Associates, Inc.; and Philip J. Ringo, ATE Management and Service Company.] The final report, or Action Plan, was

TRB Executive Committee, they are in varying stages of implementation. In the section that follows, actions appear in regular type and current status in bold type.

ACTION PLAN

ACTION 1. Establish a committee (hereafter called the Committee on International Activities) to advise the Executive Committee and Division Councils on specific actions that can be taken to support the evolution of an international perspective in TRB. The membership should include researchers, educators, and officials of national or international institutions particularly concerned with transportation.

Specific objectives for the committee will include the following:

- As a top priority, identify transportation research issues that are important in terms of these international objectives and that are not now covered by committees or sessions, and recommend, in coordination with the staff, priorities for any new committees.
- Assist in implementation of the various recommendations noted below, especially identification of theme sessions; coordination with researchers in other countries; solicitation of papers, etc.; participation in the Annual Meeting or modifications thereof; participation in specialized or broadened committees; participation in existing or new specialized meetings; and other activities.

The scope of the committee has been approved as follows: "This committee is concerned with the evolution of an international perspective in all facets of all modes of transportation within the scope of the Board. In consultation with staff and volunteer leaders, it shall advise the Executive Committee and Councils on specific actions that will help to achieve that perspective, including implementation of the specific actions approved by the TRB Executive Committee." Robert A. "Bud" Hubbard, President of Wilbur Smith and Associates, Inc., Columbia, South Carolina, has been named chairman. He is currently working with staff to finalize the initial roster of committee members.

Feature

presented to and approved by the Executive Committee in January 1983. This article summarizes progress to date in implementing the recommendations made in that study.

THE NEED

From the beginning, the motivation for the study was guided by two questions. First, how can TRB be more effective in assisting the U.S. transportation community to become more knowledgeable about potentially useful research results developed in other countries? Second, how can TRB be more effective in making U.S. research results and knowledge available to transportation researchers abroad?

In working to answer these questions, the task forces examined every proposed international activity for compatibility using the following guidelines:

- Although the National Research Council (NRC) has significant international interests and activities, TRB as a unit of the NRC is primarily a U.S.-oriented institution.
- TRB's financial support now and in the future is expected to come primarily from U.S. entities.
- TRB activities that contribute primarily to non-U.S. transportation research activities must have an identifiable funding outside TRB's general support base, or otherwise be of nominal cost.

Out of these substantive deliberations came the Action Plan. While all 12 of the action items were approved by the

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ACTION 2. TRB staff and committees are now participating in a wide variety of international activities that include involvement of non-U.S. professionals in TRB meetings; involvement of TRB staff in non-U.S. meetings; involvement of non-U.S. professionals in TRB committee activities; sale of TRB publications and affiliations; library and other information request responses; and strong continuing involvement with IRRD, IRF, ARRB, and OECD information exchanges.

TRB staff should continue to consider awareness and knowledge about foreign transportation and research activities as an important part of their work. In a time of scarce resources it is especially important to use effectively research results developed elsewhere, where applicable, and to minimize duplication or other unnecessary costs.

In advising TRB staff of this action item, TRB Executive Director Thomas B. Deen said: "It will be clear that the Executive Committee recognizes financial and institutional constraints on expansion of TRB international involvement. But it is equally clear that it recognizes the value of the opportunities for improved transportation that may be realized by continuing and, to the extent feasible, expanding TRB's present international interactions. Thus, (the Committee says) that we should continue to consider awareness and knowledge about foreign transportation and research activities as an important part of our work. I want us to move forward with attitudes and mechanisms in place to make it possible for TRB and its supporters to capitalize on any international opportunities that come our way."

ACTION 3. A member of the TRB staff should be assigned responsibility to serve as a point of information and coordination for international activities and as a resource to the entire staff and to the committees. This is not intended to limit involvement of other staff members in international aspects of their other responsibilities.

Deen has designated Kenneth B. Johns, Assistant Director for Regular Technical Activities, to serve as TRB International Coordinator in addition to his regular duties. In making the appointment, Deen described the duties as follows: (a) serve as staff for the International Committee; (b) assist the committee, staff and TRB volunteers, and foreign transportation professionals in implementing the action items, and in further study of additional activities holding promise for improved service to TRB supporters; (c) serve as the focal point for coordination of TRB international involvement including international travel and participation in meetings; and (d) recommend revisions in TRB policies and programs that hold potential for improving service to TRB and its supporters. Assignment of these duties to the Coordinator in no way diminishes any existing international duties residing elsewhere in staff. Thus, for example, Division B (Special Projects) must still do what it has always done with respect to information exchange agreements. However, it will now be important to keep the Coordinator informed on a continuing basis.

ACTION 4. The chairpersons of committees should be authorized to add, where appropriate, up to four additional members residing outside the United States and Canada, over



Robert Hubbard, President of Wilbur Smith and Associates (Columbia, South Carolina), chairs TRB's new Committee on International Activities and looks forward to an expanded program of involvement with TRB's friends from abroad.

the usual size restriction of 25 members per committee, to gain an increased multinational perspective for their research area.

