

CONNECTIONS

SPONSORED BY THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS CLEARINGHOUSE NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 3

SUMMER 2005

TE Program Hits FHWA's Obligations Target of 75 Percent

The National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse (NTEC) announces the release of its annual report of Transportation Enhancements (TE) spending. This report, *Transportation Enhancements: FY 2004 Summary of Nationwide Spending* provides an overview of how states spent TE funds from fiscal year (FY) 1992–FY 2004. The following is a summary of the report, which is available in its entirety at NTEC's Web site: www.enhancements.org.

Background and Major Findings

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), which dedicated a portion of federal-aid highway funds specifically for TE activities such as biking, walking, historic preservation and scenic beautification, demonstrated a significant shift in national transportation policy. Prior to ISTEA, only a few of these activities had been eligible for federal-aid highway funding, and were rarely included in the normal routine of planning and building highways. The commitment to TE continued in 1998 under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Two eligible TE activities were expanded and two new TE activities were added to the list of eligible activities.

This year's report indicates state DOTs obligated \$567 million in TE funds in FY 2004, roughly 67 percent of the \$845 million made available in FY 2004. This single-year obligation percentage is notably lower than the FY 2002 and FY 2003 obligation rates of 86.3 percent and 95.9 percent, respectively. The decrease is attributed to the current delay in reauthorization of federal surface transportation legislation, as many states chose not to obligate until new transportation legislation passes, and to a higher than normal FY2004 apportionment.

On a more positive note, the cumulative (FY 1992–FY 2004) national obligation rate meets and slightly surpasses FHWA's stated goal of 75 percent for the first time since the inception of the program. **Figure 1** shows that as of September 30, 2004, 75.3 percent of all available TE funds (FY 1992–FY 2004) have been obligated. This should be considered a success, particularly considering the decrease in the FY 2004 obligation rate.

Method and Benchmark Results

NTEC uses five benchmark spending figures to evaluate the status of TE spending, both on a national and state-by-state basis. The five benchmarks include: available, programmed, obligated, reimbursed, and transferred. Transferred funds are discussed in the full report. The distribution of TE funds across the 12 eligible TE activities is also addressed.

(Continued on page 2)



THE CUMULATIVE (FY 1992–FY 2004) NATIONAL OBLIGATION RATE MEETS AND SLIGHTLY SURPASSES FHWA'S STATED GOAL OF 75 PERCENT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE PROGRAM.

...THIS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A SUCCESS, PARTICULARLY CONSIDERING THE DECREASE IN THE FY 2004 OBLIGATION RATE.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TE IN THE NEWS	4
ON THE HILL	4
RESOURCES	5
SAVE THE DATE	6

Available Funds

Available funds are the amount apportioned to the state DOTs exclusive of the amount transferred from TE to other allowable transportation programs. In FY 2004 roughly \$845 million was made available to the states for TE, up from \$648 million in FY 2003.¹

From FY 1992 through FY 2004, the cumulative amount made available to all states was \$7.3 billion. The distribution among states is shown in **Table 1**. States are typically not authorized to obligate all apportioned funds due to annual congressionally mandated limitations on obligations.

Programmed Funds

Each year NTEC asks state DOTs to provide information on programmed projects. Programmed projects are those approved by individual states to receive TE funding. As a result of these annual surveys, NTEC's database now covers 13 fiscal years of TE programming. **Table 1** indicates that the cumulative level of programming for FY 1992 through FY 2004 is \$6.67 billion, which represents 92 percent of all available funds. NTEC does not have current programming numbers for six states; therefore the actual programming level is most likely higher than the amount documented in the NTEC database. Overall, it appears that programming is continuing to occur on a regular basis and at a moderately high rate, despite the delay in reauthorization of the federal transportation bill.

Obligated Funds

An obligation is a commitment by the federal government to reimburse states for the federal share of a project's cost. Obligation rates are used to evaluate the spending status of TE funds. The national obligation rate is determined by an individual state's activity. **Table 1** shows that state obligation rates varied widely, from 96.7 percent in Wyoming to 40.4 percent in Massachusetts. These differences result from the varying TE programs in each state, and are not, in and of themselves, an indication of the success of a state's TE program. NTEC's research indicates there are various reasons for project delays, but none are singularly responsible for slow project delivery. The range of obligation rates reflects the differences in approaches, priorities, problems, policies, and solutions of states and sponsors to implement the program. Readers are encouraged to contact their state DOTs directly to discuss the status of TE spending in their state.

