

Pavement Management Systems and TRB Committee AFD10

Charles D. Larson, P.E., PMP

Chair, TRB Committee AFD10

Pavement Management Systems

Everyone that reads this journal is likely to understand the importance of pavements to a global economy, supply chain management, and just in time delivery. Smooth, long-lasting, and cost-effective pavements enhance mobility for people, goods, and services in our cities, countries, and across the world.

The objective of the International Journal of Pavement Research and Technology is to provide a platform to promote the exchange of ideas among pavement engineering communities around the world. The journal includes topics relating to pavement engineering, pavement construction, testing, preservation, and pavement-vehicle interaction (i.e., the impacts to the user). Implied is the fact that the journal is interested in topics relating to all phases of a pavement life-cycle, “cradle-to-grave,” and back to life again.

Addressing pavement needs within one project is not always a big undertaking, but what about the pavement needs for a few thousand potential pavement projects (as in the case of a national road network)? When it comes to managing a network of pavement segments, how is that done in an optimal manner? Given the increasing needs for pavement work and decreased amounts of funding available, this is a real and urgent problem.

Sound decision making requires a clear objective and the analysis of feasible alternatives. The application of Systems Analysis is a discipline dealing with the science of investigating a set of interacting entities and using them to put together a holistic business solution. Systems Analysis aims to gain insights into the whole by understanding the linkages, interactions, and processes between the elements that comprise the whole “system.” Systems Analysis was applied to the problem of managing pavements in the 1970s. Subsequently, the Systems Analysis of managing pavements is now known as Pavement Management Systems. For many folks, the words “Pavement Management System” mean software, but it is Systems Analysis that is doing the meaningful operations.

For those who find this type of problem completely fascinating and yearn to learn more, there is a committee of international experts that serves the US National Research Council's Transportation Research Board (TRB). The TRB Committee AFD10 on Pavement Management Systems is comprised of 32 members and works to promote innovation and progress in thorough research by facilitating an exchange of information, fostering technical excellence in research, providing expert advice, and disseminating research results. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact committee chairman, Charles Larson at charles.Larson@stantec.com or visit www.pavementmanagement.org.