

Contract Monitoring TAG Minutes – Oct. 7, 2008

Turner Bond, October 9, 2008

Opening:

Meeting called to order by TAG Chairman, Turner Bond, who welcomed everyone to the meeting. Member roll call was taken. Five voting TAG members were in attendance.

Members or proxies in attendance

- Barbara Scruggs (Virginia)
- Nasser Pourfarsenah (Florida)
- Kathy Smolinski, proxy for Bill Howe (New York)
- Stephen Specht (Oregon). We had 14 other attendees from TRNS*PORT-related fields.
- Tim Lindberg (South Carolina)

Other Attendees:

- Maria Tamarkin (New York)
- Tim Darrow (New York)
- Tracy Reese (New York)
- Jeff Thorn (New York)
- Cherie Shelton (Kentucky)
- Jennifer McAllister (Ohio)
- Randy Lawton (Info Tech)
- Vonda Kellet (Tennessee)
- Terry Sullivan (Info Tech)
- Kathy Yelle (Info Tech)
- Gus Bieber (Colorado)
- John Reidl (Oregon)
- Ray Drewitt (Louisiana)
- Cheri Sylvestor (Florida)

Total Attendees = 17

Mission Statement and Goals:

The mission statement and goals were reviewed. Two short term goals and one long term goal was added. The [2008 Mission and Goals](#) are included at the end of these minutes.

Short term goals: Two additions were proposed to the short term goals: 1) to review the name of the TAG, and 2) to form a Technical Review Team TRT. Steve Specht made a motion to add these short-term goals. Nasser Pourfarzaneh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Long term goals: One addition was proposed to the long term goals: 1) to develop a mutually supported list of best practices. Steve Specht made a motion to add these short-term goals. Nasser Pourfarzaneh seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Following these additions, Steve Specht moved that the modified mission and goals be approved and Nasser Pourfarzaneh seconded the motion. The motion carried. The modified Mission and Goals are included at the end of these minutes.

Election of officers:

Officers for the Contract Monitoring TAG are elected on an odd-year cycle. Hence no officers were elected in 2008. Turner Bond served as the TAG Coordinator and Steve Heller served as the Assistant TAG Coordinator.

Updates from past year

Narrative.

2008 Ballot Items:

Ballot items for Contract Monitoring enhancements to the TRNS*PORT system were reviewed by TAG members prior to the TAG business meeting. A review package was passed out to TAG members and members were given a final chance to modify or add to the ballot items. No additional changes were proposed. Steve Specht moved that the ballot items, as modified for 2008, be approved and Nasser Pourfarzaneh seconded the motion. The motion carried. The deletions, modifications and additions to the [2008 ballot items](#), as approved, are included at the end of these minutes.

Items from Floor:

An agenda of TUG events for the Contract Monitoring TAG was handed out at the beginning of the meeting. Events included a presentation from a SAS software engineer using demonstrating the use of DSS/TRNS*PORT data with Enterprise Guide, a video interview with a federal investigator from US-DOT Office of Inspector General and a SAS programming competition. A detailed description of the [2008 Contract Monitoring track](#) is included at the end of these minutes.

There was some discussion from the floor about the title and purpose of the Contract Monitoring TAG. Some audience members proposed that the mission be broadened to focus more basic historical analysis to be more attractive to states that choose not to use Contract Monitoring tools for fraud prevention but may use it to assist in data analysis for prices or quality control. A short term goal was added to poll the group to regarding satisfaction with the purpose and name of the TAG.

Jim Johnson of the TRNS*PORT Task Force made a presentation requesting resumes for the purpose of forming a TRT for the Contract Monitoring TAG. In light of the discussion about the broadness of the TAG's mission, Jim cautioned members to do their best to resolve those issues before soliciting for TAG members.

A SAS software engineer from Boston demonstrated examples of developing ad hocs with SAS Enterprise Guide, after which the TAG meeting was adjourned.

2008 Mission and Goals – Contract Monitoring

Mission Statement:

The mission of Contract Monitoring TAG is to assist the TUG in advocating for and supporting the analysis of TRNS*PORT data as it relates to construction projects from conception to finalization.