This rule is now in effect, and a number of committee chairpersons have taken advantage of this relief from the size restriction. While for the most part the participation will be by mail, there will be an opportunity for broadening the participation by transportation professionals from outside the United States and Canada.

ACTION 5. The representation of TRB in other countries should be increased in an evolutionary way by expanding the University Representatives program to additional non-U.S. universities. Alternative ways of financing this expansion should be examined, if necessary, including limits on the number of free publications or by seeking external funding for expansion of this program as a whole or in particular countries.

Some initiatives are under way with members of the U.K. Universities Transport Studies Group.

ACTION 6. Expand ties with other transportation research organizations abroad, including possible participation of representatives in their working committees; for example, OECD Road Research Directorate, European Conference of Ministers of Transport, UITP, and UIC.

ACTION 7. To provide early notice to potential Annual Meeting participants not familiar with TRB processes, publish in *TRNews* as early as possible each year complete details on that year's paper submission process, including all

applicable dates, visual aids information, etc., in a color and format appropriate for photocopying.

ACTION 8. Consider enhancing the use of *TRNews* as a vehicle to solicit papers by publishing as early as possible each year brief statements from committee chairpersons that describe topics on which special emphasis is planned for the next Annual Meeting. This would be in addition to information about committee scopes available in another form. The timing would be such as to incorporate the results of committee deliberations about plans for special emphasis sessions during the Annual Meeting. It may also be useful to draw attention to the TRB Executive Committee's most recent listing of critical issues as subjects worthy of special Annual Meeting emphasis.

Implementation of items 7 and 8 started with the March-April 1983 issues of *TRNews*. It carried more than a page of early alert information about the 1984 Annual Meeting, with special emphasis on dates and procedures for participants from outside the United States and Canada.

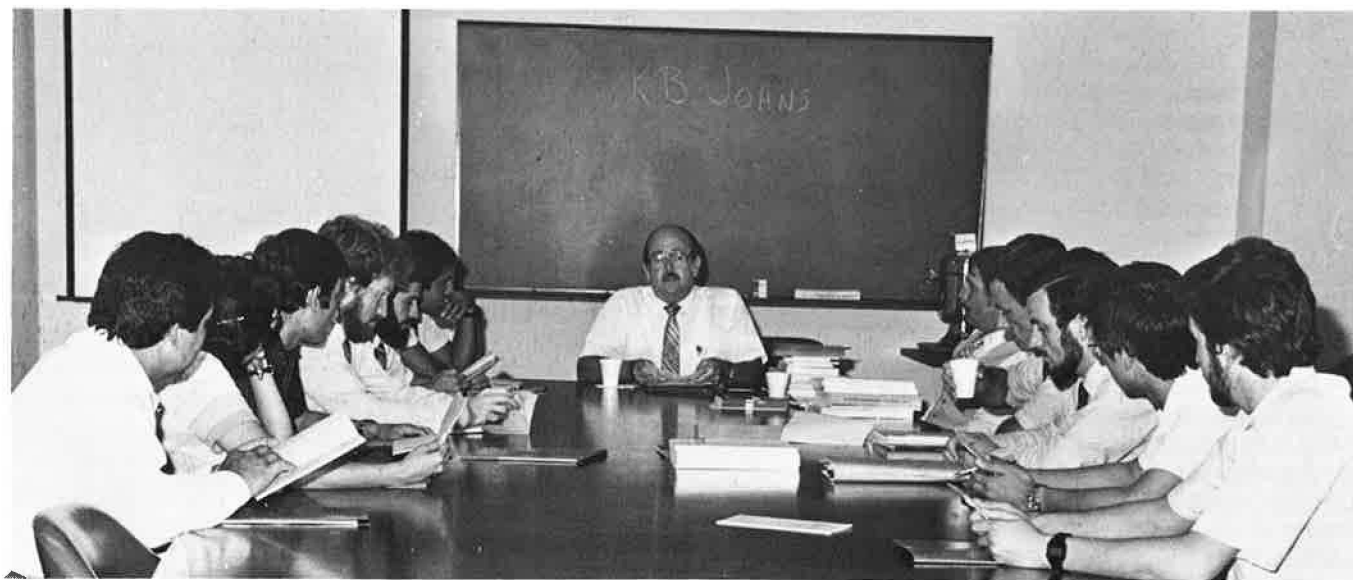
ACTION 9. *TRNews* should give increased coverage to information about research activities in other countries, as well as research results that may be particularly valuable to the U.S. transportation research community. This could include profiles in depth of major sources of research information in other countries (major research institutes, major professional societies and organizations such as UITP, UIC, etc., as well as major publications). This does not require explicit identification as in a separate section devoted to "international news." Rather, increased coverage of information coming from sources abroad would in and of itself be valuable in existing sections of *TRNews*.

