'Smart Road' research facility open for business

By Larry Hinker

More than 100 research projects have been on Virginia's new “Smart Road,” the electronic highway built especially for scientific research. On Thursday, March 23, transportation professionals and researchers, and federal, state, and local leaders, got an up-close look at the array of possibilities this unique roadway affords, in addition to its potential role as a link between Blacksburg and Interstate 81.

Unlike other test facilities, the Smart Road offers realistic conditions on an actual highway, allowing researchers to control weather and lighting as they observe traffic moving at normal highway speeds.

“The Smart Road is a remarkable test facility with enormous potential for improving highway safety and reducing congestion. It’s also a significant economic stimulus for this part of Virginia,” VDOT Commissioner of Transportation Charles D. “Chip” Nottingham said.

A project of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Tech’s Transportation Institute (VTTI), and the Federal Highway Administration, the Smart Road is designed to save lives and millions of dollars in maintenance costs with technological research that includes VDOT’s SmartTravel program of intelligent transportation systems.

“On the Smart Road, researchers can evaluate different technologies under a variety of weather conditions and lighting schemes, on different road grades, and ultimately in real or simulated traffic conditions...,” VTTI Director Tom Dingus said. “This research will help save lives and reduce injuries while decreasing expenditures for property damage, insurance, road maintenance, lost productivity and highway maintenance.”

Smart Road project manager Ashwin Amanna said, “VDOT and other highway departments will be able to develop better pavements, which eventually could save millions of dollars in highway maintenance costs. We also want to know how to make transportation more efficient without building more roads.”

The Smart Road is currently a 1.7-mile, two-lane road looped with a banked turnaround at one end and a slowed-speed turnaround at the other end. The next phase of construction will include a 2,000-foot bridge (the highest in Virginia at 170 feet) and several hundred yards of concrete pavement. When the entire project is completed, as early as 2008, the Smart Road will be a four-lane, limited-access highway extending 5.7 miles between Blacksburg and Interstate 81.

To help develop better ways to respond to the effects of weather, a half-mile section of the road will generate data from 75 weather towers that can rotate 360 degrees and pivot downward to accommodate changing wind conditions. Forty feet tall, when fully erect, the towers can generate up to two inches of rain per hour in droplets of various sizes, including mist, and they can spray water onto freezing pavement to simulate freezing rain. They also can produce up to four inches of snow per hour, with intensities ranging from a light dusting to blizzard snowfalls. Uses of the system include developing better anti-icing and de-icing methods, and enabling snowplow operators to receive valuable “hands-on” training.

To improve visibility at night, dusk and dawn, and in wet weather, researchers will

Applications to university set new record

By Amy Walker

Freshman applications to the university have recorded a 12-percent increase over last year’s figures.

Demand for admission has been high all year, according to Karen Torgersen, director of undergraduate admissions. “We saw a 10-percent increase in students applying for early decision, declaring Virginia Tech as their first-choice school. Now that both early decision and regular decision applications have been received and counted, we’ve hit a record high of 16,800 freshman applications—a 12-percent increase over last year,” Torgersen said.

“We’re also seeing an upward trend in the profile of students who want to come to Virginia Tech. Currently, the typical student we’re offering admission to has a 3.7 grade-point average, and an SAT score of 1212.”

Tech is also seeing record increases in other application pools. Transfer applications are up 25 percent over last year; international undergraduate applications are up 27 percent, and graduate applications are up 25 percent.

Torgersen attributed the increase to a variety of factors. “We are experiencing a wonderful synergy with so many things coming together at the same time. Certainly our football success is a part, but also our emphasis on technology across the curriculum, the popularity of our computer-related majors, and our jump in national

University’s expertise database enhanced

By Susan Trollop

The Virginia Tech Expertise Database (VTED) has a new look and streamlined access to a wealth of information—including, literally, dollars.

Virginia Tech has had an on-line database of faculty members’ expertise since the early 1990s. In 1996, VTED was created and officially released to the university and to the public. It was sponsored by CIT and Virginia Tech Research and Graduate Studies (RGIS). Shortly afterward, RGIS controlled the university in the Community of Science (COS) database and started uploading data to that site, giving Tech faculty members international visibility.

