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CTRE's mission is to develop and implement innovative methods, materials, and technologies for improving transportation efficiency, safety, and reliability, while improving the learning environment of students, faculty, and staff in transportation-related fields.

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## CTRE director's message: Value of a research symposium

For the fourth time in seven years, CTRE and the Iowa DOT have hosted a transportation research conference for Midwestern researchers and transportation professionals. The Mid-Continent Transportation Research Symposium, held August 21–22, 2003, in Ames, Iowa, attracted 300 participants representing 12 universities, 11 states, and five federal agencies. The Midwest Transportation Consortium (MTC) co-sponsored the event.

In this era of strained state budgets, particularly for travel, this symposium brings together government employees, academic researchers, and students to present a top quality research conference in a regional venue. Hosting this forum for transportation professionals and students reinforces CTRE's mission to help build a human infrastructure prepared to address current and future transportation challenges. It also complements the annual Iowa Maintenance Training Expo for state and local transportation workers.

The symposium featured concurrent tracks in bridge research, asset management, access management, traffic and safety, planning, highway maintenance, winter maintenance, design and construction, PCC and ACC pavements,

and transportation education. We received 80 papers and 15 presentations. The proceedings is available on CTRE's website: [www.ctre.iastate.edu/pubs/midcon2003/](http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/pubs/midcon2003/).

### Special speakers

Special speakers included the following:

- Dennis Judycki, associate administrator for research and technology, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), discussed the FHWA's planned research initiatives.
- Dean Carlson, retired director of the Kansas DOT, spoke about significant research efforts from the past like the Maryland Road Test, AASHO Road Test, and the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP) and the lessons that can be applied to the future.
- John Horsley, executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, discussed the importance of good roads to the economy of the Midwest, especially for freight movements.

### Special session: F-SHRP

The symposium also featured invitational sessions on planning the proposed Future Strategic Highway

Research Program (F-SHRP) and transportation security. Ann Brach, the responsible Transportation Research Board (TRB) staff officer and principal author of *Special Report 260, Strategic Highway Research*, moderated a session on the detailed planning efforts for F-SHRP. The principal investigators who developed detailed research plans in the four F-SHRP strategic focus areas of rapid highway renewal, improved safety, improved capacity, and improved travel time reliability were also available.

In total, 106 projects organized under 26 topics are proposed for F-SHRP funding at the \$450 million level over six years. If Congress includes an F-SHRP program in the surface transportation reauthorization bill, a detailed program of research is ready.

**Special session: Transportation security**  
Speakers on transportation security represented the FHWA, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and Iowa's Office of Homeland Security. Good communication, regular training and drills, and technology were common denominators among

these agencies' plans for improving security.

- Harry (Mac) Lister, ITS specialist from the FHWA's Midwest Resource Center, discussed highway infrastructure security. Before an incident, transportation and other responders should interact regularly in planning for emergencies and practice those plans in joint exercises.
- Joe DeLorenzo, hazardous materials specialist from FMCSA, emphasized risk assessment and concept of operations. Technology aids include vehicle tracking, wireless mobile communication, personal identification, and mobile data management.
- Michael Taborn from the FTA and David Martin from the TSA discussed public transit security. The Transit Watch program systematically engages the eyes and ears of employees and patrons. The underlying principle is that if it doesn't look right to you, it probably isn't.
- A.J. Mumm, from Iowa's Office of Homeland Security, highlighted Iowa's efforts.

Thanks from Iowa State University, the MTC, and the Iowa DOT to all who participated and attended.