

# CONNECTIONS

The NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS CLEARINGHOUSE Newsletter  
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## Capitalizing on Partnership Opportunities

In tough economic times, acquiring funds to finance projects becomes more and more challenging. Most states have many applicants with hopes for projects to improve their communities, and competition is fierce for Transportation Enhancements dollars. As the competition increases, many sponsors are seeking creative solutions to their financing dilemmas. Some have had great success orchestrating innovative partnering opportunities and garnering funds from multiple federal agencies. The following examples illustrate how capitalizing on creative partnerships has led to successful financing of Transportation Enhancements projects.

### *History in Teamwork on the Blue Ridge Parkway*

Team work and partnership have long been traditions at the Museum of North Carolina Minerals in Mitchell County, North Carolina. The original museum, constructed in 1955 along the historic and scenic Blue Ridge Parkway, was realized through the cooperative efforts of the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development and the National Park Service. Since its inception, the museum has added to the visitor experience and served as one of the most heavily visited information and orientation centers along the Blue Ridge Parkway, attracting 225,000 visitors a year.

The North Carolina portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway was designated an All-American Road in 1996 by then Secretary of Transportation, Frederico Pena. It is the nation's first and longest rural parkway spanning 469 miles from the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina. The Blue Ridge Parkway was authorized in the 1930's as one of President Franklin Roosevelt's Depression-era projects designed to employ the jobless and spur regional travel and tourism. Today, some 20 million recreational visitors enjoy views of dramatic rock formations, rivers, ridges, and scenic overlooks along the roadway. The Blue Ridge Parkway is the most heavily visited unit in the National Park System and provides a significant economic asset to the region.

While the Museum of North Carolina Minerals has enriched the experience of travelers by helping them to understand the origins and importance of area minerals, the exhibits have not been updated for nearly half a century. In the mid-1990's the National Park Service awarded \$415,000 from the Congressionally-authorized Fee Demonstration Program to replace and update the museum's exhibits. Seeking to expand the museum building and to further enrich the exhibits, the National Park Service teamed with Mitchell County and the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, a nonprofit group helping to preserve and enhance the parkway. Together the

*(continued on page 2)*



In accordance with the Legislative Language in 23 U.S.C. 133(e)(5)(C)(ii)(I) — “Funds from other federal agencies and the value of other contributions (as determined by the Secretary) may be credited toward the non-federal share of the cost of a project to carry out a transportation enhancement activity”.

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partners secured an additional \$377,000 in Transportation Enhancements funds for a new building wing and the upgrade of restroom and mechanical services.

The new building wing was recently constructed and exhibits are now being built to help visitors understand the impacts of geology on the history and economy of the region, including the mining of mica by American Indians long before the arrival of European explorers. Exhibits will highlight the region's role in historic events such as America's first gold rush. Cultural and historic stories such as these will be woven into the geo-



logic exhibits of the museum. Exhibits will also show how various minerals and aggregates are used today, including their value to road and bridge construction.

It is hoped that a greater understanding of the mountains, their formation, and minerals will raise appreciation and inspire the protection of the natural environment for future generations of travelers along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

For further information on the Museum of North Carolina Minerals, contact

Phil Noblitt with the National Park Service at 828-271-4779, ext. 242 or phil\_noblitt@nps.gov.

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## *Monument Valley Interpretive Center*

The majestic landscape of the Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, located along the Arizona-Utah state border, is characterized by red sandstone buttes and dramatic mesas soaring up from the sandy plain. This rugged landscape has become a symbol of the American West and is one of the most photographed spots on the planet. The 2.5 million annual visitors to the park arrive via US Highway 163, a state byway in both Arizona and Utah.

In keeping with the Navajo custom of treating visitors as honored guests, the Navajo Nation has plans to begin construction this spring on a new outdoor interpretive center and rest area along the Monument Valley Scenic Road. Site construction will consist of restrooms, a welcome center with exhibits, an outdoor interpretive center, and a vendor village (funded by the Navajo Nation).

The project has been made possible through the cooperative efforts of the Navajo Nation, the Arizona Department of Transportation, and the Utah Department of Transportation. The Navajo Nation originally advertised for construction bids on the Monument Valley Rest Area, Interpretive Center, and Vendor Village project. When bids exceeded the engineer's estimate, the Tribe started searching for alternative financing. With the assistance of the Arizona State Scenic Roads Coordinator, the tribe secured a \$500,000 Transportation Enhancement award in 1997 for site improvements and a National Scenic Byways Discretionary Grant for \$2,382,000 in 1998. This resulted in \$2,882,000 in total funding from the state of Arizona.

