

**Bi-State Second Annual Regional Freight Summit  
For Western Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma**

**Recap and Summary**



January 15, 2010

The Second Annual Bi-State Regional Freight Summit for Western Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma was held on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in Fort Smith Arkansas. The University of Arkansas-Fort Smith (UAFS) co-hosted the event with the Bi-State MPO and provided the meeting facility, lunch, refreshments, and all audio/visual equipment. Thirty-one individuals from the region's freight community and private and public sectors attended the Summit. The MPO Staff and its planning partners from the private and public sectors prepared the Program for the event. The Program is presented below.

## **Summit Program**

- 8:30 - 9:00*                    *\*Late Registration at the Door to the Latture Conference Center, UAFS*
- 9:00 - 9:15*                    *\*Welcome & Introductions*  
*-Dr. Paul Beran, Chancellor, UAFS*
- 9:15 - 10:00*                    *\*Multi Modal Freight Management and Operations, A Case Study*  
*-Tom Kane, Des Moines, Iowa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization*
- 10:00- 10:15*                    *\*Coffee Break (Provided)*
- 10:15 - 11:00*                    *\*Importance of Current Freight Data in Freight Management Planning*  
*-Joseph Waldo, IHS Global Insight*
- 11:00 - 11:45*                    *\*Freight Infrastructure Finance Opportunities*  
*-Joung Lee, AASHTO Center for Excellence in Project Finance*
- 11:45 - 12:30*                    *\*Lunch (Provided)*
- 12:30 - 1:15*                    *\*A State Rail Authority for Arkansas and Its Impact on Short Line Rail Needs and Economic Development*  
*-Gene Eagle, Arkansas Development Finance Authority, Invited*  
*-Chuck Cathey, Arkansas Development Finance Authority*  
*-Ken O'Donnell, Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Organization*
- 1:15 - 1:45*                    *\*Freight Management/Planning, The Federal and State Perspective*  
*-David Blakeney, Federal Highway Administration, Little Rock*  
*-Cliff McKinney, Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department*
- 1:45 - 2:15*                    *\*Western Arkansas/Eastern Oklahoma Freight Management Systems Infrastructure and Operational Needs*  
*-Ken O'Donnell, Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Organization*  
*-Mat Pitsch, Western Arkansas Planning & Development District*
- 2:15 - 2:30*                    *\*Summit Wrap-up, Comments, and Agenda Discussion for the Second Annual Bi-State Regional Freight Roundtable in April 2010*  
*-Ken O'Donnell, Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Organization*  
*-Mat Pitsch, Western Arkansas Planning & Development District*  
*-Rusty Myers, Western Arkansas Planning & Development District*

Bi-State Staff members Ken O'Donnell and Mat Pitsch facilitated this event. The University's Staff provided technical assistance. The presenters for the Summit were nationally or regionally recognized experts in their respective fields and offered to those in attendance their observations, suggestions, and recommendations for advancing the region's freight management systems and planning activities in concert with enhancing the region's economic development activities. Short Bios for each of the presenters is provided below.

### **Tom Kane**

July 1991 to Present: Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Executive Director, serving sixteen member cities and three member counties. Before July 1991, served ten years as the MPO Director in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

July 1994 to Present: Program Coordinator for Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance (CIRTPA) composed of eight member counties and ten member cities.

Education: Bachelor of Arts, St. Cloud State College, St. Cloud, Minnesota; Master of Arts, University of Akron, Akron, Ohio; and, Additional graduate work, University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, Ph.D. (ABD).

Lives in Urbandale, Iowa, with his wife, Rita; they have three daughters – Megan (Las Vegas), Melanie (Urbandale), and Meredith (Nashville).

### **Joseph Waldo**

Joe Waldo is a senior consultant in IHS Global Insight's Global Commerce and Transport Practice. He has over 20 years experience in freight operations, carrier and regional economics, transportation data analysis, urban transportation planning and transit modeling. Prior to IHS Global Insight, Joe served as vice president of sales and marketing for RailRunner N.A. Inc, a rail intermodal technology company, and also worked at Conrail, a major Northeastern Freight railroad. He has been the operations manager of a short-haul intermodal service and an economist at the Association of American Railroads

Mr. Waldo received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Catholic University of America, and his Masters Degree in Regional Economics from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. He is an adjunct professor at Montgomery County Community College, where he teaches economics and globalization. His industry experience includes freight railroads, intermodal services, private investment analysis, public sector transport planning, and ports and trade.

