# 2013 Best Traffic Records Web page Questionnaire

Again for 2013, ATSIP seeks to recognize exemplary work in the field of **"Best Traffic Records Web Page"**. A wealth of information exists on the Internet. This questionnaire, and a visit to your web site, will provide the means of evaluation for the committee to select and award the governmental agency that makes the most **complete and accurate** traffic records safety information available to the public. Characteristics to be considered include:

> Ease in getting to the site,
> Navigating the site,
> Querying the data,
> The availability of multiple years of data,
> User-Friendly.

If you would like your web site to be considered for this recognition, please complete the following short questionnaire and forward it by e-mail as an attachment to Tim Kerns (tkerns@som.umaryland.edu) by **June 17, 2013**. Winning websites will be highlighted at the 2013 Traffic Records Forum in St. Paul, Minnesota.

1. Web Page Address proposed for Consideration: http://psdl.ssrc.msstate.edu
2. Agency Submitting: Mississippi Public Safety Data Laboratory (MS PSDL) of the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at Mississippi State University (MSU)
3. Contact's Name & Title: Tonya T. Neaves, Project Director
   Address: (Mailing) P.O. Box 5287, Mississippi State, MS 39762 / (Physical) 1 Research Blvd. Ste. 103, Starkville, MS 39759
4. Contact's Phone Number: (662)325-7033
5. Contact's E-mail Address: tonya.neaves@ssrc.msstate.edu

- Traffic Records Data Components - Please Complete As Appropriate To the Web Page:
- Crash Data
  - 8 Number Of Years of Data Available At The Site That May Be Queried
  - 2012 Most Current Year of Data Available
  - 15-20 % of Crash Report information available on the website
  - 100 % MMUCC Compliant

- Integration of data - Can data in files be linked with other files by common identifiers? No
- Is a Selection Of Canned Reports Available? Yes
- Is An On Line Manual Or Help Function Available To Assist Users With Navigating and Accessing Data On the Site? A data query manual is available online to users and is currently being revised to account for functions or datasets added over the past project year that will be made available by September 30, 2013. Further, users may also request an over-the-phone or in-person data tutorial anytime.

1) What, in your opinion, is the web site's best feature?

The redesign of the MS PSDL website this past year focused heavily on several criteria, which are also believed to be some of its best features. First, the sheer ease of finding the site makes the lab exceptionally relevant. For instance, when a series of different combinations of the lab's name in whole or in part is Googled, the lab's website always appears on the first page of the search results. Second, when visiting the lab's website, it was intended that the initial page be visually appealing in an effort to catch and maintain a visitor's attention to learn more about what the lab is. And, third, the layout and organization of its content makes the lab's website not only user-friendly but also simple to navigate through the massive amount of information provided that has been effectively sectioned. Further, some additional features of the lab's website that are felt to be important include its active event calendar, quick facts, and social media links. Still, it would be remiss not mention the ability that the website has to quickly access fatality and crash data, and soon to be alcohol-impaired citation data.  This querying function also permits the user to generate downloadable bar charts and line graphs as well as download raw-number data files. The point is that the lab can readily adapt to quickly meet the changing environment needs of the traffic safety community and public in general.

2) How would you improve the site?

While there are always new things that can be done to improve any website, there are three main improvements that the MS PSDL is hoping to achieve by the end of the grant year for September 30, 2013:
   - Continue to visualize additional and more up-to-date data in the data section of the website with better querying and mapping features
   - Creating the Mississippi Association of Highway Safety Leaders organizational information section on the website as an warehouse for statewide traffic safety information
   - Create a Mississippi Office of Highway Safety grants management section on the website for to effectively track and maintain required forms for all recipients

3) How often is the site updated?

The MS PSDL website is updated on a regular basis. At a minimum, 1) the social media accounts and event calendar are updated weekly; 2) the publications section is updated monthly, unless materials are provided at an earlier date; 3) the data and programs sections are updated yearly, unless materials are provided at an earlier date; and 4) any special features are updated yearly or as needed. In addition to this, the organizational layout of the website is also reviewed annually so that the website will continue to embrace a modern and informative approach. Therefore, every time someone visits the website, he or she should, ideally, find something that is relatively new and of sound quality.

4) Is the web page 'agency' designed or was a vendor used?

The MS PSDL website was solely designed by a group of traffic safety professionals consisting of scientific researchers, field practitioners, and graduate students that are employed at the lab. Although the Mississippi Office of Highway Safety with the Mississippi Department of Public Safety does provide some direction into the website's content, in an effort to make certain files and data publicly available, they provide little input into its architectural framework. After all, the Social Science Research Center of Mississippi State University has a long history of partnership and collaboration with the supporting agencies, including conducting seat belt usage studies and developing alcohol-impaired driving education programs.

