



Summit explores directions for road pricing in Minnesota

What is the future of road pricing in Minnesota? State and national speakers shared their views at the Minnesota Road Pricing Summit, held February 1 at the Metropolitan Council chambers in St. Paul.

The summit was presented by the Citizens League, the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, and CTS. **Peter Bell**, chair of the Metropolitan Council, and **Sean Kershaw**, executive director of the Citizens League, gave opening remarks.

To set the table for the event, **Lee Munnich**, director of the State and Local Policy Program at the Humphrey Institute, said legislators need to grapple with three separate but related questions. First, should Minnesota expand the use of congestion pricing in the Twin Cities to manage flow and congestion? Second, should Minnesota use tolling to pay for needed transportation infrastructure? And third, what are the financing options in the longer term? He then introduced a short video describing the



Tyler Duvall

successful MnPASS toll lane project on I-394 west of Minneapolis.

Next, **Tyler Duvall**, assistant secretary for policy and planning with the U.S. Department of Transportation, described the *National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America's Transportation Network*, a comprehensive initiative launched last May.

Congestion pricing will be a key component of the strategy's Urban Partnership Agreements (see article on page 2).

Duvall also rebutted three common objections to road pricing. First is the concern over technological capabilities, including privacy protections. "We are beyond the technical problems," Duvall declared. "It is a policy and political will issue at this point."

Second is pricing's impact on the less affluent. Low-income citizens "are not particularly well served by current transportation policies," Duvall claimed. "Congestion itself is highly regressive," he said, as low-

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income workers lose the "bidding war" for accessible real estate. Instead of opposing pricing, Duvall asked, "Why don't we deal with the low-income problem directly?" Technology could be used to subsidize selected communities or give citizens monthly credits to ensure their mobility, he suggested.

Third is the "right-wing" argument that road pricing is double taxation—which, Duvall said, "is, frankly, not correct." Traditional taxes cover initial capital costs, he explained, but not maintenance and operations.

A reaction panel moderated by **John Doan** of SRF Consulting Group followed Duvall's presentation. State Rep. **Bernie Lieder** said "the potential is there for road pricing in Minnesota...The problem we have is in convincing the public and the legislature."

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CTS Scholar named Distinguished McKnight University Professor

Professor **Nikolaos P. Papanikolopoulos** of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) is one of the recipients of the 2007 Distinguished McKnight University Professorship. The purpose of the professorship, announced last month by the Office of the Provost and the Graduate School, is to recognize and reward the University's most outstanding mid-career faculty. Recipients are honored with the title Distinguished McKnight University Professor, which they hold for



Nikolaos Papanikolopoulos

as long as they remain at the University of Minnesota. The grant associated with the professorship consists of \$100,000 to be expended over five years.

Papanikolopoulos, a CTS Scholar, is the director of SECTTRA—Security in Transportation Technology Research and Applications—a joint program of CSE and CTS. Formed last year, SECTTRA's mission is to earn recognition for the University of Minnesota as a world leader in the development and application of technologies for transportation security (see www.secttra.umn.edu).

Papanikolopoulos, also an Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers Fellow,

is a leading figure in robotics and automation, with groundbreaking contributions in distributed robotics, computer vision algorithms, and transportation systems. His widely cited "Scout" robot, featured on the cover of the National Science Foundation's robotics report, is one of robotics's most innovative concepts and prototypes. Transportation safety has also been greatly influenced by his work on vision-based monitoring of traffic and humans.

As an assistant professor, Papanikolopoulos received a McKnight Land-Grant Professorship and a National Science Foundation Career Award. **CTS**

U of M hosts stakeholder workshop for Urban Partnership proposal

Urban regions across the country are preparing proposals to compete for funding under the U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Partnership Agreement (UPA) program. To provide input for Minnesota's proposal, the University of Minnesota hosted a stakeholder workshop March 16 on the Minneapolis campus.

The UPA is a component of the USDOT's comprehensive initiative to reduce congestion on America's roads. In an unprecedented move, the department will award one or more metropolitan areas up to \$1.2 billion (from various agencies) to execute and evaluate a bold and innovative strategy for reducing urban traffic congestion. Strategies must use all of the following components: tolling/congestion pricing, transit, telecommuting, and technology and operations.

