



# ILLINOIS INTERCHANGE

Vol. 2022-01



## ILLINOIS TOLLWAY NAMED 2021 BBM NATIONAL WINNER



For the first time since the Build a Better Mousetrap Competition began in 2009, an Illinois project has been selected as a national winner.

The Federal Highway Administration selected the Illinois Tollway's Roadway Electric Training System as the recipient of its Bold Steps Award, which recognizes a locally relevant high-risk project or process showing a breakthrough solution with demonstrated high reward.

"We are proud that a great idea developed in Illinois is receiving a national honor," said IDOT T2 Program Manager Barry Kent. "Local and state transportation agencies throughout Illinois are always looking for ways to improve their operations."

While there was a lot of great competition for this year's Build a Better Mousetrap awards, the Illinois Technology Transfer Center ultimately selected the Tollway's Roadway Electric Training System as the

overall state winner of the competition and submitted the nomination to the FHWA for consideration at the national level. Tim Peters, IDOT Local Policy and Technology Engineer, said the Tollway's training system clearly stood out as a creative solution to longstanding challenges.

As a transportation organization serving 1.6 million customers daily, of course, safe, well-maintained roadways are the top priority for the Illinois Tollway, says Illinois Tollway Executive Director José Alvarez.

"This national recognition highlights the kind of innovative thinking that makes the Illinois Tollway one of the best transportation agencies in the country," said Alvarez. "We are proud to have an environment where everyone can contribute to making improvements that help everyone do a better job."

The idea for the Roadway Electric Training System was born out of necessity.

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Please pass this on to other interested parties in your office.

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With many veteran roadway electric workers set to retire in the coming years, transportation officials needed a better way to train new electrical workers on how to assess, repair, and maintain the approximately 18,000 light fixtures along the 294-mile Illinois Tollway system.

Traditionally, the biggest challenge was performing the training alongside high-speed traffic and in variable weather while working with high-voltage equipment.

Tollway roadway lighting technician Ben Pierce, a 20-year Tollway employee, teamed up with his coworkers, Nick Perez and Eric Johnson, at the Downers Grove maintenance site to knock around ideas, research with other Tollway departments and engineers and ultimately delivered a portable training device that models the Tollway’s actual electrical equipment.

The biggest challenge to developing the device was ensuring the right amount of voltage for training new workers, he said. In the field, electricians work with

about 480 volts. The portable device is at 48 volts, which is 1/10th of the 480 volts in the field.

The Road Electric Training System was built in-house using mostly discarded or scrap parts found around the Tollway facilities. The various components fit together like LEGO blocks with all the conduit slipping inside slots and the light pole keeping all the conduit tightly in place. It took approximately 150 hours for three people to develop the device.

“This was truly a team effort,” said Illinois Tollway Roadway Maintenance Manager Joe Dragovich. “We were able to tap into a deep pool of highly experienced, highly skilled staff to develop and fine-tune a valuable new training tool.”

The Road Electric Training System has accelerated training, and the electricians are better trained. Roadway electric equipment along the Tollway is fixed more quickly, which means less downtime for inoperative equipment and better roadways for Tollway users.

