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Mineta Transportation Institute Issues a Report on Exploring the Effectiveness of Transit Security Awareness Campaigns in the San Francisco Bay Area

Researchers generate case studies, analyze effectiveness, and recommend outcome measurements.

San Jose, Calif., September 14, 2010 – The [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI) has released its newest research report, [Exploring the Effectiveness of Transit Security Awareness Campaigns in the San Francisco Bay Area](#), which includes campaign case studies from the area's five major transit agencies, an analysis of the campaigns' effectiveness, and recommendations for measuring program outcomes. Nina Rohlich was principal investigator, having created the research report as part of her Master of Science in Transportation Management. Other investigators included Frances Edwards, PhD, and Peter Haas, PhD.

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, it is increasingly important that citizens become "eyes and ears" regarding suspicious activity and that they report those incidents to the proper officials. To involve ordinary citizens, many transit agencies have created security awareness campaigns. The research objective was to learn how transit agencies create effective campaigns and to explore how they measure – if at all – that effectiveness.

"A positive finding of this research is the consistency with which Bay Area transit organizations address the need for passenger awareness as part of their overall security programs," said Ms. Rohlich. "However, while all five agencies have a similar goal – to increase passenger awareness about security issues – little evidence confirms to what extent they are achieving this goal. Therefore, the report includes suggestions for using outcome measurements to provide a reasonable indication of a campaign's effectiveness by capturing the public's response to it."

The March 11, 2004 Madrid commuter train bombings, the July 7, 2005 London transit system bombings, and the March 29, 2010 Moscow metro attacks are recent reminders that vigilance is necessary. Due to its openness and accessibility, public transit is considerably more vulnerable than airports, seaports, and other transportation modes organized around limited access points that can institute widespread security screening measures. Transit systems also may have large numbers of passengers during commute hours, plus accessible schedules and timetables. They also are in proximity to other

potential targets and are critical pieces of infrastructure for urban areas. Public involvement in alerting officials to suspicious and potentially harmful activity is critical to transit security.

Agencies should implement a combination of output and outcome measurements to capture public response to the campaign and to understand whether agencies are achieving their campaign goals to increase awareness, provide tools for action, and encourage passenger involvement. At a minimum, agencies should track marketing activity levels and use internal tracking mechanisms or surveys to capture at least one meaningful data set that summarizes passenger behavior and comprehension.

The full report may be downloaded at no charge from http://www.transweb.sjsu.edu/MTIportal/research/publications/summary/2914_09-19.html. Or visit www.transweb.sjsu.edu, click “Research,” then “Publications” and scroll down to the report.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

NINA ROHLICH is project manager for the San Francisco Bay Area Freeway Service Patrol at the Metropolitan Transportation Commission Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways (MTC SAFE). She previously was the 511 Transit and Marketing program coordinator for the Bay Area 511 Traveler Information program. Ms. Rohlich earned a Masters of Science in Transportation Management and a Certificate in Transportation Security from the Mineta Transportation Institute at San José State University. In 2008 she was awarded the Reba Malone Scholarship from the American Public Transportation Foundation. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Economics and East Asian Languages and Literatures from Smith College.

PETER HAAS, PhD has been a faculty member in MTI’s Graduate Transportation Management Program (GTMP) since 1999. He was appointed Education Director in 2001. He earned a PhD in political science (public policy and public administration) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1985. He is a former director of the San Jose State University Master of Public Administration Program, and he has consulted at every level of government and for nonprofit agencies. Dr. Haas has authored numerous reports and other publications in the field of transportation and co-authored the text Applied Policy Research: Concepts and Cases. A Fulbright scholar, he regularly contributes to MTI research projects.

FRANCES EDWARDS, PhD is Director of the Master of Public Administration program and Professor of Political Science at San José State University. She is deputy director of the National Transportation Security Center of Excellence at the Mineta Transportation Institute at SJSU, where she teaches emergency management in the Master of Science in Transportation Management program. She is also Deputy Director of the SJSU Collaborative for Disaster Mitigation, is a “subject matter expert” for the Department of Homeland Security, and has served as a Site Visitor for the National Science Foundation. She was named Public Official of the Year 2002 by Governing Magazine and one of the “Power 100 of Silicon Valley” by San José Magazine.

ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

The [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI) was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was reauthorized under TEA-21 and again under SAFETEA-LU. The institute is funded by Congress through the US Department of Transportation's (DOT) Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by other public and private grants and donations, including grants from the US Department of Homeland Security. DOT selected MTI as a National Center of Excellence following competitions in 2002 and 2006. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI's focus on policy and management resulted from the Board's assessment of the transportation industry's unmet needs. That led directly to choosing the San José State University College of Business as the Institute's home. MTI conducts research, education, and information and technology transfer, focusing on multimodal surface transportation policy and management issues. Visit www.transweb.sjsu.edu

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