Cleal Bradford, Executive Director of the Four Corners Heritage Council and San Juan Foundation, led the charge in securing funds in Utah to complete the project. He assisted in securing \$500,000 in Transportation Enhancements funds from the Utah Department of Transportation, \$50,000 from San Juan County, Utah, and \$50,000 from Utah Tourism. There is an additional \$50,000 pending from the Navajo Nation Parks Department, \$250,000 from San Juan County, and \$50,000 from Utah Revitalization.

For further information on the Monument Valley project, contact Larz Garcia at the Arizona Department of Transportation, 602-712-7906, or lgarcia@dot.state.az.us.



## Sonoma County Trail Utilizes 35 Funding Sources

The West County and Joe Rodota Trails are the primary regional trails in Sonoma County, California. These trails occupy abandoned railroad right-of-way and link the cities of Santa Rosa and Sebastopol as well as the communities of Graton and Forestville. Approximately one third of the county's population resides in areas served by this 13-mile trail corridor. The trail boasts features such as a historic trestle bridge and a boardwalk crossing an ecological reserve; it passes through shopping areas, residential neighborhoods, vineyards, berry farms, and orchards.

The acquisition and development of the trail has occurred in 10 separate phases since 1988 and has included the cooperative efforts of numerous agencies including the City of Santa Rosa, the City of Sebastopol, the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works, the Sonoma County Water Agency, the California Department of Fish and Game, the



Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, and the California Department of Transportation.

Funding for the \$6.3 million project was assembled from over 35 sources. Approximately \$1.5 million (25 percent of total project costs) was from Transportation Enhancements. Additional federal monies were awarded from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (\$76,875) and the Recreation Trails Program (\$90,000).

Several state and county transpor-

tation funds contributed \$2.3 million, including \$450,000 from Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality. The remaining funds were contributed from various state and county agencies, non-profit groups, and private individuals.

The project was designated a Community Millennium Trail by the White House in 2000 and honored with the Award of Excellence for regional park planning by the California Parks and Recreation Society in 2001. For more information on the West County and Rodota Trails, contact Sonoma County Regional Parks at 707-565-2041 or email [psales@sonoma-county.org](mailto:psales@sonoma-county.org).

## Aid for Economically Distressed Regions of Appalachia

The Allegheny Highlands Trail, located in Allegany County, Maryland, is the centerpiece of a long distance regional trail system connecting the National Park Service's C&O Canal Towpath with a series of seven interconnected trail segments in Maryland and Pennsylvania. When the trail system is completed in 2005 it will be possible to hike or bike from Washington, DC to Pittsburgh without leaving the trail system.

The 22-mile trail segment in Maryland follows the route of the historic Western Maryland Railroad from Cumberland to the Pennsylvania line and was made possible through the collaborative efforts of many dedicated agencies and individuals in both Maryland and Pennsylvania. The Allegany County Department of Community Services developed a financing strategy that combined several federal, state, local, and private funding sources.

The regional trail system was identified in TEA-21 as a High Priority Project for Penn-

sylvania. Pennsylvania transferred \$875,000 from this fund to the Maryland State Highway Administration for the planning, design, and construction of Maryland's portion of the trail. Additional federal sources of funding for the Maryland segment included \$2.7 million in Transportation Enhancements awards and \$242,000 in grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission. The Appalachian Regional Commission provides funds to encourage economic development in distressed

counties in Appalachia. The combined federal funds comprise 46 percent of the total project costs.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the Allegheny Highlands Trail was held on January 6, 2003. When completed the trail is expected to create service jobs in the region and contribute to area revitalization efforts. For additional information contact Rich Harris at the Allegany County Department of Community Services at 301-777-5852 or [rharris@allconet.org](mailto:rharris@allconet.org).



### US DOT's Route to Reauthorization

As we await the official unveiling of the Bush Administration's surface transportation reauthorization proposal, a preview was offered at the Transportation Research Board 82nd Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. in mid-January. Emil Frankel, the Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), and Administrators of eight federal transportation agencies provided a glimpse of what the USDOT and the Administration have been developing.

Under the direction of Secretary Norman Mineta, the USDOT's reauthorization efforts have been focused around three central themes—safer, simpler, and smarter—and creating a transportation system that adheres to these principals is key. The input of numerous stakeholder groups has helped to develop these core principals and guide the future mission of the USDOT. Mr. Frankel stated that Secretary Mineta's top priority is to improve the safety and security of the Nation's transportation system. He also stated that further flexibility to state and local decision-makers was a priority.

Mary Peters, Administrator of the FHWA, provided comments on her agency's efforts toward reauthorization. She stated that the Bush Administration's legislative

proposal will seek to maintain the balance of safety, mobility, and environmental concerns of ISTEA and TEA-21.