Figure 1: TE Funds Obligated Each Fiscal Year • FY 1992 – FY 2004

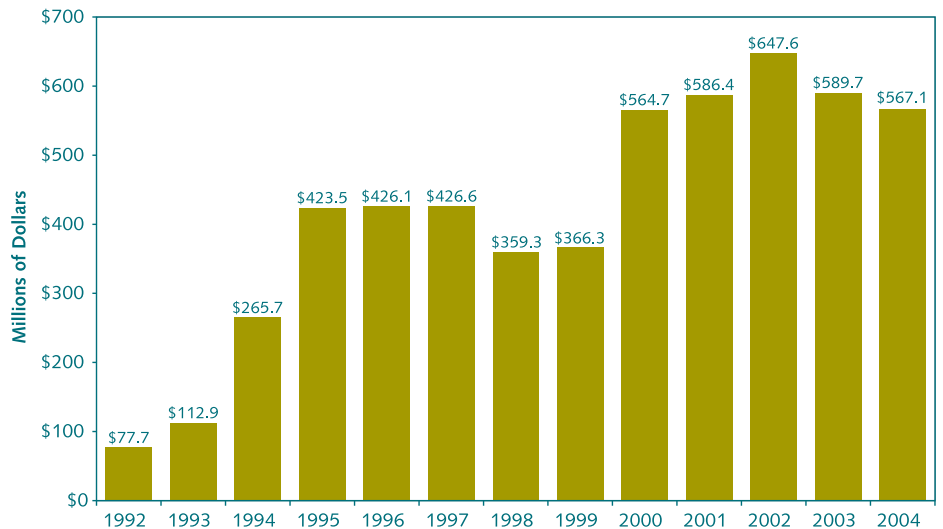
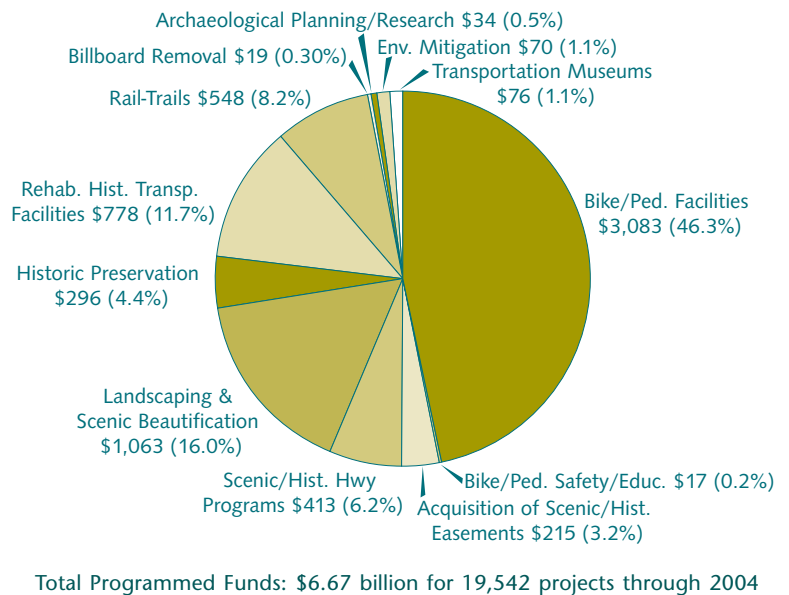


Figure 2: Distribution of Federal Funds by TE Activity

FY 1992 to FY 2004 (Federal funds in millions)



Reimbursed Funds

The final stage of TE project funding is reimbursement for work completed. **Table 1** shows that the cumulative national reimbursement rate (as a percentage of apportioned funds) at the end of FY 2004 was 57.4 percent, an increase of 2.4 percentage points over the reimbursement rate at the end of FY 2003. Reimbursement rates range among states from a low of 21.3 percent in Massachusetts to a high of 89.1 percent in Wyoming. The reimbursement rate will always be lower than the obligation rate, since work cannot be reimbursed if it has not occurred.

