



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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SAN FRANCISCO. The U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) today presented the Administrator's Award for Outstanding Public Service to the cities and transit authorities of Portland, Oregon, Madison, Wisconsin, and Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, for displaying extraordinary initiative in advancing urban transportation in the public interest."

"This is the first time UMTA has made such awards," said UMTA Administrator Robert E. Patricelli, who presented the awards. "I expect, however, that this will become an annual occasion.

"Many urban areas throughout the Nation are now implementing innovative transportation programs and services," Patricelli continued. "I think it is time we publicly recognize some of these programs and hold them up as successful examples of what can be accomplished through good transportation planning and programming."

Portland, Oregon was chosen for its imaginative use of transportation improvements as a contribution to the revitalization and preservation of the center city. The community's use of a free service zone, reserved high-occupancy freeway lanes for buses, innovative fare programs and construction of a new center city transit mall all are helping to make Portland's central city area a more attractive place and to maintain it as an economic and social center. Increased transit use -- resulting in some 28,000 fewer auto trips a day into the downtown area since 1971 -- also has significantly improved air quality within the center city.

Madison, Wisconsin was chosen for its innovative approach to providing public transportation services in a small urban community. This community of 175,000 has combined improved transit services with auto use disincentives. Special transit services and preferential bus treatment on major streets have been combined with a policy of gradual reduction of downtown parking and doubled parking rates for remaining spaces. Madison's aggressive transit marketing program, placement of transit service within one-quarter mile of 90 percent of Madison residents and, most importantly, continued local political and financial support have helped achieve an 8 to 10 percent annual ridership increase since September 1971.

Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota was chosen for its imaginative use of transportation system management (TSM) opportunities in addressing its transportation needs. Despite a relatively low density population, good road system and large number of downtown parking spaces, the area has managed to increase total transit ridership by about 8 percent annually between 1970 and 1975. Among the successful TSM activities are the I-35W corridor in which 17 express and priority bus routes use metered freeway ramps to obtain preferred access; exclusive, reverse-flow bus lanes over one-mile sections of Second Avenue and Marquette Avenue in downtown Minneapolis; and the Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis, which establishes an auto-restricted, bus-only zone in the downtown shopping district.

UMTA has contributed considerable financial assistance for transit improvements in these three communities. "I am pleased that UMTA has played a significant role in assisting these communities to provide excellent transportation services," UMTA Administrator Patricelli said. "What is even more gratifying, however, is the fact that these communities accomplished such achievements through the determined and concerted efforts of local transit-related organizations -- the operator, transportation planners and public officials at all levels of government.

"Intergovernmental cooperation, backed by substantial public support and citizen participation, is what it takes to make transportation services truly responsive to local needs."

The UMTA awards were presented to representatives of each community during the annual meeting of the American Public Transit Association, held at the San Francisco Hilton Hotel, October 17 - 21.

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