

Road Dust Management Practices and Future Needs Conference

Written by editorial staff at the Western Transportation Institute

Over ninety participants, representing three countries, gathered in San Antonio, TX last November for the 2008 Road Dust Management Practices and Future Needs Conference. As the first conference of its kind, the event brought together researchers, vendors, practitioners, Local Technical Assistance Programs, and environmental groups to present, discuss, and prioritize current and future road dust management best practices and to create a “road map” for the future.

Focused on moving beyond small-scale experimentation and on to full-scale implementation of dust control, the ultimate goal was to generate a plan for achieving wider, environmentally sustainable, and cost-effective implementation of dust control Best Management Practices on unsealed roads and adjacent areas. The conference provided an unprecedented opportunity for these disparate groups to engage in a high level of cross-talk and dialogue and provided better communication and outreach for the future.

Conference participant, Jerold Vincent, Tetra Technologies, Inc., emphasized the significance of the networking opportunities. “As a manufacturer of calcium chloride, a widely used dust control material, it was very beneficial to discuss common issues and practices with a full range of people from public officials, to vendors, to college professors.”

Keynote speaker presentations, each with insights from a national, research, vendor/construction, or maintenance perspective, provided participants with critical background information on past, continuing, and new dust management efforts. Keynotes included Michael Long, Chair, TRB LVR Committee, Oregon Department of Transportation, David James, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Ron Wright, Idaho Transportation Department, and Ken Skorseth, South Dakota State University.

The conference was a huge success that culminated in the development of a strategic plan including performance measures, protocols, education, outreach, and the formation of a strong network of constituents. Over twenty vendors, consultants, government and university researchers, and university transportation center personnel committed to serve as champions to help move these conference outcomes forward.

Co-chaired by Roger Surdahl, FWHA Central Federal Lands, and Western Transportation Institute's (WTI) Steve Albert, the event was sponsored in part by EnviroTech Services, Inc., North American Salt, Bureau of Indian Affairs, FHWA - Federal Lands Highway, National Park Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Forest Service, and WTI. Additional input and planning assistance was provided by the United States Geological Survey, National Association of County Engineers, University of Nevada at Las Vegas, University of California at Davis, Department of Environmental Quality & Environmental Management in Clark County, Nevada, Local Technical Assistance Program, San Diego State University, Idaho Transportation Department, and Midwest Industrial Supply, Inc.