In Minnesota, a steering committee with representatives from Mn/DOT; the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit; Hennepin, Ramsey, and Dakota

Counties; the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority; and the University of Minnesota (Humphrey Institute, CTS, and the ITS Institute) has been meeting regularly. Workshop sponsors included Mn/DOT, the Metropolitan Council, the Citizens League, and the University of Minnesota.

CTS director **Robert Johns** gave the welcome and outlined workshop's purpose. **David Horner**, chief counsel with the Federal Transit Administration, explained the UPA program.

Next was a panel on Twin Cities opportunities for UPA funding, moderated by **Khani Sahebjam**, Mn/DOT Metro district engineer. Speakers were **Bernie Arseneau**, director of Mn/DOT's Office of Traffic, Safety, and Operations; **Arlene McCarthy**, director of metropolitan transportation services with the Met Council; and **Lee Munnich**, senior fellow with the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

The second panel, moderated by **Bob DeBoer**, director of policy development

with the Citizens League, featured elected officials giving their perspectives on Twin Cities' opportunities for UPA funding. Speakers included **Peter McLaughlin**, Hennepin County commissioner; **Ann Rest**, state senator; **Sandy Hewitt**, Plymouth City Council member; and **Mike Turner**, Dakota County commissioner.

The workshop then turned to break-out groups where participants discussed corridor-specific alternatives in the Twin Cities. Group leaders were former state senator **Carol Flynn**, **Ken Buckeye** of Mn/DOT's Office of Investment Management, and Munnich and DeBoer.

Lisa Freese, Mn/DOT deputy commissioner, gave the wrap-up and next steps. Applications are due April 30; 10 finalists will be chosen, and a more refined proposal will be due in the early summer. A funding decision is expected by August 8, 2007. **CTS**

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Hennepin County Commissioner **Linda Koblick** believes MnPASS is a "positive experience...that is ready to be replicated." Public approval rises after a new project such as MnPASS is in place and working. What's still needed, she said, is a multi-layered marketing effort to explain pricing to chambers of commerce, city councils, counties, and others.

Although state senator **Julianne Ortman** said she supports road pricing, she noted her concern for the entire tax burden of Minnesotans. She also questioned the "affordability" aspect of pricing: "Do we want to leave some people without the same levels of access to public services?"

Participants then heard a vision for a new direction in transportation finance from **Ed Regan**, senior vice president with Wilbur Smith Associates. "The days of the gas tax may be numbered," he began, due to several factors: political resistance to raising tax rates, decreased purchasing power due to inflation, and the growing use of hybrid and fuel cell vehicles. While "increased fuel efficiency is a very good thing for the environment and conservation," he said, "it will be very bad for transportation finance" if the tax system is based on consumption rather than mileage.

One possible long-term solution: a

national conversion to mileage-based taxation, phased in by 2025. All vehicles would come equipped for distance-based taxation, ultimately at the assembly line, Regan said. All transportation taxes would be collected as direct road user charges and distributed to the federal, state, and local levels.

Robert Johns, director of CTS, moderated the next reactor panel. Rep. **Michael Beard** pointed out that "the whole concept of user-based pricing isn't as foreign as we think," as the aviation and trucking industries already are using advanced technologies. He cautioned, however, that some citizens—such as his grandparents—may be unable to adapt. "Are we actually going to put a transponder in their '68 Buick?"

Former state senator **Carol Flynn**, now with Transit for Livable Communities, said that while she supports the pricing concept, other cities where it is used (such as London and Oslo) invested heavily in transit and made a major commitment to provide alternatives to vehicles and tolling. "The issue of equity is very real for downtown Minneapolis [residents], aging driv-



Bernie Lieder



Julianne Ortman



Michael Beard



Carol Flynn

ers, and those who don't own vehicles," she said.

Mayor **Jim Hovland** of Edina, who chaired the MnPASS study commission, said "we can't come close to buying our way out of congestion, so [pricing] methods are quite fascinating." One of the commission's recommendations was to actively pursue an interconnected system of MnPASS lanes for congestion management.

