Roundabouts Lead the Future of Transportation
Preparing for International Conference in Carmel, May 17-20

Leslie Benson - Communications

American Structurepoint has become the state of Indiana’s “go-to” expert on roundabout design and configuration. Not only has the firm designed more than 46 roundabouts since completing its first in 1997, but its engineers also conceptually designed and engineered the Keystone Parkway Corridor in the City of Carmel, completed in fall 2010, which included five award-winning, tight, double teardrop roundabout interchanges. American Structurepoint was also recognized for its expertise on the subject in 2009 by INDOT, which asked the firm to collaborate with DLZ Indiana LLC and the FHWA in publishing guidelines for a new chapter of the Indiana Design Manual, focused specifically on roundabouts.

Communities around the world have long searched for ways to transform congested intersections and roadways into the efficient transportation arteries they were constructed to be. The City of Carmel, Indiana, has found success in this effort by transforming standard 2- and 4-way, stop-controlled intersections, as well as signalized intersections, into more continuously flowing modern roundabouts. The City has realized the decrease in traffic congestion, accidents, and rush hour headaches by eliminating the inefficiencies of traffic signals. To promote and educate engineers and policy makers on the many benefits of roundabouts, American Structurepoint is assisting the City of Carmel and the Purdue University-based Indiana Local Technical Assistance Program as they host the Transportation Research Board’s Third International Conference on Roundabouts, Tuesday, May 17, to Friday, May 20, 2011. The conference will take place in Carmel at the Renaissance Indianapolis North Hotel with the Institute of Transportation Engineers joining the TRB as co-sponsor of the event.

Dubbed “Roundabout City, USA,” the City of Carmel boasts over 80 roundabouts either in place or under construction within a 5-mile radius of the conference venue, many of which were designed by American Structurepoint. Tours of Carmel’s roundabouts, available during the conference, will offer visitors the ability to have a firsthand look at dozens of roundabouts in many different applications and with varying traffic volumes. The conference will present research and provide testimonial related to the safety, social, environmental, and economic benefits of these circular intersections.

Kicking off the conference on May 17, from 8 a.m. to noon, Clive Sawers, a traffic engineering consultant from Pen Traff in Devon, England, will lead a workshop on mini-roundabouts and their effect on traffic capacity, safety, and land use. The mini-roundabout session will be followed on the afternoon of May 17, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., by “Roundabouts 101,“ an introduction to the elements and principals of roundabouts to a novice audience. On the morning of May 18, keynote speakers will include Joseph Toole, associate administrator for the FHWA Office of Safety; Michael B. Cline, Commissioner of INDOT; and James Brainard, the Mayor of the City of Carmel.

The festivities will also include a welcome reception for attendees at Carmel’s newly opened Palladium at the Center for the Performing Arts on the evening of May 17, an exhibitor reception at the Renaissance on May 18, and an afternoon at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway on May 19, to enable attendees to experience the pre-race festivities associated with the 100th anniversary of the Indianapolis 500. “We thought that this would be a perfect opportunity for people from around the world to experience one of the region’s most historic and well-known sporting events,” says Craig Parks of American Structurepoint. “Cars will be practicing on May 19 (weather permitting), so visitors will be able to see IMS in full swing.”

Noteworthy presentations scheduled during the conference include Carmel City Engineer Mike McBride’s discussion of the City’s extensive experience with roundabouts. During McBride’s 10 years of engineering leadership with the City of Carmel, he has overseen the planning and installation of more than 60 roundabouts within the City, as well as advised public officials and municipal engineers around the nation regarding the implementation of roundabouts in their communities. One marquee project McBride will highlight is the Keystone Parkway project. According to the City of Carmel, the redesign of its 4.5-mile Keystone Corridor has reduced accidents with injury by 78 percent with its six newly constructed roundabout interchanges. In addition, the more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly crossing produced by these new interchanges has provided residents and visitors with easier connections to merchants, parks and recreational areas. Also presenting at the conference will be members of American Structurepoint’s Road Group leading educational workshops on topics ranging from roundabout design visualization to developing capacity models.

For more information, visit www.TRB.org/Conferences/Roundabout2011.aspx.