Kroes and Chen Named Researchers of the Year

Each year, the URITC awards research grants with the goal of making a positive impact in the transportation field. In many cases, the research results are difficult to quantify.

In the case of the “Feasibility Study to Increase Utilization at the Port of Davisville,” the research resulted in Rhode Island receiving a $22.3 million Federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant. The grant will be used to increase the port’s capacity, allowing for the staging for off-shore wind equipment and the handling of cargo for short sea shipping.

In recognition of the hard work that James Kroes and Yuwen Chen put into the study, which led directly to the TIGER grant, the two URI professors were named the 2010 Co-researchers of the Year by the URITC.

“This award recognizes the impact these researchers have had on their students, the state and the New England corridor,” said URITC Executive Director Deborah Rosen.

The idea for the research study was initiated when Kroes met Port Director Evan Matthews while visiting Davisville on a tour of the port for the URITC’s Business Academy.

“Evan asked if I knew anyone at URI that might be interested in working on a research project to evaluate the feasibility of using the port for containerized freight shipments,” explained Kroes. “The project was a great supply chain and transportation study that would allow us to involve students in innovative research.”

Aside from the professors, several URI students played important roles in the study.

“The outcome of the URITC research project is strong evidence to the caliber of faculty and students which URI has been able to attract to the Supply Chain program,” said Rosen. “This major was started with a grant from the URITC and the fact that it led to a substantial federal grant is a testament to the wisdom of initiating this program.”

In the nomination letter for the URITC award, Matthews wrote, “As a transportation professional and adjunct faculty for the University, it has been a pleasure to work with Professors Chen and Kroes, and to be a part of the research experiences they have created for URI students.”

Porsche Moves to Davisville

On Sept. 14, 2010, Porsche Cars North America (PCNA) announced that it is moving its port of operations from the Port of Baltimore to the Port of Davisville in North Kingstown.

On an annual basis, the port will serve as the entry point for some 11,000 Porsches that are bound for dealerships throughout the Northeast.