(Continued on page 4)

¹ Due to delays in reauthorization, FHWA apportioned FY 2004 funds as if FY 2004 were a continuation of existing Federal-aid Highway Program funding categories at FY 2004 levels (using the Administration's SAFETEA funding levels as a guide). As the proposed Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) does not yet exist, the HSIP amounts were included in the Surface Transportation Plan, thus drawing the 10 percent set aside for TE from a larger pot of money. This accounts for a larger FY 2004 apportionment.

TABLE I: STATE PROGRAM BENCHMARKS FOR FY 1992 THROUGH FY 2004

State	AVAILABLE	PROGRAMMED		OBLIGATED		REIMBURSED	
	FY92-04	FY92-04	Rate	FY92-04	Rate	FY92-04	Rate
Alabama	\$150,780,178	\$140,540,956	93.2%	\$119,093,969	79.0%	\$80,725,597	53.5%
Alaska	\$116,754,439	\$108,799,671	93.2%	\$111,765,531	95.7%	\$103,002,521	88.2%
Arizona	\$128,148,262	\$128,152,682	100.0%	\$86,227,807	67.3%	\$62,049,352	48.4%
Arkansas	\$94,888,011	\$90,958,815	95.9%	\$83,515,073	88.0%	\$75,313,697	79.4%
California	\$618,199,609	\$663,866,428	107.4%	\$492,494,499	79.7%	\$351,459,194	56.9%
Colorado	\$105,769,848	\$68,831,682	65.1%	\$79,650,891	75.3%	\$68,349,563	64.6%
Connecticut	\$103,573,190	\$96,296,217	93.0%	\$90,971,426	87.8%	\$75,781,930	73.2%
Delaware	\$39,835,264	\$52,348,842	131.4%	\$31,134,916	78.2%	\$27,445,589	68.9%
District of Columbia	\$32,742,013	\$31,933,713	97.5%	\$29,151,303	89.0%	\$19,973,568	61.0%
Florida	\$389,724,842	\$361,391,952	92.7%	\$282,150,556	72.4%	\$264,059,687	67.8%
Georgia	\$271,208,660	\$270,842,396	99.9%	\$205,690,441	75.8%	\$160,077,356	59.0%
Hawaii	\$62,277,659	\$50,187,135	80.6%	\$50,187,135	80.6%	\$32,903,750	52.8%
Idaho	\$50,339,188	\$36,713,500	72.9%	\$38,357,194	76.2%	\$31,020,317	61.6%
Illinois	\$284,671,507	\$252,548,713	88.7%	\$199,631,279	70.1%	\$157,914,762	55.5%
Indiana	\$194,053,085	\$223,304,359	115.1%	\$159,044,338	82.0%	\$127,578,329	65.7%
Iowa	\$100,774,156	\$82,881,190	82.2%	\$77,127,992	76.5%	\$61,310,704	60.8%
Kansas	\$99,602,587	\$82,713,547	83.0%	\$74,139,295	74.4%	\$67,433,148	67.7%
Kentucky	\$123,439,126	\$123,330,147	99.9%	\$111,623,470	90.4%	\$74,472,304	60.3%
Louisiana	\$110,427,543	\$96,900,283	87.8%	\$54,976,448	49.8%	\$46,010,485	41.7%
Maine	\$37,609,727	\$34,795,369	92.5%	\$26,586,488	70.7%	\$22,692,351	60.3%
Maryland	\$112,934,137	\$116,854,855	103.5%	\$88,669,275	78.5%	\$61,342,056	54.3%
Massachusetts	\$125,272,402	\$63,822,313	50.9%	\$50,568,462	40.4%	\$26,704,078	21.3%
