

MINNESOTA FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE WINTER 2008 MEETING

Meeting Summary

The Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC) met February 15, 2008, for its Winter quarterly meeting in Bloomington, Minnesota. Following is a recap of the meeting:

Panel on Transportation Legislative Issues for 2008 Session

Panel Moderator – Ron Have – MFAC Chair

Betsy Parker - Government Affairs Director, Mn/DOT

Betsy provided an overview of the Governor's Transportation Plan and other transportation-related legislative issues for the 2008 Legislative Session – link to Mn/DOT legislative issues web page:

<http://ihub.dot.state.mn.us/information/legislative2008/index.html>

Betsy also reviewed an overview of Mn/DOT's USDOT-funded Urban Partnership Agreement – link to web page: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/funding/upa/>

Margaret Donahoe - Legislative Director - Minnesota Transportation Alliance

Margaret presented the legislative priorities for the Minnesota Transportation Alliance. More information on the Transportation Alliance position on transportation issues and needs can be found at the following link: <http://www.transportationalliance.com/>

John Hausladen - President - Minnesota Trucking Association

John outlined the major issues the MTA will be pursuing in this year's legislative session including:

- Increasing the GVW cap on 9-ton roads from 73,280lb to 80,000lb
- Defaulting all 9-ton county roads to 10 ton standard unless posted lower
- Increasing the maximum allowable time at rest areas from 6 hrs to 10 hrs
- Allow a 400lb exemption/variance to the GVW for trucks equipped with APU's (Auxiliary Power Units) or other anti-idling equipment

For more on MTA and it's transportation priorities see following link:

<http://www.mntruck.org/>

Mark Wegner - President - TC&W Railroad

Mark presented the major issues of concern to the rail industry in the upcoming year, especially as they relate to the Short Line & Regional RR's. These issues included the following:

- Minnesota Rail Service Improvement (MRSI) program revisions and bonding needs
- Railroad Capital Improvements Federal tax credits should be extended to Minnesota Short Line and Regional RR's
- Advocacy for RR Trespass and RR Police Certification provisions in proposed legislation
- In favor of greenhouse gas reduction provisions proposed for this session

For more on short line & regional rail issues see following link to Minnesota Regional Railroads Association (MRRA) web site: <http://www.minnesotarailroads.com/>

Security Practices Within Transportation Systems

Robert Tatum – Vice President-Security, Transystems, Inc.

Mr. Tatum provided an update on the present status of security issues and regulatory provisions related to freight transportation, including hazmat commodity movement, along with information on possible upcoming changes to security/hazmat regulations. For information on TranSystems security services see their web site at:

http://www.transystems.com/line_of_business_view.asp?line_id=4

Minnesota Interstate Truck Parking Study – Phase I Results

Dr. Tom Maze – Professor, Iowa State University

Mark Berndt – VP-Freight Planning, Wilbur Smith & Associates

Highlights from the Minnesota Interstate Truck Parking Phase I Study were presented covering the project purpose; analysis of truck parking supply and demand; identification of capacity constrained rest area facilities; and results from driver/dispatch survey.

Link to web page for pdf of study: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/ofrw/freightProj.html>

Metropolitan Council Transportation Policy Plan – Freight Transportation

Charles Carlson – Transportation Planner, Metropolitan Council

Charles presented an overview of the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan and the current schedule for its update. Specifically covered were freight transportation elements and the Met Council's approach to this area as delineated in Policy No. 14 in the plan. Link to the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan web page:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2004/summary.htm>

Discussion followed regarding freight connectors to the National Highway System (NHS) identified in the Metropolitan Area and the setting of priorities for investment in these corridors in the Met Council's Transportation Investment Plan (TIP). There will be further discussion and review before the Met Council Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) regarding the NHS connectors as development of the 2030 Policy Plan proceeds.

Link to Met Council TAB web site: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/services/tab.htm>

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 Bob Gale, MN/DOT Office of Freight & Commercial Vehicle Operations at 651-366-3664 e-mail: robert.gale@dot.state.mn.us.