In the summit's closing remarks, **Rick Arnebeck**, director of Mn/DOT's Operations, Safety, and Technology Division, described two of the department's pricing initiatives. In one, Mn/DOT is preparing an application for the federal urban congestion initiative (see above). The other is a proposal for a mileage-based fee demonstration, which will be discussed during the legislative session.

"Minnesota has been a leader in pricing...and has the capability to provide national leadership," he concluded. **CTS**

ITSO conference gives inside look at MSP

The 2007 Interdisciplinary Transportation Student Organization (ITSO) student paper conference, held in March at the University, featured transportation research presentations from six students, sev-



Jeff Hamiel

eral awards, and an inside look at Minneapolis-St. Paul (MSP) International Airport from executive director **Jeff Hamiel**.

Hamiel, a University of Minnesota graduate, shared his 30-year career journey leading to the top job at one of the world's largest airports. In addition to his personal story, Hamiel emphasized the value to the region of the 3,000-acre international airport, citing its \$10.5 billion annual economic impact.

"We now have the most convenient and service-oriented air route structure of any airport in the United States," he said, not-

ing the key role of Minneapolis-based Northwest Airlines (NWA), the fourth largest carrier in the world.

Besides NWA's contributions, Hamiel pointed to reliability, safety, and a dedicated staff as the other main reasons for the success of the MSP operation. He also touched on recent negotiations with NWA to ensure the airline's continued presence through the company's financial troubles.

Throughout his presentation, Hamiel displayed high enthusiasm for flying and the aviation business. Though he began his career as an Air Force pilot, he credited a combination of experience and education for his further success. "Transportation is incredibly dynamic," he said. "There are so many doors that have opened and so many opportunities."

Hamiel's luncheon presentation also served as the monthly chapter meeting of the North Central Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (NCITE).

University of Minnesota students pursuing degrees in transportation-related fields created ITSO with support from CTS. The main purpose of the group, which now has 153 student members, is to connect with transportation professionals through monthly meetings and other events and learn about careers in transportation.

ITSO is sponsored by CTS, the University's Department of Civil Engineering, and several professional organizations, including the Minnesota Chapter of Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS Minnesota), NCITE, and the Intelligent Transportation Society of Minnesota (ITS Minnesota).

Membership in ITSO is free. Students interested in becoming involved in this organization may visit the ITSO Web site at www.tc.umn.edu/~itso. **CTS**

U of M research featured at pavement conference

"Pavement engineering touches everybody's lives, whether they drive or not," said **Mike Darter**, director of the University's Pavement Research Institute (PRI), in the plenary session of the 11th Annual Minnesota Pavement Conference. He was one of several University presenters at the conference, held February 15 in St. Paul.

Pavement conditions affect more than ride comfort and safety—they also influence economic development, timely movement of products, and public safety and defense, he said.

Darter used his time at the podium to share some background about the institute and its plans for the future. "Our job is to grow pavement research," he said. The institute was established in 2003 by the University's Department of Civil Engineering (CE) and CTS, along with Mn/DOT and the Minnesota Local Road Research Board (LRRB). (See www.pri.umn.edu.)

"Budgets are far less than required to maintain the pavement network at current conditions," Darter said. "Improved design, materials, equipment, and construction are greatly needed to reverse the trend."

The conference began with welcoming remarks from **Lisa Freese**, the new deputy director at Mn/DOT. Next was the presen-



Pat Hughes, Maureen Jenson (plenary co-moderator) Duane Blanck, Lisa Freese

tation of the **Gerald Rohrbach** Annual Pavement Conference Award to **Duane Blanck**, county engineer of Crow Wing County.

Also in the plenary session, **Gene Skok**, a retired CE researcher, shared design features and trends from 50 years of the interstate in the North Central region. In addition, **Ben Worel** of Mn/DOT presented current benefits and future directions for the MnROAD pavement research facility. Minnesota is estimated to save \$33 million annually from the first phase of MnROAD, Worel said. Phase 2 will include reconstruction of some of the facility's test sections and pooled-fund research under the umbrella of TERRA, the Transportation Engineering Road Research Alliance (see

www.terreroadalliance.org).

