MTKN Fifth Annual Meeting
October 20-21, 2005
Kansas City, Missouri

Official Minutes

MTKN participants
Jerry Baldwin, Minnesota DOT*; Janet Bix, Ohio DOT*; Nelda Bravo, NTL; John Cherney, WisDOT*; Mary Kathleen Geary, Northwestern University; Betty Lou Hicks, Hanson Professional Services; Fang Huang, MoDOT; Marie Manthe, Kansas DOT*; Arlene Mathison, CTS; Amy Matzke, Hanson Professional Services; Nina McLawhorn, WisDOT*; Danielle Pollock, MoDOT; Bob Sweet, UMTRI; Hank Zaletel, Iowa DOT/CTRE

Library Connectivity Pooled Fund participants
Jason Bittner, MRUTC; Cheryl Bodan, PennDOT; Dustin Brinton-Wilson, PennDOT, Ruth Letson Tennessee DOT; Sue Sillick, Montana DOT; Laura Wilt, Oregon DOT; Christi Powers, consultant

joint participants in the MTKN and the Library Connectivity Pooled Fund Study

Thursday, October 20, 2005

Update on Status of MTKN

Following the luncheon and introductions, Arlene Mathison gave a brief update on the status of the MTKN. This past year, MTKN became incorporated, finalized and approved their bylaws, and obtained a checking account. The web site, www.mtkn.org, has been improved and updated. Four member organizations have also joined the Library Connectivity Pooled Fund Study: the Departments of Transportation in Kansas, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

The focus of MTKN's work for the coming year was to be decided in the business meeting the following day, but Arlene did state that the Network is committed to helping state Departments of Transportation and other transportation libraries however possible, and encouraging the development of additional transportation knowledge networks.

Strengths and Benefits of a Regional Knowledge Network

Bob Sweet was the moderator for this portion of the meeting. Bob introduced the presentations with his recollections of the formation of MTKN, from early discussions in the summer of 2001, to the first annual meeting in Minneapolis that December.

Marie Manthe gave a short talk called "Why My Best Job is Even Better than I Expected." Marie became the Kansas DOT Librarian only two years ago, and while she considers the position her "best job," she explained ways that membership in MTKN has brought additional

benefits, including interlibrary loan at no charge, and the sense of being part of a peer group from the moment she started working at KDOT.

Hank Zaletel explained how he is "Partnering for Success at Iowa DOT." Three and a half years ago, Hank's position as Iowa DOT's librarian was eliminated, but he continues to work in the Iowa DOT Library as an employee of the Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE) at Iowa State University. This role gives him access to many resources through the university that he previously did not have with his DOT position alone. Thus, the cooperation between Iowa DOT and ISU enables Hank to better serve his patrons. He also spoke about using the Transportation Libraries Catalog, TLCat, in training sessions with ISU students. The partnership and hard work of MTKN members and the National Transportation Library were the impetus for TLCat's creation, and a benefit for Hank and those he trains.

John Cherney gave a presentation about the growth of the Wisconsin DOT's Research and Library web site. Just a couple of years ago, the Research area had only six web pages, and the Library only two. WisDOT's Internet Redesign Project had a planning team with members from several divisions, including the Office of the General Counsel and the Office of Public Affairs, as well as the Research Coordinating Section and the Library, and input from the Division of State Patrol, Bureau of Traffic Safety, and Division of Motor Vehicles. Today, this area of WisDOT's web site has approximately 125 pages, 500 PDF files, and more than 2000 hyperlinks to internal and external resources. The close cooperation between the Research and Library staff with other areas in WisDOT has resulted in a web resource that is a great benefit to other transportation libraries and researchers.

