



U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
www.dot.gov/briefing-room.html

News

RITA 07-10

Wednesday, October 13, 2010

Contact: Jane Mellow

Tel.: (202) 366-4792

U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood Announces \$18.7 Million in Transportation Research Grants in Eleven States

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today announced more than \$18.7 million in grants to 11 University Transportation Centers (UTCs) that are using new technologies and developing innovative approaches to improve transportation systems throughout the country.

“By investing in research at our nation’s universities, we are helping to address today’s transportation needs while training tomorrow’s transportation professionals,” Secretary LaHood said.

The awards were made by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT) Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA). UTCs conduct research that directly supports Department’s priorities and are a critical part of the national transportation strategy.

“Sound science and rigorous analysis provide a solid foundation for the development of transportation policy,” said RITA Administrator Peter H. Appel. “The UTC program plays a key role in supporting collaborative research and transportation workforce development that will help us create a truly 21st century transportation system.”

“The UTC program is a great example of an investment that will pay dividends long into the future. The students involved in pioneering UTC research today will go on to become the transportation leaders of tomorrow,” Administrator Appel added.

The Infrastructure Technology Institute (ITI) at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, will use a \$3,324,400 grant to extend experimental work in monitoring the health of the infrastructure of rapid transit and commuter railroad structures through partnerships with the Chicago Transit Authority and Metro North Railroad in New York. ITI will also continue long-term studies of bridge performance, combining measurements of live loads, predictions of structural responses, and measurements of actual structural response. Funds will also allow for the expansion of an already successful infrastructure summer institute for high school students.

The Oklahoma Transportation Center will use its \$3,243,400 grant to provide the consortium of Langston University, the University of Oklahoma, and Oklahoma State University with support for transportation-related research, education, outreach and technology transfer while

developing a diverse next-generation transportation workforce. The emphasis at the Center is on technology transfer events based upon current and past UTC-supported research and education developments in pavement, bridges, safety, and sensor technology.

The Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium (OTREC), a partnership between Portland State University, the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, and the Oregon Institute of Technology, supports sustainable transportation research and education through advanced technology, integration of land use and transportation, and support for healthy communities. OTREC will use a \$3,243,400 grant to further advance research and education in those areas with particular focus on transportation modeling, sustainable cities, and electric vehicles.

The National Center for Freight and Infrastructure Research and Education (CFIRE) at University of Wisconsin-Madison will use its \$3,243,400 grant to fund research on a range of freight-related issues including multi-modal efficiency, transportation policy, traffic analysis, air quality and public health, sustainable construction materials and processes, the economic impacts of goods movements, and increased capacity of the freight and passenger rail system. CFIRE will also lead the development of a regional freight plan for the 10-state Mississippi Valley Freight Coalition and continue to support the training and education of the next generation of professionals in its transportation management and policy program.

The University Transportation Center (UTRC) based at the City University of New York, a consortium of 12 major universities from the states of New York and New Jersey as well as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, will use a \$2,082,800 grant to support research, education, and technology transfer activities that address the planning and management of regional and national transportation systems. The primary focus at UTRC is the stewardship, management, and future evolution of the New York City region's already-mature transportation systems in the face of emerging challenges.

The Georgia Transportation Institute/University Transportation Center will use a \$925,700 grant to fund research projects that focus on transportation system productivity, economic development and finance. A portion of the funds will also be used to sponsor graduate student scholarships that support future transportation professionals.

The Midwest Transportation Consortium, located at Iowa State University, will invest a \$925,700 grant in addressing rural traffic safety. Research efforts focus on infrastructure improvements and use of data management systems to reduce the number and severity of crashes. The grant also provides substantial support to outreach activities geared towards encouraging youth to explore careers in transportation, including an online teen magazine called *Go!*

The Eastern Seaboard Intermodal Transportation Applications Center at Hampton University, one of three Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to operate a UTC, will use a \$463,400 grant to enhance regional intermodal transportation systems by improving safety and efficiency while minimizing environmental impacts. Growth in the region's interstate highways, international airports, marine ports, and railroads poses a challenge to improving safety and infrastructure, and controlling air pollution. The Center responds to these challenges through a balanced combination of transportation research, education, and technology transfer activities.

The Nevada Transportation Research Center (NUTC) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas will use its \$463,400 grant to continue developing cutting edge research tools and products especially relevant to the unique Nevada environment. The funds are matched by the Nevada Department of Transportation and also support research performed at the University of Nevada, Reno. The Center is developing new theories, software and hardware tools, and online systems. Additionally, the grant supports graduate, undergraduate and high school students, and funds are used to collaborate with visiting scholars. The UTC grant is also attracting many more sources of research funds, which would not have been possible without that support.

The Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE) at North Carolina State University will use its grant of \$462,900 to continue its 20-year legacy of conducting innovative programs of research, education, and technology transfer, seeking to mitigate the impacts of surface transportation on the environment.

The Michigan Ohio University Transportation Center (MIOH UTC), a consortium of five universities, is allocating a significant portion of its \$462,900 grant to examine the impact of multiple proposed transportation projects on the traffic and economic vitality of the “mega-region” of southeast Michigan (Detroit), northwest Ohio (Toledo), and southwest Ontario (Windsor). These proposed projects investigate regional implications across state and national borders, involving collaboration of transportation leaders from across the region. MIOH is also undertaking research on bio-fuels and is engaged in a variety of K-12 student outreach activities to create a larger and more diverse generation of future transportation professionals.

UTCs maintain vital partnerships with regional, state and local transportation agencies to help find solutions to challenges facing local communities. In addition, RITA’s UTC program is now leading the efforts to develop a National Transportation Workforce Development Strategy to ensure our nation has access to a diverse, multi-disciplinary and highly skilled workforce capable of meeting the needs of the 21st century transportation system.

RITA provides \$81 million in annual funding to 136 colleges and universities conducting transportation research and providing the training needed to manage today's transportation infrastructure through the UTC program. UTC colleges and universities trained 32,000 practicing transportation professionals in 2009. More information about the UTC program can be found at <http://utc.dot.gov/>.

###