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This issue of the Volpe Journal focuses on the Center's work in supporting transportation safety initiatives. The examples we discuss here will demonstrate the Center's long-standing tradition of encouraging cross-cutting technologies where, by working with the many different transportation modes, the Center is able to transfer lessons learned across the modes.



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The Volpe Center's expertise and understanding of the whole transportation system provides the basis for its role in providing research and analysis that support the government in determining the best course of action to improve safety. The federal government plays a key role in transportation safety by providing appropriate regulations and legislation. In this arena, the actions taken must be based on a careful and credible analysis of potential benefits and costs. This kind of analysis also provides an important impetus for voluntary acceptance of safety advances as the general public becomes aware of the real issues and the need for change.

The Volpe Center's systems approach to problem solving entails examining every possible aspect to ensure that safety risks are fully addressed, and that work in one area does not compromise safety in another. Volpe Center research is focused on accident prevention—which involves identifying safety issues, assessing safety risks and implementing interventions at the scene of potential accidents—and mitigating the consequences of accidents—which involves determining what must be done to minimize their effects.

The Center is proud of its technical staff and their dedication to making a difference. Currently, more than one-third of the Center's workforce is involved in improving transportation safety—an indication that there is still a critical ongoing requirement to provide analytic and research support to the DOT and other agencies, as they address transportation safety issues.

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