

TR NEWS

Making Progress in Uncertain Times *Proving Transportation's Mettle*

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Highway Capacity Needs**

**Setting Priorities
for Safety Research**

**Assessing the Federal
Research Investment**



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Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine

National Academy of Sciences National Academy of Engineering Institute of Medicine National Research Council

The **Transportation Research Board** is one of six major divisions of the National Research Council, which serves as an independent adviser to the federal government and others on scientific and technical questions of national importance, and which is jointly administered by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine. 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. The Board's varied activities annually engage about 7,000 engineers, scientists, and other transportation researchers and practitioners from the public and private sectors and academia, all of whom contribute their expertise in the public interest. The program is supported by state transportation departments, federal agencies including the component administrations of the U.S. Department of Transportation, and other organizations and individuals interested in the development of transportation.

The **National Research Council** was organized by the National Academy of Sciences in 1916 to associate the broad community of science and technology with the Academy's purposes of furthering knowledge and advising the federal government. Functioning in accordance with general policies determined by the Academy, the Council has become the principal operating agency of both the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering in providing services to the government, the public, and the scientific and engineering communities.

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* Membership as of February 2009.

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3 Making Certain Progress in Uncertain Times: The Transportation Research Board's 2008 Field Visit Program

The 2008 field visits by TRB Technical Activities staff found that transportation agencies are addressing uncertainties about the economy, energy, climate change, funding, and national policies with new ideas, programs, and techniques to improve customer services. The commitment, hard work, and dedication of transportation personnel promise positive developments in the coming year.

17 The Collaborative Decision-Making Framework: Evolving Product of SHRP 2 Capacity Research

Stephen J. Andrle and Janet D'Ignazio

The Capacity focus area of the Second Strategic Highway Research Program is developing approaches and tools for integrating environmental, economic, and community requirements into the analysis, planning, and design of new highway capacity. The Collaborative Decision-Making Framework provides an adaptable approach, with principles, guidelines, and procedures for a variety of projects and contexts.

24 NEW TRB SPECIAL REPORT Safety Research on Highway Infrastructure and Operations: Improving Priorities, Coordination, and Quality

Jill Wilson

The field of road safety improvement is developing a foundation in science, with knowledge based on high-caliber research studies instead of on conventional wisdom and observation of practice. A study committee appointed by the National Research Council has developed recommendations on the processes for establishing research priorities, coordinating research activities, and improving research quality.

28 NEW TRB SPECIAL REPORT The Federal Investment in Highway Research 2006–2009: Strengths and Weaknesses

Stephen R. Godwin

The TRB Research and Technology Coordinating Committee, appointed by the National Research Council, has published an assessment of the highway research programs funded under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users. Recommendations and findings address such issues as competitive awards of funding, advanced research, funding cuts, stakeholder-supported programs, dissemination of results, and setting research priorities.



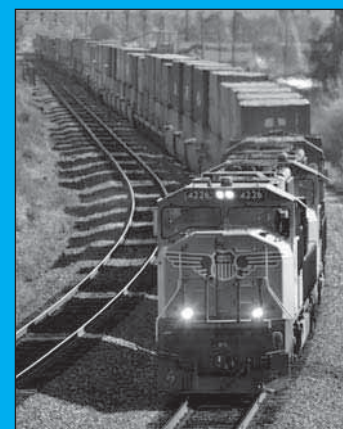
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COVER: A cargo train passes near Riverside, California. During the past year's economic downturn, state transportation agencies and institutions have worked with determination and resolve to keep transportation and research on track, delivering innovations and cost efficiencies. (Photo: Caltrans)

TR NEWS

features articles on innovative and timely research and development activities in all modes of transportation. Brief news items of interest to the transportation community are also included, along with profiles of transportation professionals, meeting announcements, summaries of new publications, and news of Transportation Research Board activities.

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COMING NEXT ISSUE

The March–April *TR News* features photo highlights and brief reports from TRB's 88th Annual Meeting, January 11–15, in Washington, D.C., including the spotlight sessions on Transportation, Energy, and Climate Change; an array of speakers, sessions, and poster displays; exhibits and special events; major awards and new officers; and more. Feature articles focus on transportation libraries in the digital age; the history of Transportation Research Information Services, which recently celebrated its 40th anniversary; and a point of view on the vital role of libraries at state departments of transportation. The next issue also includes an examination of the equity implications of financing the nation's surface transportation system and a summary of progress in the Strategic Highway Research Program 2.



The TRB 2009 Annual Meeting program offered more than 600 sessions with approximately 3,500 papers and presentations, plus meetings and special events, earning the focused attention of more than 10,000 registrants, who shared information about research and best practices, networked with colleagues, and pursued professional and educational goals, as exemplified by this group of first-time attendees, briefed by V. Thera Black (*left*), Chair of the Metropolitan Policy, Planning, and Processes Committee.