Ms. Peters spoke of the importance of decision-making at the state and local levels stating, "we believe that local problems are best solved at the local level." She discussed an increased emphasis on safety and increased flexibility for states using existing funds. She also stated that FHWA hopes to "reduce separate funding categories and to consolidate existing core programs" in an effort to streamline delivery and further flexibility.

Towards efforts at simplifying, Ms. Peters stated, "in infrastructure, we are looking into elimination of some sub-categories of funding so that the projects in these categories can be administered as a part of our core programs." Further, the FHWA will continue efforts to streamline environmental decision making while protecting the environment and will consider delegating some federal environmental review responsibilities to project sponsors.

There was no direct mention of Transportation Enhancements in the preview speeches—so we will continue to wait and see what is in store. The Bush Administration's reauthorization bill is expected to be introduced "shortly" to the new Congress.

## RESOURCES

**The Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities** released *Livable Communities @ Work*, the first in a new series of papers focused on creating smarter, more livable communities for people of all backgrounds. You can download this report and review other Smart Growth news events at [www.fundersnetwork.org](http://www.fundersnetwork.org).

**The National Center for Bicycling and Walking** recently launched a new online calendar of training opportunities in the fields of bicycle and pedestrian facility design, safety issues, community planning, and more. The information is presented in two formats: as a scrollable registry of the courses divided by topic and as a calendar-based listing, so you can easily see what courses and events will be offered when. Visit the new calendar at [www.bikewalk.org/technical\\_assistance/training\\_resources/training\\_calendar.htm](http://www.bikewalk.org/technical_assistance/training_resources/training_calendar.htm).

**The National Main Street Center**, a project of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, offers technical assistance, training materials, an annual conference, and annual competitions to towns, cities, and urban neighborhoods looking to revitalize their commercial districts. To learn what the National Main Street Center can do for your community visit [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org).

**National Scenic Byways Online**, sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration, offers a wealth of information on National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads, including how to apply for funding, how to market your byway, state level contacts, resources and Web sites, as well as information on byways across the country. To learn more, visit [www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org).

**The Smart Communities Network**, a Web site sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, contains a plethora of information on creating sustainable communities, from green buildings and development, 'smart' land use planning, to transportation issues. Each feature contains case studies, codes/ordinances, articles, and related resources. Check out the regularly updated list of funding opportunities at [www.sustainable.doe.gov/management/financl.shtml](http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/management/financl.shtml).

**The Surface Transportation Policy Project** has expanded its series of Transportation Decoders to include discussions on road repair, traffic safety, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program, and the federal bridge program—all components of the transportation legislation to be reauthorized this fall. Visit [www.transact.org](http://www.transact.org) and [www.tea3.org](http://www.tea3.org) to stay current on the issues and efforts surrounding reauthorization.

### Lolo Pass, Idaho

Travelers, including Native Americans and explorers Lewis and Clark, have stopped at Lolo Pass on their journeys through the Bitterroot Mountains between Idaho and Montana for thousands of years. Today they are greeted by a lodgepole pine log visitor center. More than 50,000 annual travelers are expected to stop at the new Lolo Pass Visitor Center, located on US Highway 12, while enjoying outdoor activities and in celebration of the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Funding for the center came from the U.S. Forest Service, TEA-21, and both Idaho and Montana Departments of Transportation. [*The Associated Press State & Local Wire* 1/28/03]

### Avon, New York

Residents in Avon, New York, will notice a lot of construction along Genesee Street this spring as ground is broken on a \$448,000 beautification project. Recently awarded TE funds will be used towards the cost of new sidewalks, crosswalks, colonial-style streetlights, landscaping, benches and bike racks. The pedestrian friendly project is expected to boost the economy by encouraging travelers from Canada and New England to stop in Avon on their travels along Routes 5 and 20. [*Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* 1/6/03]

### Covington, Tennessee

A TE funded streetscape project is set to begin later this spring around Covington's historic Court Square. New lighting, brick paved crosswalks, sidewalks, benches, and landscaping will be added. Related projects not funded with TE, include burying electric utilities, repaving several streets, planting 68 new trees, and the construction of a small park in a previously vacant lot. The Court Square projects will improve walkability and help market the square as a unique shopping district. [*The Commercial Appeal* 12/19/02]

### Athens, Georgia

Contractors in Athens, Georgia, are installing three bicycle and pedestrian bridges along the TE funded Oconee River Greenway trail. The bridges, which will be ready this spring, will increase travel options as pedestrians and bicyclist will be able to travel seamlessly throughout the greenway. One bridge will feature a pedestrian overlook. [*Athens Banner-Herald* 1/7/03]