Concurrent sessions included presentations by CE faculty **Mihai Marasteanu**, "Low-Temperature Cracking," and **Lev Khazanovich**, "Dowel Bars."

The conference was sponsored by Mn/DOT, the Minnesota Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP), PRI, TERRA, and a number of other organizations.

Representing the University on the planning committee were **Jim Grothaus**, Minnesota LTAP director; **Lori Graven** and **Teresa Washington**, College of Continuing Education; and Darter, Khazanovich, Marasteanu, and Skok. **CTS**

Executive Committee membership changes

The CTS Executive Committee, chaired by **Richard T. Murphy Jr.**, has three new members:

Lisa Freese, the new deputy commissioner of Mn/DOT, brings 23 years of planning expertise to this position. On staff at Mn/DOT since 1999, Freese previously served in planning positions with the cities of Eagan, Roseville, Rosemount, and St. Paul. She most recently served as area manager in the Metro District, where she managed the delivery of state road construction projects in Carver, Dakota, and Scott Counties.

Linda Koblick, Hennepin County commissioner, is the chair of the Hennepin County Board Public Works Committee. She served on the Lt. Governor's I-394 MnPASS community task force and now chairs the second phase. She is vice chair of the Hennepin County Regional

Rail Authority, and she serves on the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) and the Southwest Policy Advisory Committee.

Brian Lamb has served as general manager of Metro Transit since September 2004. Previously, Lamb served the organization for 20 years. From 1999 through 2002 he was the director of driver and vehicle services in the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. In January 2003, he was selected by Minnesota Governor **Tim Pawlenty** as the state's commissioner of administration, where he served until he rejoined Metro Transit.

CTS also thanks two outgoing members for their dedicated service on the Executive Committee: **Tom Weaver**, regional administrator with the Metropolitan Council, and **Anne Beers**, assistant commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. **CTS**

CTS staffing news

Mary Snyder joined CTS in January. As executive assistant, she provides administrative support and assists program directors with a variety of tasks. Snyder previously worked with the University's Department of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies and has experience in several other University departments. She has a diverse educational background with degrees in music literature and American Indian studies.

Keith Carlson accepted the new position of operations manager and began work in February. He will lead CTS human resources activities, assist with financial management, manage several infrastructure systems, and be responsible for facilities management. He joins us from the Medical School, where he served as an associate administrator. He has an associate degree in business administration and is currently pursuing a degree in family social sciences at the University.

Snyder and Carlson replace **Connie Waldherr** and **Cindy Holton**, who left CTS in November. **CTS**



Lisa Freese



Linda Koblick



Brian Lamb



Tom Weaver



Anne Beers

Upcoming events

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

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|------------|---|-------------|---|------------|--|
| Apr. 18–19 | National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission Field Hearing, Minneapolis. Contact Stephanie Jackson , 612-624-8398, sjackson@cts.umn.edu | April 23–24 | ITS Minnesota 13th Annual Meeting, Duluth. Contact Electra Sylva , 612-624-3708, conferences5@cce.umn.edu . | Oct. 3–4 | Minnesota Fall Maintenance Expo, St. Cloud. Contact Kathy Warren , 651-351-7432, kwarren@usinternet.com . |
| Apr. 25 | Graduate Certificate in Transportation Studies Information Session, Minneapolis. Contact Stephanie Jackson , 612-624-8398, sjackson@cts.umn.edu . | May 1–2 | CTS 18th Annual Transportation Research Conference, Saint Paul RiverCentre. Contact Electra Sylva , 612-624-3708, conferences5@cce.umn.edu . | Oct. 16–17 | AirTAP Fall Forum, Breezy Point. Contact Mindy Carlson at 612-625-1813, carlson@cts.umn.edu . CTS |
| Apr. 22–25 | 2007 APWA North American Snow Conference, St. Paul. Contact Brenda Shaver , 816-595-5240, bshaver@apwa.net . | Sept. 17–18 | Toward Zero Deaths Conference, Duluth. Contact Shirley Mueffelman , 612-624-4754, conferences2@cce.umn.edu . | | |