Janet Bix from Ohio DOT took the broadest approach to the benefits of networking with a presentation entitled "Better Living through Unity." Janet's presentation explained how networks can help librarians to run their libraries more cost-effectively by maximizing resources. She noted that there are many different ways to partner with other libraries, requiring varying levels of commitment, so becoming a member of a network does not automatically mean you won't have time to keep up with day-to-day tasks. Janet's presentation gave an overview of the Ohio DOT and its intranet site, then explained the benefits the library receives through its partnership with the State Library of Ohio, its inclusion in OhioLink, the statewide library catalog, its membership in MTKN, and its participation in TLCat.

Overview of NCHRP Synthesis 37-02, "Preservation and Use of Institutional Memory"

This overview was given by Nelda Bravo, Director of the National Transportation Library. Nelda explained that institutional memory has been compromised in recent years, for several reasons. First, when a longtime employee retires from an agency, their knowledge and experience goes with them. Second, agencies often need to downsize in difficult economic times, and eliminate both employees and resources to try to keep their budgets under control. Third, the nature of the workforce has changed, so that fewer people remain with an employer for a long time and retire after many years of service, but instead, we have "serial careerists," who change jobs, agencies, or even occupations with much more frequency than in the past.

Nelda stated that, in addition to the loss of institutional memory through loss of employees, there have also been real losses in resources. for example, the US DOT Library has had to reduce the size of its collection because it is being moved to a smaller space. The paper trail for the development of the nation's transportation infrastructure is being lost.

Those working on this project hope to impact how people perceive information, and illustrate the value of historical information and documents. Part of the reason the study is being done now is that 2006 will be the 50-year anniversary of the beginning of the Interstate system, and several agencies are also having 100-year anniversaries around this time. Thus, there is a growing interest in historical information and documents, and the need to preserve as many of these primary sources as possible. Nelda stated that the final meeting will likely be in May 2006, and the study's recommendations to determine strategies and obtain support will be published as an NCHRP Synthesis.

Laura Wilt raised a question about retention schedules. In her agency, the Oregon DOT, there are retention schedules for certain kinds of documents, explicitly stating that for a given type of project, the documents must be destroyed after a specific period, for example, ten or twenty years. Thus, when questions arise about a project that was completed long ago, it is difficult or impossible to locate the relevant information to answer them. Nelda believes that issue will be addressed in this project. She added that the Scope of Work for the project is available on the TRB web site. [It is located here.]

What's New with the NTL, TLCat and Reauthorization?

Nelda explained how the reauthorization bill has impacted the NTL. NTL is still a part of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), but the BTS is no longer its own unit. It is now a program office under the Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA). NTL programs include hosting TRIS Online, making TLCat's guest view available, sponsoring the U.S. participation in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) International Transportation Research Documentation database (ITRD), and providing reference services.

Nelda provided brief updates on the NTL's programs. She stated that the data structure of TRIS is being redesigned. The NTL does not have a cataloger now, so for the time being, additions to the NTL Catalog will be primarily links to other agencies' documents, rather than full-text items. Regarding funding for additional libraries to join TLCat, it should be possible to add a few if some of the State DOTs whose TLCat subscriptions are currently being funded by NTL, are able to begin paying for the service on their own.

Demonstrating Your Transportation Library's Return on Investment

Jerry Baldwin of Minnesota DOT explained that his Return on Investment study grew out of the question, "What does the library do for the Minnesota DOT?" Believing that in-depth reference requests were an area where the library saved a great deal of time for the agency's staff, Jerry

surveyed Mn/DOT employees to ask how much time library reference services had saved them in searching for and locating information. The average time was two work days, or 16 hours. He included in his calculations the benefits of borrowing items through interlibrary loan, and routing periodicals throughout the agency to reduce the cost of duplicate subscriptions.

After calculating cost savings and cost avoidance attributable to the library, Jerry wanted to determine ways the library provides added value to Mn/DOT. According to a study published in 1993, the average value of a professional article to the reader and her or his agency is $600 per reading. He used this figure, along with the library's circulation, interlibrary loan, and periodical routing statistics, to determine added value, and also included a separate calculation to show the value of Mn/DOT Library's web site for its users. The final benefits to costs ratio was 12:1, with benefits of more than $8.3 million, and an annual return on investment of more than $7.5 million for Fiscal Year 2001. The detailed figures and calculations can be viewed here, on the Mn/DOT Library web site.

