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LTAP/TTAP: YOUR SOURCE FOR COST-EFFECTIVE SNOWFIGHTING INFORMATION AND TRAINING

by Lisa Haacken Pogue • American Public Works Association

Across the country, 38,000 local agencies — small and large cities, rural and urban counties, and tribal governments — maintain nearly 3 million miles of roads and some 29,000 bridges. Many of these agencies are also responsible for keeping their communities' transportation system operating in the winter. And that means keeping up with constantly changing winter maintenance procedures, new techniques, and the latest information on combating winter storms.

Local agencies find, just like state departments of transportation, that their public expects them to clear local roads, protect drivers from the dangers of snow and ice, and remain sensitive to the public's concerns that their tax dollars are being spent wisely as well as protecting the environment. Local and tribal government transportation agency personnel need to know the latest and best information to help them do that job, from proper spreading techniques, new equipment, calibration of spreaders, road weather information systems, and salt storage. All of this is done to make sure that local drivers, school buses, trucks and emergency vehicles are able to operate safely even in the winter.

This fall when local and tribal governments are starting to prepare their equipment, supplies and crews for the winter, many take advantage of their Local and Tribal Technical Assistance Program (LTAP and TTAP) centers to tap into information about new technologies and training on best practices in snowfighting.

LTAP/TTAP TAKES INFORMATION AND TRAINING TO LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS

LTAP/TTAP snowfighting information and training takes many forms — courses, snow plow rodeos, winter equipment expos, newsletter articles etc. Many of these efforts are done in partnership with other state and national organizations. And, most importantly, LTAP/TTAP snow and ice control training is affordable to local and tribal transportation agencies. Just a few examples include:

Kansas

The Kansas LTAP Center has a two-pronged training approach for snow and ice training. Once every three years, Kansas DOT employees attend the (KDOT) Kansas Snow Conference. The day and a half conference includes classroom modules and equipment demonstrations. Kansas LTAP also

provides a resource table to disseminate snow and ice related written materials. Each year Kansas LTAP provides a six-hour snow and ice control session, at five sites throughout the state. An average of 200 people attend this training each year. In 2003 instruction included classroom modules, agency tours and equipment demonstrations. Written workbooks are provided to each participant.

Kentucky

The Kentucky LTAP Center holds five to ten snow and ice removal workshops a year around the state, using *The Snowfighter's Handbook* produced by the Salt Institute. They also feature winter maintenance articles in their newsletter, often after the workshops to highlight topics and equipment details shared in the workshop.

Wisconsin

The Wisconsin LTAP offers a series of winter road maintenance workshops at seven locations each fall. They also assist the Wisconsin American Public Works Association (APWA) chapter with their Snow Plow Rodeo by developing a quiz for the rodeo.

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Indiana

The Indiana LTAP Center has developed a two-hour snow plow safety course and they also sponsor an annual snow rodeo, which includes a winter equipment expo.

Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania LTAP program uses the Salt Institute's training materials for their one-day course on winter maintenance. All Pennsylvania LTAP courses taught through Penn State University are at no charge to the local government. The center schedules sessions at various locations across the state or municipalities can request a session at their facility. When a municipality requests a course, they are asked to invite their neighbors and provide coffee and donuts in the morning; some even spring for lunch.

In addition, the program also holds a winter plow rodeo in conjunction with the annual American Public Works Association (APWA)/LTAP Statewide Public Works Symposium. The snow plow rodeo is a major attraction. Branch APWA chapters hold their own rodeos during the summer and send their best drivers to the annual Symposium in order to take home the traveling trophy along with the prizes.

The Pennsylvania LTAP program also gets snow crews ready for winter in the fall edition of their newsletter. They constantly use material from Salt Institute such as their "Think, Act, Be Safe" article on winter safety.

New Hampshire

From 1993-2002, the University of New Hampshire LTAP program trained 764 participants. In 2003, they arranged many of the sessions for the FHWA/NHDOT Easter Snow Expo, training 827 participants. In their workshop evaluations, participants consistently rank the winter operations course the high-

est quality. At their "Anti-Icing Applications" workshop, the center invites participants to bring their trucks with spreaders and salt for calibration. They offer this one-day workshop in several locations throughout the state for a low price of \$60.

North Carolina

The North Carolina LTAP program has used the Salt Institute materials in training courses and also lends materials to local agencies. They work with other LTAP centers to provide training – sponsoring the Wisconsin LTAP program's Don Walker to conduct a snow and ice control workshop twice a year.

