

# SAFER Report

Volume 1, Number 3

Fall 1997

## The Status of Driver and Vehicle Inspections using ASPEN and SAFER

ASPEN was developed by the Office of Motor Carriers Field Systems Group to facilitate roadside safety inspections of commercial vehicles and drivers. The software provides users current information about the carrier, an inspection recommendation based on the carrier's safety and accident history via the ISS algorithm, and computer assisted data entry procedures for conducting inspections.

The information needed to keep ASPEN users current is provided by the SAFER system. SAFER identifies changes to carrier information downloaded each week from the Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS). Changes significantly affecting a carrier's ISS score are downloaded to ASPEN via the SAFER subscription download process. Changes to a carrier's safety history that may affect the ISS score are

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## Reno Conference Draws Attendees from 21 States and Canada

Captain Tim Erickson (Washington State Patrol) and Mr. Paul Henry (Oregon Department of Transportation) welcomed over 125 state agency officials, FHWA leaders, motor carrier representatives and transportation consultants and vendors to the Western States Regional Mainstreaming Conference held August 20-22 in Reno, Nevada. The tone for the conference was set by an impressive group of speakers who addressed ITS/CVO issues, by practitioners who shared lessons learned from CVISN pilot projects, and through the productive interchange among attending CVO regulators and operators from the Western and Midwestern states and the Canadian province of Alberta.



*ITS/CVO seeks to make CVO safer, simpler, and less costly through cost-effective technologies.*

## ITS/CVO Technology Showcased

The Reno Conference offered ITS/CVO equipment vendors and software developers a chance to show their stuff. In addition to vendor displays at the conference, one breakout session was set aside

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## SAFER Business Strategy

SAFER development is currently funded by the Federal Highway Administration Office of Motor carriers (FHWA/OMC). FHWA/OMC intends for SAFER operations and maintenance (O&M) costs to be covered by user fees. These fees **will not** be charged to law enforcement and related state and federal agencies, but all other organizations that subscribe to SAFER will be charged a user's fee for the services they request. These services include:

- subscription processing;
- carrier, vehicle, and driver snapshot queries;
- queries for carrier profile reports; and
- queries for driver and vehicle inspection and accident reports

In order to satisfy these requirements, TransCore, the SAFER O&M contractor, is developing an accounting and cash management system. TransCore has purchased an accounting system and is establishing relationships with banks and credit card clearinghouses to facilitate cash management and transaction processing.

The SAFER Business Plan outlines the methods that will be used to track user support services. Periodic usage summary statements will be provided to the Account Manager at each organization. Each organization can choose to pay for these services through prepaid cash accounts with a local bank or credit card accounts established with the SAFER clearinghouse.

The fees associated with the SAFER services will be established by a Control Board based on incurred O&M costs and the volume of service requests. Since the O&M costs are largely fixed, an increase in demand for services will result in lower cost per unit of service and thus a reduction in user fees. The initial fee structure is currently being reviewed by the SAFER Steering Committee and FHWA/OMC. The proposed fee structure is outlined below:

- Snapshot Subscriptions - \$4.00 per request plus 8 cents per snapshot.
- Profile Requests - \$10 per carrier profile.

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## SafeVUE in Beta Testing

The SAFER / CVIEW Visual User Environment (SafeVUE) was released by Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (JHU/APL) for Beta testing in July of 1997. SafeVUE is a Windows 95/NT application that provides access to the SAFER system. It is designed to serve the needs of commercial carriers, insurance companies, shippers, research organizations, and government agencies who wish to subscribe to the SAFER system and receive on-line services.

The Beta version of SafeVUE permits the user to dial into the Safer system, download subscription information to a local database, make queries against Safer or SafeVUE's local database, and export the carrier snapshot information to an ASCII file.

In future releases, SafeVUE will provide access to detailed carrier profile information and vehicle snapshots and inspection records. A given user may also be able to access their own driver snapshot record. It will enable the user to developed complex database queries and add or modify subscription specifications.