Long Range Goals:

- Provide guidance for TRNS*PORT applications to preserve and enhance the analytical capabilities and functionality that reside in BAMS/DSS.
- Promote flexible inter-active/analytical tools that could work in conjunction with “decision support” data.
- Support a diversity of output formats
- Continue to advocate and guide the rewrite of BAMS/DSS
- Promote awareness of the full analytical capabilities of BAMS/DSS including but not limited to:
 - competition modeling
 - fraud detection
 - general contract monitoring
 - comparison of as-bid to as-built data
 - identification of “bid items of concern” for construction personnel
 - Methods of evaluating design-build contracts and lump sum items
 - addressing modeling techniques to improve estimate quality
- Develop a mutually supported list of best practices for the four areas of Contract Monitoring work.
 - Enhancing competition
 - Combating fraud
 - Data analysis.
 - Historic Database management

Short Range Goals:

- Protect and enhance the quality and usability of the Trns.port data during the development of web Trns*port database.
- Survey all Trns*port agencies to determine how they are utilizing the DSS models and database
- Poll the TAG membership to explore the possibility of a more appropriate title for the TAG.
- Create a Technical Review Team (TRT) to define user requirements for upcoming Contract Monitoring tools.

Ballot Item Adjustments – 2008

Outlined below are the ballot item adjustments for items pertaining to the Contract Monitoring TAG. Obsolete items have been recommended for deletion after reviewing them thoroughly and conferring with the original author. Some items were adjusted for clarity or to make the scope more appropriate to current needs. New items were added based on user suggestions collected over the last several months.

Ballot Items to be Dropped

2617 – Delete this ballot item: Obsolete

3292 – Delete this ballot item: The software already does this.

4208 – Delete this ballot item: Diminishing interest

4246 – Delete this ballot item: Should have been included in maintenance. Darleen Randal of InfoTech will refer this item to Regan for further evaluation to determine if the error still occurs.

7595 – Delete this ballot item: The state that requested it no longer needs it and better methods now exist to solve this problem.

7838 – Delete this ballot item: Does not apply.

8913 – Drop this ballot item (it will be replaced by a broader reaching item, Item A, in the new ballot items below:

Ballot Items to be Modified

4840 – Revised Title: Option of using Vendor Names or Numbers in Reports.

4840 - Revised Description: Offer the option of displaying either the vendor number or name on all DSS reports involving vendors.

7384 – Revised Title: Make it Easier to Coordinate the Name of the Init File.

7384 - Revised Description: In setting up connections to the Oracle databases, DSS uses a hard coded name for the init file. This name is found several places when setting up the system. This tends to restrict flexibility in defining the links to Oracle. We are proposing to have DSS get the init file name from a common variable, which can be changed once in a single location. P/L is set up this way and users generally find it easier to manage and find it more adaptable to the local naming conventions of their site.

6128 – Revised Title: Add Supplemental Descriptions & Qtys. to Bid Item Reports.

New Ballot Items

New Ballot Item A)

Title: Provide a Vendor Pick-List for Models with Vendor Selections.

Description: For all models requiring the user to enter a vendor ID in a selection window, provide a vendor pick-list, showing both the name and ID of vendors available in the data view selected. Ideally, these controls should include filter, sort, or first-character-recognition capabilities to allow the user to quickly find the item of choice.

Proposed by: David Tefertiller, Info Tech on 2005-07-14 and Turner Bond, TAG Chair 2008 TUG.

New Ballot Item B (applies to Preconstruction and Estimation)

Title: County Validation of Project Coordinates.

Description: Put filters on the coordinate fields in Preconstruction and Estimating modules which reject latitudes and longitudes that lie outside the outer bounds of the primary county.

Proposed by: Eddie Gatewood, Kentucky 2008

New Ballot Item C)

Title: Allow the Display of Multiple Facility Types on Vendor Maps.

Description: In VENMAP, the vendor activity map, allow the user to map different facility types, or selected facility types, with a different symbol, based on their code in the FATYPE field within the FACILITY table.

Proposed by: Michael Swedo, 2007 and Eddie Gatewood, Kentucky 2008

New Ballot Item D)

Title: Allow the Display of Several Vendor's Facilities on One Vendor Map.

Description: In VENMAP, the vendor activity map, Allow the user to select the option of displaying all facilities owned by any vendor, or displaying facilities owned by up to nine selected vendors.

Proposed by: Michael Swedo, New Jersey 2008

New Ballot Item E)

Title: Default to Last Used "View" and "Select" in Creating New Profiles.