How UMTRI is Using RSS Feeds

Bob Sweet of the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) explained how RSS feeds work, using the UMTRI site's feed as an example. RSS stands for Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication. RSS enables a web site to broadcast updates to all users who subscribe to that site's feed. To receive RSS feeds, a user must first obtain a News Reader, also known as a News Aggregator. Bob said that some of these Readers require a fee, but others are available for free download. Once the Reader is in place, then a user can subscribe to an RSS feed for any site that has one, by clicking on the small orange box marked "RSS" or "XML" on the site's home page. Bob also showed the group the page in XML (eXtensible Markup Language) containing the framework for UMTRI's RSS feeds.

Iowa DOT Library's Transportation Enhancement Grant for Historical Preservation

Hank Zaletel explained how the Iowa DOT Library was able to obtain a $50,000 Transportation Enhancement Grant to help preserve the agency's historical documents and information. There was discussion at Iowa DOT about whether the agency should keep their historical items, or give them to the Iowa State Historical Society. In general, historical societies should have the professional staff and resources to preserve documents, film, and artifacts, as that is essentially their primary function. However, Hank stated that the Iowa State Historical Society is under an agency that is grossly underfunded, and many of its "staff" are volunteers. Moreover, it is located fairly far from the DOT, so for DOT staff to utilize these items, travel and additional time would be required. Several Iowa DOT staff, including Hank, formed a committee to decide whether the materials should be kept on site, and if funding for preserving the items could be obtained. They decided to pursue the Transportation Enhancement Grant.

Hank stated that the applying agency typically must provide a certain percentage of matching funds, however, there is some flexibility in meeting this requirement. Documents, photos, and film will be digitized and included online as part of the Iowa Digital Heritage Collections. The

program supporting the Collections is CONTENTdm, an OCLC product. Hank stated that he had written much of the Request for Proposal (RFP), which will be posted within the next couple of weeks.

Friday, October 21, 2005

Before the MTKN Fifth Annual Business Meeting began in earnest, there was a significant discussion regarding whether the Library Connectivity Transportation Pooled Fund (TPF) and the MTKN are different, and if the MTKN can or should continue to exist now that the Pooled Fund is in place. Arlene Mathison allowed a period of time for this discussion, as it was important to address these questions before going forward with the items on the planned agenda. Bob Sweet began by asking how the two entities are different, and what the role of the MTKN will be now that the TPF is working towards having a knowledge network at the national level.

Laura Wilt stated that she sees the two entities as quite different. The TPF is a study, and at this point it is only scheduled to last two years. The MTKN is a regional consortium that has already been in existence for four years, and can continue on after the TPF has ended. Jerry Baldwin agreed with that assessment, adding that although there are four members of MTKN which are also in the TPF, that does not mean the TPF is replacing MTKN. Sue Sillick sees the MTKN and TPF as two different avenues toward the same goal of a national network. Sue said that she wanted her agency to join the TPF because it was the best route available for her state, Montana, to be involved in the national effort. The two groups may share the large goal of creating a national network, but each may also have short-term goals which differ from those of the other.

Bob stated that because the TPF has funding, he believes it's likely that the TPF will continue to grow, while the MTKN will stagnate, as it does not have the funding to provide additional benefits or services to its members. Betty Lou Hicks, representing the newest MTKN member, Hanson Professional Services, stated that she could not see distinct differences between the two groups. She explained that when she joined MTKN, she believed it was primarily a consortium that would agree to process one another's interlibrary loan requests more quickly than through the standard OCLC resource sharing process.

