



CTS director Robert Johns accepts position with USDOT

Robert Johns has been appointed by the Obama administration to serve as the new director of the John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center. He began his new position September 28.



Robert Johns

The Volpe Center, which operates out of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Research and Innovative Technology Administration in Boston, is charged with improving the nation's transportation system through collaborations between the USDOT and other federal, state, local, and international agencies and entities.

"This is an exciting opportunity to be challenged by a large research operation and to serve our country more directly," Johns says. "But it is a great loss to leave CTS and the

wonderful transportation community here in Minnesota."

Johns was with CTS for 21 years as director, deputy director, associate director, and research coordinator. Under his directorship, CTS external funding grew from \$8 million to more than \$20 million, making CTS one of the nation's leading research and policy centers on transportation.

Nationally, Johns is active in the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the National Academies. He currently is chair of the TRB Technical Activities Council, providing oversight to TRB's 200 technical committees that address all aspects of transportation.

A search for a new CTS director will be launched at the end of the calendar year.

Laurie McGinnis, the associate director of CTS, will serve as acting director (see related article). **CTS**

Supporters honor Robert Johns

CTS staff and supporters thanked **Robert Johns** for his years of leadership and commitment to CTS, to the University of Minnesota, and to transportation innovation at a farewell reception on September 21. **Laurie McGinnis**, acting director of CTS (see related article), moderated a short program during the event.

McGinnis introduced a videotaped announcement from the first speaker, U.S. Congressman **James Oberstar**. "This is the juncture at which people usually say, 'The University's loss is the Volpe Center's gain.' But we all gain," he said. "All centers for transportation studies gain. The whole U.S. transportation system gains, and the Volpe Center gains, by having Bob as its new leader." Oberstar called Johns an "innovative thinker, part Oxford don, part street pragmatist" with a rare ability to bring multiple ideas together into a cohesive whole. "He has served us extraordinarily well at the Center for Transportation Studies," Oberstar said. "Bob leaves behind an extraordinary legacy from

which all of us benefit, but what he takes with him are our friendship, our good will, and our best wishes."

Andy Furco, associate vice president for public engagement at the University, said Johns "has been a highly effective, dedicated, and extraordinary manager who has brought great vision and great leadership to the Center for Transportation Studies," one of the University's premier centers. "As the University looks at reforming centers, we often point to CTS as an exemplar, all due to Bob's vision and leadership," he said.

Fred Corrigan, chair of the CTS Executive Committee, shared several of Johns's accomplishments, such as the increased profile of CTS nationally, within the University, and



Andy Furco



Fred Corrigan

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McGinnis named acting director

Laurie

McGinnis has been appointed acting director of CTS by **Robert Jones**, senior vice president for system academic administration, and **Andrew Furco**, associate vice president for public engagement.



Laurie McGinnis

A civil engineer, McGinnis also holds master of public affairs and master of business administration degrees. As CTS associate director since 2001, she has worked closely with stakeholders, faculty and staff, funding organizations, and the Center's advisory committees to coordinate research conducted by academic departments. McGinnis has also overseen the development and delivery of technical assistance and training, information products, and outreach services that support the Center's programs. Nationally, McGinnis is active in the Transportation Research Board and the International Advisory Board of the Women's Transportation Seminar.

As acting director, McGinnis will oversee day-to-day management of the office and work closely with national and state

with legislators. He also credited Johns for bringing industry into the research environment. “Bob told the private sector, ‘There’s room at the table in this discussion,’ and then he created tables and chairs to bring those folks together,” he said.

Richard P. Braun, founding director of CTS and a former Mn/DOT commissioner, expressed his confidence that Johns will do an “excellent job” at Volpe. The position is “not only a neat challenge, but it’s a great opportunity to move transportation forward, and he’s the guy to do that,” he said. “Thank you for the excellent job you did running CTS.”

