

# Technology in Rural Transportation

A recent study documented more than eighty proven, cost-effective, "low-tech" solutions to rural transportation needs, most developed or implemented by local transportation professionals. One of these solutions is outlined below:



Learn all about the simple solutions on the Internet at <http://inform.enterprise.prog.org>

The simple solutions report is available from Hau To at (503) 892-2533, or email: [to@crc-corp.com](mailto:to@crc-corp.com)

## Integrated Traveler Information Systems

**Overall goal:** Provide pre-trip and en-route traveler information for tourists, commuters and all travelers to the region.

**Technical approach:** Through a public / private partnership, Mn/DOT has developed a database of information to support an Internet site, automated telephone dial-in system, email/pager push system, and kiosks. The Traffic Operations Communications Center (TOCC) is also capable of controlling a variety of permanent and temporary roadside dynamic message signs. The data is disseminated through the project Internet sites as well as additional Internet sites developed by private agencies and departments of tourism.

**Current status:** Mn/DOT is expanding traveler information systems statewide by expanding the information available over currently statewide phone systems, and adding additional information to Internet systems. Kiosk deployment will be slow in response to usage.

**Location / geographic scope:** Regional areas that include the major cities of Duluth and St. Cloud, Minnesota.

**Agencies involved:** Minnesota Department of Transportation

**Cost information:** This system was integrated as part of a major operations center deployment, so individual costs are difficult to estimate. Statewide expansion of detailed weather and road condition dissemination over the Internet (allowing users to click road segments to view current and forecasted information) is being funded at \$95,000. Individual kiosks cost around



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**Key contacts:**

\$5,000 each but can go as high as \$10,000. A city’s traveler information web site may be designed for as little as \$2,000.

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**Have goals been achieved?**

Public response has been positive. Daily use of the Internet and phone systems continues to grow. Kiosk usage is high during winter months and inclement weather days, due to a greater need for weather information in these conditions.

**Solution timeline:**

The project was deployed between the Fall of 1998 and the summer of 2000. Currently, the system is fully operational.