Now, VTED has been redesigned so that faculty members enter their records directly into Community of Science, and VTED will download from COS. The new web interface, having been tested in three departments for a trial period, is now being extended to the entire university. “More work is under way with VTED, but making this new web interface available to faculty members is important—so that they can take full advantage of our COS subscriptions,” said Gene Brown, associate provost for RGIS program development.

COS Expertise contains more than 800,000 expertise profiles of researchers and is used by

some 800 educational institutions, R&D corporations, and government agencies. The change means that Virginia Tech faculty members will have a more user-friendly interface for entering their data and may elect to provide a broader range of data, and all members of the university community will have easier access to COS services.

COS services include:

• Access to the most comprehensive list of funding information available on the web—more than $18 million available, searchable by disciplines, broad research areas, dates, and other keywords. In addition, faculty

(See EXPERTISE on 4)
Holocaust Awareness Week activities begin March 29

A talk by one of two Holocaust survivors among 5,000 Jews living in a town in Poland will highlight Holocaust Awareness Week. The keynote address and a number of discussions and presentations surrounding diversity issues comprise the spring calendar of Multicultural Programs in the Dean of Students Office.

The Holocaust Awareness Week keynote address by Holocaust survivor Charlaine Schiff will be in the Donaldson Brown auditorium on April 25 at 7 p.m. Schiff, one of two known survivors among the 5,000 Jews in her hometown in Poland, is affiliated with the United States Holocaust Museum.

Other events, which are open to the public, include:

“Disability Awareness: Students Sharing Their Differences, Professionals Sharing Their Experiences.” On March 29 at 4 p.m., students with various disabilities will share their experiences and discuss the resources they use. Professionals who provide services for students with disabilities will talk about the services they provide and why they decided to work in this area. Special guests include Susan Angel and Connie Wilkinson from Services for Students with Disabilities in the Dean of Students Office. Location: Black Cultural Center, 126 Squires.

Terry Kershaw, director of Black Studies, and student facilitators Charles Fields and Dennis Weaver will discuss “Disabled Life” by E. Lynn Harris on March 30, at 5 p.m. in the Multicultural Center, 140 Squires. The book is a fictional account of the black gay experience in America.

On April 11 at 4 p.m., “Race, Culture, and the Media: Gay/Bisexual Issues and the Media” will be presented. Eldd Sewell, professor of communications studies, and student representatives from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Alliance will lead the discussion in the Black Cultural Center, 126 Squires.

There will be a reading of the names of Holocaust victims on April 24, from 1:30 p.m. in 140 Squires as part of Holocaust Awareness Week. The program is titled “Unto Every Person There Is a Name.”

On April 24 at 6 p.m., Holocaust Awareness Week continues with “Christian Reactions to Anti-Semitism before the Holocaust” by Jeff Collins of Judicial Affairs will lead a discussion group in 140 Squires.

On April 26 at 4 p.m., Multicultural Programs will host the closing reception in the Donaldson Brown Commonwealth Dining Room. The Dean of Students Office will recognize individuals and groups who have contributed to Multicultural Programs throughout the academic year. The reception is open to the public.

Students and faculty members will discuss their experiences visiting the death camps of Poland on April 27 at 7 p.m. as part of Holocaust Awareness Week in a program titled “Confronting the Chimneys.” The program includes a slide show and short film. Location: Old Dominion Ballroom in Squires.

Anyone with a disability who needs assistance or accommodation to attend any of these events should contact the Dean of Students Office at 1-3787 TDD 1-8781.

More information is available from Elaine Oliver at 1-6023 or ecơoliver@vt.edu.

CEUT plans programs
The Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching will offer three programs in the first week of April.

On Tuesday, April 4, from 2:45 to 3:30 p.m. in Hillelcrest, Margaret Hable will present Active Learning Strategies. This workshop provides ways to keep students more actively engaged during class.

On Wednesday, April 5, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in Donaldson Brown rooms D and E the CEUT will host a video-conference titled “How to Customize an Online Course On Thursday.”

The program will illustrate how on-line courses work and demonstrate how instructors can evaluate and select options to give courses their personal and institutional stamp.

Leave donations requested
Employees in Recreational Sports and Physical Plant have requested leave donations. Any salaried classified employee or 12-month tenure faculty member may participate by donating annual leave in increments of eight hours.