Bernie Arseneau, director of the Minnesota Department of Transportation’s policy, safety, and strategic initiatives division, thanked Johns on behalf of Commissioner **Tom Sorel** and Deputy Commissioner **Khani Sahebjam**. “There’s no doubt that Mn/DOT and CTS had a really impressive partnership,” Arseneau said. The two organizations worked together closely to strengthen transportation research and handle sometimes sensitive issues. “I look forward to continuing the relationship for many years,” he said.

Tom Scott, former director of the University’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, credited Johns and CTS for their role in positioning interdisciplinary centers in the University’s organizational structure. “What struck me most,”

Scott said, “is how Bob and the center have been able to stick pretty faithfully to basic transportation areas and have also been willing to strike off into new and innovative directions, help us all think about ways to educate the state on broad transportation issues, and get faculty and students in a wide range of disciplines to study transportation.”

Next, McGinnis read portions of a letter from **Max Donath**, director of the Intelligent Transportation Systems Institute, who was unable to attend. “Bob Johns put CTS on the national map,” Donath wrote. “Bob articulated a vision for CTS and fleshed out that vision and the structure and process that made it all hang together. I am proud to have been a partner with Bob in carrying out that vision.”

McGinnis then expressed appreciation for Johns on behalf of CTS staff. “Bob led us internally, and pushed us, and sometimes it was challenging, but it was always fun and we always had great results,” she said. “You will be missed, but you did an excellent job preparing us for this. We hope we’ll do you proud.”

Johns then took the podium and welcomed McGinnis as acting director. “Laurie will do a great job,” he said. “Her passion and commitment are evident... We helped build CTS together, along with many other CTS staff.”

Johns said his time at CTS “was just a dream come true, and it’s been a



Richard Braun



Bernie Arseneau



Tom Scott

wonderful experience.” What particularly excited him was the opportunity to pursue diverse topics within the University and then work with external organizations to make things happen.

Johns cited an essay from the September 6 *New York Times Book Review* titled “The University’s Crisis of Purpose” (by **Drew Gilpin Faust**, president of Harvard) to help articulate what he valued about working in a university: “Higher education is not about results in the next quarter but about discoveries that may take—and last—decades or even centuries.” Resolving the tension between sponsors seeking quick results and universities stretching the envelope produces great things, he said. “When it works, it really advances Minnesota.”

In closing, Johns thanked supporters in the University administration; the CTS Executive Committee; professionals and practitioners on the councils and committees; faculty and research staff; and CTS staff. “I plan to stay connected,” Johns concluded. “I hope we can do some great things together in the future.” **CTS**

Freight and Logistics Symposium: the system after economic recovery

When the economic recovery begins in earnest, the business landscape could look quite different. The core challenges for the freight transportation, logistics, and manufacturing industries—including modal

capacity, energy, the environment, and sourcing strategies—will come blazing back, and they all need to be addressed to manage the transportation-related aspects of economic recovery.

At this year’s Freight and Logistics Symposium on December 4, representatives from the business community, academia, and the public sector will discuss what to expect when business picks up again. They will also discuss the infrastructure, policy, and practice changes needed with economic recovery.

Presentations will cover trends and scenarios for

the future, the role of the public sector, multimodal strategies, and freight system impacts of the federal authorization bill.

A brochure is enclosed. For more information, contact **Sara Van Essendelft**, 612-624-3708, or see www.cts.umn.edu/Events/FLOGSymposium. **CTS**



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transportation agencies, business organizations, elected officials, other universities, international partners, and University leaders to build on the already established programs and leadership activities of CTS. **CTS**

Guidebook offers advice, resources for airport managers

The managers of small airports have a wide range of duties and have often come into their job with little formal airport management training. The Airport Cooperative Research Program's recently published *Guidebook for Managing Small Airports* (ACRP Report 16) aims to help these airport personnel find resources and techniques they can apply to better meet their responsibilities.

