Task Force 13

March 2025
Volume III , Issue 1

Spring Newsletter

Fall Meeting Recap– Buffalo, NY

Rapturous in-person turn out, engaging discourse, and a captivating new host location highlight this past Fall Task Force 13 meeting held in Buffalo, NY from October 1st - 3rd. Empowered by each attendee and presenter, TF13 continues to improve upon and provide a quality platform to uncover bridge and roadside hardware related innovations, policy changes, and testing updates. With a total of 90 virtual and in-person participants, this past bi-annual meeting, graciously hosted onsite by Calspan Corporation, was jam packed with insightful activities and presentations.

As customary at the start of each event, a broadcasted Pooled Fund Group and TF13 joint meeting, comprised of DOT officials, industry leaders, and research professionals, received updates from AASHTO on M180 specification changes, were informed of ongoing modeling and testing of EVs by entities such as George Mason University and Calspan, and discussed criteria surrounding lab testing and accreditation. Over the course of the final two days of the TF13 meeting members entertained topics covering ATSSA's review of the FHWA's issuance of letters of eligibility, evaluation processes of vehicle fleet representation of electric, 2WD, and 4WD vehicles in crash testing, updates on the latest activities of the subcommittees and products listed within the Roadside Hardware Guide. Participants were also treated to two crash tests and a crash test facility tour, coordinated by Calspan.

Missed a few topics during the meeting? We've got you covered. Catch up with the meeting notes on the TF13 website.

Inside This Issue

Next TF13 Meeting

SAVE THE DATE:

April 16th – 18th 2025

LOCATION:

Lincoln, NE

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Embassy Suites Hotel

Requests to be added to Thursday's TF13 meeting agenda for 15-minute Technical Presentations must be made in advance of the meeting.

An Organization Powered by Volunteers

As a non-profit organization, TF13 relies on the generosity of its members to provide essential leadership for the board and subcommittees. Working as a TF13 officer can be a source of personal and professional growth. Subcommittee co-chairs, whether DOT or industry members, aid in the facilitation of discussion and sharing of ideas and information impacting the members of the subcommittee.

If you are interested in volunteering as a co-chair, please reach out directly to John Durkos at jdurkos@roadsystems.com.

Current Vacancies:

⇒ Vice President

⇒ Subcommittee #1 Guide Maintenance

Newly Filled Vacancies:

⇒ Subcommittee #3 Bridge Railings
Carl Gaudry; Louisiana DOTD

⇒ Subcommittee #6 Work Zone Systems
Marc-Andre Seguin; MOOVOP Inc.
Kevin Schrum; University Alabama Birmingham

⇒ Subcommittee #9 Marketing
Stephanie Poynor; S.I. Storey Lumber Company
Scott Peters; Franklin Industries

TF13 Guide to Standardized Roadside Hardware

https://tf13.org/guides/

Links also available from main website:
https://tf13.org/

Hardware Categories

Bridge Railings

Crash Cushions

End Treatments/ Terminals

Longitudinal Barriers

Sign Supports

Transition Systems

Work Zone Systems

Components

Industry Contacts/ Manufacturers

Hardware Guide Updates

Several new Hardware Systems and Components have been added to the TF13 Guide. These, in addition to recently revised drawings, are shown on the "Hardware Guide – Recent Updates" page on the TF13 website.

https://tf13.org/guide-recent-updates/

This page is updated frequently, so please visit often for the latest Guide updates.

Location, Location, Location: A Meeting for the Books

CALSPAN

In a step away from ordinary, the Task Force 13 meeting was held in Buffalo, NY as Calspan graciously hosted our group for the event. All who attended were impressed with the well-equipped meeting facility as well as their capabilities at the research center.

Upon a visit to the Calspan campus, you are quick to learn that they do much more than what we were there to witness; outdoor testing of the MASH TL-3 NYDOT box beam guardrail system. Calspan also conducts indoor crash testing in one of two crash halls devoted to front end and high-speed collisions, respectively. They perform these tests for new to market, not to market, and proprietary vehicles for both private and government research, including IIHS safety testing. Attached to this area they manage and calibrate their collection of THOR crash test dummies to record every reaction imaginable during impact and deceleration.

If that isn't impressive enough, Calspan's campus provides opportunities for other research and testing, such as tire testing for the race, airline, and automotive industries. Add to that the transonic and hypersonic wind tunnel testing and it's easy to see why our group enjoyed the tour for a quick dive out of our daily focus.

