

# AASHTO NEWS

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Sept. 19, 2005

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## **Oregon, Minnesota, and New York Receive AASHTO Awards For Best Practices in Context-Sensitive Solutions**

### *Seven Additional States Recognized for 'Notable Practices'*

Road projects and programs in Minnesota, Oregon, and New York were honored today for exemplary efforts in context-sensitive solutions at the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) annual meeting in Nashville, Tennessee.

The competition, titled *Best Practices in Context-Sensitive Solutions*, was sponsored by the AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence. Thirty-three states submitted 75 applications for the center's 2005 annual best practices competition.

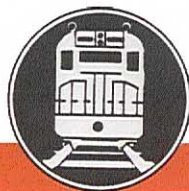
Context-sensitive solutions (CSS) consider the total context within which a transportation improvement project will exist. CSS involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility.

A diverse expert review panel selected three winners and seven notable practices from across the United States. Awards were presented for the best project, best program, and best institutional change.

Minnesota's Trunk Highway 38, the Edge of the Wilderness National Scenic Byway Corridor won the Best Project award. The corridor reconstruction project focused on maintaining the roadway's existing alignment, incorporating four-foot paved shoulders with a rumble strip and an additional two feet of reinforced soft shoulder to improve safety and accommodate bicyclists, while reducing the roadway's impact on the land.

Oregon's Transportation Investment Act (OTIA) State Bridge Delivery Program won for Best Program. Oregon's innovative program to replace more than 300 bridges includes a collaborative permit-streamlining effort and will be implemented using a context-sensitive and sustainable solutions (CS<sup>3</sup>) approach.

The New York State Department of Transportation's Context Sensitive Solutions Implementation Initiative won the Best Institutional Change award. The CSS initiative includes a CSS policy directive for the department as well as an annual CSS award to recognize exemplary practices; a CSS web site; numerous CSS training courses; and incorporation of CSS into the agency's Project Development Manual.



In addition to the three award-winners, the following seven efforts were recognized as Notable Practices:

- SR 179 Needs-Based Implementation Plan—Arizona DOT
- Highway 1 Median Barrier Project—California DOT
- Berthoud Pass Mountain Access Project—Colorado DOT
- Stormwater Management Visual and Environmental Quality and Safety Program—Maryland State Highway Administration
- U.S. 131 S-Curve Replacement Project—Michigan DOT
- I-580 Freeway Extension Project—Nevada DOT
- Institutionalization of CSS—Utah DOT

“These exemplary efforts show how transportation agencies are working with communities across the nation to design and construct road projects in a manner that fits the natural and human environment, achieving mobility and safety goals while enhancing community values,” said AASHTO Executive Director John Horsley.

“The award winners and state DOTs cited for notable practices will serve as models for achieving truly context-sensitive transportation solutions,” Horsley said.

A publication highlighting the winning projects and notable practices will be released in the winter of 2005.