The guidebook was created by Minnesota AirTAP, which assembled the research team for the project and provided overall leadership and management.

AirTAP, which is housed at CTS, was awarded the \$397,000 contract in 2006, after responding to an RFP issued by the ACRP. The ACRP is sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and managed by the National Academies, acting through its Transportation Research Board (TRB). It is one of the TRB's applied contract research programs that develop near-term, practical solutions to problems facing transportation agencies.

Small airport managers, owners, operators, and policymakers are assumed to be responsible for activities often unrelated to the management of the airport, says **Jim Grothaus**, AirTAP director and the project's principal investigator. "The [guidebook] project team intended to capture the critical issues that these practitioners frequently encounter while wearing the airport manager's hat."

In addition to Grothaus, the guidebook's authors were **Thomas Helms Jr.**, formerly of CTS; **Shaun Germolus** and **Dave Beaver**, AirportAdmin, LLC.; **Kevin Carlson**, **Tim Callister**, and **Bob Kunkel**, Mead & Hunt, Inc.; and **Ann Johnson**, Professional Engineering Services, Ltd.

The guidebook gives airport managers and operators current, practical advice in a convenient format on such topics as financial management, oversight of contracts and leases, safety and security, noise control, community relations, federal grant compliance, capital improvements, and facility maintenance. It also identifies

the best sources of additional information about these topics as well as low-cost, easily implementable practices in use at some airports.

In creating the guidebook, the research team conducted a literature review to determine available and relevant information sources and surveyed nearly 200 small airport managers across the country to identify challenges and current practices in managing small airports.

The *Guidebook for Managing Small Airports* can be downloaded, or a printed copy ordered, from TRB's Web site at www.trb.org/Main/Public/Blurbs/162145.aspx. **CTS**



CTS hosts 'Transportation Jeopardy' at State Fair

People of all ages stopped by the CTS exhibit at the Minnesota State Fair on September 4.

The main attraction was Transportation Jeopardy, hosted by the *Star Tribune's* "Road Guy" blogger and columnist **Jim Foti**. Contestants tested their transportation knowledge against other fair-goers in classic *Jeopardy* fashion. Lucky winners **Brian Saint Clair** of Shoreview, **Suzy Bergstrom** of Shoreview, **Mike Schmidt**

of Coon Rapids, and **Paul Ackermann** of White Bear Lake each took home a transportation-related prize: a nonmotorized scooter.

Young fair-goers visiting the University's building had the opportunity to check out Gridlock Buster, an interactive traffic-control game designed by the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Institute (www.its.umn.edu). The game incorporates tools and ideas used by traffic engineers to give players a taste of what goes into managing traffic flow. The ITS Institute is housed at CTS.

For the safety-conscious adult, the Center for Excellence in Rural Safety (CERS) showcased **SafeRoadMaps.org**, a powerful and visually innovative crash-mapping tool that maps every roadway fatality in the nation, down to the local level. CTS collaborates with the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs to provide CERS services.

CTS staff and student volunteers worked at the exhibit.

For more information about the exhibit, including photos and links, please see www.cts.umn.edu/Events/statefair2009/index.html. **CTS**



CTS staff and Jim Foti at the fair. Back row: Gina Baas, Foti, Amy Friebe, Shawn Haag, Michael McCarthy. Front row: Mindy Carlson, Linda Preisen, Stephanie Malinoff, Arlene Mathison



Jim Foti emceed "Transportation Jeopardy."



Young fair-goers check out Gridlock Buster, a traffic-control game developed by the ITS Institute.

CTS Fall Luncheon November 10: ‘Why Electric Cars?’

The time for plug-in vehicles is now, says **Dan Davids**, president of Plug In America. He will explain why at the CTS Fall Luncheon on November 10.

For a number of reasons, electric vehicles (EVs) will figure significantly in reducing our nation’s dependence on petroleum and improving the global environment, Davids says. For example:

- The technology is ready. Today’s batteries are reliable and the cars require nearly no maintenance.