5) Are levels of access to data permitted according to need or status?

Most all of the files and data housed on the MS PSDL website are made available for public consumption. The main goal of the website is to provide users with unrestricted access to traffic safety information, and building in permission levels would defeat that purpose. Therefore, all files and data with personally identifying information are scrubbed and delinked prior to being loaded onto the website. However, certain other documents, as requested by the Office of Highway Safety with the Mississippi Department of Public Safety to be placed on the website, as the funding agency, may contain highly sensitive information. In such a case, a password authorization by the originating creator must be provided to open the document.

6) Does the Statewide Traffic Records Coordinating Committee approve updates or changes to the page?

No, the Mississippi State Traffic Records Coordinating Committee does not make any official decisions regarding the development, operation, or preservation of the MS PSDL website; however, they do have a certain magnitude of influence in determining which traffic safety information should be provided by the Mississippi Office of Highway Safety with the Mississippi Department of Public Safety to be made publicly available. In addition to this, the Project Director is a member of the STRCC Executive Committee, providing the organization with direct access for representation of file and data needs.

7) What Agency has responsibility for maintaining the site?

The MS PSDL was established in 2007 at the Social Science Research Center of Mississippi State University in partnership with the Mississippi Office of Highway Safety and the Mississippi Highway Patrol of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety. Initial funding for the lab was made available with 408 funds, now MAP21, from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration. The project need was originally envisioned by the Social Science Research Center Director, Arthur Cosby, and the former Mississippi Highway Patrol Commissioner, Michael Berthay, to assist with the successful execution of the State's Highway Safety and Performance Plan focused on adopting and implementing programs that enhance the functionality of data-driven strategies by leveraging operational technology with the ability to perform problem identification and countermeasure analysis. Responsibility for maintaining the website is maintained by

project leadership although the supporting agencies do provide some guidance into securing future funds towards increasing the lab's longevity. Both entities realize the need for university-based research and development applications, and the lab is the intersection that brings to bear those same interests and capabilities.

8) Describe any further improvements you intend to make.

There are many additional improvements that the MS PSDL will be implementing over the next several months, prior to the end of its grant year on September 30, 2013:
- Developing an annual statewide traffic safety statistical data book to be featured on the home page as well as included in the publications section of the website
- Developing an annual statewide policy factsheet to be handed out among relevant policymakers included in the publications section of the website
- Continue updating the events calendar
- Assisting with developing and managing the first ever Mississippi Safety Training and Recognition Symposium program, branding, and registration
- Add more detailed information about the technological traffic safety applications being developed in the programs section of the website
- Continue updating the quick facts
- Continue developing an iPhone/iPad mobile application

9) Does the agency advertise the Site? How?

Yes, the MS PSDL website is promoted and advertised through a variety of mediums, which include but are not limited to:
- Internal Activities
  - Annual Planning Retreat
  - State Agency Advisory Board
  - State Advocacy Advisory Board
  - Logos and Letterhead Materials
  - PowerPoint Presentation
- Social Media Accounts
  - Facebook - facebook.com/MississippiPSDL and facebook.com/MSStateSSRC
  - Twitter - twitter.com/ms_psdl and twitter.com/MSU_SSRC
  - YouTube - youtube.com/mspsdl
- Associated Websites
  - Social Science Research Center - http://www.ssrc.msstate.edu, under Laboratories section
  - Mississippi Department of Public Safety - http://www.dps.state.ms.us/resources/related-links/, under Traffic Records Statistics section
  - Mississippi State University – http://www.msstate.edu/web/people/detail.php?id=293
- Organizational Meetings
  - Mississippi Association of Highway Safety Leaders - monthly

- o Mississippi State Traffic Records Coordinating Committee - quarterly
- o Mississippi Highway Patrol -biannually
- Conference Presentations
    - o Transportation Research Board
    - o American Society for Public Administration
    - o Southeastern Conference for Public Administration
    - o University of Central Florida's Center for Public and Non-Profit Management Research Colloquium
- Publications
    - o Journal of Transport Geography, under Guangqing Chi in 2011
    - o Accident Analysis and Prevention, under Guangqing Chi in 2011
    - o Journal of Safety Research, under Guangqing Chi in 20120
    - o Annual Brochure

**I would like to have this project considered for presentation during one of the forum sessions.**

**<u>X</u> Yes, oral presentation     <u>X</u> Yes, poster presentation  _____No**

**Note: The MS PSDL would like to be considered for either an oral or a poster presentation.**