### **Joung H. Lee**

Associate Director for Finance and Business Development  
The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

Mr. Lee reviews surface transportation policy and legislative matters with the State DOTs, Executive Branch, and Congressional staff. He also examines highway and transit funding

scenarios, evaluates options and proposals for innovative financing of federal highway projects, works with capital market representatives to facilitate capital project funding, and delivers funding and financing presentations to interested parties.

Mr. Lee holds a Bachelor Degree of Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia and a Master of Governmental Administration degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

**David Blakeney**

Realty Officer and Transportation Planner, FHWA

David is the Realty Officer/Transportation Planner in the Arkansas Division, Federal Highway Administration.

In addition to his responsibilities of administering the Federal-aid Right of Way Acquisition Program, David administers the Federal-aid Statewide Planning, Freight Planning, Scenic Byways and Metropolitan Transportation Planning Programs for three of the eight MPOs in the State of Arkansas.

David is a 1984 graduate of Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree and in 2005 he completed the USDA Graduate School's Executive Leadership Program.

**Cliff McKinney**

Intermodal Transportation Planner, AHTD

Mr. McKinney currently is involved in the following committees: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Official's Standing Committee on Rail and Standing Committee on Water Transportation; Advisory Committee-Arkansas State Airport Plan; Annual Governor's Conference on Waterborne Transportation; and, U.S. maritime Administration-Gulf Rivers Intermodal Partnership.

Mr. McKinney received his Masters of Science in Transportation from Oklahoma State University.

**Mat Pitsch**

Intermodal Project Manager, Western Arkansas Planning and Development District  
Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Ken O'Donnell**

Director, Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Director of Planning, Western Arkansas Planning and Development District

## *Selected Summit High Points*

Tom Kane made the following points in his presentation:

- Develop partnerships with local and regional shippers and transportation providers
- There are significant economic impact and considerations in effective freight management. Included in these are; increased modal choice that can impact the costs of operations and establishing the synergies between the economic development sector and the MPO relative to freight management and planning
- Consider developing potential partnerships with national organizations that share the same agenda as local and regional freight planning functions. Two such organizations are the North American Inland Port Network and the North American SuperCorridor Coalition

Joe Waldo made these points in his presentation:

- States and MPOs that plan for freight growth enhance their competitiveness in global and domestic markets generating substantial economic benefits in their region
- The basic components of successful freight planning include:
  1. Defining the critical elements of the freight system
  2. Freight data collection and management
  3. Developing a freight advisory body
  4. Identify and document public and private input and involvement
  5. It is critical to identify and analyze the source of freight data

Joung Lee offered these observations relative to freight management and planning

- Identify the freight needs and then the possible source of funds to satisfy them
- Very few freight projects were selected for Stimulus funding
- The dwindling Highway Trust Fund will negatively impact freight projects unless the new Highway Bill re-authorization provides categorical funding for freight projects

David Blakeney shared the Federal Highway Administration's perspective relating to freight planning. He mentioned that the most important aspect of successful freight planning is the development of partnerships among all the parties, both public and private, within the freight community.

Cliff McKinney provided the attendees with an overview of the Arkansas State Rail Plan and discussed the uncertainty of funding and the mechanics of project selection. He also discussed the potential of a high-speed rail service through Arkansas running from the northeast part of the state to the southwest part of the state.

## **Suggested topics for the spring Freight Roundtable as offered by attendees at the 11/18/09 Summit**

1. Additional rail service information in the FS/VB area.
2. The Memphis Freight Experience
3. State assistance for Class II and III railroads in Arkansas and surrounding states
4. Overview of the various intermodal operation currently n the state
5. Excursion rail corridor between Alma and Branson
6. Commodity flow study for West and NW Arkansas
7. Enhancing the river-port and Ft. Chaffee access to river
8. Operational differences between closed vs. open reciprocal RR switching
9. Transportation role in strengthening regionalism
10. Intermodal facilities truck-rail-truck
11. Regulatory Compliance initiatives for global companies such as customs border protection
12. Air cargo needs in area and air cargo capabilities at FS Regional airport
13. Establishing a foreign trade zone or sub-zone
14. Freight Infrastructure Financing Opportunities

## **Comments from Summit attendees**

1. Attempt to interlace passenger and freight rail service in area (including NWA)
2. Develop an assessment of the freight assets and a freight development plan
3. Need to keep the economic development community involved in the freight management efforts
4. Need to capitalize on the fact that we have 3 Class railroads in our area
5. Need to know the role of international trade in our area.
6. Illustrate the role of the River in supporting the economic development activities in our area and identify the transportation infrastructure to support the river freight operations
7. Need to get more private logistics operators within the area to become more involved in the freight enhancement activities relating to economic development advances
8. Work to get the private sector involved in order to possibly leverage private and public transportation investments