



# NEWS

ISSUE 3

## Plenary Session Highlights

The California Highway Border Patrol Color Guard opened the 2009 AASHTO Annual Meeting Plenary Session and presented the colors as the National Anthem was eloquently sung by Donna Brown. The room was filled with a blend of delegates from all over the country.

speaker of the session. Her address focused on the extension of the Highway Authorization Bill and future perspective of funding for transportation construction. Senator Boxer noted that every \$1 billion spent on construction translates into 34,700 jobs created in the United States.

Al Biehler, President of AASHTO continued the session by presenting two awards: The Frank Francois Award and the Award for Special Merit. The Francois Award went to the state that demonstrated cutting edge innovation. Washington State was the recipient of this award and was presented a trophy and a check for \$10,000.00. The Special Merit Award winner was selected by the AASHTO President and was presented to Paula Hammond, Secretary of Transportation for Washington State for her extraordinary communication skills, not only on the local level but on the national level as well.

Keynote Speaker Douglas Duncan, President and CEO, FedEx Freight provided invaluable insight to what transportation means to one of the biggest users of the nations transportation systems. Eighty percent of the goods consumed and sold in this country are delivered via the trucking industry.

Randy Iwasaki gave his thanks and appreciation to all the attendees and was presented with a gift for being the Host State for the 2009 AASHTO Annual Meeting.

The session was wrapped up with the announcement of the AASHTO Awards; Grand Prize and the People's Choice. Thirty-three States submitted 50 projects and the two finalists were awarded \$10,000.00 for scholarships or a community project. The Grand Prize was awarded to Minnesota for the I-35 Bridge and the People's Choice award was presented to the state of Florida. California's 60/91/215 Interchange Project was recognized as the Legacy Project of 2009.

The Honorable Barbara L. Boxer, (D-California) was the guest



## Highlights from Innovative Mobility Showcase 2



## THANKS FOR COMING!

Visit the AASHTO 2009 Annual Meeting website at [www.dot.ca.gov/aashto2009](http://www.dot.ca.gov/aashto2009) to view photos and newsletters from the Annual Meeting.



## PALM DESERT WEATHER FORECAST

Monday, October 26      Mostly Sunny  
Hi: 88° Lo: 64°



# Lights, Camera, Action...



On Saturday, October 24th spokespersons representing various transportation agencies took part in the seminar entitled, "Lights, Camera, You!" The seminar was led by Emmy award winning television reporter, Tony Dorsey. Attendees learned the do's and don'ts of on-camera interviews and even participated in a mock on-camera interview with Mr. Dorsey.

One of the unique tactics used to teach proper interview etiquette was that of the "Ambush Interview." This interactive exercise included Mr. Dorsey and his camera man peppering the participants with probing questions and encouraging the interviewees to keep their composure and stay focused. The tips and tactics shared in this seminar will be invaluable knowledge that each participant will be able to take back to their agencies and effectively use them to deliver better on-camera interviews.

## Are We There Yet?

When it comes to getting the word out about transportation projects, the answer is; "We Can Be," Hosted by Paula Hammond, Secretary of Transportation for the state of Mississippi led the discussion on public relations and marketing transportation projects in a way that engages the communities they serve. By communicating early and often, it's the hope that this question of "are we there yet" is more out of curiosity than frustration.

Three major projects from across the country were prime examples of how to successfully disseminate vital construction information. The projects: Delaware's I-95, Caltrans I-5 Boat Section and Minnesota's I-35 Bridge Project are unique in their own way and required specific communication methods. A common theme was communication and availability to the public and media was the key to successfully working through a project.

From "in your face" road signs that grab the public's attention, to "dial an engineer" campaign, the ultimate goal is to get the messages out to the communities consistently and accurately. By being proactive with providing construction information whether good or bad, the public became part of the process. While discussing the I-95 project, Carolann Wicks, Secretary of Transportation for Delaware said, "Timely responses, don't shy away from the tough questions." It was unanimously agreed upon that this

included the media as well. By making themselves available on a regular basis there was less opportunity for information to take a wrong turn. This practice also served as a no cost approach in getting construction messaging in print, radio and television.

"Maximum disclosure leads to minimal delay" is the approach Kevin Gutnecht, Director of Communication for the Minnesota DOT believes helped them get through a very difficult time when the I-35 bridge collapsed on August 1, 2007. Killing 13 people and injuring 140 others, the tragedy sent speculation and distrust across the country. Communities with similar bridges took this opportunity to review and scrutinize the reliability of bridges in their backyard. Providing immediate information and access to the project, the public was kept in the loop and therefore able to make educated decisions on their commuting options. However, it also served as an opportunity for the community to rebuild its trust in bridges and the Department of Transportation.

Are we there yet? It isn't your traditional scenario with the kids in the back seat waiting patiently to arrive at their destination. It's now a measurement of whether or not we're successful in informing the public regarding transportation construction.

# Mississippi...It's Like Coming Home

*Please join us at the spectacular Beau Rivage Hotel and Spa in Biloxi, Mississippi on the beautiful Mississippi Golf Coast for the 2010 AASTHO Annual Meeting. Experience Southern hospitality at its finest, perfectly blended with delicious coast cuisine and an easy-going atmosphere.*

Thursday, October 28, 2010  
- Tuesday, November 2, 2010