HELP, Inc. and ADVANTAGE CVO are currently using the SafeVUE software to download weekly updates via their carrier subscriptions. Several commercial carriers, insurance companies, and government agencies are assisting JHU/APL by Beta testing the software. ❖

## SAFER - ASPEN Interface Demonstrated at Houston and Denver CVSA Meetings

Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (JHU/APL), TransCore, and the Office of Motor Carrier's Field Systems Group joined forces at the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) meeting in Houston, Texas on May 5-7 and in Denver, Colorado on September 29 -October 2 to demonstrate the interface between the ASPEN inspection system and SAFER. The new interface enables ASPEN or AVALANCHE users to upload inspection reports to the SAFER system. These reports can then be

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## CVIEW Installed in Maryland and Virginia

The Commercial Vehicle Information Exchange Window (CVIEW) is a special version of the SAFER software designed for state installations. Many of the states involved in the Commercial Vehicle Information Systems and Networks (CVISN) prototype and pilot program are interested in making the CVIEW software a critical component of their system architecture. The overall concept of data exchange via the CVIEW system is shown in the figure below.

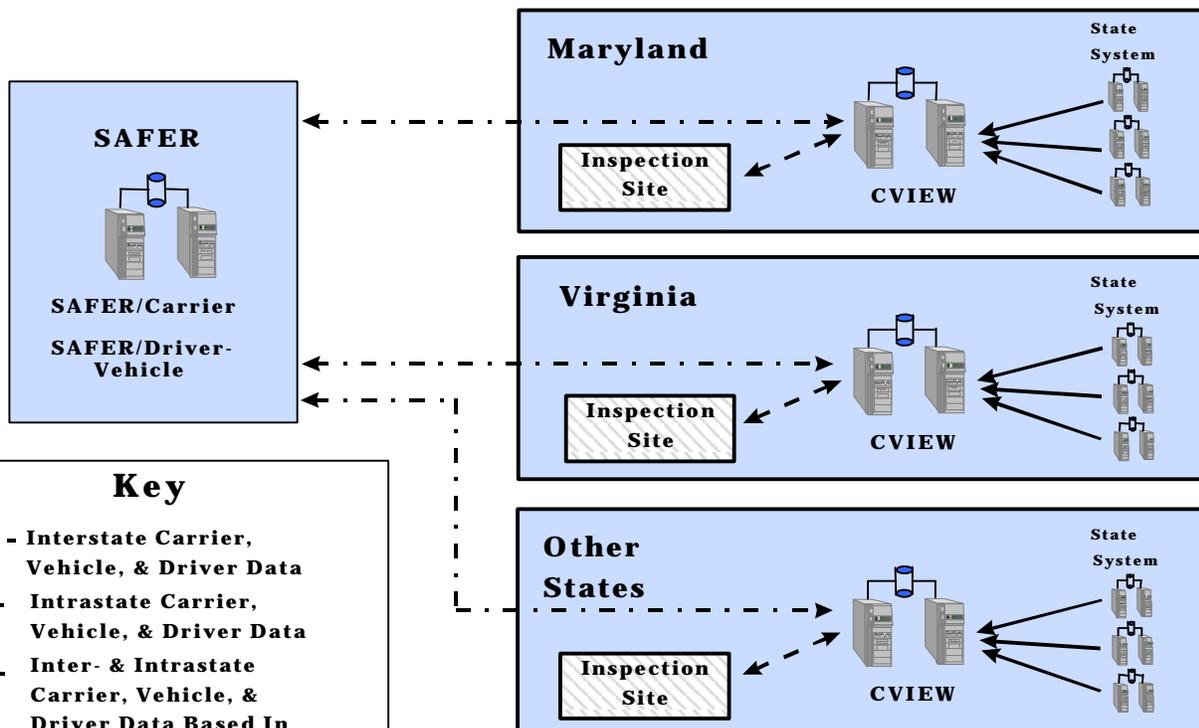
The alpha release of the CVIEW software supporting the exchange of interstate carrier data between SAFER and the roadside is installed in the Maryland and Virginia CVISN Prototype States. The beta release of the software will be available to the CVISN Prototype and Pilot States in February, 1998. ❖

specifically for vendors of key desktop and roadside ITS/CVO technologies to demonstrate how their products and services will help motor carriers and state agencies meet the dual goals of highway safety and productivity improvement.

