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# Research and Special Programs Administration *Highlights*

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At DOT We Are

## *Moving America*

*Into the 21st Century*



### Small Businesses Support Innovation in DOT National Transportation Policy

Secretary of Transportation Samuel K. Skinner recently announced 36 Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program awards for creative science and engineering transportation projects. The program is administered by RSPA through the Transportation Systems Center.

Secretary Skinner said, "The efforts of these awardees serve as critical links to the advances required to meet transportation needs of the future. The President's National Transportation Policy (NTP) places great emphasis on research. This is an example of ways that the federal government can help the private sector solve challenging technical problems in transportation."

Congress established the SBIR Program in 1982. This year, the Department's operating administrations (FAA, FHWA, FRA, NHTSA, and USCG) awarded nearly \$3.7 million for these 36 contracts, which were selected from more than 500 proposals submitted by small business firms and individuals.

RSPA Administrator Travis P. Dungan stated, "America has always been dependent on the innovative spirit of our small business community. We are counting on the energy and vitality of these firms and individuals as we plan to implement national transportation goals."

### Office of Pipeline Safety

The program and authorities administered by the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) will be critical to the successful achievement of the Research and Special Programs Administration's (RSPA) commitments under the National Transportation Policy (NTP). In all areas of its program, including regulatory, technological, and legislative, OPS will be on the cutting edge of the critical public policy decisions necessary to achieve the goals of the NTP, particularly those relating to maintenance and development of the transportation infrastructure, and protection of the environment.

OPS's regulatory initiatives will have a significant impact on those areas of emphasis, and include proposed requirements for hydrostatic testing of older liquid pipelines; adoption of one-call damage prevention notification systems; and maintenance of pipeline maps and inventories.

OPS will actively support increased funding for grants to states to provide incentive for the states to assume greater responsibility for pipeline safety and environmental protection. A strong and effective state pipeline commitment is indispensable to a nationwide safety program.

Additionally, RSPA's OPS will propose for inclusion in the 1991 DOT annual legislative program the reauthorization of the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act of 1968 and the Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Safety Act of 1979, and to broaden their focus to include environmental protection. The proposal will seek reauthorization

under both acts through 1993, and will contain several substantive amendments.

### Office of Research and Technology

The National Transportation Policy places a heavy emphasis on revitalization of the Department's research and development (R&D) program to develop advanced transportation systems for the 21st century. RSPA's Office of Research and Technology (ORT) will have a key role in advocating many of these policies. ORT has the responsibility to ensure that the Department's R&D work reflects the needs of the transportation community, takes advantage of emerging technical opportunities, and reaches its ultimate users in a form which they can apply.

The Office has already conducted a series of analyses of the research and technical implications of the policy document. These papers are being used by the Department's R&D Coordinating Council (the high-level panel which oversees DOT's various R&D programs), and the Secretary's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Budget and Programs to help structure a series of specific R&D initiatives responding to the directions set forth in the Policy.

The Office also operates the Department's centralized Technology Sharing Program, which is an active mechanism communicating technical materials to state and local government decision-makers. As required in the NTP, RSPA/ORT will work with other elements of the Department to try and be even more supportive of state and local elected and appointed officials.

Technology Sharing is issuing a variety of new materials on improving use of existing highway and transit system capacity, an area specifically highlighted by the policy. Additional visibility is being given to a variety of products dealing with innovative financing approaches. ORT is also

Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA) responsibilities include hazardous materials transportation, pipeline safety, transportation emergency preparedness, safety training, technology transfer, multimodal transportation research and development, and airline statistics.

working to help make the various research laboratories run by DOT more responsive to state and local needs through mechanisms like the interagency Federal Laboratory Consortium.

The Office also has oversight over radionavigation systems, whose effective functioning is critical for advanced marine, aviation, and other transportation systems. Particularly noted in the NTP is the exciting new Global Positioning System (GPS). The directions for the evolution of GPS and related options are set forth in the interagency Federal Radionavigation Plan: RSPA/ORT prepares it, and will be disseminating it broadly to state and local officials. The office will also begin actively promoting civil applications of the new systems, and developing new technologies to help do this.

### Office of Emergency Transportation

The National Transportation Policy (NTP) reaffirms the critical importance of civil transportation to national security and disaster preparedness. The Policy statement directs continued support to the Department of Defense to meet military transportation needs and improved preparedness for natural catastrophes and other national disasters. Responsibility for implementing these policies falls to RSPA's Office of Emergency Transportation (OET). As a result of the NTP, OET is undertaking several new initiatives to enhance the capability of the Nation's transportation system to support national security and domestic emergency preparedness policies.

