



# Technology Exchange

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LTAP's "Successful Supervision for Local Road Supervisors" Roads Scholar class provided hands-on, experiential learning that enhanced supervisory skills and strengthened local management teams, demonstrating the power of adaptability and effective leadership in public works.

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## On Building Successful Supervisors

By *Haley Beason Ortiz*

LTAP welcomed approximately 200 enthusiastic attendees to the Roads Scholar #8A class, "Successful Supervision for Local Road Supervisors." This journey took the LTAP team and local road warriors through the cities of Baton Rouge, Covington, New Orleans, West Monroe, Natchitoches, Lake Charles, and Lafayette. While the last three sessions had to be postponed due to Hurricane Francine, this only heightened the level of commitment and enthusiasm of the participants when the classes were rescheduled. They exemplified the adaptability and spirit of collaboration that LTAP aims to foster in a supervisory training.

The instructor of the course, retired US Army Brigadier General Roger Shields, brings a wealth of experience. He is not only a seasoned leader but also a respected consultant focused on leadership and management training. His extensive background includes serving as an Army Senior Mentor and Subject Matter Expert in logistics and preparing military units for deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as for emergency and homeland defense missions.

The knowledge gained and skills developed after attending this Roads Scholar course will not only enhance individual performance but also strengthen the management teams that local road supervisors lead.

Seeing leadership in action through hands-on activities is often more impactful than simply listening to lectures. The course participants gained a deeper understanding of supervisory dynamics by actively engaging with their peers and observing various leadership styles. General Shields emphasized an experiential learning approach—one that fosters critical thinking, encourages collaboration, and allows attendees to see the direct consequences of their decisions. By participating in these exercises, supervisors



Visit [www.louisianaltap.org](http://www.louisianaltap.org) for our current classes, training requests, free resources, and much more.

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## Making Common Sense of Workplace Safety

By Rudynah Entera Capone, MPA

Happy New Year! It is only the first month of the year, but LTAP is already busy with another round of Roads Scholar classes. Following Successful Supervision, we switch our attention to the topic “Common Sense

Approach to Safety for Public Works Employees” (RS #5A). We have this course scheduled in eight locations from January 28 to March 13, 2025. It explains how employees can prevent injuries around common hazards, how beneficial it is to develop and implement a site-specific safety plan, and why leadership is vital when it comes to creating a safety culture in the workplace.

If you have not attended this class taught by Retired General Shields before, I recommend you do. Creating a safety culture in the workplace starts with establishing safety leadership. In General Shields’ words, developing a safety culture begins with the ability of the highest levels of leadership to embrace safety-driven focus on things such as mandatory safety training, proper usage of personal protective equipment (PPE), and conducting job hazard analysis (JHA). The extent to which leaders and managers can influence any organization and its employees is reliant on their place within the hierarchy. The first place to start is to talk about the issue to senior management through existing communication structures such as team meetings, tailgate safety briefings, focus groups, or project planning sessions.

There are two concepts common to public works employee operations typically used for different purposes: safety and common sense. An effective workplace safety program must contain management commitment, employee involvement, job hazard analysis, and enforcement of safety policies, procedures, and safe work practices. Another important element is ensuring all employees undergo safety training and education. LTAP offers worker safety classes such as chainsaw safety, tractor mower safety, heavy equipment operator safety, and work zone safety with basic flagging.

According to the National Safety Council, public works employees have double the likelihood of being injured or killed on the job than the average worker. This demonstrates the importance for public works employees to recognize common hazards, use the proper PPE, obtain safety training, and adhere to safety policies—all to prevent any injuries or deaths. Enforcing a strict PPE code or a vehicle seatbelt policy is a great place to start. If your job involves operating heavy equipment, conducting a safety walk-around is highly recommended. If you are a work zone crew, being cognizant of the hazards and wearing that orange safety vest is prime. According to National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse data, there were 895 work-zone-related fatalities nationwide in 2022, with 10 of them in Louisiana.

As we focus on the topic of safety for public works employees, please mark your calendar for two upcoming campaigns. First is the National Work Zone Awareness Week on April 21-25, 2025, wherein we encourage everyone to wear orange on Wednesday and educate the public about safe driving through highway work zones. Second is the APWA-led National Public Works Week on May 18-24, 2025, where we encourage public works agencies to share their stories and educate the public on the importance of public works to their daily lives.