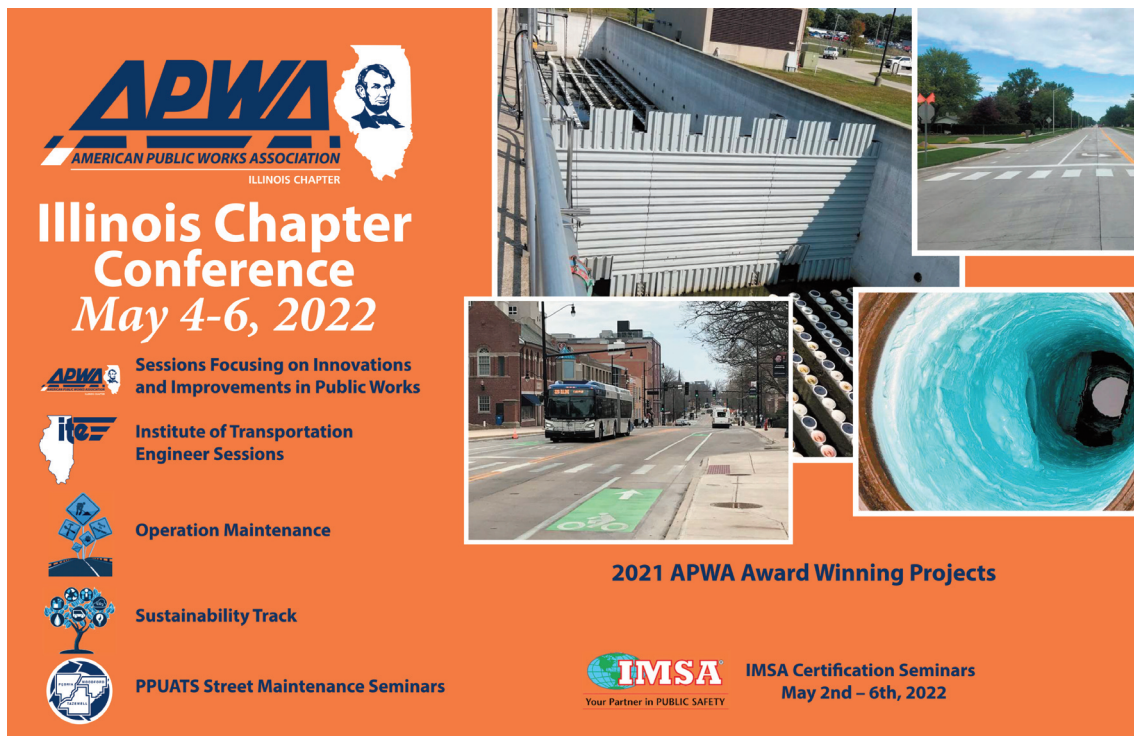
All of which made the homemade device the perfect candidate for the Build a Better Mousetrap Competition.

The Illinois Technology Transfer Center at the Illinois Department of Transportation solicits competition nominations annually from local and state transportation agencies in Illinois to recognize innovative solutions for challenges that transportation workers encounter.

Innovations range from the development of tools and equipment modifications to the implementation of new processes that increase safety, reduce cost and improve efficiency of transportation systems.

Each agency or county is given the opportunity to submit their innovative ideas and have them evaluated by IDOT staff. The judges determine whether the submitted innovations are safe, secure and efficient for transportation needs..

For more information, see the [FHWA’s Build a Better Mousetrap Competition website](#).



**APWA**  
AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION  
ILLINOIS CHAPTER

**Illinois Chapter Conference**  
May 4-6, 2022

**APWA** Sessions Focusing on Innovations and Improvements in Public Works

**ite** Institute of Transportation Engineer Sessions

Operation Maintenance

Sustainability Track

PPUATS Street Maintenance Seminars

**2021 APWA Award Winning Projects**

**IMSA** IMSA Certification Seminars  
Your Partner in PUBLIC SAFETY May 2nd – 6th, 2022

## BUILD A BETTER MOUSETRAP

Barry Kent, Technology Transfer Program Manager

Have you or one of your co-workers recently built an innovative gadget or developed an improved way to do a job? Well, now is the time to show off your creativity. The Illinois Technology Transfer (T2) Center is participating in the 2022 Build a Better Mousetrap National Competition sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) and Tribal Technical Assistance Program (TTAP) centers.

The *Build a Better Mousetrap National Competition's* purpose is to collect and distribute real world examples of best practices, tips from the field, and assist in the transfer of technology for local and county transportation workers and other LTAP/TTAP clients.

We are looking for projects that you, your employees or crew designed and built. Projects can be anything from the development of tools, equipment modification, and/or processes that increase safety, reduce cost, improve efficiency, and improve the quality of transportation.

Judging criteria will be based on a five-point scale used at both the state and national levels:

- Cost
- Savings/Benefits to the Community
- Ingenuity
- Ease of Transference to Others
- Effectiveness

Submit entries to the Illinois T2 Center, where an independent panel of judges will pick a state winner. State winners will be announced in the Summer of

2022 and entry will be submitted to the National Local Technical Assistance Program/Tribal Technical Assistance Program (LTAP/TTAP) Build a Better Mousetrap Competition. National winners will be announced at the annual National LTAP/TTAP Conference on July 18-21, 2022 in Seattle, Washington.

