

Roadway safety projects in Iowa are effective

research projects, including full electronic copies of reports dating back to 1996. We also publish staff conference presentations, conference proceedings, and newsletters online.

CTRE's webmaster Michele Regenold maintains the CTRE web site and several related sites including the Midwest Transportation Consortium (MTC) (www.ctre.iastate.edu/mtc/) and the Center for Portland Cement Concrete Pavement Technology (www.ctre.iastate.edu/pcc/). The Transportation Research Expo (TRexpo) (www.trexpo.org/) is a new site sponsored by the MTC that provides contact information and expertise about researchers in the Midwest. Michele is also assisting the Minnesota DOT with the development of a research web site. If you need help with a web site, CTRE may be able to assist you.

If you are like me, you need research yesterday and don't have time to read much. I generally start with TRIS Online and TRIS Research in Progress to get an idea of what is going on. Then I call the researcher or the staff officer (TRB or state DOT) responsible for a group of projects and pick his or her brain directly. If there is time, I download reports and do some reading.

Time is a luxury. Use the web to make the telephone a better tool. •

A recent CTRE study demonstrates that past Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) traffic safety projects have been effective in reducing crashes. The study, conducted by Gary Thomas, former transportation engineer at CTRE, evaluated crash reduction percentages and benefit/cost (B/C) ratios for common types of roadway safety improvements.

The most significant finding was that the replacement of pedestal mounted signals with mast arm mounted signals contributed to a 36 percent crash reduction. Benefits outweighed costs by 11.2 to 1 for this type of improvement, giving it the highest B/C ratio of any improvement type studied.

Thomas also found that the addition of a traffic signal, turn lane, or both does not necessarily cause an overall reduction of crashes. In fact, while some collision types decreased after these types of improvements, others increased.

The *Effectiveness of Roadway Safety Improvements* report confirms that the Iowa DOT's past safety projects have been, on average, very effective—with an overall crash reduction of 23 percent and an overall B/C ratio of 6.3. The report will also help the Iowa DOT prioritize future roadway safety improvements.

To see the study, visit www.ctre.iastate.edu/reports/roadsafe.pdf. •