

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

The Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC) met October 8, 2004, for its Fall quarterly meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota.

A progress report, including a summary of freight-related trends, on the Minnesota Statewide Freight Plan was presented by Dan Beagan of Cambridge Systematics, the lead consultant for Mn/DOT on the project. State trends identified included: 1. Moving from a manufacturing to a service-oriented economy. 2. Manufacturing growth in technologically advanced and high-value product areas. 3. Higher value products have increased the need for reliable and timely transportation services. 4. Highway congestion is a threat to transportation reliability. 5. Future federal regulatory activities regarding freight transportation will be concentrated in the environmental, safety and security areas. 6. Mn/DOT's objective is to articulate a freight policy aimed at promoting the competitiveness and cost-effectiveness of all transportation modes.

Bob McFarlin, Mn/DOT, led a panel discussion on Statewide Transportation Funding Proposals. Presenting their transportation funding proposals were: Jay Cowles III for the ITASCA Project; Carolyn Jones for the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce; and Margaret Donahoe for the Minnesota Transportation Alliance. Much of the discussion and Q&A centered on funding source alternatives and the priorities each organization has laid out for use of the funds. For more information on these organizations and their funding proposals/recommendations check their websites at:

<http://www.itascaminn.com/>;

[http://www.mnchamber.com/priorities/minnesota\\_moves.cfm](http://www.mnchamber.com/priorities/minnesota_moves.cfm)

<http://www.transportationalliance.com/>

The membership was updated on the latest in intermodal initiatives and innovations in Minnesota. Jim Newton, President of Triple Crown® Services, updated the committee on the new service Triple Crown® now provides to and from the Twin Cities and markets east of Chicago. Triple Crown® employs the RoadRailer® technology which uses trailers that travel both on the highway and on the rails without the need for rail cars. The Twin Cities service started in the summer of 2004 and is now operating four trains per week of up to 80 trailers per train. Further information on Triple Crown® Service can be found at:

<http://www.triplecrownsvc.com/RRFleet.html>.

The group also heard from Russ Pickering representing American Service Lines and the RailMate intermodal system/technology. The inventor of the RailMate technology is Dr. Ernest Larson from Edina, MN. It is a single axle rail "bogey" system for hauling trailers via rail that can provide a low-cost alternative to current intermodal services. Further information on RailMate can be found at:

<http://www.railmate.com/index.html>.

*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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