## LTAP Applauds Bossier City's Newest Roads Scholar Graduate

LTAP is excited to announce the graduation of Anthony Cyr, Lead Civil Engineer in Bossier City, Louisiana, from the esteemed Roads Scholar Program. Anthony began his journey in 2018, and he has successfully completed all the required and elective courses offered in the program. This significant achievement demonstrates his dedication to professional development and road maintenance excellence.

LTAP's Roads Scholar Program is designed to equip local transportation personnel with the knowledge and skills needed to maintain Louisiana's vast network of roads and bridges. With over 61,000 miles of public roads and nearly 5,000 bridges in the state, local governments play a crucial role in maintaining this infrastructure. The program offers 15 courses, covering essential topics like roadway maintenance, worker safety, pavement preservation, bridge inspection, and safety leadership.

To earn the Roads Scholar title, participants must complete six required courses and at least four elective courses. Anthony's completion of these courses underscores his commitment to enhancing road safety and infrastructure in his community.

*Congratulations to Anthony Cyr on this outstanding accomplishment! His dedication to professional growth sets an inspiring example for others in the field. We are proud to have him as a Roads Scholar graduate, and we look forward to the continued impact of his work in Bossier City and beyond.*



The graduation ceremony took place at RS #8A class in Natchitoches, Louisiana, where Courtney Dupre, LTAP's Program Manager, proudly presented Anthony with his certificate and pin, among other goodies.

## ROAD SAFETY

## Improving Road Safety through Data-Driven Decision Making

### *Insights from a Local Road Safety Workshop*

*By Haley Beason Ortiz*

In October 2024, LTAP conducted a new workshop on Local Road Safety Plan Implementation in Covington, Baton Rouge, and Lafayette. Fifteen local public agencies and partner organizations participated in the workshop.

Road safety is an essential concern for communities across the nation. In Louisiana, local governments are increasingly recognizing the importance of creating safer roadways for all users, from pedestrians to drivers. To help municipalities and parishes achieve these goals, workshops focused on Local Road Safety Plans provide crucial tools and insights into reducing traffic accidents and fatalities. The workshops, led by the Local Technical Assistance Program's (LTAP)

Local Road Safety Program (LRSP) team in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), aimed to help local public agencies (LPAs) utilize data and best practices to address road safety challenges.

Cassie Parker, a Regional Transportation Planner from the South Central Planning and Development Commission (SCPDC) in Houma, participated in the Baton Rouge workshop. She shared valuable perspectives on how the information and strategies gained will shape future local road safety projects.

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## Robert Dugas, Director of Public Works for Livingston Parish

By Haley Beason Ortiz



In this edition of Leadership Spotlight, LTAP is proud to highlight a dedicated public servant and infrastructure leader: Robert Dugas, Director of Public Works for Livingston Parish. With more than 30 years of experience in public service and infrastructure management, Robert's career

has been defined by a passion for operational excellence, community development, and emergency preparedness. From his early days as a Water-Gas-Sewer Department employee in the Town of Walker to his current leadership role in Livingston Parish, Robert has made a significant impact on the growth and sustainability of Louisiana's infrastructure systems. His extensive expertise, leadership in emergency management, and ongoing commitment to community service have earned him recognition as one of the region's top public works professionals.

### *What is your definition of leadership?*

I would define leadership as the ability to unify and orchestrate teams with diverse backgrounds and expertise to achieve a common goal while fostering an environment of collaboration and mutual growth.

### *Can you share us some of the highlights of your experience as an engineer, and how you evolved as a leader?*

My 35-year journey in Public Works began as an operator in my hometown, embodying a commitment to continuous learning and growth. Throughout this progression, I've embraced increasing responsibilities, allowing me to develop a comprehensive understanding of infrastructure management while cultivating leadership capabilities at every level.

### *What other previous jobs or community roles did you have that shaped your leadership skills?*

My leadership foundation was strengthened through two pivotal roles: As a volunteer firefighter, I mastered the art of coordinating complex, time-sensitive operations within diverse teams. Also, serving as a youth sports coach taught



me the invaluable lesson that effective communication is the cornerstone of success, particularly when managing various stakeholder expectations.

### *If you were to pinpoint three traits that a leader should possess to be effective in leading teams, what would they be?*

**Communication Excellence:** The ability to foster open dialogue and embrace diverse perspectives is fundamental to team success. This creates an environment where innovative solutions can emerge from collaborative discussions.