There is no maximum donation limitation per year, nor is there a minimum balance that must be maintained. Donation forms can be downloaded from the Personnel Services web site at http://www.ps.vt.edu/forms/forms.html.

Speaker to discuss dialects
Walt Wolfram, a professor at North Carolina State, will talk on “The Rise and Fall (and Rise) of Southern Speech” March 30 at 7 p.m. in 129 McBryde.

Over the past three decades, Wolfram has pioneered research on a broad range of vernacular dialects, including African-American English, Puerto Rican English, Appalachian English, Ozark English, Southern English, American Indian English, Vietnamese English, and currently, Outer Banks and Lumbee English.

Wolfram is the author or co-author of books profiling the socio-linguistics of diverse communities and a number of textbooks, including The Study of Social Dialects in American English, the first student text on social dialectology, and his latest, Language Variation in the School and Community.

The talk is open to the public at no charge. For more information, call Clare Dambenberg at 1-7721.

SPEAKERS

Friday, 24

Women’s Month Project, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Women’s Center Lawn. Clothesline Display.

Women’s Month Project, 10-11:30 a.m., 1045 Pamplin: Panel Discussion, “Glass Ceilings and Beyond: Unmasking Women’s Leadership in Higher Education.”

Guest Lecture, 3:30 p.m., 300 Whittemore: Anita Jones, U.Va.

Saturday, 25

YMCA Hike, 10 a.m., 403 Washington St.: Kelly’s Knob.

Tuesday, 28

Forest Products Marketing and Management, 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m., DBHCC.

Gallery Opening, 4:30 p.m., Armory Gallery: James De La Vega.

Music Program, 8 p.m., Squares Recital Salon: Audition Quartet.

Wednesday, 29

University Leadership Development Conference, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., 219 Squires.

Multicultural Program, 4 p.m., 126 Squires: Disability Awareness. “With Good Reason,” 7 p.m., WYTF: Law and Respect.

Thursday, 30

YMCA Slide Show, noon, Cranwell Center: Robert Absher.

Multicultural Program, 5 p.m., 140 Squires: Book Club.

Friday, 31

Salary and Wage Paydate.

SEMINARS

Friday, 24

Highlands in Chemistry, 11 a.m., 3 Davidson: Arthur Cammers-Goodwin, Kentucky.

MCBB, noon, 102 Fralin: Bill Brown, Cornell.

Communication Studies, 3:30 p.m., Hillcrest conference room: Robert Denton.

Botany, 4 p.m., 1076 Derring: Frank Day, ODU.

CVC 2000 charity applications available
Applications for charities to participate in the 2000 Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC) are now available. Employees often comment that their favorite charity is not included in the campaign. Each charity is now eligible to apply for funding. More information and the application are available on the CVC web site: http://www.cvc.vpmn.org by contacting Karen Cootin at 1-8502 or kcootin@vt.edu.

Professor to speak on campus
On Friday, March 24, the College of Engineering will host a talk by Anita Jones at 3:30 p.m. in 300 Whittemore. She is a professor of computer science, a former director of Defense Research and Engineering (DRE) at the Department of Defense (DoD), and a co-founder of a successful software company.

At DoD from 1993 until 1997, Jones held the highest defense department job ever held by a woman. She oversaw DoD’s science and technology program, research laboratories, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). Upon leaving DoD, Jones returned to her position as professor of computer science at the University of Virginia.

For more information, contact Amy Bell in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Monday, 27

Horticulture, 4 p.m., 101 Saunders: Tony Traparni.

Statistics, 4 p.m., 1760 Linton-Reaves: Williams Woodall, Alabama.

Tuesday, 28

Electrical/Computer Engineering, 3:30 p.m., 300 Whittemore: James LaPean, ODU.

Geological Sciences, 4 p.m., 4069 Derring: James D. Webster, American Museum of Natural History.

Thursday, 30

Statistics, 3:45 p.m., 409 Huntington: Karen Kafadar, Columbia.

At the Beaver.

CSE 5, 4 p.m., 3 p.m., 246 Smyth: Jason Gledkie.

Plant Physiology, 4 p.m., 102 Saunders: Manuel Sainz, Novartis.