Submit your entries by email to [Barry.Kent@illinois.gov](mailto:Barry.Kent@illinois.gov) **The deadline to submit your entry is May 1, 2022.**



DISCOVER  
ENGINEERS WEEK®



FEBRUARY 20–26, 2022



## Illinois Technology Transfer Center

### 2022 Class Offerings

#### ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plans

Tim Peters (IDOT)

#### ADA/PROWAG (Proposed Accessibility Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way) Seminar

Traci Baker (FHWA) and Carrie Nelsen (IDOT)

#### Basic Essentials of the Uniform Act, Real Estate Workshop for LPAs

James Kyte (FHWA)

#### Basic Math Refresher Training

Barry Kent (IDOT)

#### Basic Supervisory Skills

Barry Kent (IDOT)

#### Concrete Structures

Doug Dirks (IDOT)

#### Contract Administration

Mike Copp (IDOT)

#### Drilled Shafts Construction Inspection

Doug Dirks (IDOT)

#### Earth Excavation and Embankment

Ryan Sheley (IDOT)

#### Excavating-Trenching

County Highway Department

#### Flagger Training

Stephanie Stoverink (IDOT)

#### Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA)

Carissa Calloway (IDOT) and Dana Edwards (IDOT)

Denise Johnson (IDOT) and Shelly Runyard (IDOT)

Aubrey Schuckman (IDOT) and Cassandra Squires (IDOT)

Melanie Turner (IDOT)

#### General Administrative Duties of the Township Highway Commissioner

Barry Kent (IDOT)

#### HEC-RAS Training

Consultant

#### IDOT Phase 1 Course

John Sherrill (IDOT) and Felecia Hurley (IDOT)

Carlos Feliciano (IDOT) and Charles Riddle (IDOT)

Kevin Stallworth (IDOT) and Janel Veile (IDOT)

#### Illinois Roads Scholar Program

APWA Chicago Metro Chapter in conjunction with IDOTT2

#### Implementing Safe Work Zone Operations Strategies

FHWA

#### Instructing the Implementing Safe Work Zone Operations Strategies Training Course

FHWA

#### Instructing the Implementing Safe Work Zone Operations Strategies Training Course

FHWA

#### Land Acquisition: A Federal and State Update

James Kyte (FHWA)

#### Land Acquisition: Negotiation Skills Workshop

James Kyte (FHWA)

#### MFT (Motor Fuel Tax) Accounting & Compliance Review

Amy Whitecotton (IDOT)

#### MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) Training

Dean Mentjes (FHWA) and Marshall Metcalf (IDOT)

#### PASER

Brian Tjernlund (Assistant Lee County Engineer)

#### PCC Pavement Construction Inspection

Doug Dirks (IDOT)

#### Permeable Pavements Workshop

FHWA

#### Pile Foundation Construction Inspection

Mike Copp (IDOT)

#### Plant Mix Asphalt: Design, Construction, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation

Kevin Burke III (Illinois Asphalt Pavement Association)

#### Project Administration Seminar

IDOTT2

#### QBS (Qualification Based Selection) Training

Tim Peters (IDOT)





## Seal Coats (Oil and Chipping)

Consultant

## Seal Coat, Gravel and Dirt Roads

Tim Peters (IDOT)

## Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

Tim Peters (IDOT) and Teresa Haley (IDOT)

## Small Drainage Structures Construction Inspection

Mike Copp and Ryan Sheley (IDOT)

## Snow and Ice Control

Tim Peters (IDOT)

## Social Media: Do's and Don'ts

Joe Schatteman (IDOT)

## Steel Structure Construction Inspection

Justan Mann and Ryan Sheley (IDOT)

## TMOST (Tractor Mower Operator Safety Training)

Consultant

## Understanding USACE and IDNR/OWR Permitting Requirements for Road Projects

Bill Milner (IDNR) – Downstate and Keith McMullen (Army Corp of Engineers) and Steve Altman (IDNR) – St. Louis District Julie Rimbault (Army Corp of Engineers) and Gary Jereb (IDNR) – Chicago area

## WMFT (Web Motor Fuel Tax)

Barry Kent (IDOT)

## Work Zone Safety

Paul Gurklys (IDOT) and Dean Mentjes (FHWA)

