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Congressman Rick Boucher visits the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute

BLACKSBURG, Va., April 20, 2009 – Congressman Rick Boucher, along with Virginia Senator Creigh Deeds visited the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) last week. Boucher was traveling across Southwest Virginia campaigning for Deeds as the next Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Boucher and Deeds met with the director of VTTI, Tom Dingus, as well as the stakeholders of the Institute. In addition to a presentation about VTTI and the Virginia Smart Road, Boucher and Deeds witnessed a demonstration of a transportation study conducted at VTTI on the Smart Road, had an opportunity to see various instrumented vehicles used in transportation studies and took a trip up and down the Smart Road.

Boucher was instrumental in securing a portion of the initial funding for the Smart Road in an effort to ramp up Virginia Tech's research efforts and bring more jobs to Southwest Virginia. VTTI has grown from a staff of 15 in 1993 to currently employing more than 250 including the largest group of driving safety researchers in the world; annual research expenditures of over \$20M with a 5 to 1 return on investment; and 95 research projects currently in process. In 1996, the Institute was designated as one of three Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Administration Intelligent Transportation Systems (FHWA/FTA ITS) Research Centers of Excellence. Also, in 2005, due to VTTI's continued research leadership, it was designated the National Surface Transportation Safety Center for Excellence.

Provost Mark McNamee stated, "We appreciate the support of Congressman Boucher and Senator Deeds and were happy to have the opportunity to update them on the growth and progress of VTTI, its sustained contribution to the research mission of the university, and the importance of transportation research in Virginia and the nation."

Boucher is committed to obtaining funding for infrastructure and transportation for Southwest Virginia, he is a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee serving on three subcommittees – Energy and Air Quality, of which he is the Chairman as well as Telecommunications and the Internet and Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection. He also sits on the House Judiciary Committee serving on the Courts, the Internet and Intellectual Property Subcommittee.

Driving Transportation with Technology

Tom Dingus said, “Virginia and the nation are still facing a massive transportation crisis. An ever-increasing volume of both car and truck traffic is adversely impacting safety, generating extensive wear and tear on our transportation infrastructure, and creating an unacceptable loss of life. VTTI is uniquely qualified and positioned to continue its efforts to answer the call for safer and more efficient transportation. We welcomed the opportunity to update both Boucher and Deeds on our progress over the past years.”