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

Private Sector Internet Weather Information Providers

Overall goal:	To provide transportation agency personnel with a low-cost source of weather and road condition information.
Technical approach:	The National Weather Service (NWS) has identified a number of private sector meteorologists, who for a fee provide site-specific forecast and real-time weather information. This list has been complied from the membership lists of the American Meteorological Society (AMS), the National Weather Association (NWA), and the Commercial Weather Services Association (CMSA). The providers acquire raw data from the National Weather Service which is run through proprietary models to produce user friendly information. Most of these vendors provide, at no cost, detailed weather information including generic forecasts, radar and satellite imagery, and graphical representation of conditions. Most of this data is on average 15 minutes old.
Current status:	Weather information is currently available through more than 35 private sector meteorological firms, all of which have Internet home pages.
Location / geographic scope:	Presently, data is available on a region-wide basis throughout the United States. As meteorological models continue to advance, corridor-wide and even site-specific information should be available at the cost of subscribing to an information provider.
Agencies involved:	A list of the service providers is available at: http://www.nws.noaa.gov/im/more.htm#vendors

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Cost information:	The principal costs involve the establishment of an Internet account with a provider. These can typically be obtained for a single user at a rate of approximately $20 per month. Additional costs may include a modem and personal computer, if not already available.
Key contacts:	See agencies involved above.
Have goals been achieved?	The NWS can provide weather information down to 40 km grid spacing on a national level. Private sector weather information providers can break this down with their own proprietary forcasting models or with models provided by the National Weather Service. The NWS is capable of providing 10-km grid spacing nationally, but most local offices do not implement this due to the amount of computing power needed for that task.
Solution timeline:	As more private sector firms establish WWW sites, the competition for users will increase and should result in additional and higher quality data being freely available. The NWS is still working on implementing 10-km grid spacing for all local offices.

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