Description: When setting up a new profile of a DSS model, have the "data view" and "contract list" default to the last one the user entered in the system.

Proposed by: Michael Swedo, New Jersey 2008

New Ballot Item F)

Title: Show Currently Running Processes at the Top of the Process Status List.

Description: Have the actively running processes show at the top of the list as a default, when the user opens the "Process Status" window.

Proposed by: Michael Swedo, New Jersey 2008

New Ballot Item G)

Title: Provide a "Save to" Browser for Reports.

Description: Allow the user to select an output destination for reports somewhere other than the default. In this case, deleting the profile need not delete the reports.

Proposed by: Turner Bond, Missouri 2008

New Ballot Item H (applies to Preconstruction and Estimation)

Title: Auto-Confirm Project Coordinates in NGT Preletting Modules

Description: Create a panel in the preconstruction modules of NGT that graphically plots the project center point on a map based on the longitude/latitude coordinates the user has entered.

Proposed by: Turner Bond, Missouri 2008.

2008 TUG Agenda – Contract Monitoring Track

Introduction

Duration: 5 min. (Place)

Time: 1:00PM; Tuesday, Oct 7

A brief overview of the features planned for the Contract Monitoring track and how to get the best out of it. Why things are scheduled the way they are and how to determine if a session is right for you.

Business Items – Contract Monitoring TAG

Duration: 25 min. (Place)

Time: 1:05PM; Tuesday, Oct 7

Consent Agenda and discussion: Missions and Goals.

Consent Agenda and discussion: 2008 Ballot items for the software enhancements ballot.

Discussion items from the floor.

Target Audience: Members of the Contract Monitoring TAG and interested TUG attendees.

Best Practices and Standards for Contract Monitoring

Duration: 60 min. (Place)

Time: 1:30PM; Tuesday, Oct 7

A discussion of Contract Monitoring and how it compares with other professions. How do we establish excellence? What's our bare minimum? If we were asking for more resources what standards would we use? We'll review standards, peer review and measures used in other professions to assess what it might hold for us. The meeting will begin with video clips from other professions, a brief presentation and will open to a round table and discussion from the floor. Basic practices will be debated with regard to their value as an internal goal.

Target Audience: Contract Monitoring die-hards, policy wonks, managers looking for structure, goals and ideas. People new to Contract Monitoring seeking to tailor their annual goals.

15 minute break 2:30 – 2:45

SAS Programming Competition – Rules and Procedures

Duration: 15 min. (Place)

Time: 2:45; Tuesday, Oct 7

Outline procedures for the 2008 National TRNS*PORT Programming Competition for SAS. Submittal guidelines, examples, questions from the floor.

Target Audience: Highway professionals involved in SAS programming and using some type of data that is relevant to the TRNS*PORT system.

Point-and-Click TRNS*PORT Data Analysis using EG.

Duration: 60 min. (Place)

Time: 3:00; Tuesday, Oct 7

Remember when mainframe DSS used to come with SAS Assist ... and nobody used it? How can we do better with future versions of DSS? How can we do better now? If you don't like writing code but need to do some robust analysis, where do you turn? Brian Reynolds, Software Engineer for the SAS Institute will demonstrate the use of SAS Enterprise Guide (EG) with

TRNS*PORT data. EG is one of SAS's newer interfaces, which allows analysts to point-and-click their way through relational databases without writing code. Better yet, EG generates code in the background that you can save and reuse later. This is a rare opportunity to gain valuable instruction and insight from an expert. Come see the tool that some SAS professionals use to generate the first draft of their applications.

Detecting DBE Fraud using TRNS*PORT data.

Duration: 120 min. (Daily Double)

Time: 10:15AM Wednesday, Oct 8

DBE Fraud has spawned an increasing number of cases within the U.S. Attorney's Office and US-DOT-OIG. Contract Monitoring professionals need to become versed in the structure of these cases. Come learn one method for detecting DBE fraud with TRNS*PORT data and get some general information about DBE cases. George Sullivan, Senior Investigator for the US-DOT Office of Inspector General will make a video appearance discussing profiles of typical DBE cases, and we'll outline one technique for computer-assisted detection of DBE fraud using TRNS*PORT data.

Target Audience: Contract Monitoring, Fraud Investigation, Auditing or DBE professionals. Managers seeking to support the development of this capability within a Transportation Agency.

Developing Market Areas with DSS

Cancelled.