

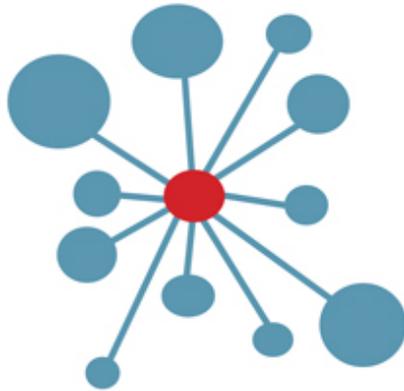
September 1, 2016

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS



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**executive directors conference
september 18 - september 20, 2016
south bend, in**

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CONGRESS BRIEF

Field Hearing on the California High-Speed Rail Project

On Monday, the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Material held a field hearing on the Continued Oversight of the California High-Speed Rail Project. In Chairman Jeff Denham's (R-CA) opening statement he expressed the desire to explore the original project, where it stands today, and whether there is a realistic way to complete the project approved by voters in 2008. Chairman Denham also noted his concern with California's Cap-and-Trade Program not producing the revenues expected and mentioned other notable issues in California that deserve attention such as water infrastructure. In his testimony, Dan Richard, Chairman of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, told the subcommittee that the project is going smoothly and the new business plan shows the project has enough money to build the line from San Jose to Wasco in the Central Valley.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

FHWA Announces Grants to Test New Ways of Funding Highways

The new Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives (STSFA) grant program will fund states for the exploration of revenue mechanisms to help sustain the Highway Trust Fund. The eight projects selected will share the \$14.2 million to pilot an assortment of options to raise revenue such as on-board vehicle technologies that charge vehicles based on miles traveled and pay-at-the pump/charging station road user charges. The states selected for the new FAST Act program are California, Delaware, Hawaii, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, and Washington.

VP Announces \$2.45 Billion Federal Loan to Amtrak

Vice President Joe Biden announced last week that the Build America Bureau is loaning Amtrak \$2.45 billion through its Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program, the largest loan in the history of USDOT. The loan will be used to buy 28 new trainsets and improve rails and stations along the Northeast Corridor for high-speed trains. The new trainsets will help accommodate the rapid growth on the Acela Express line by increasing capacity and providing more frequent service from Washington, DC to Boston, MA.

Public Transportation Safety Program Final Rule Safety Stakeholder Letter

FTA Associate Administrator for Transit Safety and Oversight Thomas Littleton penned a letter this week to public transportation safety stakeholders about the Public Transportation Safety Program Final Rule. The final rule specifies the enforcement actions available to FTA when a public transportation provider is not in compliance with federal safety law and applies the Safety Management System principles that use data to build on existing transit safety practices. Littleton's letter emphasizes FTA's commitment to safety and desire to connect with stakeholders in implementing this new rule.

Safety Performance Management Resources

FHWA recently announced the availability of four new resources online to help states and other stakeholders implement the Safety Performance Management Measures Final Rule. The resources include a safety performance targets timeline and a list of data resources and training support. In addition, the **MPO Safety Performance Measures Fact Sheet** summaries the requirements for MPOs and compares the different responsibilities with state DOTs.

REGIONS BRIEF

Strengthening Emergency Preparedness through Alternative Fuel Vehicles

Preparing our communities for disasters and emergencies is essential for minimizing loss and ensuring swift recovery. The Initiative for Resiliency in Energy through Vehicles (**iREV**) is addressing the challenge of these disruptions by developing resources for emergency planners to help communities integrate alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) into their fleets. This initiative, with support from the U.S. Department of Energy Clean Cities Program and led by the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO), promotes this resiliency strategy through case studies, tools, workshops, and policy and planning toolkits.

iREV released several **case studies** conducted by NASEO that detail the challenges and advantages of incorporating alternative fuel types into emergency fleets. NASEO is also in the process of developing the online iREV Tracking Tool to help emergency planners access the data necessary to understand the costs and benefits associated with different AFVs. Your region can get involved in this initiative by attending one of the many workshops that will be held around the country. The **next workshop** takes place in Savannah, Georgia on October 19. There will also be an upcoming webinar for NARC members to learn more about this program. Please contact Cassie Powers (cpowers@naseo.org) with any questions.