Michigan	\$237,392,180	\$210,652,794	88.7%	\$169,497,517	71.4%	\$124,469,196	52.4%
Minnesota*	\$141,690,408	\$107,142,997	75.6%	\$135,999,197	96.0%	\$119,949,209	84.7%
Mississippi	\$93,336,865	\$74,873,876	80.2%	\$74,093,413	79.4%	\$56,841,032	60.9%
Missouri	\$143,232,039	\$138,099,655	96.4%	\$115,009,286	80.3%	\$80,269,553	56.0%
Montana	\$68,085,603	\$51,176,160	75.2%	\$52,234,192	76.7%	\$41,864,641	61.5%
Nebraska	\$66,573,957	\$58,430,256	87.8%	\$52,932,612	79.5%	\$35,539,656	53.4%
Nevada	\$57,867,728	\$56,352,936	97.4%	\$40,041,474	69.2%	\$34,981,348	60.5%
New Hampshire	\$41,548,291	\$30,263,252	72.8%	\$36,173,511	87.1%	\$26,892,802	64.7%
New Jersey	\$151,081,484	\$138,355,694	91.6%	\$116,091,310	76.8%	\$90,550,480	59.9%
New Mexico	\$81,162,059	\$74,017,800	91.2%	\$62,518,652	77.0%	\$53,125,150	65.5%
New York	\$294,285,116	\$251,703,864	85.5%	\$225,998,546	76.8%	\$138,545,676	47.1%
North Carolina	\$215,601,495	\$193,444,852	89.7%	\$181,056,156	84.0%	\$138,020,198	64.0%
North Dakota	\$54,476,702	\$37,762,753	69.3%	\$44,009,104	80.8%	\$39,797,799	73.1%
Ohio	\$236,507,785	\$167,021,328	70.6%	\$190,887,341	80.7%	\$155,567,516	65.8%
Oklahoma	\$119,983,028	\$107,087,775	89.3%	\$106,073,255	88.4%	\$71,562,919	59.6%
Oregon	\$90,038,815	\$66,422,328	73.8%	\$55,195,403	61.3%	\$47,418,370	52.7%
Pennsylvania	\$211,215,944	\$290,954,860	137.8%	\$135,629,576	64.2%	\$81,484,372	38.6%
Rhode Island	\$37,589,238	\$31,899,626	84.9%	\$34,790,894	92.6%	\$23,693,516	63.0%
South Carolina	\$130,622,818	\$57,176,269	43.8%	\$102,074,669	78.1%	\$68,073,254	52.1%
South Dakota	\$53,464,854	\$31,451,098	58.8%	\$32,219,224	60.3%	\$31,717,695	59.3%
Tennessee	\$155,979,286	\$154,917,679	99.3%	\$112,317,587	72.0%	\$73,527,112	47.1%
Texas	\$554,722,716	\$552,806,096	99.7%	\$323,135,114	58.3%	\$253,197,717	45.6%
Utah	\$56,757,406	\$33,712,596	59.4%	\$39,476,058	69.6%	\$34,767,090	61.3%
Vermont	\$36,330,346	\$40,634,164	111.8%	\$30,538,222	84.1%	\$24,585,598	67.7%
Virginia	\$163,451,855	\$174,710,985	106.9%	\$155,456,868	95.1%	\$76,227,778	46.6%
Washington*	\$117,453,156	\$115,184,825	98.1%	\$94,154,195	80.2%	\$83,097,180	70.7%
West Virginia	\$57,913,367	\$57,019,425	98.5%	\$50,647,797	87.5%	\$35,903,971	62.0%
Wisconsin	\$172,331,691	\$134,045,367	77.8%	\$93,216,317	54.1%	\$72,525,077	42.1%
Wyoming	\$44,154,893	\$40,953,882	92.8%	\$42,711,275	96.7%	\$39,362,258	89.1%
Puerto Rico	\$15,520,839	\$15,507,118	99.9%	\$15,520,839	100.0%	\$13,967,993	90.0%
Total*	\$7,253,397,397	\$6,671,797,075	92.0%	\$5,462,457,390	75.3%	\$4,165,146,492	57.4%