Fundamental to these initiatives is an in-depth review of defense transportation requirements in light of changing world threats. This assessment will be conducted in concert with defense and intelligence agencies, as well as the transportation industry. Special attention will be paid to implementing the President's national defense airlift and sealift policy statements, as specifically required by the NTP. In addition, OET will develop innovative techniques to identify and address defense transportation shortfalls, including databases and computer modeling techniques. Finally, continued support will be provided to the NATO Civil Aviation Planning Committee, in accordance with current national security strategies.

In the natural disaster arena, the NTP calls for OET's continued evolutionary development of contingency response plans for worst-case disasters, particularly catastrophic earthquakes and nuclear powerplant accidents. OET will work

with industry to ensure that the Department's planning for all modes of Transportation considers current industry trends and practices for emergency preparedness management. In addition, OET will seek ways of using the 400 + DOT National Defense Executive Reservists from industry to assist in nondefense catastrophic occurrences. Finally, OET will expand the joint planning program with Transport Canada to provide mutual support in any transborder emergency.

### Employee Recognitions

Dr. Richard R. John has been appointed Director of the Transportation Systems Center, and Dr. Frank F.C. Tung has been appointed Deputy Director.

The Transportation Safety Institute's new Deputy Director is Mr. William Clark Gable.

Ms. Judith Kaleta has been appointed Acting Chief Counsel for the Office of the Chief Counsel.

Mr. Edward J. Ondak, Region Chief for the Western Region of RSPA's Office of Pipeline Safety, was awarded the prestigious Cox Award. Named in honor of the late Col. George C. Cox, the award is given in recognition of an individual's public contribution to underground corrosion engineering. Mr. Ondak is recognized for his many contributions in the prevention and control of underground corrosion in underground pipelines.

### Office of Hazardous Materials Transportation

Under the National Transportation Policy (NTP), all DOT offices are directed to "ensure that the transportation system supports public safety and national security." RSPA's Office of Hazardous Materials Transportation (OHMT) is wholly dedicated to the pursuit of this goal. Safety is DOT's top priority, and it is no less so for OHMT. OHMT is taking actions to enhance the safety and efficiency of hazardous materials transportation at home and abroad.

The NTP states that it is Federal policy to implement domestic standards for hazardous materials transportation that are, to the maximum extent, consistent with safety and compatible with international standards, in order to facilitate foreign trade and maintain the competitiveness of U.S. goods. By adopting final rules under Docket HM-181, OHMT will have gone far toward the

harmonization of domestic and international safety standards. This will both facilitate foreign trade and maintain the competitiveness of an industry that has consistently achieved a positive balance of trade. Chemicals, alone, accounted for a trade surplus of more than \$15 billion in 1989.

In addition to encouraging greater state and local involvement in transportation safety issues, the NTP calls for the Federal regulation of intrastate movement of hazardous materials by motor carrier. OHMT has established Docket HM-200 to develop the specific details of this initiative. OHMT also expects to publish a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) this summer in which specific highway routing requirements for materials of an extremely hazardous nature will be proposed (Docket HM-203). A further rule for highway routing of all other hazardous materials will also be proposed.

### RSPA Supports NTP Intelligent Vehicle/Highway Systems Thrust

RSPA Administrator Travis P. Dungan participated in the National Leadership Conference on Intelligent Vehicle/Highway Systems (IVHS) as a member of a senior executive DOT delegation headed by Secretary Skinner. The conference, held May 3-5 in Orlando, FL, was designed to bring key leaders from the public and private sectors together to forge a national consensus concerning advanced technologies for improved highway operations as a means for advancing U.S. mobility and international competitiveness. The conference was attended by 300 persons, including senior members of the Department, state, local and private highway agencies, corporate executives from domestic auto, electronics, and research industries, leading universities, and representatives of highway user groups. The conferees concluded that it is in the national interest to formulate and conduct a national industry/government effort to promote IVHS technologies. To this end, it is intended that a private, non-profit organization be established, called ELECTRANS, to serve as an advisory group to the government and others concerning directions and priorities for an American IVHS program.

RSPA participation in the national IVHS leadership conference is one aspect of a comprehensive effort to support the implementation of the National Transportation Policy Statement (NTP). The NTP cites the advancement of transportation technology and expertise as one of the nation's highest goals.