

NEWS



TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD

500 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

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Contact: Russell Houston
(202) 334-3252
rhouston@nas.edu

FORMER AASHTO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRANK FRANCOIS TO RECEIVE FRANK TURNER MEDAL

Francis B. “Frank” Francois, the former Executive Director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), is the 2007 recipient of the Frank Turner Medal for Lifetime Achievement in Transportation. The award will be presented during the Chairman’s Luncheon on January 24, 2007, at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) 86th Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. Francois retired from AASHTO in February 1999 after a distinguished career in transportation and public policy. He continues to provide transportation advice as an independent consultant. Francois is being honored for his leadership on national transportation policies and programs and for his contributions to AASHTO and to the federal-state partnership that defines the U.S. transportation system.

The Frank Turner Medal recognizes lifetime achievement in transportation, as demonstrated by a distinguished career in the field, professional prominence, and a distinctive, widely recognized contribution to transportation policy, administration, or research. The award was established in 1998 to commemorate Frank Turner’s extraordinary accomplishments in the development and construction of the U.S. transportation system. Turner was the initial recipient of the medal in 1999. TRB serves as the secretariat for the award, which may be conferred biennially. The following organizations are sponsors of the award: AASHTO; American Concrete Pavement Association; American Highway Users Alliance; American Portland Cement Alliance; American Public Transportation Association; American Road and Transportation Builders Association; American Traffic Safety Services Association, Inc.; Asphalt Institute; Associated General Contractors of America; Construction Industry Manufacturers Association; Equipment Manufacturers Institute; Eno Transportation Foundation; Institute of Transportation Engineers; National Asphalt Pavement Association; Road Gang; and Texas A&M Foundation.

Born on a farm in Iowa, where he still farms, Francois earned a bachelor of science degree in engineering from Iowa State University and a law degree from George Washington University. In his early career Francois was engaged in an active patent and trademark law practice, and he served 18 years in elected office in Prince George’s County, Maryland. During those years, Francois also held a number of state and national posts, including two years as President of the National Association of Regional Councils and a term as President of the

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National Association of Counties. As a county official, Francois was actively involved in transportation issues in his county and region. He was on the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments for 14 years, where he served terms as President and Chairman, and was a member of the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Transportation became a full-time career in 1980 when Francois was named Executive Director of AASHTO, the professional organization that represents the highway and transportation agencies of the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. With his strong background in local and regional government and his understanding of public policy, Francois played an influential role in the development of national transportation policy and in the continuing evolution of the federal–state partnership that shapes the U.S. transportation system. During his 18 years as Executive Director, he reasserted AASHTO’s position as the premier technical organization in adopting and issuing highway standards and specifications, and he strengthened its role in transportation policy making at the national level. Involved in the development and implementation of transportation policy on behalf of the state departments of transportation in all modes, Francois became the unmistakable voice of the states.

Active in TRB for more than 25 years, Francois was a highly active ex officio member of the TRB Executive Committee during his years as AASHTO Executive Director. He played pivotal roles in the creation of the Strategic Highway Research Program and in the formation of the Intelligent Transportation Society of America. An Emeritus Member of TRB’s Transportation History Committee, he recently chaired the study Committee for a Future Strategy for Transportation Information Management and has served on many other TRB committees and panels. Francois has published articles in a variety of technical and professional publications, is an eloquent speaker on the history and future of U.S. transportation, and has helped represent the United States at a number of international transportation conferences.

Francois was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1999, and in 2002 he was recognized with an honorary life membership in the Institute of Transportation Engineers. In 2003 Iowa State University presented him with the Marston Medal, its highest award for engineering achievement. In 2004 he was named by the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) as one of America’s top 100 private-sector transportation design and construction professionals of the 20th century. Other honors and awards include the George S. Bartlett Award (1997), presented by AASHTO, ARTBA, and TRB; the Theodore M. Matson Memorial Award (1993); and TRB’s W. N. Carey, Jr., Distinguished Service Award (1989).

More than 10,000 policy makers, administrators, practitioners, researchers, and representatives of government, industry, and academic institutions are expected to attend the Transportation Research Board (TRB) 86th Annual Meeting, in Washington, DC, January 21-25, 2007. The meeting, held at the Marriott Wardman Park, Omni Shoreham, and Hilton Washington hotels, includes more than 2,800 presentations in 500 sessions, 75 workshops, and 400 TRB committee meetings covering all aspects of transportation.

TRB's mission is to promote innovation and progress in transportation through research. In an objective and interdisciplinary setting, 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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