*Minnesota and Washington figures have been adjusted for SIP Pict. All figures represent cumulative totals FY92-FY04

Raleigh, North Carolina

Residents of Raleigh, North Carolina proudly unveiled a 660-foot pedestrian and bicycle bridge this April. The distinctive bridge spans I-440 with three bowstring arches that mimic the famous Sydney Harbor Bridge in Australia. The bridge forms a crucial part of the Reedy Creek Greenway, a trail system that connects two college campuses, the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Green Environmental Education Center, a university research forest, prime open space, and Umstead State Park. The bridge and connecting trails were made possible by \$2.6 million in Transportation Enhancements funds provided by the North Carolina Department of Transportation and an additional \$1.2 million in state and local matching funds. [News Observer, 4/17/05]

Houghton, Michigan

Residents of Houghton, Michigan, can now easily walk from residential districts to the waterfront through a new pedestrian tunnel financed with \$350,000 in Transportation Enhancements funds. Located near the intersection of M-26 and Lakeshore Drive, the tunnel was constructed as part of a larger highway project on U.S. Highway 41 and M-26 in Houghton. [Detroit Free Press, 4/27/05]

Lansing, Michigan

This February, the Friends of Durant Park celebrated the successful conclusion of a four-year effort to restore the historical Durant Park Arch to its original grandeur. Built at Saginaw Street and Washington Avenue in the 1920s, the arch honors William Durant, the founder of General Motors Corporation and the donor of the 3-acre Durant Park. A combination of \$33,232 in local park funds and a \$65,904 Transportation Enhancements award from the Michigan Department of Transportation made the arch restoration possible. [Lansing State Journal, 2/7/05]

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

In early May, the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum unveiled a new 28,000-square-foot metal display building that will house the museum's collection of electric railway cars. The thirty cars on display cover the entire spectrum of electric cars, ranging in age from a 1880s Pittsburgh horse car to a 1980s Pittsburgh electric streetcar. A \$475,000 Transportation Enhancements award was used to fund the first phase of building construction, which called for more than 110,000 cubic yards of earthwork and installation of effective stormwater management measures. [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, 5/1/05]

TE Program...

(Continued from page 2)

Obligation and reimbursement rates are noteworthy because they are a measure of the lag time between project selection and implementation.

Distribution of Funds

NTEC's national project data listing yields information about how TE funds have been programmed across the 12 eligible activities. This data indicates the distribution of funds across the 12 activities has changed only slightly since FY 1999. **Figure 2** demonstrates that bicycle and pedestrian facilities, combined with rail-trails, comprises 54.5 percent of federal TE funds programmed between FY 1992 and FY 2004. Historic preservation and preservation of historic transportation facilities received 16.1 percent of TE funds. Landscaping and scenic beautification also received 16 percent of TE funds. Together, these five categories account for 86.6 percent of programmed federal funds.

Conclusions

Transportation Enhancement funds are in high demand. The number of requests for projects continually exceeds available funding and sponsors are providing larger-than-required non-federal shares of project costs. Despite the uncertainties of transportation reauthorization, most states programmed projects in FY 2004 and several states programmed projects for future fiscal years.

For the first time since the inception of the TE program, the cumulative national obligation rate meets and slightly

surpasses FHWA's stated goal of 75 percent. Though this is a success, it is important to remember that TE obligations remain lower than other federal-aid highway programs. All state DOTs and project sponsors are encouraged to continue their efforts toward facilitating the implementation of TE projects so more communities can realize the benefits Transportation Enhancements have to offer.

The full spending report is available on NTEC's Web site at www.enhancements.org or by contacting NTEC at 1-888-388-NTEC. Contact information for state DOT and FHWA TE staff is also available from any of these sources.

ON THE HILL

On May 17, 2005 the Senate passed a \$295 billion version of a six-year surface transportation bill that included an amendment introduced by Senator Sessions (R-AL), which would have cut the TE program by 1.1 billion dollars. This amendment, however, was defeated by a vote of 84-16, keeping TE funding in place within the Senate bill.

On May 26, 2005, the Senate passed a 30-day extension of surface transportation programs, the seventh such extension to pass since the expiration of TEA-21. The extension allows additional time for soon-to-be-appointed House and Senate conferees to iron out differences between the House bill, which has set total spending at \$284 billion dollars, and the \$295 billion Senate bill. President Bush has threatened to veto any bill set above \$284 billion.



Using a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the **Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design** at the University of North Carolina has produced an innovative book, accompanying CD, and traveling exhibit entitled, *“On the Road Again — Creative Transportation Design.”* The eighty-page, full color book provides valuable tools and tips for integrating design elements into transportation projects. Topics include: fund-

ing for creative design in transportation, benefits of including creativity in the design process, advocating for creative design, and the process and policies to ensure creative transportation design. The accompanying CD includes images and information for over 200 transportation projects that have incorporated creative design elements. The book and CD may be ordered online at www.craftcreativitydesign.org.

The Thunderhead Alliance, a national coalition of local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations, recently released the *“Complete Streets Report.”* The paper summarizes results from a national inventory of jurisdictions with some form of “complete streets” policy — a resolution, law, internal directive or other document which requires routinely building and reconstructing streets to be safe and convenient for all users, including those on foot and bicycle. Advocacy leaders can use the recommendations found in the report as they contemplate their own complete streets campaigns. Download the report from www.thunderheadalliance.org.



