

Intelligent Transportation Society of Arizona
2012 State Chapter Membership Growth Award Application



The Intelligent Transportation Society of Arizona (ITS Arizona) was founded in 1992 in Phoenix, Arizona. Through the region's participation in the Metropolitan Model Deployment Initiative (MMDI), ITS Arizona experienced steady growth in membership numbers over the years. In 2005, ITS Arizona hosted the ITS America annual conference and brought nation-wide recognition to the organization.

In 2008, Phoenix was one of the areas hardest hit by the economic downturn. The staggering loss in membership prompted ITS Arizona to scale back on annual conference activities. The membership decline continued until the then newly-elected 2010-2011 leadership team devised and implemented several strategic initiatives to reverse the course. The outcome was a 45% year-to-year growth in membership (from 202 to 292) and record conference attendance since the inception of the organization. In addition, a record high in sponsorship and support from the private sector afforded ITS Arizona the capacity to provide better services to the community it serves.

These strategic initiatives which led to the record membership number in 2011 include:

- 1) **Modernization of administrative functions.** A brand new website (www.itsaz.org) was launched in early 2010 featuring a new organization logo and a stream-lined interface design that projects a professional image. The new web site provides easy access to content modification and thus eliminated the need for a dedicated web master and enables frequent information update. A commercial e-mail marketing application, Constant Contact, increased the efficiency in managing the membership, particularly in tracking membership status, facilitating annual conference registration, and sending targeted e-mail notifications and newsletters. In addition, an electronic payment option was added to simplify financial transactions.

- 2) **Higher level of volunteer board member participation.** In early 2010, ITS Arizona terminated the service contract with the public relations firm that had worked with ITS Arizona since the inception of the organization. These important functions are now performed by key board members. A "cookbook" was developed to define the

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continuously-evolving responsibility and role of each board member. Greater emphasis on recruiting board members from the public and the private sectors, as well as from major academic institutions in the region afforded ITS Arizona higher visibility and greater reach to these target groups which, correspondingly, led to greater member recruitment success from these groups and a more enriched organization.

- 3) **Improved level of services.** Efforts were made to reduce the logistical challenges for vendors to participate in the annual conference. Feedback from vendors and sponsors were given due consideration for future improvements. Free technical workshops on carefully selected topics were provided as an added value to the registered members. With registration fee underwritten by the conference sponsors, students, as perspective members, were afforded the opportunity to participate free in the annual conference, the dedicated student paper sessions, and the technical paper awards.

In 2011-2012, ITS Arizona had conducted two well-attended day-long technical workshops, attracting 60 and 90 participants respectively (Bluetooth Summit, IT for Transportation). Joint luncheons in collaboration with ITE and IMSA are being planned for the coming months. The 2012 annual conference in October has now been expanded to two days with a projected 300 members in attendance.