## You, Others & Their Real Colors (Real Colors Series Program)

### Real Solutions (Real Colors Series Program)

### Real Applications (Real Colors Series Program)

### Real Teams (Real Colors Series Program)

Stephanie Stoverink (IDOT)

## Roadside Safety Design

### Highway Slope Maintenance and Slide Restoration

### Traffic Signal Design and Operation

### Modern Roundabouts: Intersections Designed for Safety

### Intersection Safety Workshop

NHI (National Highway Institute) (FHWA)

## Barry Kent

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Schedule, Enroll or Host by contacting





## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



### FHWA announces new programs that provide funding opportunities for local governments

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides the basis for FHWA programs and activities through September 30, 2026. It makes a once-in-a-generation investment of \$350 billion in highway programs.

Many of the new programs include eligibility for local governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Tribes, and other public authorities, allowing them to compete directly for funding.

[Read more.](#)



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I P W M A N . O R G

## A WORD FROM THE BUREAU CHIEF

George A. Tapas, PE, SE

2021 was again a crazy year for everyone, with both huge successes, a few losses, all sandwiched by a lot of change. Focusing on our success would take more time than reasonable, as it was a year of growth, innovation, and new developments for the Illinois Department of Transportation. The largest success was the full implementation of the electronic invoice process, continued drive for more efficiencies, and an increase in being responsive to the needs of our Local Public Agencies. We are all eager to build on these successes and drive a path forward that is productive, and results driven. This approach is also yielding a greater communication and shared-vision between Central Office, and each of our great Districts all across the State.

Our D1 office saw the retirement of Terri Latinwo, which was a huge loss, but her long awaited respite is already being taken on by new staff and consultant's that will help bridge the gap.

Our D2 office is losing Local Roads Field Engineer Colby Ardis, who's retirement was on Dec 31st. Colby oversaw Henry, Whiteside, Carroll, and Stephenson Counties. Shawn Ortgiesen, D2, Local Roads Field Engineer was named District 2 2021 Engineer of the Year for his work with developing better methods of tracking project material approval and certifications coordinating with the District 2 Materials office for expedited project closeout. Shawn is also working on an informational training class for D2 LPAs and consultants on the requirements for project material certification. Congrats to Shawn!

D3 saw Matthew Feller start at the end of last year as a Field Engineer (CEV) in Local Roads.

D4 office added Al-Barrae R. Shebib Field Engineer (CE V) and Mike Hudelson Field Engineer (CE V). They hope to fill 2 positions in 2022, the Documentation review position and the Technical Services Engineer position (CE IV).

D5's Local Road staff has had no alterations through 2021 and is ready to start 2022 off strong!

D6 and D7 Local Road staff has also had no changes throughout 2021 and will begin 2022 off with the same staff!

D8 has a few new members to their team. Rebecca Tharp – CEVI – has already hit the ground running as the new D-8 Local Roads Engineer – Promoted from D8 Project Support (welcome Rebecca). Phillip Freimuth – CEV – Field Engineer – Promoted from D8 Studies & Plans. D8 Local Roads was sad to see the departure of their secretary, Merrie Glisson.

D9 had a few changes to their staff as well. Jay Kranz CE VI becomes our new D-9 Local Roads Engineer when he was promoted from D9 CE V Local Roads Field Engineer. Dennis Patrick Naas ET V Local Roads Support Technician was promoted from D9 CE III Plans Engineer in Program Development and Dale Barclay ET IV Local Roads Documentation Compliance Reviewer has been promoted from D9 TM II Contract Compliance Specialist.

Back in Springfield at our Central Office, there have been numerous new changes and key additions to our Local Roads staff. We welcomed in October two new Graduate Public Service Interns from the University of Illinois, Taylor Moore and Damola Olajide. Key hires and staff expansion include Bobbie Hunter as Accountant Advanced (being promoted from

Accountant where she served in D-6), Teri Hammond as Accountant Advanced (joining us from SERS), and Roger L. Moore as Accountant Advanced (joining us from ISP). We also want to thank an entire cast of 75-day employees that aided and assisted our Team in the past year – they were awesome. Kelly Vlastnik is Project Development Engineer working 75 days, and Sam Mead is a contractor working with Environmental Coordinator. A very special thank you is also noted herewith to Teresa (Sharp) Cline as she stepped into both learn, lead, and now train our new team members on Fiscal Controls. For those that do not know Teresa, she is an Agreement Analyst that was hired in November of 2020, and to learn from scratch the complexities of a completely new work element is truly an amazing accomplishment – we all thank her. Michael Peterson joined the Bureau from BIP in January 2021 as our Local Systems & Services Chief. Last but certainly not least, Central Office would also like to recognize the promotion of Bill Raffensperger's to Local Studies and Plans Engineer.

