2006
THE YEAR
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Eight New Roads Scholars Honored

Eight new Roads Scholars were honored at the Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma (ACCO) Fall Conference held in Oklahoma City, November 14-16, 2006. The Roads Scholar Program is an educational certification series offered to county commissioners, road foremen and other county road employees. The program includes nine courses related to the technical aspects of maintaining roads and bridges in rural Oklahoma. Students who complete the courses, totaling 120 hours of instruction and laboratory experience, are certified as Roads Scholars.

Since 1997 when the program began, 245 county employees have become Roads Scholars. LTAP staff members have compiled a state map with all the Roads Scholars in each county listed. Go to: http://ltap.okstate.edu and click on the Roads Scholar Search button.

For more information about the Roads Scholar program, course descriptions and class schedules, contact Doug Wright at 405-744-6049, or visit the LTAP website at: http://ltap.okstate.edu
Motor Grader Operator Training for Road Workers held in Choctaw, Oklahoma

The Motor Grader Operator Training course was held on October 11, 12, and 13, 2006, at the Eastern Oklahoma County Technology Center in Choctaw, Oklahoma. This one-day program involved county road workers receiving classroom training during the morning session, and the rest of the day spent in “hands-on” practice in the field.

Motor grader operators were shown proper methods for building and maintaining Oklahoma roads, including blading techniques, safe operation, and daily equipment maintenance. Erosion control methods, and the use of moisture to reduce loss of material were covered, as well as drainage information and practice at cutting proper road cross sections.

“These methods save taxpayer investment in both building and maintaining our roads,” LTAP Manager Doug Wright said. “A grader is a complex and very expensive machine, but with professional instruction and practice, operators use their skills to build and maintain better roads,” Wright added.

The course is designed for all road maintenance personnel—experienced and inexperienced—and stresses the importance of good drainage, and the need for well-crowned roads with adequate ditches. The operators review proper road profiles and drainage and ditching issues, and learn about new techniques and technologies.

“We are able to offer this hands-on field training with the latest equipment, which is by far the best way to learn these techniques, because of the support from leaders in the motor grader equipment business,” Wright said. Equipment and operator experts from G.W. Van Keppel Company, The C.L. Boyd Company, and Warren Caterpillar Equipment provided the equipment and expert instructors for the classes. The Eastern Oklahoma County Technology Center, Oklahoma County District 2, and LTAP specialists provided the site, equipment, and personnel to prepare the site for the workshop.

Plans are being made for a comprehensive, four-day Motor Grader Operator Course. In this course, students will be given extensive instruction in road maintenance/building theory and motor grader operations. Students will be tested at the conclusion of the class to certify their competence. It is anticipated the classes will be held in Spring and Summer 2007.

For more information about this class or other courses offered by LTAP, call 405-744-6049 or visit the LTAP website:
http://ltap.okstate.edu
The Heavy Equipment and Vehicle Institute at OSU-Okmulgee hosts Equipment Maintenance Course

In November, the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), conducted a course in Equipment Maintenance at the Heavy Equipment and Vehicle Institute at OSU-Okmulgee. More than 60 county employees attended the course that covers the fundamentals of maintaining county owned vehicles and road construction equipment. It is one of nine courses required in the LTAP Roads Scholar program.

“We are fortunate to have such a premier facility and faculty for this class. It is truly one of the finest facilities of this kind in the United States,” LTAP Manager Doug Wright said.

“This program started right after WWII and we’ve been training technicians since then,” according to Roy Achemire, Program Chair of the Heavy Equipment and Vehicle Institute. The success of the program is “part facility and part attitude,” according to Achemire.

The 86,000 sq. ft. facility houses the Institute, which provides technical training for Caterpillar, Komatsu, John Deere, Case, Ford New Holland, Ditch Witch, Kenworth and other vehicles and equipment, as well as natural gas compression equipment, and other agricultural and industrial equipment and components. Because of the diversity of equipment used at the Heavy Equipment and Vehicle Institute, “no matter what kind of equipment a county may use, it is likely that the Institute at OSU-Okmulgee will have someone on the faculty who has expertise with that equipment,” Wright said.

