

Online is on course

Industry has wealth of Internet education opportunities

David Kuehn

A better trained transportation work force today equals a better transportation system tomorrow.

From hot-mix asphalt (HMA) paving to traffic maintenance to concrete-pavement construction, free online courses developed by the Transportation Curriculum Coordination Council (TCCC), in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) National Highway Institute (NHI), put a wealth of training resources at the fingertips of every transportation agency and contractor in the country. A new TCCC website (<https://fhwaapps.fhwa.dot.gov/tccc/>) now makes finding and scheduling courses easier than ever.

Launched in 2000, the TCCC is a partnership that includes representatives from FHWA, NHI, regional state training and certification groups, several American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials subcommittees and industry associations. The partnership was formed to help train and certify the construction and maintenance work force, while streamlining the training process and avoiding duplication of efforts.

More than 60 self-paced TCCC courses are available for scheduling at any time, offering agencies, contractors and others maximum flexibility. Courses include a series on concrete-pavement construction that covers everything from mix-design principles and concrete durability to early-age cracking and troubleshooting techniques. Another series of courses offers participants the inside track on highway plan reading, presenting eight modules ranging from Highway Plan Reading Basics to Traffic Control Plans and Bridge Plans (for information on all eight modules, search for Course No. FHWA-NHI-134108).

Work-zone traffic control, meanwhile, is covered in two courses on Maintenance of Traffic for Technicians (Course No. FHWA-NHI-380098) and Maintenance of Traffic for Supervisors (Course No. FHWA-NHI-380099). The five-hour courses present information about traffic-control-device placement, field maintenance and inspection.

Other recent new training includes HMA Paving Field Inspection (Course No. FHWA-NHI-131129). The 4.5-hour course is designed

to help inspectors learn the many aspects of what is involved in an HMA paving operation and to assist them in recognizing problems during a project and offering solutions.

Although it focuses on technicians and inspectors, the training is useful to anyone working on an HMA project.

The TCCC has developed a Core Curriculum designed to guide state and local transportation agencies as they implement technician training and professional development programs. The curriculum covers five technical categories: construction, employee development, maintenance, materials and safety and work zones. Within each technical category, one matrix defines the important subject areas and the skills required to best complete the necessary work. A second matrix identifies the training available to gain these vital skills.

The TCCC also is a partner in the online National Transportation Training Resource

The TCCC has developed a Core Curriculum designed to guide state and local agencies as they implement training and development programs.

(NTTR), which serves as a central repository of training information. Transportation agencies, contractors, members of academia and industry associations can use the NTTR to learn about new training resources, find out about training approaches that other organizations are using or identify peer experts who can share their experiences and offer assistance. Resources are identified by technical categories and skill-level competencies. Site users can register as a contributor to submit their own training resources. The NTTR is at visit www.nttr.dot.gov.

Looking ahead, the TCCC will continue to expand the many resources on its website and launch new online course offerings, serving as a valuable focal point for transportation training nationwide. To start putting the power of its many resources to work for your agency or organization today, visit <https://fhwaapps.fhwa.dot.gov/tccc/>. R&B

Kuehn is team director for Exploratory Advanced Research in FHWA's Office of Corporate Research, Technology, and Innovation Management at the Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center in McLean, Va. He can be contacted at 202.493.3414; e-mail: david.kuehn@dot.gov.