



International Road Federation

Geneva Programme Centre
Chemin de Blandonnet, 2
CH-1214 - Vernier
SWITZERLAND
Tel: +41 22 306 02 60
Fax: +41 22 306 02 70
info@irfnet.org www.irfnet.org

Brussels Programme Centre
Avenue Louise, 113
B-1050 - Brussels
BELGIUM
Tel: +32 2 644 58 77
Fax: +32 2 647 59 34
info@irfnet.eu www.irfnet.eu

Washington Program Center
Madison Place
500 Montgomery Street Fifth Floor
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
USA
Tel: +1 703 535 1001
Fax: +1 703 535 1007
info@irfnews.org
www.irfnews.org

IRF was founded in 1948 to encourage better road and transportation systems worldwide. IRF is a non-profit, non-political service organisation which helps in the application of technology and management practices to produce the maximum economical and social return from national road investments. Some 500 governments, companies and associations around the world are members of IRF and provide financial support to the three offices in Geneva, Brussels and Washington DC. National and regional road associations around the world make up the Federation. IRF is an accredited transportation consultant to the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Organisation of American States, and works closely with other international institutions in the transportation field.

Road safety is no accident...

Winners of IRF's 2006 Annual Road Safety Awards demonstrate the four Es of excellence



The IRF Road Safety prizewinners (from left), Jean-Claude Roffé of Colas Group; David McConnell (Project Officer, Strategic Highways, UK), and Dr Gao Hailong of RIOH (PR China)

The three winners of IRF's annual awards, presented at the General Assembly in May at Istanbul, Turkey, all showed aspects of four vital elements: Excellence in Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Encouragement (four Es).

First place went to Amey Infrastructure Services (UK) for its work with the A77 Safety Group in Scotland. The Group is a partnership established to challenge the significant casualty rate on the A77 trunk road, a vital west coast route comprising a mixture of motorway, dual and single carriageway, which has over the years gained the unenviable reputation as one of the most dangerous roads in Scotland. In the ten year period to October 2004, 68 people lost their lives in 53 crashes on the stretch between the Glasgow boundary and the west coast port of Cairnryan. In addition, 493 people were seriously injured and 1,400 received slight injuries.

The partnership was established

between the owners and managers of the route, the emergency services, the local authorities and local pressure groups. Through the work of the group, funding of £120 million (US\$246 million) was brought forward to upgrade 25km to motorway status. But this left a further 110km mix of dual carriageway and single carriageway. The dangers of the route continued to be tragically highlighted through fatal and serious injury crashes at a number of locations. A disproportionate number of young drivers were among those killed and injured. So the group considered an integrated approach, including a route safety strategy focusing on the four Es.

In terms of engineering, six specific sites for improvements were identified and funding of £20 million (\$41 million) to implement the schemes has been approved, with the first scheme starting in summer 2006 and the last to be completed by late 2008.

From an education perspective,

a hard-hitting interactive video presentation targets fifth and sixth year school pupils. It is based on a fatal road crash on the A77 and involves emergency service workers who were present at the location as well as the parents of one of the deceased.

Enforcement was a key aspect and, in a first of its type in Europe, an average speed detection system was installed, monitoring over 45km of the route.

The final element, encouragement, was achieved through the introduction of a dedicated website and a media and communications strategy. A key has also been activity by the partners within the communities involved.

Clearly, the measurement of success for the group is a reduction in casualties. While this should not be considered on short-term figures alone, the partnership is encouraged by a 40% drop in those killed or seriously injured in the nine month period from July 2005 to March 2006, when compared with the three-year average over an equivalent period between 2002 and 2005.

