

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

The Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC) met February 18, 2005, for its winter quarterly meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota.

MFAC Chair, Ron Lifson led a review of the MFAC 2005 Action Plan and the status of TEA Reauthorization. Also discussed were the issues of funding/congestion/reliability and millennium generation/security.

### Minnesota Statewide Freight Plan

A summary and review of Minnesota Statewide Freight Plan and action items identified in the study were presented by Marc Cutler of Cambridge Systematics, the primary consultant for the project, and Bill Gardner of Mn/DOT, the Project Manager for the study. Bill Gardner led a question and answer session following the presentations. Topics discussed ranged from private funding opportunities to impacts of West Coast port congestion to possibility of additional rural intermodal terminals in the state. A draft of the final Statewide Freight Plan can be viewed at: [http://www.dot.state.mn.us/ofrw/statewide\\_plan.htm](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/ofrw/statewide_plan.htm).

### MFAC Freight Research Opportunities and Involvement

Bob Johns, Director of the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) at the University of Minnesota outlined the research program at CTS and links to freight as well as ways in which MFAC members can become involved in research. For more on CTS' research program refer to:

<http://www.cts.umn.edu/research/index.html>. Bob also presented the Minnesota Department of Transportation Research Program on behalf of Mn/DOT. See the following for more on Mn/DOT's research programs:

<http://www.research.dot.state.mn.us>. Jerry Nagel, President of the Northern Great Plains Institute located in Fargo, ND brought the group up to date on studies and other activities related to the northwest regional transportation and economy.

### 2005 Minnesota Legislative Session Update Panel

Betsy Parker, Mn/DOT's Office of Government Affairs Director led a panel presentation and discussion which included State Representative, the Honorable Mary Liz Holberg and Mn/DOT's Assistant to the Commissioner for Transportation Policy & Government Affairs, Bob McFarlin. Representative Holberg reviewed various funding proposals currently under review including the Citizen's League and Itasca Group proposals. She also covered the issue of funding sources and the variety of revenue generating tax options.

Mr. McFarlin presented an overview of the Governor's transportation investment plan proposal which was built around four principles: 1. Build on the success of 2003/2004 when 17 major projects were fast-tracked; 2. Increasing investment by substantial amounts to "catch-up"; 3. Provide sustainable long-term additional resources to highways, local roads and transit; 4. Be fiscally responsible regarding transportation for the state. A question and answer period followed led by Betsy Parker.

*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.*

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