International Scope of TRB

Currently, there are 534 individual or organizational associates of the Transportation Research Board from 59 different countries. At a typical TRB Annual Meeting, some 200 registrants, or about 5 percent of the total, come from more than 20 foreign countries. Actual involvement in the meeting program, i.e., presenting papers, comprises 7.5 percent of the total program. There is a steady bi-directional flow of transportation research information to and from the TRB automated information storage and retrieval systems as a result of exchange agreements with information systems in other countries. Through library subscriptions, many overseas transportation agencies acquire and use TRB publications. In similar fashion, the TRB library regularly obtains some 60 periodicals from a dozen countries as an information source for TRB staff and supporters.

As a matter of editorial policy, *TRNews* is most receptive to suitable articles, announcements, and news briefs of the type described. Authors wishing to offer material are encouraged to contact Kenneth B. Johns or other TRB staff with a description or abstract of any proposed articles.

ACTION 10. Committees should be encouraged to review relevant international literature, especially that of research organizations similar to TRB (such as the Transport and Road Research Laboratory in the United Kingdom, Australian Road Research Board, the French Institute for Transportation Research, etc.), on a periodic or continuing basis and report important results to the TRB community through informal reports at committee meetings, preparation of sum-



International Road Federation fellowship recipients attend a seminar at TRB prior to beginning a year's study at various universities. Such seminars to explain TRB's activities and organization are cosponsored by IRF and TRB. TRB usually hosts two such groups annually. Students pictured here with Kenneth B. Johns (center), TRB Assistant Director for Regular Technical Activities and Coordinator for International Activities, represent the nations of Chile, China, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela. (TRB photo by Herbert A. Pennock)

many articles for *TRNews* or for formal presentation at the Annual Meeting, and/or through nomination of a small number of outstanding papers to be reprinted in the Transportation Research Record series.

ACTION 11. Staff should explore ways in which information about the Annual Meeting program can be made available earlier than by normal delivery of the November-December issue of *TRNews*.

TRB found a way to get the 1983 Annual Meeting tentative program (November-December *TRNews*) to other countries much earlier than ever before. As a by-product, TRB has also resolved to improve delivery of the tentative program to domestic as well as overseas locations. Beginning this year, the tentative program will be separated from the *News*, permitting an earlier mailing date and an overall cost saving. (See related story, page 29.)

ACTION 12. In future appointments to the Executive Committee, consideration should be given to individuals who would bring a perspective on transportation from the viewpoint of other countries and/or of international trade.

COMMENT

TRB's International Coordinator and the new Committee on International Activities will be working hard to carry out the Action Plan approved by the Executive Committee. But if theirs is the only effort, we will not move very far toward answering the questions posed at the beginning of this article. To provide benefits to the Board, to its constituents, and to transportation both here and abroad, the combined efforts of many will be required. To this end, readers are encouraged to offer suggestions and assistance, and, above all, to participate in these actions in every possible way.

Bid Analysis and Management System

Kansas Department of Transportation "BAMS" Away at Bid-Rigging

KENNETH STODGELL

U.S. News & World Report (February 16, 1981) published an article titled "Highway Robbery: The War on Bid Riggers" that maintained, "Crooked highway and paving contractors have been socking the public with overcharges running into millions upon millions of dollars." The subject of that article, of course, was "bid-rigging." Collusion on state contracts and bid-rigging is known to be widespread. It infringes on the highway contracting process in many states, including Kansas.

Due to collusive activity in the construction industry, the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) recognized the need for a bid monitoring system. After an in-house evaluation and meetings with consultants from Info-Tech, Inc., of Gainesville, Florida, it was determined that Info-Tech's Bid Analysis Monitoring System (BAMS) met the agency's overall objectives for a bid analysis tool. KDOT was the first organization in the country to complete the BAMS installation process; the system went on line in February 1983. KDOT's Construction and Maintenance Bureau and Office of the Inspector General are using BAMS in the areas of contract cost estimation, bid analysis, and bid investigations. The tools to develop and maintain a complete historical data base, a set of application/analysis programs, and a menu-oriented user interface are provided to assist KDOT personnel in a user-friendly environment. KDOT per-

sonnel have found the system to be flexible enough to allow easy ad hoc reporting from the historical base, which includes color-graphic capabilities as an integral part of the system. BAMS was installed with a minimal impact on existing systems and few support requirements from data-processing personnel. The system interfaces with existing bid data files

Feature

and collects information that spans the entire contracting process—pre-letting, letting, and post-letting.

This article reviews (a) the status of legal proceedings and actions in Kansas concerning bid-rigging and (b) the available and proposed preventive measures instituted by the Kansas state government that may be of assistance to other states.

HISTORIC BID-RIGGING ACTIVITY

Bid-rigging has been defined as the concerted activity of two or more qualified bidders to determine, by private agreement,

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