Second prize was gained by the Research Institute of Highways (RIOH), Ministry of Communications (PR of China), for its Highways Safety Enhancement Project (HSEP). Most of the older roads in mountainous areas of China have steep slopes and sharp curves and many of them are in valleys. They lack basic protective facilities, with some 70% of traffic accidents happening on such roads. Engineering standards for many low-level roads have not yet been perfected. So, in 2004, the Ministry of Communications decided to launch its HSEP, for both national and provincial highways, with the theme 'Eliminate Potential Danger and Cherish Life.' The RIOH was appointed to guide, supervise and manage the project.



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A single-carriageway river valley road in rural China

The HSEP introduced advanced concepts, some of them imported, in setting the guidelines for a scheme which was safe, economical, environmentally friendly and effective. The concept had to be both forgiving and flexible, to integrate technical innovation, traffic calming, local conditions, culture and landscape.

RIOH embraced advanced techniques such as a safety audit, roadside safety design, and speed control. It provided roadside clear zones, accident forecasts and assessments of accident-prone sections: 3D markings were applied to bridge/sharp curve combinations, long downgrades, tunnels and fog areas.

New technology included solar-energy powered safety protection facilities, video-monitoring based on GSM wireless transmissions, automatic traffic accident identification systems, guardrail simulation test platforms and meteorological early-warning systems.

RIOH invested RMB 30 million (\$4 million) in road traffic safety technology and compiled more than ten standards and regulations, including the HSEP Technical Guide.

In total, more than RMB 6.5 billion (\$860,000) has been invested to implement HSEP for China's low-level roads. Some 210,000 potential incidents have been eliminated, including a substantial reduction in serious accidents. Road traffic fatalities have decreased by over 5,000 annually for three consecutive years: fatalities

per 10,000 vehicles decreased from 10.8 in 2003 to 7.6 in 2005.

RIOH has achieved a level of excellence which bodes well for long-term safety.

The third of the Safety Awards went to the management at Screg Nord Picardie (a member of the Colas Group). The award was made for innovative efforts in education and encouragement. Over the past ten years, the company management has constantly trained its workforce in an effort to keep employees safe and cut road accident-related costs. To date, more than 900 personnel have followed the SCOPE training plan (Sécurité Conducteur Organisation Par de vehicule et Environnement), a half-day programme that aims to improve road safety awareness and outline safe driving principles.

Road safety relay officers have been trained in each profit centre (to date there are 12). Within this educational framework, in 2003 the company decided to create its own Road Safety Challenge. Management's target was two-fold: to increase awareness and motivation among its agency supervisors, and to increase each employee's personal degree of involvement regarding road accident risks, including travelling to and from the office.

Personnel transport is often required. Van drivers were thus given priority access to the SCOPE training programme. They also underwent an audit of their driving skills and habits. But in order to provide a long-term boost to the programme, management decided to create an in-house challenge to motivate the supervisory level and ensure the involvement of all drivers during each of their journeys (professional and commuting).

Each employee has his/her own Corporate Licence, containing a total of 12 points. This document is used to add up each driver's points in each agency, and thus determine the average number of points for a specific agency, called the Average Licence. The number of points on the licence is directly linked to the driver's behaviour. The goal is not just to "punish" people who have had accidents by removing their points, but rather to reward those who demonstrate exemplary behaviour behind the wheel.

The main thrust of this in-house challenge is the idea that all accidents are avoidable. Drivers have a direct impact (be it negative or positive) on the final ranking of their agency, through their day-to-day behaviour on the road. Rivalry between agencies is thus wholly positive, encouraging better and safer driving patterns ■

Major Black Sea players give their views

At the BSEC Conference in Istanbul (see report in the June 2007 World Highways), four of the leading participants gave their impressions of the event

Mr Yevgen Koziy, Executive Manager, BSEC Permanent Secretariat, Istanbul.



"This Conference is the first major international forum with the participation of both government and private sectors following the signature of the

Memorandum of

Understanding (MoU) establishing the Black Sea Ring Highway. Participants are unanimous on the necessity to develop transport infrastructure in the BSEC region as a part of the Euro-Asian transport corridors.