### Wickford, Rhode Island

A \$200,000 TE award was recently awarded to redesign the entryway and add signage and landscaping to historic Smith's Castle. TE funds will also be used to produce a cultural landscape report detailing significant archaeological features on the 22-acre site. Smith's Castle, a historic site once owned by Rhode Island's founder Richard Smith, dates back to the 1600s. Project funding will be paid out between now and 2005. [*The Providence Journal-Bulletin* 12/23/02]

### Columbus, Nebraska

Construction will begin later this spring on the 1.5-mile Wilderness Park Trail in Columbus, Nebraska. The trail will link local walkers, joggers, inline skaters, and wheelchair users to city soccer complexes and other trails. Trail funding comes from state TE funds, and fundraising efforts of the Lower Loop Natural Resources District and the local youth soccer organization. [*Columbus Telegram* 12/18/02]

### Holly Springs, Georgia

The restoration of the Holly Springs Train Depot is nearly complete thanks to two TE awards. The first award financed extensive building renovations nearly two years ago. The most recent TE award is being used to install a new terra cotta tile roof on the depot, a replica of the original roof. The restored depot, now a community center, is the centerpiece of Holly Springs's historic district. [*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* 2/6/03]

### Norman, Oklahoma

Elected officials and residents recently celebrated the rededication of the 1909 Norman Train Depot. A \$480,000 TE award from the Oklahoma Department of Transportation was used towards interior renovations, exterior brickwork, and the construction of a new ADA accessible train platform. The restored depot is expected to encourage economic development in Norman. [*The Oklahoma Daily* 1/17/03 and 1/23/03]

### Marshfield, Wisconsin

The City of Marshfield, Wisconsin, has a new look thanks to a TE funded streetscape project. Nearly \$250,000 was awarded to purchase and install period lighting along Veterans Parkway and South Central Avenue, an entryway to Marshfield's historic district. The Main Street Marshfield organization notes the new lighting helps to portray a friendly, historic feel in the downtown historic district. [*Marshfield News-Herald* 12/7/02]

## FHWA HEADQUARTERS REORGANIZES

Due to an internal reorganization at FHWA Headquarters, Transportation Enhancements is now located in the Office of Natural and Human Environment. Harold Peaks and Danyell Diggs are no longer responsible for the program. Responsibility for Transportation Enhancements has shifted to Rob Draper, John Fegan, and Christopher Douwes. Rob Draper is now responsible for overall program direction and reauthorization. Christopher Douwes is responsible for making eligibility determinations, and John Fegan is charged with overseeing the operations of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse. There is no change in how Transportation Enhancements is being administered or the points of contact within FHWA Division offices.

## National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse

c/o Rails-to-Trails Conservancy  
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**Web site:** [www.enhancements.org](http://www.enhancements.org)

**Save the Date!**  
Conference Calendar

### MAY 2003

NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS CONFERENCE  
May 18–21, 2003 • Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Telephone: 800-429-9297 ext. 5  
Email: [center@byways.org](mailto:center@byways.org)

NATIONAL TOWN MEETING ON MAIN STREET  
May 18–21, 2003 • Cincinnati, Ohio  
Telephone: 202-588-6239  
Web site: [www.mainstreet.org/Conferences/NTM/index.htm](http://www.mainstreet.org/Conferences/NTM/index.htm)

### JUNE 2003

INTERNATIONAL HERITAGE CONFERENCE 2003  
June 7–11, 2003 • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
Web site: [www.riversofsteel.com/conference.asp](http://www.riversofsteel.com/conference.asp)

TRAILLINK 2003: DESIGNING FOR THE FUTURE  
June 26–29, 2003 • Providence, Rhode Island  
Web site: [www.railtrails.org/traillink2003](http://www.railtrails.org/traillink2003)

### AUGUST 2003

SCENIC SUMMIT: ACTION FOR  
AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES, COUNTRYSIDES AND  
PUBLIC LANDS  
August 3–6, 2003 • Denver, Colorado  
Telephone: 303-494-1246  
Email: [scenicsummit@atwoodcompany.com](mailto:scenicsummit@atwoodcompany.com)  
Web site: [www.scenicsummit.org](http://www.scenicsummit.org)

9TH CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL SCENIC AND HISTORIC TRAILS  
August 22–25, 2003 • Bow, Washington  
Email: [nattrails@aol.com](mailto:nattrails@aol.com)

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ECOLOGY & TRANSPORTATION  
August 24–29, 2003 • Lake Placid, New York  
Web site: [www.itre.ncsu.edu/cte/icoet/icoet2003.html](http://www.itre.ncsu.edu/cte/icoet/icoet2003.html)

## HELP US UPDATE

It is time to update our *Connections* mailing list and we need your help. If you have a name/address change, would prefer to receive *Connections* electronically, or no longer want to receive the newsletter, please let us know. Send an email to [NTEC@transact.org](mailto:NTEC@transact.org) or call 1-888-388-NTEC.

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