

NEWS



TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD

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For Immediate Release
Press Release

January 17, 2012
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TRANSIT LEADER J. BARRY BARKER RECEIVES 2012 SHARON D. BANKS AWARD

J. Barry Barker, Executive Director of the Transit Authority of River City (TARC), Louisville, Kentucky, is the 2012 recipient of the Sharon D. Banks Award for Humanitarian Leadership in Transportation. This Transportation Research Board (TRB) award, which may be conferred biennially, was established in memory of Sharon Banks, who was the General Manager of AC Transit, Oakland, California, from 1991 until her death in 1999. She chaired the TRB Executive Committee in 1998. Barker will receive the award on January 25, 2012, during the Chairman's Luncheon at the TRB 91st Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

The Sharon D. Banks Award recognizes innovative and successful leadership in people-oriented initiatives in transportation, sustained over an extended period of time, that exemplify Banks' ideals of humanity and service. The award goes beyond general managerial excellence, focusing on accomplishments in areas such as the education, training, and mentoring of transportation professionals; community-sensitive facilities and services; or comparable people-oriented initiatives. Contributors to the award included the Research and Special Programs Administration (now the Research and Innovative Technology Administration) and the Maritime Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation, AC Transit, the American Public

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Transportation Association, the California Transit Association, the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, and TRB. Recipients are chosen by a selection committee appointed by the Chairman of the TRB Executive Committee.

Barker's core belief that "the quality of life in our communities is only as good as it is for the least advantaged members of our communities" underlies his strong leadership and accomplishments as a people-oriented transit manager. He is honored for his career-long commitment and contributions to "improving transportation access—and the quality of life—for the poor, elderly, and people with disabilities" and for a management approach that looks "beyond specific transportation modes to a customer focus where travel and access needs of customers are paramount and transportation options are designed accordingly." Barker's accomplishments at TARC have been recognized by the Louisville Urban League, the Kentucky Council for the Blind, and numerous other organizations. He has been honored by the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Easter Seals, and the NAACP for his work to ensure diversity in the workplace and accessible transportation. He currently serves on the Easter Seals Project Action Advisory Committee and the National Center for Senior Transportation.

Barker, who has more than 30 years of public transportation experience, has been Executive Director of TARC since 1994. Before joining TARC, he was General Manager of METRO Regional Transit Authority in Akron, Ohio, and previously served as Assistant General Manager for Marketing and Management at the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. Early in his career he worked as a planner in Ohio, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C. He holds a bachelor of science degree in engineering from Case Western Reserve University and a master's degree in public administration from Cleveland State University.

Long active in TRB, Barker is a member of the TRB Executive Committee and its Subcommittee on Planning and Policy Review, chairs the Transit Research Analysis Committee, and has served as chair or member of many other committees and Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) panels. He is a past chair of the TCRP Oversight and Project Selection Committee and currently chairs the Board of the National Transit Institute. Barker was named Outstanding Public Transportation Manager by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) in 2007 and is immediate past Vice Chair of Governmental Affairs for APTA.

More than 10,500 policy makers, administrators, practitioners, researchers, and representatives of government, industry, and academic institutions are expected to attend the Transportation Research Board (TRB) 91st Annual Meeting, in Washington, DC, January 22-26, 2012. The meeting, held at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park, Omni Shoreham, and Hilton Washington hotels, includes more than 4,000 presentations in 650 sessions and workshops covering all aspects of transportation.

The mission of the Transportation Research Board is to provide leadership in transportation innovation and progress through research and information exchange, conducted within a setting that is objective, interdisciplinary, and multimodal. TRB facilitates the sharing of information on transportation practice and policy by researchers and practitioners; stimulates research and offers research management services that promote technical excellence; provides expert advice on transportation policy and programs; and disseminates research results broadly and encourages their implementation. A major focal point of TRB's activities, the Annual Meeting provides an

opportunity for transportation professionals from all over the world to exchange information of common interest.

Organized in 1920, TRB is a division of the National Academies, which include the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, and National Research Council. The nation turns to the National Academies for independent, objective advice on issues that affect people's lives worldwide.

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