

All Computer Users In Transportation Should Know A few Things

A quick review of three very good sources of computer software in transportation, by Dr. Dot

I am getting more and more calls from New Hampshire public employees who are looking for specific types of software. There are two very good sources of transportation software which operate out of universities and one source which is more general but I have found to be very helpful.

The first place you should know about is The Center for Microcomputers in Transportation known as *McTrans*. This center opened up in July of 1986. Its primary purpose is to serve as a center of technology exchange for microcomputer software in transportation. Its support staff includes specialists in the areas of traffic engineering, hydraulics, construction management, rural and urban planning, pavements, safety and highway design, and others.

McTrans offers an excellent Software and Source Book as well as a professional easy to understand newsletter. Their customer service is excellent. They send out software quickly and they are always eager to help us poor frustrated users when we call. They have made a concerted effort to keep software prices to a minimum and they are highly recommended for beginners and advanced users alike. For more information, *McTrans* can be contacted by calling 904-392-0378 or by writing to:

McTrans
University of Florida
512 Weil Hall
Gainesville, FL 32611

The second place you should be aware of is the University of Kansas Transportation Center. These people also offer a wonderful newsletter, *PC-TRANSMission*. They have an excellent staff, they offer top customer service, they have a library of good transportation software (*PCs in Transportation Software Directory*), they have an excellent software distribution service, they keep their charges to a minimum, and I wouldn't be without them. They are an essential addition to the transportation computer user. For more information call 913-864-5655 or write to:

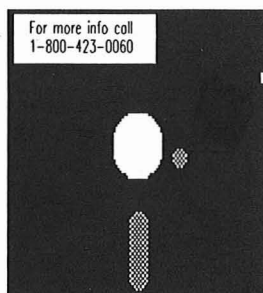


University of Kansas
Transportation Center
2011 Learned Hall,
Lawrence, KS 66045

The final place you may wish to be aware of is a private operation which distributes shareware and other public domain software. These people offer a magazine titled, *Shareware*. They also have a library catalog called, *The PC-Sig Library*. This outfit offers low-cost software from soup to nuts and I often browse through their offerings when I'm in the market for a particular type of software application. For more information call 800-245-6717 or write to:

Shareware
1030 D East Duane Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

One thing is for certain, the world of microcomputers can be confusing and overwhelming. If you have any questions on software, shareware, freeware, hardware, etc. -- give us a call! We'll help you sort out the mess. We can be reached at the Technology Transfer Center by calling 1-800-423-0060 or send in your question on the mailer attached to this newsletter.



Tort Liability And The Highway Agency

The state of New Hampshire now has a level of pending tort claims totaling between \$4,000,000 and \$5,000,000

The liability of highway agencies for proper design, operation, and maintenance of roadway facilities is coming to the forefront of public sector awareness. Litigation stemming from traffic accidents frequently involves the applicable highway agency for purposes of establishing the agency's actions, or lack thereof, as contributory to the resulting accident. Public sector costs of this litigation can be staggering and methods of reducing exposure to this liability need to be addressed.

A legal term, "tort," is described as a wrong committed by a person or agency which results in some damage or injury to the person or property of another. In the context of highway operation and maintenance, tort liability is typically associated with "negligence" on the part of the highway agency or official with regard to the design, operation or maintenance of the traveled roadways. Negligence can be either the doing, or failure to do, something that an ordinary, reasonably prudent person might have done or not done under comparable circumstances.

On July 3, 1985, the state of New Hampshire repealed its "sovereign immunity" from suit in tort cases. Since then, negligence suits against the State for defective highways has been increasing to a present level of pending claims totaling \$4 to \$5 million. Applied to the approximately 4,800 miles of state owned highways, this translates to a currently pending claim of about \$1,000 per mile of highway! Note that this does not include present claims against town and city maintained roadways.

The above noted claims against the state of New Hampshire can be apportioned, approximately equally, among the following three categories:

- Defects related to snow and ice conditions or snow and ice removal
- Defects related to standard maintenance -- potholes, ditches, existing signs, signals, etc.
- Other defects related to the roadway facility -- guardrail, roadway alignment, signing, roadside obstacles, etc.

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