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**SECRETARY CARD LAUNCHES
TRANSIT RESEARCH PROGRAM
WITH \$8.9 MILLION GRANT**

Secretary of Transportation Andrew H. Card Jr. today announced a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant of \$8.9 million to the Transportation Research Board (TRB) to launch a public-private initiative that will address the short-term research needs of the transit industry.

"The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) reflects the administration's determination to stimulate progress in the transit industry while reducing federal red tape," Card said. "The initiative will improve the efficiency of the industry's operations and maintenance through advanced engineering and innovative training programs."

The TCRP, modeled after the successful National Cooperative Highway Research Program, is open to research ideas submitted from all sources. It will be administered under a Memorandum of Understanding signed today by Card, FTA Administrator Brian W. Clymer, the TRB and the Transit Development Corporation (TDC) -- a private non-profit research foundation established by the transit industry.

"Today's grant will address the need for better communication among operators, manufacturers and suppliers," Card said. "It is the first award of \$88 million authorized over the next six years by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act."

An independent governing board, composed of the newly expanded TDC Board of Directors, will select those research topics that best meet the short-term needs of local transit operators. The research will then be conducted by the TRB, using competitively selected experts and services.

The first annual agenda of research topics will be selected this summer. Following a review of proposals, the projects should be under way by the end of the year.

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