The upcoming 2022 year is already off to an exciting start. The T2 Center continues its leadership in what will become a state-of-the-art MFT full-scale training and resource program; and a planned new Engineering Agreement training series. We also hopefully will see a greater in-person training session progression continue (like the recent County Engineers ELD Class), as the COVID situation is further mitigated. The Bureau will see the completion of updates to the Highway Systems Manual, the BLRS Manual, and the Road, Bridge and Other Related Laws of Illinois Manual. We have the most dedicated employees in the Department at both Central Office and in each District.



Before we closed it is with heavy hearts, but fond memories that Central Office would like to remember the loss of Janet Crane, who served as our file clerk, and whom we lost to COVID in early December 2021. Janet joined us in January 2021 from the Prison Review Board, and while her time with us was short,

long will be the memories. She will always be remembered with an enduring smile and welcoming laugh. We move forward and grow from knowing her, secure in the remembrance that Janet attested that working with all our great people and at IDOT was her best job. She will be greatly missed, and may her memory be eternal.

ILLINOIS PUBLIC SERVICE INSTITUTE



**IPSI**  
illinois public service institute

APWA Illinois Chapter  
APWA Chicago Metro Chapter

## OPEN REGISTRATION

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If you have any questions or need an account created, contact: [barry.kent@illinois.gov](mailto:barry.kent@illinois.gov)



Kent, Barry D.

Course Catalog: BLRS - Bureau of Local Roads and Streets

- Home
- Instructor Calendar
- User Information
- Supervisor Access
- Course Catalog
- Student Records
- Class Calendar
- Logoff

Course Title	Description	Enroll
BLRS - 2021 General Admin Duties of the Highway Commissioners	BLRS - 2021 General Admin Duties of the Highway Commissioners - PDH=0 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
BLRS - 2021_National_Work_Zone	BLRS - 2021_National_Work_Zone - PDH=0 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
BLRS - ADA Self Evaluation and the role of an ADA Coordinator	BLRS - ADA Self Evaluation and the role of an ADA Coordinator - PDH=1 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
BLRS - ADA Transition Plans - Part 2	BLRS - ADA Transition Plans - Part 2 - PDH=1 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
BLRS - Flagger Safety	BLRS - Flagger Safety - PDH=1.5 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
BLRS - Grant Accountability and Transparency Act Training	BLRS - Grant Accountability and Transparency Act Training - PDH=0 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
BLRS - IDOT Phase 1	BLRS - IDOT Phase 1 Four Modules PDH=5 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
BLRS - Invoice All Electronic Submission	BLRS - Invoice All Electronic Submission - PDH=0 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
BLRS - Motor Fuel Tax Refresher	BLRS - Motor Fuel Tax Refresher - PDH=0 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
BLRS - Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Program	BLRS - Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Program <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
BLRS - Snow and Ice Control FY2021	BLRS - Snow and Ice Control FY2021 - PDH=1 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
BLRS - Work Zone Safety	BLRS - Work Zone Safety 7 video parts PDH=2 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select
STTP - S-11 HMA Field Inspection	STTP - S-11 HMA Field Inspection - PDH=3.5 <a href="#">More info</a>	Select





The Technology Transfer (T2) Program is a nationwide effort financed jointly by the Federal Highway Administration and individual state departments of transportation. Its purpose is to transfer the latest state-of-the-art technology in the areas of roads and bridges by translating the technology into terms understood by local and state highway or transportation personnel.

The Illinois Interchange is published quarterly by the Illinois Technology Transfer Center at the Illinois Department of Transportation. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations presented in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect views of the Illinois Department of Transportation, or the Federal Highway Administration. Any product mentioned in the Illinois Interchange is for informational purposes only and should not be considered a product endorsement.

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**VACANT**

Visit our website at

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