



## Award Presentations

September 28, 2009

Contact: Tony Dorsey  
202-624-3690

### NORTHEAST

June 22, 2009

Renaissance Boston  
Waterfront Hotel  
Boston, MA

### WEST

July 13, 2009

Bell Harbor  
Conference Center  
Seattle, WA

### MIDWEST

July 15, 2009

Amway Grand Plaza Hotel  
Grand Rapids, MI

### SOUTH

August 31, 2009

Beau Rivage Resort  
& Casino  
Biloxi, MS

### NATIONAL

AASHTO Annual Meeting  
Palm Desert, CA  
October 25, 2009

## **America's Ten Best Transportation Projects Unveiled Today States to Vie for "People's Choice" and National Grand Prize**

(Washington, D.C.)—Ten states share the national spotlight today, as AAA, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce announce the top ten finalists in the **2009 America's Transportation Awards** competition.

A panel of judges evaluated 50 highway projects from 33 states in three categories: "On Time," "On Budget," and "Innovative Management." Twenty-two winning projects were selected during four regional competitions. The top ten projects scored the highest number overall points during the judging.

Now the competition begins anew: America's Transportation Awards' **Grand Prize** will be determined by independent judging and will be presented at the AASHTO Annual Meeting on October 25, in Palm Desert, California. The top ten projects will also compete for the **People's Choice Award**, which will be decided by popular vote. On-line voting is now underway at the competition's official website through Oct. 23, 2009: [www.americastransportationaward.org](http://www.americastransportationaward.org).

"These projects show that states are being accountable for every dollar they receive from the taxpayers. They are using the smartest technology in their projects, and they are investing in their communities by reducing congestion, protecting the environment, and enhancing safety. In these tough economic times, the value of rapid and efficient highway construction gets magnified even more," said John Horsley, AASHTO executive director.



## **The Top 10 Nominated Projects by category are:**

### **On Time: Accelerated Delivery**

#### **Dial An Engineer: Maryland Department of Transportation, *MD 32 at Burntwoods Road Project.***

Teamwork, professionalism, promptness, and accuracy were the hallmarks for managing the Maryland State Highway Administration's (SHA) interchange project at MD 32 and Burntwoods Road, which serves an average of 30,000 vehicles a day. Safety concerns due to high speeds and heavy traffic volumes prompted the \$18.5 million interchange project. The design team is credited with using creative ways to keep the public informed and traffic moving safely through the work zone. A direct telephone number to the project engineer was also made available to the traveling public so that any questions or concerns could be addressed directly.

#### **Corridor Updated in Half the Time: Delaware Department of Transportation, *I-95 Mainline Widening Project.***

This four-mile Interstate widening project, which added a fifth lane in each direction, was a challenge due to the nearly 230,000 vehicles that use the eight-lane section each day. The corridor is considered a lifeline for East Coast goods transport, local commuter travel, and tourism. DeIDOT set an aggressive 18-month schedule and spearheaded a public outreach plan that included regular and immediate updates to the general public and other stakeholders groups, including legislators, businesses, hospitals, and schools. DeIDOT and its contractors were able to widen the corridor without closing any lanes during peak hours, while minimizing impacts to all adjacent wetlands, ensuring safety to the traveling public and workers, and finishing the project in half the time of the advertised schedule.

#### **Smart Bridge Technology: The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), *I-35W Minneapolis Bridge Replacement Project.***

The tragic collapse of the Interstate 35W Bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, occurred on August 1, 2007. The 140,000 vehicles that once crossed the bridge each day were forced to make several detours which caused lengthy delays. Realizing the urgent need to replace the bridge, MNDOT moved quickly to execute a contract that called for completion of the new bridge in 14½ months. The new \$234 million I-35W Bridge includes 10 lanes for traffic, reconstructed interchange ramps, and room to accommodate a future light-rail line. The new bridge also has the world's largest anti-icing system and uses smart bridge technology. Approaches to the bridge were also reconstructed, along with various local streets adjacent to the project, and observation decks under the bridge along the banks of

the Mississippi River. The project was completed in September 2008, three months ahead of schedule.

**Preserving History: Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOT), *Front Street Natchitoches Restoration Project*.**

The Front Street restoration project rehabilitated six city blocks of historic brick-surfaced streets in Natchitoches, the oldest settlement in the Louisiana Purchase. The project included removing, cleaning, and then replacing each of the approximately 300,000 roadway bricks once the existing infrastructure had been replaced. In order to keep businesses open along the street, the project was divided into three, two-block-long phases. Discoveries of Native American and 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century European artifacts as well as a 109-year-old silver dollar from the New Orleans mint were made during the project. Despite facing numerous obstacles, including Hurricane Gustav, the entire Front Street project was completed in the original contract time of 240 calendar days.

