

# ARIZONA MILEPOST



**AZ**  **LTAP** Local Technical  
Assistance Program  
Summer Issue | Volume 2, Issue 6



As we close out the summer season, I would like to thank our partners and member agencies for your continued support, willing collaboration and steadfast commitment to improving our local road systems and workforce. This

quarter over 500 local employees enrolled in training across 40+ sessions! With our calendar already packed with training through December, we plan to end the year strong!

Locals can look forward to attending a Grants and Funding Workshop we will be hosting before the end of the year. Those details are still being finalized, so stay tuned into our weekly newsletter for more information coming soon!

I am wishing you all a safe holiday season! Let's close the year out on a good note!

**Rebecca Mayher**  
Program Manager

## SHARE YOUR LOCAL INNOVATIONS

Have an innovation you'd like to submit on behalf of your agency? Scan the QR code to complete the short form!



To see past submissions, visit our website [HERE](#) or for more information on the Build a Better Mousetrap competition, visit the [FHWA's Center for Local Aid Support](#) site.

# Congratulations, Road Scholars!



The Road Scholar Program provides an opportunity for local municipal employees to be trained by AZ LTAP in the latest technologies and innovations through a series of instructor-led training.

Enrollment into the program is free to all agencies and their employees. Our program currently offers three levels of training, each of which feature a carefully curated curriculum of courses suited to transportation workers at every level of their career (i.e. entry level, low level managers, and supervisory/management).

Please join us in congratulating the following individuals who have completed the requisite hours of training to become Road Scholars of the listed level!

| Road Scholar     | Agency              | Level   | Date          |
|------------------|---------------------|---------|---------------|
| Justin Rowe      | Town of Queen Creek | Level I | February 2025 |
| Johnny Rodriguez | Town of Queen Creek | Level I | February 2025 |
| David Ortiz Jr   | Town of Queen Creek | Level I | February 2025 |

<https://www.azltap.org/services/road-scholar-program>

## Last Chance!

### Final Pre-Scheduled Road Scholar Training Dates for 2025.

To register yourself or your employees in the below training, submit the Course Enrollment Form on our website here: <https://www.azltap.org/forms>

| Course                                           | Date  | Time    | Location |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|----------|
| LTP0013 Basic Materials                          | 10/21 | 8am-5pm | Virtual  |
| TCH3841 Transportation Math I                    | 11/06 | 8am-5pm | Phoenix  |
| LTP0016 Signing & Striping I                     | 11/18 | 8am-5pm | Virtual  |
| LTP0115 Two-Way Radio & Effective Communications | 12/02 | 8am-1pm | Virtual  |
| LTP0116 Construction / Maintenance Safety        | 12/16 | 8am-5pm | Virtual  |

## Heavy Equipment, Light Conversation with Regional Trainer Joshua Luchtel

Our regional trainers spend 90% of their time on the road bouncing from region to region to deliver the technical expertise Arizona's local public agencies need to maintain their workforce and operations.



For Joshua Luchtel, our Regional Heavy Equipment trainer, a typical training week sees him setting off from our home base on a Monday afternoon and

not returning home until Thursday night or Friday morning (depending on how far outside of Phoenix the agency is located). The heavy equipment position can be a particularly tough one due to the amount of time spent on the road, so what draws someone like Joshua to the job? We sat down with him to learn more about his equipment operation experience and pick his brain.

### How did you get started working with heavy equipment?

My family on "both sides" were in farming, construction and trucking. The summers of my youth were always spent in both industries. So growing up in my family, it was natural that, as soon as you could reach the pedals in tractors or equipment, an elder would show you the "ropes" - teaching you

the ins and outs of how to use it, how to treat it, and how to maintain and service them. I've always had a love for the work,

equipment and semis, the "big boy toys" as one of my uncles always said. I learned how to run a 4020 John Deere pulling a disc, hay rake or harrow by the time I was 10, I could clean an irrigation ditch with a Case Construction King Backhoe by 13, dig in telco boxes with a Cat 416 backhoe at 13, run fiber jacket in a Cat D8 with a cable plow by 14 and drive a 444 Cummins 13spd Peterbilt with a step deck hauling 1 ton hay bales when I was 15. It's been tires and tracks ever since.

### What do you think is the most important skill for operators to master early on?

That the machine is an extension of your body, it's just iron without an operator. Learn the machine, what it's capable of doing, what the limits are, not over playing your abilities and learning all you can, from whom you can, to master your craft.

