RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT NUMBER: 02412

PROJECT TITLE: Emergency Bridge Replacement Public Relations

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PROJECT OBJECTIVE: The objective of this project is to provide immediate, intensive public relations assistance to the Alabama DOT. The PR is needed to keep Birmingham officials and citizens aware of work activities, progress, and proposed completion dates for the emergency replacement of a bridge in the southbound lane of I-65 in the busiest interchange in Alabama.

PROJECT ABSTRACT: On the first Saturday of January 2002, a gasoline tanker collided with a bridge in the I-59/I-65 interchange in Birmingham. The resultant blaze destroyed the structure, and caused significant traffic delays and congestion. There is a need to work out new traffic routes, to find ways to replace the bridge quickly and efficiently, and to keep motorists informed of the situation. This project will provide public relations tools and media pieces to move daily information to the public, starting immediately and continuing until normal public relations tools can handle the situation.

PROJECT TASK DESCRIPTIONS:
Task 1 – Establish a communications network
Task 2 – Attend daily status briefings at ALDOT headquarters
Task 3 – Prepare media pieces as needed to address the situation
Task 4 – Arrange press conferences and site visits as needed

MILESTONES AND DATES:
- Initiate project: January 7, 2002
- All tasks will be conducted simultaneously
- Conclude project: estimated 30-60 days

TOTAL BUDGET: Alabama DOT, estimated $14,266.
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT:
There will be no student involvement.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS:
There is no direct relationship to other UTCA projects; however, public relations tools and procedures used in UTCA Projects 99459 – “Safety Public Awareness – Phase 2” and 00473 – “Safety Public Awareness – Phase 3” will be adapted for this project.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ACTIVITIES:
Technology transfer will consist of short-term public relations briefings, press conferences, and written pieces.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT:
The primary benefit of this project will be the availability of timely information regarding the status of the project, and of traffic flows. This will allow roadway users to plan their trips in a way that minimizes lost time due to re-routing around the destroyed bridge.

TRB KEYWORDS:
Bridge replacement, traffic diversion, public awareness