**Commitment to Development:** A true leader focuses on cultivating talent within their team. By investing in others' growth, we strengthen not just individuals but the entire organizational fabric.

**Strategic Organization:** Implementing clear structures and procedures ensures efficient workflows and well-defined responsibilities, enabling teams to operate with purpose and precision.

### *In any of your past and present leadership roles, what has been the most challenging task you've had to overcome?*

One of my most significant challenges has been managing technological transitions within established teams. I've addressed this by implementing peer-led training programs, leveraging the strengths of tech-savvy team members to guide others through change. This approach has proven effective in building confidence and facilitating smooth transitions while maintaining team cohesion.

### *Who do you see as your model leader?*

While I've been fortunate to learn from many exceptional leaders throughout my career, I've developed a distinctive leadership philosophy centered on continuous improvement. My guiding principle, which I regularly share with my team, is: "Raise your standard until YOU are the standard." This approach emphasizes personal growth while inspiring others to achieve their highest potential.



### Motivation for Attending the Workshop

Parker explained her motivation for attending the workshop: “I was motivated to attend this workshop to deepen my understanding of current best practices in road safety and to connect with peers who share similar challenges.” In an ever-evolving field like road safety, staying up-to-date on the latest research, strategies, and tools is crucial. This workshop provided a platform for participants to learn and collaborate, ensuring that the strategies used at the local level are effective and aligned with state and national strategies to reach zero deaths.

### Key Takeaways: Data-Driven Decision Making

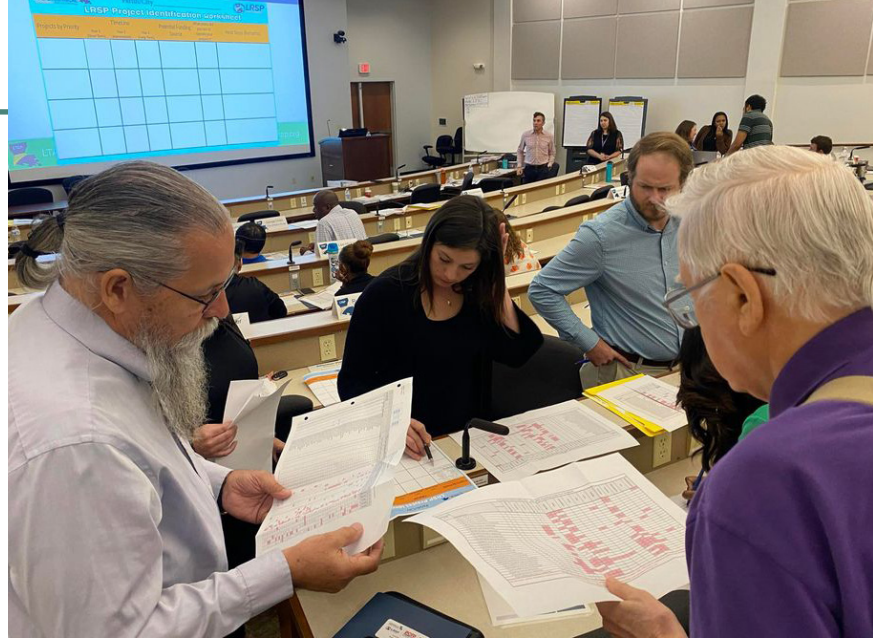
When asked about the most valuable sessions from the workshop, Parker emphasized the sessions on data-driven decision-making and innovative safety strategies were particularly valuable. “Learning about successful case studies and the application of advanced data analytics tools provided actionable insights that we can implement in our South-Central region.” This focus on data is a central theme in modern road safety planning. By using crash data, local authorities can better understand accident patterns and develop targeted interventions. Parker emphasized how tools like information from LTRC and collaboration with LTAP help inform these decisions, providing a deeper understanding of where and how to improve safety on all public roads.

### Developing Local Road Safety Plans

Parker’s primary goals following the workshop are to work on developing Local Road Safety Plans in collaboration with several parishes in Louisiana. “I am excited to focus on developing Local Road Safety Plans in collaboration with our local governments across the parishes of Assumption, Lafourche, St. James, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, and Terrebonne,” she shared. These plans aim to address the unique road safety challenges of each parish, using the insights gained from the workshop to create tailored strategies. This may include curve delineations, enhanced signage, traffic calming measures, and other proven effective infrastructure improvements.