"Development of transport infrastructure of the Black Sea region is in the interests of both the east and west of the Euro-Asian continent. And the Black Sea region itself, with its transport infrastructure, should be regarded as a part of the Silk Road. We have heard from all the working partners on the development of transport policy and infrastructure and the liberalisation of transport infrastructure in particular. Conference attendees have been able to assess current and future trends based on real analytical reports."

HE Dr Eng Yarob Suleiman Badr, Minister of Transport, Syria.



"This conference has been very useful in three ways. Firstly, we have gained new information on what is happening in the Black Sea region and an interesting way

to link the Black Sea with the Silk Road. Secondly, through contacts established in and around the meeting, and thirdly, the technical sessions on road safety and management, and state-of-the-art technology.

"We are now able to align our projects with long term regional

strategies, and to adjust our policies in relation to developments around Syria. For example, we are interested in expanding our national highways to north-eastern Syria (the Turkish-Iraqi borders), establishing a new route to the Mediterranean, and to finish a new freeway of about 100km from Lattakia to Ariha, which will open all the north-eastern parts of Syria to the sea. This is the first toll system project under tender, and the project will be finalised in October 2008.

"On the issue of non-physical barriers, we signed an agreement with Jordan and Lebanon and are planning to sign one with Saudi Arabia, to establish a single register for cars to cross borders of all these countries. There are still unresolved problems with visas and customs, but that is within the scope of the Ministry of the Interior."

Mr Rustan Jenalinov, Secretary General, Permanent Secretariat, IGC Traceca, Baku, Azerbaijan.



"This is the first Conference to target the Black Sea and the Silk Road at the same time, integrating the corridors of the Black Sea, Central Asia, the Caucasus and

Europe. It has strong private sector participation. In this context Traceca is forming a Business Consultative Council aimed at attracting the business sector, which in turn requires the creation of an environment favourable to investment. The Conference widely addressed the issue of PPPs, and the countries of our region are keen to share experience on this.

"One unresolved challenge is non-physical barriers to trade. For example, Kazakh road carriers are refused entry into China. Their goods have to be reloaded onto Chinese vehicles. There are a great number of non-physical barriers, including administrative border-crossing problems, toll fees and

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HE Dr Eng Yarob Suleiman Badr

non-parity of transport operations. "In Traceca we are currently implementing five projects. We benefit from technical assistance from the EU for improving maritime links in the Black and Caspian Seas. We await the results of an analysis of freight flows, we are fostering an inter-regional transport dialogue between the countries of our region and the EU, and we are examining the integration of transport networks of the region with the Trans-European Networks. We are very keen to foster multimodal transport operations."

Mr Zhang Xiaojie, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Communications, PR of China.



"We sponsored the Third Silk Road Conference. Such activities by IRF raise awareness of all countries around the Silk Road, particularly in terms of

infrastructure construction and facilitation of transit transport, crucial to the development of regional economies.

"A major concern for the Silk Road is non-physical barriers, which can only be addressed through the conclusion of a multilateral facilitation agreement. Under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (which launched the original idea) and with the assistance of ESCAP and the Asian Development Bank, we are negotiating a multilateral agreement for facilitation of transit. These negotiations have continued for a long time, but eventually they may prove useful for other countries in the region.

"The economies of countries around the Black Sea are booming. If the Silk Road can bring China and those countries together, it will be a very good opportunity for all parties involved in terms of increased trade volumes" ■

First meeting of IRF environmental group

Chairman Dimitris Mandalozis presided at the first meeting of the IRF Eironmental Group in Geneva, Switzerland on 5 July.

The group agreed, as a first step, to devote its attention to three themes: Water Management, Materials, and Noise.