Volkswagen Settlement Details

From two related settlements this summer, Volkswagen (VW) agreed to spend up to \$10.03 billion in consumer compensation and \$4.7 billion to mitigate pollution and invest in supporting zero-emission vehicle technology. The emission reduction program is part of the settlement from the *Clean Air Act* violations and requires VW to fund projects that reduce emissions of NOx across the country. The funds will be administered by a trustee and beneficiaries may include states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and Indian tribes. VW is also required to invest \$2 billion in advancing green vehicle technology. Over half of this money will go towards a national plan that VW will develop with input from cities, states, Indian tribes, and federal agencies. Final approval of the settlement will come this fall and details on environmental mitigation and zero emission vehicle investments are still forming. The **Partial Consent Decree** is available online and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has released a list of **FAQs for Beneficiaries to the VW Mitigation Trust Agreement** that provides more information on timing and requirements of the emissions reduction program.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

OPPORTUNITIES

[View full list of grants and events!](#)

Every Day Counts Community Connections Webinar

September 8, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

September 22, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

As part of the FHWA Every Day Counts initiative, presenters in this webinar will explain how the Community Connections initiative will promote effective practices for reconnecting and revitalizing

communities; provide background information on how past transportation investments have divided communities, cutting off connections between neighborhood residents and essential services; and discuss how state and local partners are applying proven strategies to assess and address the impacts that these transportation impacts are having on their communities.

Dynamic Traffic Assignment: A Practical Approach

September 14, 2:00 – 4:00 PM ET

Dynamic Traffic Assignment (DTA) promises better treatments of recurring and non-recurring traffic flow phenomena, including queue formation and spillback where volumes exceed capacity, than static traffic assignment methods to which planners are accustomed. DTA also more readily accommodates the added temporal fidelity of emergent travel demand model frameworks (e.g., tour- and activity-based models) and offers a solution for analyzing innovative congestion management strategies (e.g., advanced traffic management systems, intelligent transportation systems, and managed lanes) for which static assignments are unsuitable. This webinar presents a practical methodology for building and applying DTA for real planning projects, provides recommendations for defining success, and identifies some of the pitfalls and shortcuts that stand in the way of wider adoption and successful application of DTA.

NARC's 2016 Executive Directors Conference and Board Retreat

EDC: September 18-20 – South Bend, IN

Board Retreat: September 20-21 – South Bend, IN

Join NARC and the Michiana Area Council of Governments for the 2016 Executive Directors Conference in South Bend, Indiana. This conference brings executive directors, deputy directors, and senior staff together to network, share best practices, and explore opportunities for strengthening professional capacity and development. *Please plan to arrive on Sunday, September 18. Hotel rooms will not be available on Saturday night at our hotel or any others in the area.*

Let's Talk Performance: Safety Target Setting and Coordination

September 20, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

FHWA will provide an overview of the findings from the Safety Target Coordination Final Report and presenters from a state DOT and MPO will showcase noteworthy practices on how their organizations coordinate on safety target setting in support of the Safety Performance Management Measures Final Rule. This event is open to staff from FHWA, state DOTs, SHSOs, MPOs, and other stakeholder agencies.

Accommodating Trucks in Innovative Design Intersections and Interchanges

September 21, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

In an effort to maximize safety, better accommodate bicycle and pedestrian movements, and/or optimize motor vehicle flows, various states, counties, and municipalities that build and maintain the roadway networks are constructing new types of intersections and interchanges. Many of these connection points are also being designed to better accommodate truck movements. This webinar will discuss the reasons why many different types of innovative intersections are becoming more popular across the US, describe the state of the practice on how agencies are factoring in trucks and freight needs when planning and designing those intersections, and review on-going efforts in two states – Oregon and Ohio – that demonstrate how this is done within states at the program and project levels.

Southern Arizona's Inaugural Technology and Transportation Summit

October 13 – Tucson, AZ

Pima Association of Governments (PAG) invites you to attend southern Arizona's inaugural Technology and Transportation Summit. The 2016 summit will feature local and national industry and academic leaders working to create a more sustainable, efficient, functional, and connected urban environment. Come explore how technology and applied transportation solutions merge and what advances we can expect in the future.

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