

Highlights from the International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association Annual Conference

Interview with
John J. Kennedy,
P.E., PTOE



John Kennedy with Dennis Li, President of the International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association.

International Past President John J. Kennedy, P.E., PTOE has been involved in the transportation industry for 45 years. John has been actively involved with ITE, serving at all levels of leadership at the Chapter (co-founder of the Massachusetts Chapter), New England Section, and Northeastern District levels, as well as on the International Board of Direction. A senior principal at VHB, John has focused his entire career on traffic operations on large-scale, high profile projects including the award-winning Central Artery/Tunnel project in Boston, MA, USA. Earlier this summer, John was invited as a VIP to attend the 11th Asian Pacific Transportation Development Conference and 29th International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association (ICTPA) Annual Conference in Hsinchu, Taiwan. Following his attendance, John provided an overview to *ITE Journal*.

ITE JOURNAL: What topics did the ICTPA Annual Conference Cover?

JOHN KENNEDY: The three-day event included a technical tour of a transit system and high speed rail operation with an opening session; a series of keynote speeches and two technical paper sessions followed by a dinner; and local sightseeing tours on the day of the conference closing. The technical sessions provided seven concurrent programs, each with up to six

presentations. Unfortunately not all of the planned topics were covered, due to limited participation from mainland China after a series of events led to visa cancellations. Sessions ranged from presentations similar to those given at ITE meetings, involving traffic control and management traffic flow and network analysis, sustainable transportation systems, intelligent transportation management systems, vehicle design system operations and safety, and transportation planning, and also expanded to areas that included including rail transportation, transit, and transportation infrastructure (pavements, retaining systems, fatigue, and evaluation pile stiffness analysis). Presenters included both public and private sector members together with a relatively large number of students.

ITE: What was your experience like at ICTPA?

JK: My experience at the meeting, both personally and professionally, was very positive. There were some language difficulties, but all of the U.S.-based delegates were fluent in both languages. Nearly all of

About the International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association

The International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association (ICTPA) is a nonprofit organization that promotes professional development by fostering fellowship and cooperation among its members and by maintaining a central point of reference. ICTPA was first established in the United States as the North American Transportation Professionals Association in 1987. Today, its 1,000+ members bridge East and West theories and practices of transportation in the Asia Pacific. The organization has six chapters within the United States and one in Hong Kong. It was originally established at the University of Kansas (KU), the base of its founding members. Dr. Alice Kuo, a staff member of the KU transportation center, serves as the organization's executive director. The organization rotates its meetings between Asian sites and U.S. sites. Learn more at <http://ictpa.org/index.html>.

the technical presentations were spoken in Chinese, though a number of the presentations did use English in the PowerPoints. About half of the 50-page conference program was dedicated to abstracts of 80 of the presentation papers, more than 90 percent of which were in English. (A couple of the presenters went out of the way to attempt to present in English when I was in the room.) I did have the opportunity to talk with some of the other ITE members who were in attendance and found that the majority of U.S.-based attendees were more aligned with the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), a sponsor of the meeting.

ITE: How did this meeting take a different approach from ITE meetings?

JK: The difference in the size of our organizations means a different format in the programs and a very high reliance on the volunteer labor and, in this instance, a high student population for putting the conference together and conducting it. The concept of including a short abstract of the presentations within the conference program, or within the conference “app,” might be a nice addition potentially eliminating the need for a compendium. The number of overlaps in presentation



John Kennedy at a session during 11th Asian Pacific Transportation Development Conference and 29th International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association (ICTPA) Annual Conference in Hsinchu, Taiwan.

topics with the sessions we include in our ITE Annual Meetings & Exhibits and District Meetings was amazing (I would classify this gathering as a large District meeting). The major session topics included Traffic Safety and Management (6 presentations), Transportation Planning (6 presentations), two sessions on Traffic Control and Management (6 presentations each), Intelligent Traffic and Transportation Management (6 presentations), Sustainable Transportation Systems (6 presentation),

Transportation System and Vehicle Design (5 presentation), Traffic Flow and Network Analysis, and others. The papers within the sessions covered a wide range of topics from system optimization to treatment of wrong-way movements at interchanges, to Transit-Oriented Development. Granted, while many authors recognized U.S. experiences, the interest goes beyond the United States.

ITE: What opportunities exist for ICTPA and ITE to work together?

JK: While ITE is known to many of the U.S. members of ICTPA, I don’t believe that to be true of members outside of the United States who may relate more to ASCE. I think the greatest takeaway is our opportunity to explain what ITE is to ICTPA members and what we can provide them in transportation related terms. A few members even questioned how to join ITE. That carries into working together in the future. I believe that ITE could be a sponsor of the next ICTPA conference in Houston, TX, USA as a way to enter into the international aspects of the organization. The opportunity to take a similar model to our growth efforts in India and other emerging countries may also exist. **itej**



John Kennedy spoke at the conference as a VIP guest.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN KENNEDY