During this session, TransCore's David Roden showed how carrier safety data can be accessed electronically through FHWA's Safety and Fitness Electronic Records (SAFER) System. The SAFER Web Page and the SafeVUE software were demonstrated. Interactive carrier queries were performed, a subscription was downloaded, and the SafeVUE database was exported to an external ASCII file.

Mr. Roden was joined by FHWA's Mike Blevins who provided an overview of ASPEN, the software designed to allow roadside inspectors to use pen-based and laptop computers to enter safety inspection results at the time inspections are performed, and upload this information to the SAFER system. ❖

### SAFER/CVIEW Data Exchange



#### Key

- - - Interstate Carrier, Vehicle, & Driver Data
- - - Intrastate Carrier, Vehicle, & Driver Data
- Inter- & Intrastate Carrier, Vehicle, & Driver Data Based In that State

## SAFER Web Site Updates

The SAFER Internet Web Site has been one of the most popular and successful aspects of the SAFER system. It has provided commercial carriers, insurance companies, financial institutions, and shippers with up-to-date information about carrier safety and accident histories. There have been over 32,000 visitors to the site since March, 1997

The Web page has been an effective mechanism for communicating questions and concerns about the SAFER system, safety data, and commercial vehicle issues to the SAFER Deployment Coordinator and the SAFER development team. Timely input from individuals accessing the Web site has helped to improve SAFER operations. More importantly, user comments have helped guide improvements in system performance and in the user interface. Many of these enhancements have been implemented. For example:

- database access performance was improved.
- access to the database query page was more clearly presented
- access to the SAFER Reports in text and Adobe Acrobat formats was added, and
- older Web Browsers such as Netscape 2.0, Internet Explorer 2.0, and America On Line are now automatically recognized and directly supported.

One of the difficulties users had with the SAFER Web page was understanding how to use the Name search option. If a user did not provide a wildcard character (\*) before or after the name they entered into the query field, the software searched for the name using an "exact match" method. This often failed to locate the desired carrier because the name entered did not exactly match the full name included in the SAFER database. The new Web page provides two buttons under the query field that makes it easier for users to choose the type of search most appropriate to their needs.

The Web page will continue to evolve. One area currently being investigated is the ability to provide users with various statistical queries supported by graphical output to assist them with data analysis tasks. We will continue to provide users with information updates as these capabilities are developed.

"Thank You!" to those of you who have accessed the Web page and provided constructive comments. We welcome your input and need your support. If you haven't visited the site, please do. The address is [WWW.SAFERSYS.ORG](http://WWW.SAFERSYS.ORG). ❖

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based on the results of compliance reviews and accident and inspection reports.

SAFER also provides a mechanism to electronically transfer inspection reports from roadside ASPEN units to a State's SAFETYNET site where the information is processed for input to the MCMIS database. This transfer mechanism is called the SAFER Data Mailbox. It is currently being prototyped and tested by a group of eastern states referred to as the Eastern States Coalition; RS Information Systems is serving as the technical liaison between the states and the SAFER and ASPEN development teams.

As part of the SAFER Data Mailbox test, state law enforcement officers will use ASPEN roadside units and mobile communications technologies to upload inspection reports to the State's Safetynet mailbox on the SAFER system. The AVALANCHE software, which resides at state SAFETYNET sites, will download this information from the SAFER mailbox and make it available to the SAFETYNET software for subsequent data processing.

Near-term, future capabilities will allow SAFER to store inspection reports in its database for up to a thirty day period. ASPEN will also be enhanced to allow it to query the SAFER database to provide the officer in the field with detailed information about recent inspections that have been performed on a particular vehicle or driver. If the vehicle or driver had a recent Out-of-Service (OOS) violation, the officer will be provided access to the information necessary to determine when the OOS event occurred and, if an inspection correction report was submitted, whether or not corrective action was taken. ❖

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downloaded to a state's SAFETYNET site for data processing and input into the Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS). The next release of ASPEN, Version 1.4, combined with the latest release of the SAFER software, will allow inspectors to query SAFER to download previously stored inspection reports generated during the last thirty day period by roadside enforcement officers anywhere in the country. ❖