

## **MINNESOTA FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE WINTER 2007 MEETING**

The Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC) met February 9, 2007, for its Winter quarterly meeting in Bloomington, Minnesota.

### **Panel on Transportation Legislative Issues for 2007 Session**

Panel Moderator – Ron Have – MFAC Chair

Betsy Parker – Government Affairs Director, Mn/DOT reviewed the key elements of the Governor's FY 2008-09 budget recommendations which included: Implementation of the MVST Constitutional Amendment; Sales Tax on Vehicle Leasing; Trunk Highway Investment; Mileage Charge Pilot Demonstration Project; Exempt Trunk Highway Fund From Sales Tax. For more information and details refer to the Mn/DOT 2007 Legislative Affairs Web Site: <http://ihub.dot.state.mn.us/information/legislative2007/index.html>

Margaret Donahoe – Legislative Director of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance spoke about the outcomes of the MVST Amendment success. Also outlined were the Alliance's priorities for this legislative session: Increase and index gas tax (currently does not grow with inflation); Remove caps on tab fees; Allow local governments to use wheelage tax/local option sales tax; Increase GO and trunk highway bonding; Allocate some of the budget surplus to roads and transit. For more information refer to the Alliance's web site at: <http://www.transportationalliance.com/>

Erin Sexton – Dir Transportation Policy - Minnesota Chamber of Commerce presented the Chamber's legislative package for this session which included: Roads investment (MVST transfer of 60%, 5 cents fuel tax increase; increase license tabs fees; and continued use of bonding); transit investment via MVST 40% transfer; MVST extended to vehicle leases; and one time general fund appropriation. Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Web Page: <http://www.mnchamber.com/>

Question & Answer Session followed panel presentations.

### **Chairman's Forum**

John Tompkins, Mgr – Freight Planning & Development, Mn/DOT, updated the committee on the following: National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission Field Hearing – will be held in Minnesota April 18 & 19, 2007; US Congress through SAFETEA-LU Mn/DOT is requiring States to develop a Strategic Highway Safety plan that identifies and promotes implementation of effective proactive Safety strategies; overview of the Executive Summary for Twin Cities Metro Area Freight Connector Study completed with the assistance of Wilbur Smith & Associates and S.E.H. Consulting Group

Rick Arnebeck – Director – Operations, Safety and Technology Division, Mn/DOT, gave an overview of Mn/DOT's involvement with the North American Superhighway Corridor Coalition (NASCO). NASCO web site: <http://www.nascocorridor.com/>

Ferrol Robinson – Principal, SRF Consulting Group gave a presentation on Germany's current national distance-based toll system for trucks.

## **Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Business Investment Program Overview**

Bob Isaacson – Director Analysis & Evaluation, Minnesota Dept. of Employment & Economic Development (DEED) spoke about DEED's Business Investment Program. Transportation Economic Development Program which involves: Working with MnDOT (Including local/regional discussions with MnDOT district offices); MFAC participation; Freight planning; Aviation system planning; Railroad program; Truck weight proposals; Research support; and the Regional Distribution Center/IEDZ program.  
DEED web site: <http://www.deed.state.mn.us/>

## **North Star Rail Intermodal – Progress Report**

Craig Damstrom – President & CEO, NRSI gave a presentation on the progress of the North Star Rail Intermodal terminal facility. The facility is located in Montevideo, MN, on the TC&W RR and will utilize RailRunner container technology. It is expected to be operational by May 2007. Northstar Rail Intermodal Website:  
<http://www.northstarintermodal.com/>

## **Developing energy and products from Renewable Energy Resources**

Dick Hemmingsen – Director – Initiative for Renewable Energy and the Environment (IREE), University of Minnesota presented an overview of the IREE program. Resources for renewable energy areas of research include: ethanol; soy bio-diesel; diverse mixtures of prairie grass; bio-diesel feed stocks; and dimethyl ether (DME). IREE web site: <http://www1.umn.edu/iree/>

*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, and provides advice to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN/DOT) and the Metropolitan Council regarding freight issues and investments. For more information refer to the MFAC web site, <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/ofrw/mfac.html> , or contact John Tompkins, MN/DOT Office of Freight & Commercial Vehicle Operations at 651-366-3710 e-mail: [john.Tompkins@dot.state.mn.us](mailto:john.Tompkins@dot.state.mn.us) .*