Friday, 31

Communities in Chemistry, 11 a.m., 3 Davidson: Christa Cuyler, Wake Forest.

MCBB, noon, 102 Fralin: Judy Roe, Kansas State.

Botany, 4 p.m., 1076 Derring: David Occiet.
Affirmative Action Incentive Grant proposals sought

Virginia J. Reilly, assistant director of Tech’s EDFA Office, has announced the eleventh call for proposals for the Affirmative Action Incentive Grants Program. The program is designed to provide seed money for new affirmative action activities for students, faculty and staff members or students. The Technology program, which is a project of the university’s EDFA Committee, will award grants of up to $2,500 (from a total pool of $20,000) for innovative affirmative-action projects.

The awards will be made for a one-year period, beginning July 1, 2000, with a potential one-time renewal. Applicants seeking renewal or extension of previously funded projects must also submit a proposal.

Activities appropriate for support include projects designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of new approaches to promote affirmative action; activities which will enhance the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women, minorities, and people with disabilities; programs that will encourage behavioral and attitudinal changes supportive of affirmative action and diversity; and, studies to evaluate.

The deadline for application is April 10.

The following classified positions are currently available. More details of these positions, specific application procedures and position closing dates may be found on the Personnel Services web site at http://www.ps.vt.edu. Available positions are also listed on the Job Live, a 24-hour recorded message service. For information on all job listings, call 1-5000. Some of the following positions include state benefits. Positions with numbers beginning with a “W” are hourly and do not include state benefits. Individuals with disabilities desiring assistance or accommodation in the application process should call the Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Office at 1-5300.

Office Services Specialist, 6844T, Grade 5, Center for Academic Enrichment and Excellence. Office Services Specialist, 15227T, Grade 5, Political Science Department.

Plumber/Steamfitter, 7278H, Grade 7, Residence Dining Programs/Facilities.

Police Captain, 7587T, Grade 11, Police Services.

Program Support Technician, 4637G, Grade 8, Institutional Research/Planning Analysis.

Program Support Technician, 6327M, Grade 8, Agricultural Applied Economics.

Program Support Technician, 5195T, Grade 8, College of Business.

Program Support Technician Senior, 10474T, College of Business.

Programmer/Analyst, 0000, Grade 0, Virginia Tech Services.

Public Relations Specialist/Writer, 4922G, Grade 9, Center for Transportation Systems.

Public Relations Coordinator, LC083, Grade 12, University Relations.

Public Relations Specialist, 7549G, Grade 10, Center for Transportation Research.

Animal Care Technician A, W022155M, Grade 3, Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Animal Care Technician B, W022191Q, Grade 5, Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Computer Technician/Installation/Repair Tech., W029917T, Grade 8, Mathematics.

Executive Secretary, W026947T, Grade 6, University Libraries.

Flight Instructor (Pilot, Single Engine), W022101C, Grade 4, CNS.

Food Operations Assistant A, W022314H, Grade 1, Residential Dining Programs.

Food Operations Assistant B, W022315H, Grade 2, Residential Dining Programs.

Housekeeping Worker, W00574G, Grade 1, DBHCC.

Housekeeping Worker, W029494T, Grade 1, Residential Dining Programs.

Laboratory Technician Senior, W020117T, Grade 5, EHSBS.

Laboratory Technician, W02729M, Grade 5, Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Nursing Assistant, W023156G, Grade 4, Adult Day Services.

Office Services Assistant, W0228835C, Grade 4, University Libraries.

Office Services Assistant (Switchboard Operator), W022101C, Grade 4, CNS.

Program Support Technician, 7344T, Grade 6, Mathematics.

Programmer, W022995G, Grade 10, Information Technology Acquisitions.

Public Relations Specialist/Writer, W022976G, Grade 8, Residential Dining Programs/Marketing/Conference Services.

Radiologic Technologist, W022386G, Grade 7, Health Center.

Vehicle Services Attendant, W020300G, Grade 3, Motor Pool.

University Only Laboratory Specialist Senior, U7402M, Grade 9, Biochemistry.

Off Site Evening Announcer, 1962D, Grade 8, WYFT.

Office Services Assistant, 6586J, Grade 4, HFPE.

Office Services Assistant, 7496J, Grade 4, VCE.