### What common mistake(s) do new operators make, and how do you help them improve?

New operators are in a rush to prove themselves, to be valuable to their peers, to gain some instant respect. It won't help them to have an incident or damage a machine. So don't overplay your abilities. Show them the best practices, the safest ways. I tell new operators that "You're going to make mistakes, we all do, the difference will be how you approach

the next task and what you learned from past mistakes.

### What is your favorite piece of equipment to train and why?

That's a tough one, they all have their place, their use. I've got to say a Motor Grader or Blade as I've always called it. It's very capable for you to damage it if you're not paying attention. Most machines have some "stops" engineered into them, those machines won't let you do certain things. The Blade will let you move every joint designed to move, and do it simultaneously. It's a constant chess game of what I want to do and how I can do it. Making every move count.

### What has been the most rewarding part of working with local and tribal governments so far?

I enjoy meeting new people, getting to know them, a chance to help new operators be safe, and having them get that "Ah Ha" or "lightswitch" moment. That's the best, when you get to see it happen, you know you imparted a little wisdom.

When he is not training, Joshua is often still out on the road dropping by local agencies and doing site visits to share our latest resources and opportunities. If you see him out and about, make sure to pick his brain about all things equipment!

For more information on the Heavy Equipment Training and Certification Program, please visit our website [here](#).

## Building Connections at the ACEC Roads and Streets Conference

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Arizona (ACEC) Roads and Streets Conference is one of the premier transportation events in our region, bringing together engineers, industry leaders, public officials, vendors, and transportation professionals from across the state. Held this past September 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, the conference served as a dynamic forum for sharing innovative ideas, discussing emerging trends, and addressing the challenges shaping the future of our transportation infrastructure.

This year, Joshua Luchtel and Polo Torres, AZ LTAPs regional trainers, attended the ACEC Roads and Street conference. Throughout the conference, both trainers participated in breakout sessions and attended presentations on a wide range of topics, gaining insight into recent updates to the Manual on Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

In addition, they were able to connect with new and existing LTAP member agencies, introducing the program to those representatives from municipalities unfamiliar with the Local Technical Assistance Program. The conference also provided valuable opportunities for them to connect and engage with our partners and industry vendors.

In their own words, “it was a pleasant experience from beginning to end” and they both “returned energized and ready for the year ahead”. These opportunities to connect with our industry peers make it possible for our program to continuously meet the needs of Arizona’s local, rural and tribal agencies. Joshua and Polo both came back excited to share what they had learned and with many suggestions for us to implement in the new year!



### 2025 BABMT Competition Submission Update

Earlier this year, the LTAP Centers were informed that the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) Build a Better Mousetrap Competition for 2025 has been postponed until 2026. This year, our Center received a number of excellent submissions which highlight the level of ingenuity and attention-to-detail local government employees display on a daily basis. As a result, our Center is actively working on creating an opportunity to celebrate those who submitted before the year ends. Stay tuned into the weekly Tapping In! newsletter for an announcement with more details. For the time being, check out the past and present submissions on the [Local Innovations](#) page on our website.

### Feel Good Stories from the ADOT Blog

- [ADOT worker aids flood rescue: 'That kid needed to get to the hospital ASAP'](#)
- [ADOT celebrates Phoenix-area volunteers](#)
- [Tomorrow's leaders make a positive difference in Fort Mohave](#)



## Let Us Know How We Are Doing!

We're inviting you to fill out the below survey regarding your overall satisfaction with the AZ LTAP Center, program services and customer service received thus far in 2025; your input is greatly appreciated and will help us understand how to further meet the needs of Arizona Locals!

This survey should take you less than 5 minutes to complete. To access it, scan the QR code to the left with your phone or tablet OR click this link: <https://forms.gle/sAA6gFPeNSWmFcGz9>.

## Are You Subscribed?

To stay up-to-date with news, resources, and training opportunities coming out of our center as well as our local and national partners, make sure you are subscribed to our Tapping In! Weekly Announcements newsletter. The newsletter goes out weekly on Tuesdays. Sign-up is available on any page of our website at the very bottom of the screen! If you sign up but are still not seeing the newsletter come your way, email [Ttraining@azdot.gov](mailto:Ttraining@azdot.gov) and we will get you manually added!

*This newsletter was prepared by Jendayi Edmeade, AZ LTAP Administrator & Marketing Specialist*