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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS**

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CMV</td>
<td>commercial motor vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSTSCE</td>
<td>National Surface Transportation Safety Center for Excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>SME</td>
<td>subject matter expert</td>
</tr>
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<td>VTTI</td>
<td>Virginia Tech Transportation Institute</td>
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CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND

Since its inception in 2006, the National Surface Transportation Safety Center for Excellence (NSTSCE) has completed numerous research studies and published a number of reports relating to surface transportation safety. However, these reports, and furthermore the findings of these studies, can only provide a benefit to the transportation industry, government agencies, and the general public if they are able to be easily searched for, located, and disseminated. The NSTSCE stakeholders expressed a desire to feature the summarized study results of published reports in a way that could easily be delivered to and understood by the general public. Researchers involved in outreach for NSTSCE felt one cog in this effort to promote surface transportation safety would be to utilize the power of the Internet to reach a broad audience, not only nationally but internationally as well. From this, the quarterly newsletter *Transportation Research Today* was born (Figure 1).

![Transportation Research Today newsletter](image)

Figure 1. Screen capture. *Transportation Research Today* newsletter.
CHAPTER 2. TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH TODAY

Transportation Research Today was designed as a quarterly newsletter. The newsletter was written and published in a magazine style that allowed viewers and subscribers to either print or read online. To further enhance the online reading experience, the newsletter was published in an interactive magazine template through ISSUU.com, which allows for page turning, zoom capabilities, and searching.

The newsletter was developed with a cover page that included a table of contents, a feature article, three secondary articles, a featured researcher, a “Did you know?” fact, various sidebars with NSTSCE and Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) content, a transportation-related cartoon, the NSTSCE Outreach Coordinator section, and links to other NSTSCE websites and email.

Unique to each cover page was an image relating to the feature article along with a mile marker image in the bottom right corner. The mile marker images were captured along various roadways and represented each issue number. All articles were selected by the researchers involved in NSTSCE outreach with input from the subject matter experts (SMEs). The featured article and the first secondary article were written about completed NSTSCE projects that could potentially be of interest and relevance to many demographic groups (e.g., senior citizens, teen drivers, truck drivers). The third and fourth secondary articles were written about ongoing studies to provide a glimpse into some of NSTSCE’s current work. Each issue also highlighted an NSTSCE researcher with a picture and short bio-sketch along with a “Did you know?” fact relating to the Virginia Smart Road (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Screen capture. Featured researcher and “Did you know?” fact.](image-url)
Other aspects of the newsletter were the various sidebars linking to other NSTSCE websites or pertinent announcements. These were important in garnering additional exposure for other NSTSCE-related activities such as the Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) Driving Safety website and the International Symposium on Naturalistic Driving Research (Figure 3).

![Announcement! The 4th International Symposium on Naturalistic Driving Research](image)

*Figure 3. Screen capture. Newsletter Announcement example.*

Additionally, all of the stakeholders were represented with their logo and links to their websites (Figure 4) included at the front of each issue along with a column written by the NSTSCE outreach coordinator.

![Stakeholders of the National Surface Transportation Safety Center for Excellence](image)

*Figure 4. Screen capture. Stakeholder logos and links.*
Further, a transportation-related cartoon (Figure 5) was created that reflected the theme of one of the articles contained in the current newsletter issue.

![The Road Ahead](image)

**Figure 5. Illustration. Sample newsletter cartoon.**

As mentioned previously, *Transportation Research Today* was published quarterly. The inaugural issue was released in January 2014 and was followed by releases in April 2014, July 2014, and October 2014. Upon publication, each issue was accessible through ISSUU and the NSTSCE webpage. A PDF version was also available for anyone who preferred to download a copy. The front page of VTTI’s website ran a picture of the cover and a link to the newsletter during the first week of publication for each issue, and new issues were announced through release date posts on VTTI’s Facebook and Twitter accounts. All e-mail subscribers also received notification of each issue’s release.
CHAPTER 3. SUMMARY

The NSTSCE newsletter *Transportation Research Today* was an excellent opportunity to increase the exposure and benefit of NSTSCE research findings, publications, and safety topics to a broad audience consisting of the general public and the transportation industry, including government agencies, original and aftermarket equipment manufacturers, advocacy groups (e.g., groups serving senior citizens), driver’s education and CMV training institutions, CMV fleets, insurance companies, and other research entities.

The personnel involved in the creation and publication of each issue felt that it was a success. Readership continued to rise and *Transportation Research Today* has had over 8,900 views (as of September 20, 2015) with an average read time of 15 minutes. The newsletter has been viewed in 17 countries and territories in addition to the United States. These countries include:

- Canada
- United Kingdom
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Italy
- Germany
- Sweden
- Finland
- Belgium
- France
- Poland
- China
- Japan
- Hong Kong
- South Korea
- Malaysia
- Saint Lucia

It should be noted that these numbers do not reflect the number of times the PDF of the newsletter may have been downloaded and viewed.

The subscriber list for the newsletter also continued to grow as each issue was published. Subscribers typically joined via an online sign-up through VTTI’s website, at VTTI’s open house, at conferences, and via word-of-mouth. Individuals on the subscriber list would receive an email with a direct link when each issue was published. MailChimp was used as the email distribution method and to manage the subscriber list. However, being a subscriber was not a prerequisite for viewing the newsletter, which, as described above, was open and accessible through a number of channels. Marketing the newsletter was accomplished through VTTI’s website, stakeholders, and through various advocacy and safety organizations (e.g., Delaware Motor Transport Association).

After the final issue of Volume 1 (Issue #4) of *Transportation Research Today* was published, it was decided that this newsletter would be combined with the VTTI e-newsletter moving forward.
All issues from Volume 1 will continue to be accessible on the VTTI website at http://www.vtti.vt.edu/national/ncstsr/index.html.