The WG has already started collecting contributions from members on these topics. Those willing to get involved or looking for more details can contact the coordinator of the WG at the IRF Geneva Programme Centre, Susanna Zammataro at szammataro@irfnet.org

Road safety arrives in Hungary

"People should not die on roads because of poor infrastructure" was the key message of Mr Balazs Felsmann, State Secretary for Infrastructure at the Hungarian Ministry of Economy and Transport, when addressing the over 90 participants at the two-day workshop jointly organised in Budapest on 28-29 June, 2007 by the IRF and the European Commission.

During 2007 two more workshops will be held, in Turkey and Lithuania, to offer selected stakeholders the

possibility of acquiring valuable information on road safety engineering and a platform to share best practices.

These workshops are partnerships between the IRF Brussels Programme Centre and the EC's Directorate General for Enlargement. For more information, look at www.irfnet.eu.

• Full workshop proceedings are available from http://www.erf.be/section/safer_roads

New dawn on road research: launch of IRF Research Council

The IRF Research Council will take on a global coordination role in the areas of Safety, Mobility, Environment and Competitiveness

Reconciling individual mobility needs with legitimate societal aspirations for cleaner, safer and smarter road transport requires a constant adaptation to new methods, materials and technologies. That, in turn, requires research. The IRF is at the forefront of numerous

research initiatives with leading international institutions and is now pleased to announce the launch of the IRF Research Council, a catalyst of expertise and skills committed to improving the sustainability and efficiency of the road sector.

• For more information on the IRF Research Council please visit www.irfrc.org

IRF diary dates

2nd IRF Regional Conference on "Road Safety - Design, Construction & Operations of Roads"
5-6 October 2007, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India Contact: Andy Bastienne on abastienne@irfnet.org and look at www.irfnet.org

2007 IRF Road Safety Awards - Call for Submissions
Deadline for submissions is 15 October 2007 Contact: Maria Novikov on mnovikov@irfnet.org and look at www.irfnet.org

"Promoting PPP Investments in CEE" - Conference organised with the European PPP Centre
29-30 October 2007, Budapest, Hungary Contact: Andy Bastienne on abastienne@irfnet.org and look at www.irfnet.org

The June edition of *World Highways* carried the announcement of the above meeting and a summary of what to expect

A reminder, for your diaries: Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA, October 9-11.

General Sessions: During these sessions, the future of America's federal highway system will be examined by IRF's national road association, the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA).

ARTBA will overview its Critical Commerce Corridors (3C) initiative, aimed at improving the current US Interstate Highway system and providing the new capacity and intermodal connections necessary for ensuring continued global competitiveness.

Delegates will also hear about the role technology can play in developing a new vision for America's transportation network, receive an update on the fiscal year 2008 US Transportation Appropriations Bill; learn about federal regulatory and environmental issues, and get a status report on the 2009 reauthorisation of SAFTEA-LU, the highway transit investment law.

Chairman's Reception and Dinner Cruise: Attendees will depart Fort Lauderdale aboard a luxury yacht and tour the unforgettable intracoastal waterways.

William Troxler Memorial Golf Tournament: To start the week off, the annual optional golf event has been organised, to honour William Troxler's service to IRF. During his IRF service, Mr Troxler helped



WPC 2007 IRF Annual Meeting reminder

The sun sets over Fort Lauderdale

make the Fellowship Program the success it is today. Proceeds from the tournament support the Fellowship Program and other IRF educational activities.

Fellows Reunion: As part of the Annual Meeting, IRF will hold a networking reunion to bring together Fellows from the outgoing Class of 2007 and the incoming Class of 2008, as well as many Fellows from previous years.

And More: Meet Hall of Fame NFL football coach Don Shula on

10 October and 'power golf' legend Brian Pavlet on 11 October at the Exhibit Floor main stage.

Please visit www.irfnews.org to read more about the IRF 2007 Annual Meeting and to register. Thousands are expected to attend this one-of-a-kind industry event, so register early and reserve your hotel ■

• For more information, please contact Kate Mullett at +1 703 525 1001 or email kmullett@irfnews.org.