

UTC Spotlight

University Transportation Centers Program

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The Center for Intermodal Freight Transportation Studies Provides Forum for Local and National Freight Transportation Issues

When the Center for Intermodal Freight Transportation Studies (CIFTS) was established at the University of Memphis in 2007, part of the vision was to provide a forum for regional and national issues related to freight transportation. The idea was to provide an impartial environment for vigorous examination of issues critical to each mode of transportation as well as intermodal and public policy issues. Memphis is a good place for such a forum as it is headquarters and World Hub for FedEx, gateways for five Class 1 railroads, one of the nation's largest inland ports, crossroads for the Interstate highway system and the I-69 NAFTA corridor, and home to many businesses that provide transportation services and support.

The *CIFTS Annual Intermodal Conference* has helped to implement the vision, but the conference has also highlighted the need for more effective communication among many levels of stakeholders in both the public and private sectors. The conferences have also identified important topics for research and focused outreach.

The theme of the CIFTS 2nd Annual Intermodal Conference in September 2008, was "Moving Beyond First Response," focusing on transportation issues in the months and years following major disasters. As part of the conference, an informal, facilitated roundtable was conducted with industry leaders and public officials, including representatives from transportation, emergency services, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. One of the overarching conclusions was that many of the stakeholders had only limited understanding of the basic roles, resources, and limitations of their



partner organizations in all four phases of emergency management—mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

A follow-up CIFTS research project, by Malcolm Baird, Ph.D., at Vanderbilt University, took a detailed look at the phases of emergency management and at the different perspectives of key stakeholder groups. The results of that research reinforced and clarified the need for more effective commu-

nication and interaction among the stakeholder groups that share responsibilities for freight transportation safety and security.

Building on the annual conference and the emergency management research, CIFTS now hopes to expand its role as a forum host and facilitator to include more operational topics and more direct interaction among a wider group of stakeholders. One sample effort thus far focused on railroads and hazardous materials.



CIFTS partnered with the CN railway to provide classroom and extensive hands-on training for first responders and other stakeholders.

In June of 2010, CIFTS partnered with the CN railway (CN) to provide classroom and extensive hands-on training for first responders and other stakeholders, beginning with a day-long workshop. The session began with a structured presentation by CN experts, held on the University of Memphis campus at the FedEx Institute of Technology. Session topics included an overview of safety in the railroad environment, examples of hazards often encountered at derailment scenes and other railroad emergencies, and

the characteristics and safety-related features of locomotives and various types of rail cars, especially cars that transport hazardous materials. In addition, participants were briefed on special terms and jargon used in the rail industry and how to obtain critical information about the materials being transported, including use of a "train consist" to determine the types and locations of railcars in a train.

The second half of the day was all hands on. The participants were bused to a major CN facility in Memphis where a locomotive and six rail cars were positioned for training. The equipment included hazmat tank cars with a range of valves and controls and the "CN 911" training car. Each participant

was able to physically inspect, climb, work with, and see first-hand the features and devices that were described in the morning session.



Danny Wilson, of CN railway, points out the location of the fuel shut off valve on a typical diesel locomotive.

First responders from Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas, including some from small communities and rural areas, participated in the training without charge. The 1-day event was followed by 3 days of more specialized, on-site training by the Memphis and Shelby County fire departments. Over the 4-day period, a total of more than 125 first responders received information and practical experience that will

enhance the safety and security of rail transportation in the mid-south, including responder safety and protection of the communities that are served by rail transportation.

According to Marty Lipinski, Ph.D., Director of CIFTS, "We are proud of the policy-level discussions that occur at our annual conferences, and the research that examines topics in more detail and provides valuable insight. We are equally proud of our efforts to follow through and implement the policy and research recommendations at the operational level." Lipinski added, "Most of those who received this training were very appreciative and perhaps a little surprised that CIFTS was addressing their needs so directly. We believe that this is a real success story for the UTC. Of course, we all owe a huge 'thank you' to CN for donating the expert personnel and the railroad equipment."



Local firefighters observe the procedures to stop a leaking valve on a tanker car.

For more information, or to see a video presentation on the training, please go to www.memphis.edu/ifti. 🌐

About This Project

The project examining origins, underlying concepts, variations, limitations, and implications of the "phases of emergency management" was conducted by Malcolm E. Baird, Ph.D., at Vanderbilt University under the auspices of the Center for Intermodal Freight Transportation Studies (CIFTS), the University Transportation Center at the University of Memphis. The research was supported by matching funds from the Tennessee Department of Transportation and the Ingram Barge Co. The technology transfer training for first responders was supported with financial assistance from the CN Railway. Martin Lipinski, Ph.D., CIFTS Director, and Sean Ellis, CIFTS Associate Director, were responsible for coordinating the training with Danny Simpson, Assistant Vice-President for Safety and Environment, CN Railway.

This newsletter highlights some recent accomplishments and products from one University Transportation Center (UTC). The views presented are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration or the U.S. Department of Transportation, which administers the UTC program.