A heart-felt THANK YOU goes out to all Calspan team members that hosted and supported our event. It will be remembered and talked about for years to come.

Updates You Care About

AASHTO M180-23

Standard specification for steel components for highway guardrail

⇒ Live Discussions

- During the final quarter of 2024, AASHTO requested to begin discussions on the changes to M180 with an ATSSA/TF13 member liaison. Frequent meetings have ensued and continue.
- Based on updates presented during an education session at this year's past ATSSA Annual Expo in Orlando, FL , AASHTO is actively working with manufacturers, installers, and other leaders in the industry to resolve many of expressed concerns.
- Further updates can be expected midyear 2025 from the ATSSA M180 Task Force within the ATSSA Guardrail Committee in regards to their efforts with AASHTO.

Build America, Buy America Act

Law requiring the use of American-made products in federally funded infrastructure projects

On January 14th, 2025 the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published its final rule regarding the longstanding Manufactured Products Waiver, confirming the decision to rescind the waiver.

The rescinded waiver, which previously allowed manufactured products used in federal-aid highway projects not to comply with FHWA's Buy America requirements, is intended to help bolster American manufacturing.

⇒ Two Phase Roll Out

- Projects obligated on or after October 1, 2025: final assembly of all manufactured projects must occur in the U.S.
- Projects obligated on or after October 1, 2026: Requires the cost components of U.S. products mined, produced , or manufactured to be 55% or greater of the total costs of all components of the manufactured product.

The new rule does not change the Buy America requirements that currently apply to iron or steel.

EVs PROVING SAFE OR NOT?

A Consumer Report's article published in April of 2021 reports that today's EVs are as safe or safer than gasoline or diesel-powered vehicles with IIHS testing backing this statement. The IIHS testing shows these vehicles keep the occupants safe through standard vehicle crash testing applied to all vehicles. Those of us in this arena though, know there is an important side of the story that is missing. The question this article and multiple others do not address is this: do the current highway safety systems in place work with these new EVs on the roadway?

2024 Rivian R1T Crash Test. Image courtesy of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (iihs.org).

The answer may not be what we hope. Currently, within the 5 MASH tests performed on EVs we have seen 4 failures with the only "PASS" coming on a portable concrete barrier that showed excessive deflection. It appears that if a major shift in the vehicle fleet progresses towards including more EVs, our safety systems may need some redesign.

There are several projects currently being worked on. One notable project, through George Mason University, compares crash tests and injuries between EVs and like modeled internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. GMU has already taken existing computer models of ICE vehicles and matched known crash test results through computer simulation. Through modeling, GMU was able to determine that the structure of the EV is the most critical component. When adjusting ICE vehicles to match EV weights and center of gravity the tested and failed systems using EVs did not fail the simulated tests. It was only when the structure of the car model was changed to more closely match the EV structure did the simulation fail like the known EV crash tests.

These on-going studies and others like them will go a long way in showing our industry what direction we need to go as the vehicle fleet continues to change.

2024 Ford Mustang Mach-E BEV Crash Test. Image courtesy of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (nhtsa.gov).

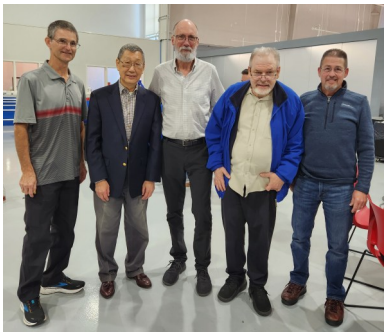
Where Are They Now?

Role Transitions

- Eric Smith: *Resigned from Hill & Smith; accepted position with Valtir*

A Special Update: Dr. Dean Sicking

Selected in 2024 to receive the Landmark Award, Dr. Sicking was inducted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame on February 7, 2025 for his work on the SAFER Barrier, significantly reducing global fatalities and injuries along race tracks.



Awards and Honorees

- Task Force 13 would like to recognize Greg Neece for 6 years of past dedication and contributions as a board member. Greg served as Secretary of TF13 from 2017-2023.

"TF13 thanks Greg for everything he did for us over those 6 years. The energy, enthusiasm, and great ideas he brought to our planning sessions are missed." - John Durkos

Upcoming Industry Events

⇒ April 16-18 TF13 Spring Meeting; Lincoln, NE

⇒ August 19-22 ATSSA Midyear Meeting; Milwaukee, WI

Thank you to everyone who helped contribute and provide sources of information to include in this edition of the newsletter!