Jerry stated that the MTKN and TPF are the first pieces in what he believes will be "a network of networks." In the same way that AASHTO has regional components, and most OCLC services and customer contacts are through regional service providers, transportation's national knowledge network will be in a far better position to succeed and grow if it is supported by a system of regional networks. Nina McLawhorn agreed that the groups are building a network of networks, adding that it would be helpful if we could determine how to institutionalize regional networks.

Review and Approve ILL Guidelines and Guiding Principles

Several members of the group recalled that two MTKN documents, the Interlibrary Loan Guidelines and the Guiding Principles, were updated during the 2004 annual meeting at UMTRI. However, the versions available for this year's meeting did not appear to have been updated. After the conference, Bob will try to locate the updated versions, then work with Marie to finalize the two drafts. They will be distributed to the other MTKN members via e-mail, and approved by e-mail exchange or conference call.

Discussion of Plans for the Coming Year

In the meeting agenda, Arlene had included a list of projects that MTKN might wish to focus on during the coming year. The group reviewed the list, and each person selected three or four items that they felt to be most important. New committees were then formed to begin addressing the highest priority projects.

Performance measures – how to measure and communicate the benefits of MTKN

The group discussed various measurements which could be useful for this project, including additional return-on-investment studies, figures for interlibrary loan activity within the group, and reference assistance we receive from each other. Arlene stated that as the TPF members determine how they will keep their statistics, the MTKN libraries should try to maintain theirs the same way. The group agreed that it's also necessary to keep the audience in mind when presenting our libraries' statistics: using the same sets of numbers, we need to develop different outputs for different groups. For instance, we would not present information to CEOs or State DOT agency leaders in the same way we would to SLA members.

Nina emphasized the need to distinguish between outputs (figures and statistics) and outcomes (the Network's accomplishments), and utilize both appropriately when communicating with other groups. Nina agreed with Arlene that member libraries' statistics should be standardized as much as possible. Nelda Bravo reminded the group that MTKN members have collectively added thousands of holdings to OCLC, and continue to increase the visibility of transportation publications and libraries. Nina stated that our performance measures should illustrate the added value our customers receive because of our membership in MTKN, for example, how does it help in project delivery, safety, or other areas?

John Cherney, Jerry, and Nina volunteered to be on the Performance Measures Committee.

Funding for MTKN

At this point, the MTKN does not have funding. Betty Lou questioned why funding is needed. Arlene stated that members have been dependent upon the goodwill of our agencies to allow us to use our time and resources for MTKN tasks, as well as for the time and travel to attend the annual MTKN conference. Arlene stated it would be beneficial if the Network could become

more self-sufficient. Bob stated that if we had funding, we might be able to have an administrator for MTKN in the future. Nelda added that funding would provide the opportunity for someone to travel and represent MTKN at certain events, particularly if MTKN partners with other organizations. Nina agreed that greater self-sufficiency would be a positive development, adding that WisDOT has spent a large amount of money on endeavors related to MTKN and increasing transportation library networks, as well as contributing to, and acting as lead state for, the Library Connectivity Pooled Fund.

Bob, Arlene, and Kay Geary will be on the MTKN Funding Committee.

Partnerships

The category of "Partnerships" on the agenda covered a lot of ground, including encouraging the formation of other regional library networks, trying to recruit more members into MTKN, and partnering with both associations (such as AASHTO) and TLCat libraries outside of the Midwest. The group agreed that "Partnerships" could be defined broadly during this discussion.

Nelda stated that part of an organization's growth process is to make partnerships with its customers, particularly with other organizations. In essence, MTKN would need to approach others, explain what we are and what we do, and ask how we can help them, proposing that we work together, and help each other reach our goals. A big part of this is forming relationships with people in the other organizations. Arlene stated that, at this point, she feels unprepared to develop those kinds of relationships – and no one disagreed with her statement. Nelda stated that Lisa Pogue of the American Public Works Association did this for the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), and would be a good person to ask about how to approach organizations and talk with them about developing partnerships.