The International City and County Management Association recently released *“Active Living and Social Equity: Creating Healthy Communities for All Residents — A Guide for Local Governments.”*

The guide describes how local government staff can design healthy communities for all residents, regardless of income, race or ethnicity, age, ability or gender. The guide explains the connections between active living and social equity,

provides a toolbox of local government strategies for promoting active living equitably, and highlights notable examples of local initiatives from around the country. Download from the planning/economic development section at <http://bookstore.icma.org>.

The Project for Public Spaces and Scenic America have launched a new Web site, www.contextsensitivesolutions.org, on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration and other agencies. The Web site contains a resource center, documents, case studies, and a peer networking forum to help transportation professionals implement the principles of “CSS” — Context Sensitive Solutions. CSS is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that 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.

Smart Growth America, the National Wildlife Foundation, and NatureServe released *“Endangered by Sprawl: How Runaway*

Development Threatens America’s Wildlife.” The 68-page, full-color report explains how rapid land consumption has become a threat to America’s native plants and animals. The report recommends ways to stem the tide of habitat loss by changing local land use patterns and improving state and federal natural resource and transportation policies. The study also highlights the forward-looking efforts of some localities to identify critical habitats and preserve them even as their regions grow. Download the report from www.smartgrowthamerica.org.



The Orton Family Foundation announced that its CommunityViz® planning software is now available to communities at the reduced cost of \$185. CommunityViz provides GIS-based analysis and real-world 3D modeling that allow people to envision land use alternatives and understand their potential impacts, explore options and share possibilities, examine scenarios from all angles — environmental, economic, and social — and feel confident in their decisions. Purchase online at www.communityviz.org.

NEW FHWA RESOURCE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND QUESTIONS

For all those seeking to resolve eligibility questions, the new FHWA publication *Guiding Principles and Questions* is an essential resource. Users can click on the TE category of interest to see a list of “guiding principles” that clarify project eligibility issues. An accompanying list of “guiding questions” helps users determine how a proposed project meets eligibility criteria, and raises other important considerations. Both prospective applicants and decision-makers will find the *Guiding Principles and Questions* useful in determining the viability of TE projects. This resource and related documents such as the Guidance on Transportation Enhancements and the TE Questions and Answers are all available on the FHWA Web site, www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/TE/Guidance.htm



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS CLEARINGHOUSE
C/O RAILS-TO-TRAILS CONSERVANCY
1100 SEVENTEENTH STREET, NW, 10TH FLOOR
WASHINGTON, DC 20036

TOLLFREE TEL: (888) 388-NTEC

FAX: (202) 466-3742

EMAIL: NTEC@ENHANCEMENTS.ORG

WEB SITE: WWW.ENHANCEMENTS.ORG

NonProfit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Rails-to-Trails
Conservancy



SAVE THE DATE!

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

JULY

TrailLink 2005

July 27–30, 2005 • Minneapolis, Minn.
www.railtrails.org/traillink2005

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy invites you to be a part of TrailLink 2005, the premier trails and greenways gathering! Head to Minneapolis/St. Paul and experience first-hand one of the country's most advanced urban trail systems.

AUGUST

International Conference on Ecology and Transportation

Aug. 29–Sept. 2, 2005 • San Diego, Calif.
www.icoet.net

SEPTEMBER

Rail-Volution

Sept. 8–11, 2005 • Salt Lake City, Utah
www.railvolution.com

SEPTEMBER (continued)

National Preservation Conference

Sept. 27–Oct. 2, 2005 • Portland, Ore.
www.nthpconference.org

OCTOBER

International Walk-to-School Day

Oct. 5, 2005
www.walktoschool-usa.org

ASLA Annual Meeting & Expo

Oct. 7–10, 2005
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
www.asla.org

AMPO Annual Conference

Oct. 11–15, 2005 • Denver, Colo.
www.ampo.org

Rock and Road 2005: National Scenic Byways Conference

Oct. 16–19, 2005
Cleveland, Ohio
www.bywaysonline.org

Connections is a quarterly publication of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration. Submission of articles as well as letters and other comments are welcome.

Editor: Ryan Greene-Roesel
Contributing Writers: Ryan Greene-Roesel, Susanne Fogt
Graphic Designer: Barbara Richey

Unless otherwise stated, the contents of this newsletter reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the opinions, findings and conclusions presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FHWA and USDOT.