Program Support Technician, 7543J, Grade 6, NVC—Computer Science.

Budget Manager, 7567T, Grade 14, Residential/Dining Programs/Day Services.

Biochemistry, W022201C, Grade 4, CNS.

Dietetics, W0228835C, Grade 4, University Libraries.

Computer Technician, W022299D, Grade 10, Infor- mation Technology.

Computer Technician, W022994T, Grade 1, Residential Dining Programs.

Computer Technician/Installation/Repair Tech., W022314H, Grade 1, Residential Dining Programs.

Civil Environmental Engineering.

Automotive Technology.

Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Emergency Services Assistant, W022835C, Grade 4, University Libraries.

Budget Manager, 7567T, Grade 14, Budget/Financial Planning.

Computer Technician, 1927G, Grade 9, Physical Therapy.


Housekeeping Worker, 7572T, Grade 1, Physical Plant.

Office Services Assistant, 6485J, Grade 1, Residential/Dining Programs.

Human Resource Generalist, 1037T, Grade 12, Personnel Services.

Laboratory Specialist Senior, 7862M, Grade 9, CEB.

Geotechnical Engineering Technician (Laboratory), 7580U, Grade 11, Civil Environmental Engineering.

Housekeeping Worker, 7572T, Grade 1, Physical Plant.

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Univerrity's first design standards for instructional space to be unveiled

By Catherine Doss
Virginia Tech’s first set of performance/design standards for instructional space will be unveiled Monday March 27 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium at the Paul Biotechnology Center. The new classroom standards are the result of a collaboration between faculty members and the university’s task force studying classroom space, design, and usage. “These standards will be our baseline measure, and all new and renovated instructional spaces will be expected to conform to these standards as projects are funded.”

Last summer the classroom task force sent out a request for proposals and subsequently hired Clark & Nesson, a Virginia Beach-based architectural and engineering firm to assist the task force in developing design guidelines specific to the university’s classrooms. In addition to the public presentation, the guidelines will be incorporated into the university’s classrooms. In addition to the public presentation, the guidelines will be incorporated into the classroom task force’s presentation on “Learning Centered Environments” held last December. The new classroom performance/design guidelines are the third and final initiative of the classroom task force.

Applications are now being accepted for the second round of Transforming Instructional Space (TIS) grants. Proposals are due Monday April 17 in the Provost’s Office, 330 Burruss Hall (0132). Preliminary decisions will be made by May 1.

For more information about the March 27 event, or the TIS grant-application process, contact Dixon Hanna at hanna7@vt.edu.

By Jeffrey S. Douglas
Epidemiologists in the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine have contracted with Fairfax County Health Department officials on a $75,000 project designed to help control a raccoon rabies epidemic in the area by conducting a wildlife rabies-vaccination program. The goal of the Fairfax County Oral Rabies Vaccine Program is to help protect citizens and companion animals in the Fairfax County area from exposure to the deadly virus, according to Franco Elvinger, an associate professor in the college’s Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences. Fairfax County, a suburban area near Washington D.C., accounted for almost 20 percent of the state’s reported rabies cases during 1999.

While rabies is largely controlled in domestic animals through mandatory immunization programs, it remains difficult to control in wild animal populations such as raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats. Effective wildlife vaccines have been developed, Elvinger said, getting the vaccine into the animal remains a significant challenge.

Epidemiologists have determined that delivering oral rabies vaccines through baits is the best way to approach the task. Elvinger, who is collaborating with scientists at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta on the project, plans to deliver the vaccine in roughly one-inch square blocks made of a fish-meal polymer.

In April, public-health workers and volunteers will begin distributing 17,000 vaccine doses over an area which covers about one-sixth of Fairfax County in an effort to achieve a distribution density of one bait per two to a half acres.

“We hope to get a large enough percentage of the raccoon population so that the epidemic will be reduced,” Elvinger said. “There will always be raccoons coming in from areas that are not vaccinated.”

Virginia has had a significant wildlife rabies problem for the past 30 years or so, according to Elvinger. In 1999, 529 rabies cases were reported in wildlife, 35 cases were reported in domestic animals, and 17 additional cases were reported in bats. Of those 581 reported cases, 107 were reported in Fairfax County.

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