Nina suggested that MTKN should target AASHTO to begin making a partnership, adding that AASHTO's Research Advisory Committee (RAC) and the TPF are two connections that the MTKN can use. Jerry noted that MTKN's membership area is based on AASHTO's Region Three, and asked if that could also help. Sue stated that Region Three is hosting the 2006 RAC meeting, so it may be possible to highlight MTKN at that event. The meeting will be in Ohio in summer 2006. It was decided that Jerry, Janet, and Hank will talk with their State DOT RAC representatives about this topic, and Nelda will assist the group as needed.

At MTKN's Fourth Annual Meeting in 2004, a committee was formed to encourage the development of other regional networks. Marie Manthe was the contact person for transportation libraries in AASHTO Region One states, Bob for Region Two states, and Jerry for Region Three states. At this time, MTKN does not have the resources to pursue this in a formal way, however, these three members will continue to be the contact people for the other Regions, and to informally promote the formation of other networks. Jerry stated that he had talked with Sue before she left the meeting, and Sue told him she plans to talk with Leni Oman further about forming a network in Region Four. Marie also talked with Dustin Brinton-Wilson and Cheryl Bodan as they were leaving the meeting, when Dustin asked if Marie was the Region One contact. Marie suggested other Region One State DOT librarians that Cheryl and Dustin could

contact, and let them know that she is open to any questions they might have. Nelda added that further discussion of regional networks at the Government Transportation Research Information Committee (GTRIC) meeting in June 2006 could also be beneficial.

There was some brief discussion about MTKN's members and how we might be able to add more members, or at least do additional networking with non-member libraries in our states. It was decided that Bob will contact the automobile manufacturers' libraries in Michigan, and John will contact the Portland Cement Association (PCA) Library, to find out if they have any interest in networking with MTKN. Arlene will also contact Illinois DOT, South Dakota DOT, Nebraska DOT, and Purdue University (initially the MTKN member for Indiana) to ask whether they would still like to be involved in MTKN. The Illinois and South Dakota DOTs still have their libraries, but no longer have librarians running them.

Executive Committee Elections

This year, the Network decided to add Secretary and Treasurer positions. Janet Bix was elected Incoming Chair at least year's meeting, so she begins her term as Chair at the end of this meeting. Bob was elected Incoming Chair for this year. Hank Zaletel is now the Treasurer, and Marie is the Secretary. Arlene will serve on the Executive Committee as Past Chair, and Nelda is still considered an ex-officio member.

Additional Topics and Tasks

The members discussed where to have next year's conference. Several members agreed the Chicago area seemed to be a good choice. Kay will check into meeting and lodging options in the area of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and their approximate costs.

A summary of this meeting will be developed by Arlene and Janet. Information on the presentations made on October 20, including PowerPoint files, will be posted on the MTKN web site, and will be recorded on CD along with the meeting summary. Nelda added that MTKN's five-year anniversary is coming up. Janet requested that anyone who was involved in the initial discussions that led to the creation of MTKN, please share their recollections with her so they can be noted and compiled.

Although not requiring formal committees, the group agreed that a TLCat flyer should be developed, and the existing MTKN brochure must be updated. John, Hank, Arlene, and Janet will work on the TLCat flyer, while John and Arlene will update the MTKN brochure.

Members questioned whether MTKN should try to be added to the Library and Information Science for Transportation (LIST) Committee agenda for the TRB conference in January 2006, to provide an update on TLCat. Janet will contact Laura Whayne and Sandy Tucker to try to add MTKN to the agenda. There was also a question about statistics on the use of TLCat. Jerry stated he had checked that recently; the figure was approximately 2500 hits per month.

Janet shared a packet depicting slides from a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Finding Transportation Information: a Tutorial." It provides information about how to search TRIS Online and TRB's Research in Progress database, and how to use search engines to find information resources about transportation-related topics. Janet asked whether the PowerPoint should be added to the MTKN web site, and the group agreed it was a valuable tool and should be added.

The afternoon of October 21 was reserved for committee members to meet and discuss their issues and plans.