Maine

Municipalities can schedule the Maine Local Roads Center's traveling "Road Ranger," Phil Curtis, to conduct a free half-day workshop on-site. These "short shops," customized to meet the needs of the municipality, include a program on snow and ice control.

Washington

The Washington State T2 Center (WST2) has offered 29 classes and trained 515 local agency employees around the state since 1999. Sessions were scheduled in all areas of the state.

What do their participants say are the most useful topics in snowfighting training? They want

to know about the use of products in order to explain it to news media as well as the benefits of materials used for snow and ice control. They're always looking for information on using new products and information on how to correctly place materials on roads. Application issues are also important as well as when to apply materials and how much to apply during different conditions. They also want to know about testing products.

Ohio

Ohio LTAP has distributed materials from the Salt Institute at conferences and trade shows. Ohio LTAP also offers "Circuit Rider" classes and one-day courses. The one-day courses give attendees an opportunity to do pre-trip inspections of snow plows and trucks. This fall, Ohio's county, city, village and township agencies can have training brought to their site. Agencies provide the equipment, facility, and employees to be trained (up to 15-20 people). The center provides one or more of Ohio DOT's experienced equipment trainers to conduct hands-on training, using the specific equipment their employees will be working with for a fee of \$250 per training day. Local agencies may be able to arrange for employees from neighboring agencies to participate and share the cost of the training.

TAC Learning Guide and "At a Glance" available

New (Free) Canadian Snowfighter Training Materials Released. The Transportation Association of Canada, supported by the Salt Institute and Canadian public works agencies, has developed an exciting set of training materials, its Salt SMART learning guide, to train Canadian snowfighters to incorporate the new Environment Canada salt management Code of Practice and TAC's more detailed *Syntheses of Best Practices for Road Salt*.

<http://www.tac-atc.ca/english/information/services/readingroom.cfm>. The new training materials and the *Syntheses* are available at no cost on the TAC website.

TAC has also produced a valuable train-the-trainers guide, *At a Glance* to teach trainers how to take maximum advantage of the learning guide. The guide is also available online, free.

TAC offers train-the-trainer courses for up to ten trainers for \$5,000. Contact Diane Jodouin at TAC: 613-736-1350 x237 or djodouin@tac.atc.ca.

New "Operations" training program available

The Salt Institute and the National LTAP Association, representing 57 transportation technology transfer (Local Technology Assistance Program) centers around the U.S., have unveiled a new snowfighters training tool: a PowerPoint presentation designed for experienced trainers to use in workshops on snowfighting "Operations."

"This is the fifth in a series of training presentations developed by this partnership," explained Salt Institute president Richard L. Hanneman, "but it is the first program to embed video clips in the PowerPoint slides, giving trainers a more engaging format."

He added that the partners would revise the first four PowerPoint presentations to include embedded video clips.

The materials were produced by LTAP trainers and the Salt Institute under the guidance of an advisory panel of LTAP winter maintenance trainers.

"If we are to succeed in incorporating new technologies and techniques into our efforts to keep winter highways safe and reliable commercial arteries, training is the key," Hanneman said. The Institute encourages annual training for all plow and spreader operators.

The new "Operations" program is available as Volume 2 of the series. The 2-CD set remains priced at \$20 and is available from the Institute.

"With the embedded video clips, the new presentation and its associated print handouts didn't fit on a single CD, but we now offer the 2-CD set for the same low price of \$20," Hanneman explained. The CDs contain all five PowerPoint presentations, associated handouts and electronic copies of all the Salt Institute snowfighter training publications including the new *Highway Salt and Our Environment* as well as the most-requested *Snowfighters Handbook* and *Salt Storage Handbook*.

Minnesota

Minnesota LTAP's "circuit rider," Kathleen Schaefer, frequently uses information gathered from the Salt Institute in her "Snow and Ice, Sensible Material Application" classes. The Salt and Highway Deicing Newsletter also provides much useful information she passes along to the operators. She also frequently accesses the Salt Institute Web site to gather information. She has received many positive responses from operators attending the workshops such as: "I learned that more is not always better." "I can change the way I put products down." "Very informative." "Helps remind us of the environmental impact we have and also the costs involved." The program charges \$250 for groups up to ten and \$350 for 11 or more, with an average size class of about 20.

Montana

In Montana, the LTAP center's Fourteenth Annual Equipment Operator Training Workshop and Snow Rodeo was so well attended they had to put limits on the number of attendees for the rodeo portion. The equipment and safety training seminar portion brought

together equipment operators from across the state to share information on road maintenance, equipment, and solutions. "What a great turn-out and terrific fellowship among the participants. All of the training that LTAP offers is outstanding. I would recommend that every road personnel take as many classes that he or she can to improve their skills." said one participant.

