



## AASHTO/FHWA *Freight Transportation Partnership II* Conference in Natchez Mississippi

The second AASHTO-FHWA Freight Transportation Partnership Meeting will take place in Natchez, Mississippi, on February 14th through 16th, 2007. The theme of this conference is: **Meeting the Freight Challenge: *Moving Ahead!! Staying Ahead!!***

At this year's Partnership Meeting, state DOT freight officials will engage with FHWA Division freight staff, and U.S. DOT headquarters staff from all of the freight modes. Its focus will be in developing an understanding of the institutional and organizational changes needed to establish permanent freight capacity within state organizations.

This year's agenda will highlight the following topic areas: Implementing the SAFETEA-LU freight provisions; Developing a freight transportation capacity within state DOTs; Collaboration among states on multi-state corridors; Engaging effectively with the private sector; Breaking down the federal modal silos; Generating investment capital for freight projects; Building Freight Professional needs, and Creating a national framework for freight transportation investment.

The conference is designed to assist in:

- Understanding the institutional changes needed to develop freight professional and organizational capacity;
- Developing strategies to enhance freight partnerships;
- Identifying strategies and tactics to implement Freight policies;
- Moving from planning to implementing freight transportation improvements; and
- Identifying freight professional development needs and preferred delivery mechanisms

Private sector shippers and carriers from around the country will attend, along with representatives from the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) and the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC). They will focus on the challenges that they are facing in transportation from both a macro and micro level.

In 2005, at the first Freight Partnership conference, State DOT's, FHWA staff, the private sector, and several MPO's met to discuss policy initiatives that could be done to advance freight transportation issues and solutions at the local, state, and national level. At the first Freight Partnership in Columbus, Ohio, 32 State DOT offices, and 34 FHWA Division offices participated. State and Federal officials had an opportunity to meet for the first time and along with other neighboring states to share best practices and better lines of communication.

Key outcomes from that conference included 1) development of the State Freight Coordinator position description and 2) a request for the development of a national freight policy. A synthesis of finding from the AASHTO-FHWA survey results and items discussed at the Columbus, Ohio meeting can be downloaded, by visiting the AASHTO Freight Transportation Network: [http://freight.transportation.org/freight\\_forums05.html](http://freight.transportation.org/freight_forums05.html)