

MINNESOTA FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE FALL 2005 MEETING

The Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC) met September 29, 2005, for its Fall quarterly meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Regional Economic Competitiveness and Competitiveness Indicators

Douglas Petty, CEO, Great North Alliance provided an update and insights on the current and future state of the Twin Cities Metropolitan area including the following information:

- History of Great North Alliance—corporate level leadership to champion for regional vitality and competitiveness; to hold leadership accountable for long term trends; objective analysis.
- Importance of metropolitan areas to population distribution, infrastructure, spending power.
- Prosperity hinges on competitiveness (productivity), which itself translates back to innovation.
- Compared the Twin Cities to other “high performance” metropolitan regions.
- The Twin Cities make up the 12th largest metropolitan area, economically, in the nation, 5th largest in the high performance cohort.

For more information on Great North Alliance: <http://www.thegreatnorth.com/>

Federal Transportation Funding Reauthorization Bill of 2005 (SAFETEA-LU)

John Tompkins, Mn/DOT, Freight Planning & Projects Manager, presented the provisions of SAFETEA-LU pertaining to freight programs and funding. Refer to the FHWA site on SAFETEA Provisions that includes specific information on freight provisions at: <http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/safetea.htm>

Panel on State Transportation Bill and 2006 Legislative Session

- Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) Ballot Provision:

Bob McFarlin, Mn/DOT, Assistant to the Commissioner on Policy, provided the following comments regarding the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) Ballot Provision due to appear on the state ballot in 2006:

It's an opportunity to pass an amendment for all revenue on motor vehicle sales tax to be dedicated to transportation purposes. Fees on vehicles would be constitutionally dedicated to be used for transportation. The MVST generates \$600 million gross/year and has been growing as prices increase and as the sale of vehicles stays stable. In connection with the transportation use of the funds, the legislature also proposed at least 40% be dedicated to transit and no more than 60% for roads, with percentages being changeable in the future. He also emphasized the importance of a coordinated effort to support the passage of the ballot measure encouraging members of the freight community to participate in the effort.

- Truck Size & Weight Project Update:

Bill Gardner, Director of Freight Planning & Development, Mn/DOT, and Project Manager, presented a status report on this project. For current status and other information on the project refer to:

<http://webservices.camsys.com/trucksizeweight/index.htm>

Or contact Bill Gardner at: Phone: 651-406-4806/e-mail:

william.gardner@dot.state.mn.us

- Freight Transportation Items for 2006 Legislative Session:

Cecil Selness, Director – Office of Freight & Commercial Vehicle Operations, Mn/DOT provided the following comments on freight related possible items on the agenda for the 2006 State Legislative Session: The legislature had an extensive session last year and has decided on a much shorter one this week (8 weeks). This is the year to pass a capital budget. Mn/DOT has proposed to the Department of Finance \$6 million each for the Minnesota Rail Service Improvement (MRSI) Program and the Port Development Program.

Report on Hurricanes Katrina/Rita Minnesota Transportation Response:

Ron Have, President, Freightmasters Transportation, reported the following regarding his company's involvement in providing transportation relief to areas in Louisiana and Texas affected by the hurricanes. Freightmasters worked closely with the Doyle's Hope for the City charity coordinating donations and sent more than 50 truckloads to key locations in the hurricane-impacted areas. Twelve truckloads were also handled by Freightmasters from Conagra's Nebraska operations to the affected areas. Of special note for Freightmasters was the significant number of its drivers who volunteered their time to make these trips.

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, contact Bill Gardner, MN/DOT Office of Freight & Commercial Vehicle Operations at 651-406-4806 or

william.gardner@dot.state.mn.us.