Michigan TTAP

The Michigan TTAP Center offered tribal transportation agencies a course on snowfighting. A participant from the St. Croix Band remarked about the workshop, "I now understand the legalities involved with snowplowing and doing it right."

LTAP centers have also been active in the Federal Highway Administration's Eastern Winter Road Maintenance Symposium and Equipment Expo. The conference targets winter maintenance managers and public works practitioners from cities, townships, counties, and states east of the Mississippi River. LTAP centers in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, Massachusetts, West Virginia and New Hampshire have helped the

conference grow from 700 to more than 1,000 attendees. The ninth annual conference was held September 8-9, 2004 in Knoxville, Tennessee. For more information go to www.easternsnowexpo.org.

LTAP/TTAP's mission is to foster a safe, efficient, and environmentally sound surface transportation system by improving skills and increasing knowledge of the transportation workforce and decision makers. The program includes a network of 51 centers in every State and Puerto Rico, plus 7 regional Tribal Technical Assistance Program centers serving tribal governments. For more information on the LTAP/TTAP program or to find your local LTAP/TTAP center go to www.ltapt2.org.

The National LTAP Association has entered into a formal partnership with the Salt Institute to produce training materials. While designed for the experienced trainers used by LTAP/TTAP Centers, the materials are made available free online from the Salt Institute website, <http://www.saltinstitute.org/snowfighting>. LTAP seminars can be found on the Salt Institute calendar, <http://www.saltinstitute.org/23.html> ■

Excellence in Storage Winners

Nineteen state, provincial and local government transportation facilities in the U.S. and Canada have earned the 2004 Excellence in Storage Award from the Salt Institute. The award recognizes high standards of environmental consciousness and effective management of winter materials storage. Another thirty-nine facilities were cited for "continuing excellence" for sustaining award-winning programs recognized in the first 17 years of the program.

"The single salt management investment with the greatest cost-to-environmental benefit is proper salt storage," explained Salt Institute president Richard L. Hanneman, in announcing the award winners. "These agencies are not only exemplary environmental stewards, they have demonstrated a commitment to cost-conscious spending of tax dollars and promoting safe working conditions for their employees."



2004 Excellence in Storage Winners

Beaver Township, Bloomsburg, PA
City of Brampton Sandalwood Pkwy. Facility, Brampton, ON
Clarion County Main Facility, Shippensburg, PA
CT DOT Colchester Salt Storage Facility, Colchester, CT
CT DOT Glastonbury Maintenance Facility, Glastonbury, CT
CT DOT Griswold Salt Storage Facility, Griswold, CT
CT DOT Hebron Salt Shed, Bolton, CT
CT DOT New Preston Satellite Pile, Litchfield, CT
CT DOT Route 71A Salt Shed, Meriden, CT
CT DOT Thompson Salt Storage Facility, Thompson, CT
CT DOT Waterford Salt Storage Facility, Waterford, CT
CT DOT Willington Maintenance Facility, Willington, CT
Cranberry Township, Cranberry, PA
Ministry of Transportation of Ontario Elsinore Facility, St. Catherines, ON
NJ DOT Folsom Yard #451, Folsom, NJ
Regional Municipality of Peel Copper Road Yard, Brampton, ON
City of Roanoke Public Works Salt Facility, Roanoke, VA
South Whitehall Township, Allentown, PA
City of Stamford Highway Department, Stamford, CT

The awards were announced during the American Public Works Association Congress in Atlanta.

The Excellence in Storage Award is part of the Salt Institute's Sensible Salting Program – an educational program for salt customers on how to store and apply salt in an environmentally sound manner. Over the award competition's 17 years, just 107 "excellent" programs have been recognized. Among the thirty-nine facilities cited for "continuing excellence," Buffalo Grove, IL, has won "excellence" designation 16 times; Arlington Heights, IL has won 13 times.



Every year about 15 million tons of deicing salt is applied to roadways in the U.S. and another five million tons in Canada. Applying salt reduces injury accidents by 88% and pays for itself in a half hour in terms of avoided crashes.



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You just enjoyed another electronic **Salt and Highway Deicing** Newsletter! It helps you make better decisions in your winter maintenance responsibilities and gives even more information by active links to www.saltinstitute.org <<http://www.saltinstitute.org>> with specific pages to further snowfighter information. Feel free to forward this newsletter to other interested persons so they can also enjoy this informative free quarterly. Be aware Salt Institute never sells or distributes any of your contact information to any outside source. Please sign up at: <http://www.saltinstitute.org/subscribe/index.html>