**Trimming 30 Minutes from Commute: North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), *Clayton Bypass Project*.**

The Clayton Bypass is a new 10.7-mile, four-lane divided freeway from I-40 to US-70 in Johnston and Wake counties. The project included building 22 new bridges and four new interchanges with major arteries, demolishing three existing bridges, and widening two miles of both eastbound and westbound I-40. Heavy traffic flows and multiple environmental concerns led to the use of numerous innovative techniques, intelligent transportation systems, and materials, including turbidity monitors, temporary work bridges, and the state's first fully automated speed detection system. Speed sensors located throughout the project allowed dynamic message signs to display real-time travel information, including estimated drive times. Motorists can now bypass 11 stoplights, saving between 15 to 30 minutes in travel time. It has also immediately eased workday commutes for 29,500 vehicles. A close working relationship between contractors and NCDOT allowed this major construction project to be completed one year ahead of schedule. It has improved traffic flow both through and around the town of Clayton, and was designed to preserve important environmental areas in the Neuse River and Tar River Basins.

**On Budget: Enhancing Value**

**Improving International Connections: New York State Department of Transportation, *I-86 Interchange Project*.**

Nestled in the Three Rivers Valley near Corning, NY, this project was viewed from a national and international perspective as part of the trade corridor that connects

Toronto and Detroit to the eastern seaboard. Numerous elements were included to enhance community involvement and safety, including the development of an animated video so that the public could view the actual “drive-through” of the interstate connecting ramps. In addition, NYDOT included a fixed, automated-spray, anti-icing system to reduce accident potential on the four new interstate connecting ramps over the Cohocton River levee system. These projects required a high level of design as well traffic forecasting, transportation planning, and a full environmental impact study.

**Two States Trim Time and Costs on New Bridge: Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), *Yankton Bridge Project*.**

The Yankton Bridge Project replaced a bridge that had spanned the Missouri River between Nebraska and South Dakota for 84 years. The new \$24 million, four-lane bridge spans 1,590 feet and is 74-feet wide. It crosses the Missouri over five piers and has 14 decorative 50-foot-tall spires that are wired for lighting and extend across the bridge from Nebraska to South Dakota. It is the first time the tower design has been used on a bridge. The project was completed one year ahead of schedule and came in under budget due to close cooperation between NDOR, their partners across the border in South Dakota, and the contractors and subcontractors involved in the project. The old bridge will be converted by the community of Yankton into a pedestrian and bicycling path.

**Innovative Management**

**Website Eases 3.8 Million Detours: California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), *Fix I-5 Sacramento Project*.**

The Fix I-5 Project, initiated by Caltrans, repaired drainage systems and replaced pavement for the “Boat Section,” a three-quarter-mile stretch of I-5 in downtown Sacramento that carries more than 190,000 vehicles each day. The construction focused on an innovative approach that reduced construction time to just seven and a half weeks by completely closing one side of the freeway at a time, each side being closed twice. A region-wide public information campaign was created with the goal of 100 percent project awareness. The centerpiece of the campaign was an interactive website that received 1.7 million visits during its five-month run. More than 6,000 users signed up for daily project updates and traffic alerts. More than 3.8 million trips were detoured and delays averaged only five to ten minutes.

**Safety First: The Michigan Department of Transportation (MIDOT), *M-115 Clare County Improvement Project*.**

Using a \$1 million grant from the FHWA's "Highways for Life" safety program, MIDOT upgraded a rural 5.5-mile, two-lane section of Michigan 115 from Lake

Station Avenue to the Osceola/Clare County line. The project was designed to promote innovative construction techniques such as self-adjusting temporary signals and temporary object markers to eliminate vehicle runoffs. Other innovative ideas included the use of pre-cast bridge construction and using a best value award process that took mobility and construction staging, along with safety and cost, into account. Overall, traffic delays averaged two minutes, 16 seconds, and the project was completed 20 days ahead of schedule. The project significantly improved pavement conditions and safety along the road.

**Technology Aids Urban Decongestion: Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), 95 Express Miami Project.** The 95 Express Miami Project was designed to relieve the major traffic congestion problem plaguing the Miami-Dade and Broward County area by converting High Occupancy Vehicle, or HOV, Lanes into High Occupancy Toll, or HOT, lanes and increasing occupancy requirements from 2+ to 3+ people. Funded through a U.S. Department of Transportation grant, the \$62.9 million project includes a new carpool registration process designed to enhance enforcement and reduce the number of vehicles using the expressway. Planners used innovative design; transportation demand management; rapid transit improvements for dedicated, low-emission buses; integration of intelligent transportation systems with electronic toll collection; and a widespread public outreach strategy that included a three-language marketing to reach both visitors and residents of South Florida. The newly striped and configured “95 Express” uses a variable-priced toll that adjusts to congestion levels and encourages travel in less heavily traveled periods. Toll-free options are also offered to registered carpools, motorcycles, and hybrid vehicles.

Last year, the first annual America's Transportation Award **Grand Prize** went to the states of Virginia and Maryland for constructing the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, which spans the Potomac River on I-95 near Washington D.C.

After 55,500 on-line votes were cast, the **People's Choice Award** in 2008 went to the state of Mississippi for the Bay St. Louis Bridge, near Biloxi. The original structure was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

Learn more about the projects and the competition at:  
[www.americastransportationaward.org](http://www.americastransportationaward.org)