The importance of collaboration was another key takeaway from the workshop. Parker emphasized how vital partnerships with organizations like LTAP,

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### **Workshop participants say...**

**“I enjoyed the smaller setting and the interactions within the workshop.”**

**“Now that I’ve completed this course, I look at road safety differently and have a better understanding of how to improve it.”**

**“This workshop has made me better equipped to talk with LPAs.”**

**“I loved the detailed approach to each module.”**

**“I enjoyed the examples of implemented and completed projects as well as the before and after pictures.”**

DOTD, and LTRC have been. “Their expertise and resources have provided us with vital support in understanding and interpreting data more effectively.” These collaborations help local agencies make informed decisions, ensuring that road safety interventions are based on robust data analysis and tailored to specific local needs.

The Local Road Safety Plan Implementation workshops provide valuable insights and tools for local governments and safety agencies to improve road safety and reduce traffic-related incidents. By focusing on data-driven decision-making, fostering collaboration, and continuously refining analytical skills, participants can create safer roadways tailored to their communities’ needs. As Louisiana continues to develop and implement these plans, the workshop’s emphasis on innovation and best practices will play a key role in reducing fatalities and improving the overall safety of public roads. Through these efforts, our hope is not only to create safer roads but also to build a culture of safety across the state. LRSP Project Pre-Apps Now Accepted!

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### *Successful Supervisors (continued from page 1)*

can better internalize the principles of effective leadership, making it easier to translate these lessons into their everyday work environments. The physical representation of leadership practices helps solidify the learning experience, creating lasting memories and insights that will serve them well in their supervisory roles. Through all of our classes, LTAP encourages collaboration, teamwork, and creative thinking.

In conclusion, LTAP is excited about the positive impact this course will have on local road supervision across Louisiana. The team looks forward to seeing the skills honed in this program translate into more effective leadership, better communication, and improved teamwork in the vital task of managing our local road systems. *Thank you to all participants for your dedication, and special thanks to General Shields for his invaluable guidance and mentorship. Together, we are paving the way for a stronger future in road management.*

## Save the Date for Deadlines and Events

LTAP is now accepting submissions for the **LRSP Project Pre-Application Letter of Intent**. The deadline for submissions is **January 31, 2025**. Interested in learning more? Check out our recorded Zoom meeting on our website along with the application form and helpful tips and tricks. Do not miss out on this opportunity—*visit our LRSP project page at [www.louisianaltap.org/lrsp-project-applications.html](http://www.louisianaltap.org/lrsp-project-applications.html)*.

Join us at a convenient location near you for **Roads Scholar #5A Safety - A Common Sense Approach**, taught by Retired US Army Brigadier General Roger Shields, who has over 40 years of experience in safety management. This class is being taught from **January 28-March 13, 2025**, in several locations around the state. This training course was designed specifically to address hazards that public agency workers may face while performing daily tasks. *Visit our website at <https://registration.ltrc.lsu.edu/courses/view?id=326> for more details on Louisiana Local Technical Assistance Program.*

If you work for a local agency and you've implemented a tool, equipment, or any type of solution that is cost-saving, effective, and easily transferable, please submit it as an official entry into the **Build a Better Mousetrap (BABM): Louisiana Local Innovations Program**. **Applications are due March 31, 2025**. *Visit our website at <https://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/ltap/build-a-better-mousetrap.html> or contact us for more information!*

**National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW)** is an annual campaign held at the start of construction season to encourage safe driving through highway work zones. The key message is for drivers to use extra caution in work zones. This year National Work Zone Awareness week is **April 21-25**. The National Work Zone Memorial is updated annually and is inscribed with more than 1,600 names to honor individuals killed in work zone tragedies. The traveling memorial visits sites across the country and a virtual representation is available for online or in-person meetings and events.

Every year, LTAP supports the commemoration of the **National Public Works Week**, which is **May 18-24**. The center works with the American Public Works Association (APWA) Louisiana chapter in their efforts to educate the public about the value and necessity of public works projects throughout the state and across the nation.





## LOUISIANA LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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The purpose of the Local Technical Assistance Program is to provide technical materials, information, and training to help local government agencies in Louisiana maintain and improve their roads and bridges in a cost-effective manner. To accomplish this purpose, we publish a quarterly newsletter; conduct seminars, workshops, and mini-workshops covering various aspects of road and transportation issues; provide a lending library service of audio/visual programs; provide technical assistance through phone and mail-in requests relating to transportation technology; and undertake special projects of interest to municipalities in Louisiana.