“Our program benefits not only from a great facility but also from the expertise of our faculty,” Achemire added.

“One consistency between the LTAP program and ours is that our courses start with preventive maintenance. Preventive maintenance is a big deal for all of us, even for our own cars, but on this heavy equipment, counties are losing money every day that equipment isn’t in use. And, of course, preventive maintenance prolongs the life of the equipment, which also saves a substantial amount of money and down time,” Achemire said.

For more information about the Heavy Equipment and Vehicle Institute contact Program Chair Roy Achemire at 918-293-4724 or email: roy.achemire@okstate.edu

Contact LTAP for information about the Equipment Maintenance Course or other courses offered by LTAP, call Doug Wright at 405-744-6049 or email: douglas.wright@okstate.edu
When clearing debris after a storm, removing dead trees, or chopping firewood, chainsaws save time. But as the American Red Cross points out, “it can be unforgiving and lethal, causing injury or death in the hands of an uninformed and unaware operator.” In natural disasters, the American Red Cross offers this reminder: More injuries occur during clean up after a storm than during the storm.

According to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, there were more than 32,000 chainsaw injuries during 2004. Of those injured, 1,149 people were seriously injured, requiring hospitalization, or were killed. Chainsaw accidents comprise 11 percent of all injuries involving yard and garden equipment, according to the CPSC review for 2004.

According to George Maher, Ag Safety Specialist at North Dakota State University, following these safety guidelines can substantially decrease chainsaw injuries.

**General Safety Tips**

- Use proper clothing and equipment. People employed as chainsaw operators are required to wear a helmet system, consisting of head, face and hearing protection; cotton or leather gloves; chainsaw protective chaps or pants (UL Listed); and a pair of chainsaw protective work boots with steel toes. (OSHA Reg. 1910.266)
- Read the operator’s manual. Become familiar with the recommended safe operating procedures.
- Use the chainsaw when in top physical and mental condition. Medications, alcohol, and fatigue are factors that contribute to injuries.
- Use the proper saw and get training from someone who is experienced with the type of chainsaw to be used. Lightweight saws (8 to 12 in. guide bar) are best for cutting small branches and felling very small trees up to 10” in diameter. Midweight saws (14 to 20 in. guide bars) should be used for frequent log cutting and felling trees up to 18” in diameter. Heavyweight saws (guide bars longer than 20”) are for professional use.
- Do regular maintenance on the saw. Sharp teeth ensure the saw will cut quickly, smoothly and more safely. Always wear gloves or cover the chain with a heavy rag when sharpening the saw teeth. Proper chain tension helps increase chain life and safe cutting. A chain that is too loose tends to derail and whip around. If a chain is too tight, it may bind and wear prematurely. Chains stretch with use and need to be readjusted frequently. Change air filters, spark plugs regularly, and lubricate the saw according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Use both hands when starting and operating the chainsaw. Hold the saw with one hand, gripping the top handles firmly and pull the starter rope with the other.

**Kickback Safety Tips**

Kickback of a chainsaw occurs with the teeth on the chain catch on something as they rotate around the tip of the blade. The teeth may have enough force to cause the blade to kick back violently. Three situations cause this: When the nose of the blade strikes another object, starting a bore cut improperly, or when the blade nose or tip catches the bottom or side of a saw cut during reinsertion.

The best defense against kickback is to keep the tip guard on the chainsaw. If this is not possible, keep a firm hold on the saw and use a saw that has a chain brake or kickback guard. Don’t saw with the tip. Use a high chain speed when reinserting the blade in a cut or when removing it. Keep the saw teeth sharp. Always cut below shoulder height. This makes the saw easier to control, and keeps it away from the operator’s face.

**For more information:**

Please go to the website of the manufacturer, the American Red Cross, or visit the North Dakota State University Agriculture Safety website: www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/ageng/safety/ae1025w.htm
Season's Greetings

From: The OKLTAP Staff