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## Freight and Logistics E-News March 2006 (Vol. 4, No. 1)

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### Freight and Logistics Symposium proceedings published

The summary report of the ninth annual Freight and Logistics Symposium, held December 2, 2005, is now available. The symposium was sponsored by CTS, in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee, the Council of Logistics Management, and the Metropolitan Council.

To obtain a copy of the proceedings, please visit the [CTS proceedings page](#).

### Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee winter meeting recap

The Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC) met February 2, 2006, for its winter quarterly meeting in Bloomington, Minnesota.

The meeting began with a progress report on the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) 2006 ballot proposal. Panelists **Todd Rapp** of Himle Horner Inc., **Margaret Donahoe** of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance, and **Bob McFarlin** of the Minnesota Department of Transportation presented different aspects of the MVST proposal, followed by a question-and-answer session. See the Mn/DOT Web site for more information: [www.dot.state.mn.us/financing](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/financing).

**Betsy Parker**, from Mn/DOT's Office of Government Affairs, presented an overview of the legislative proposal for the truck size and weight project (TSW). A public draft of the proposal was presented to a joint committee of the legislature in February. The joint committee heard from many different interested parties in this matter. Refer to the [Mn/DOT truck size and weight project](#) Web site for a copy of the proposed legislation and related documents.

The committee also received a "State of the State" report from panelists representing various transportation modes:

- **John Hausladen** of the Minnesota Trucking Association spoke about trucking trends in 2005, including the lowest national fatal crash rate ever, a strong economy for freight trucking, higher LTL capacity, and an average national price of \$1.46/mile. Issues of concern to the trucking industry include a driver shortage, eminent domain, liability reform, and health care benefits.
- **Brian Sweeney** of BNSF Railroad provided an overview of rail trends, including issues with overcapacity in certain points in the transcontinental line from Los Angeles to Chicago, community impacts of local speed limits, and workforce development.
- **Chip Smith** of Twin Modal provided an intermodal perspective. Minnesota is in the center for east-west movements, within reasonable reach of each coast. However, Minnesota's weight restrictions cause problems. Minnesota, once a connector, is now a feeder point to Chicago.
- **Russ Eichman** of the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association said that 2005 had all the hallmarks of being a good year for the industry. However, the hurricanes in the Gulf had a large negative impact. Crop yields were good, but there wasn't enough transportation to move them. In sum, Minnesota handles 12-18 million tons in and out of the state each year, via the inland waterways. From St. Louis north, 80 million tons are moved annually along the length of the Upper Mississippi River. A big increase in coal movements is expected next year.
- **Steve Anderson** of the Metropolitan Airports Commission provided information about the air cargo/freight sector. In the Twin Cities, 80 percent of cargo is moved by "integrators" (e.g. UPS, FedEx), 15 percent by Northwest Airlines, and 5 percent by other carriers. The project for the Air Cargo Regional Distribution Center continues to move forward.

*MFAC is a partnership between government and business to exchange ideas and recommend policy and actions that promote safe, productive, and sustainable freight transportation in Minnesota. MFAC consists of representatives from Minnesota's shipper and carrier communities, as well as a variety of other interested organizations. MFAC provides advice to the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Council regarding freight issues and investments. For more information, contact Bill Gardner, Mn/DOT Office of Freight & Commercial Vehicle*

## **New report from the Brookings Institution: *Principles for a U.S. Public Freight Agenda in a Global Economy***

The Brookings Institution recently published a report, *Principles for a U.S. Public Freight Agenda in a Global Economy*, by **Martin E. Robins** and **Anne Strauss-Wieder**. "Rather than the Balkanized approach of the past," they argue, "a systems-based and multimodal agenda for the nation's freight needs, involving regional coordination, public-private partnership, and federal funding recognition of the same is necessary to maintain America's competitiveness and economic well-being." The report includes an overview of the current freight system, stresses affecting the system, and recommendations for policy changes to meet growing challenges. The full report is available [online](#).

## **FHWA to test new electronic freight manifest system**

In a recent issue of *Research & Technology Transporter*, the [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)](#) reported that the [U.S. Department of Transportation's \(USDOT\) Intelligent Transportation Systems \(ITS\) program](#) has launched a new generation of initiatives to improve freight movement, relieve traffic congestion, and increase transportation safety. One of these is a joint effort between the USDOT's ITS Joint Program Office and the FHWA Office of Freight Management and Operations. The offices are working with private industry to test an electronic freight manifest (EFM) system to replace the current paper-based system. Beginning this month, FHWA will conduct a year-long deployment test with freight moved from manufacturing plants to distribution centers, including trucking and aviation movements in China and the United States. A previous test of the use of EFM for air shipments found that it generated significant savings for manufacturers, motor carriers, and airlines. To learn more, see the full article in the [October/November 2005 issue](#) of the *Research & Technology Transporter*.

## **TRB Electronic Circular: *Freight Data for State Transportation Agencies***

Late last year, the [Transportation Research Board \(TRB\)](#) published [TRB Electronic Circular E-C080: \*Freight Data for State Transportation Agencies\*](#), which documents a peer exchange that was held July 11, 2005, in Boston, Massachusetts. At the peer exchange, participants identified major challenges and issues relating to freight data. Some of those challenges and issues include the determination of data and information needs, logistics and supply chain analysis, freight data framework models, the role of state department of transportation, data management personnel, and understanding the universe of data sources and available data. The discussion of future research focused on determining best practices for establishing a state freight data framework through the documentation of best state practices in linking freight data sources and customer needs to support agency decision-making efforts. Read more on the [TRB Web site](#).

## **Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program publications available**

The federal [Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program \(CTBSSP\)](#), sponsored by the [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#) and administered by the [Transportation Research Board](#), compiles knowledge from sources relating to specific commercial truck and bus safety issues. CTBSSP publications are online at [www4.trb.org/trb/crp.nsf/reference/appendices/ctbssp](http://www4.trb.org/trb/crp.nsf/reference/appendices/ctbssp).

Here are recent CTBSSP publications, with summaries from the TRB Web site:

- [Literature Review on Health and Fatigue Issues Associated with Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Hours of Work](#) (CTBSSP Synthesis 9) examines literature relevant to health and fatigue issues associated with commercial vehicle driver hours of service. This literature review was specifically requested by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to provide information related to its Hours of Service regulations issued in January 2004. The report contains a general literature review of the health issues from 1975 to the present, and fatigue issues from January 2004 to present, associated with commercial vehicle driver hours of service.

## **FHWA 'Talking Freight' seminars**

The [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)](#) "Talking Freight" online seminars cover current issues in freight transportation. If you missed a recent seminar, you can view and listen to them online through the archives of the [Talking Freight Web site](#).



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