- EV range isn’t the bugaboo that detractors claim. The vast majority of drivers cover less than 40 miles per day.
- Unlike other alternatives, such as hydrogen fuel cells, the infrastructure is already in place—the electric grid.
- EVs powered by the U.S. electrical grid are cleaner than gas, E85, biodiesel, and fuel cells. And EVs get cleaner as the electrical grid gets cleaner.

In his presentation, Davids will discuss the progress of new plug-in vehicles and

give an overview of purchase initiatives. The Obama administration announced \$2.4 billion for plug-ins in August.

Plug In America is a nonprofit coalition formed to raise public awareness of and advocate for plug-in transportation (www.pluginamerica.org.)

A registration form is enclosed. For more information, contact **Sara Van Essendelft**, 612-624-3708, cceconf5@umn.edu, or visit www.cts.umn.edu/events. **CTS**

Call for Presentations: 2010 research conference

CTS has issued a Call for Presentations for its 21st Annual Transportation Research Conference. The call invites all interested individuals to submit a one-page abstract for a presentation (or poster) at the conference, to be held April 27–28, 2010.

Please note that the 2010 conference

returns to the RiverCentre in St. Paul.

If you or your organization would like to share the results of your research or innovations in transportation-related fields, please submit an abstract by November 13.

All abstracts must be submitted electronically. Go to the CTS Web site at

www.cts.umn.edu/events/rescon and follow the instructions to submit your abstract.

For further information, contact **Sara Van Essendelft**, 612-624-3708, cceconf5@umn.edu. **CTS**

Upcoming events

To publicize your event, call CTS at 612-626-1077, fax 612-625-6381, or e-mail snopl001@umn.edu. Visit the CTS Web site—www.cts.umn.edu—for more comprehensive event information.

Oct. 25–27	2009 American Segmental Bridge Institute 21st Annual Convention, Minneapolis. See www.asbi-assoc.org/news/events .	Dec. 2	Minnesota Association of Asphalt Paving Technologist’s Annual Asphalt Conference, Brooklyn Park. See www1.umn.edu/iree/e3/ .
Oct. 26–27	Minnesota Water Resources Conference, St. Paul. See www.wrc.umn.edu/watercon .	Dec. 3	Annual Concrete Conference, St. Paul. See www.cce.umn.edu/concrete .
Oct. 28–29	Toward Zero Deaths Conference, Duluth. See www.minnesotatzd.org .	Dec. 4	Annual Freight and Logistics Symposium, Minneapolis. See www.cts.umn.edu/Events/FLOGSymposium .
Nov. 5	Minnesota Transportation Alliance Annual Meeting/Construction Forecast, St. Cloud. See www.transportationalliance.com/annualmeeting.htm .	Feb. 11	14th Annual Pavement Conference, St. Paul. See www.terraroalliance.org/events .
Nov. 10	CTS Fall Luncheon, Minneapolis. See www.cts.umn.edu/Events/Luncheon .	March 3	54th Annual Asphalt Contractors’ Workshop/Quality Initiative Workshop, Brooklyn Center. See www.asphaltisbest.com/calendar.asp .
Nov. 17	E3 2009: The Midwest’s Premier Energy, Economic and Environmental Conference, St. Paul. See http://mn-aapt.org .	March 18–19	Concrete Paving Association of Minnesota 49th Annual Concrete Paving Workshop, Breezy Point, Minn. See www.concreteisbetter.com .
Nov. 19–20	APWA-MN Chapter Fall Conference, Brooklyn Center. See www.cce.umn.edu/conferences/mpwa .	Apr. 20–21	Spring Maintenance Training Expo, St. Cloud. See www.mnltap.umn.edu/Events/SpringMaintenanceExpo .
		Apr. 27–28	21st Annual CTS Transportation Research Conference, RiverCentre, St. Paul. CTS