

## CANAMEX Corridor Coalition Meeting Summary

On August 15, 2005 members of the CANAMEX Corridor Coalition convened in Las Vegas, Nevada to discuss expanding the mission, potential projects and key organizational issues. Updates on Arizona and Mexico CANAMEX activities were included. Prior to the formal discussions, several members participated in a tour of the Hoover Dam Bypass Project. Situated approximately 1,600 feet downstream from Hoover Dam, the project is on schedule for completion in 2008. The Project represents a significant achievement for the Coalition

### Participants:

#### DOT

Dale Buskirk, Arizona  
 Holli Chavez, Nevada  
 Kent Cooper, Nevada  
 Jim Currie, Montana  
 Cleveland Dudley, Nevada  
 Dave Ekern, Idaho  
 Jeff Fontaine, Nevada  
 Jim Lynch, Montana  
 Mary Martini, Nevada  
 Victor Mendez, Arizona  
 Joe Peltier, Nevada  
 John Quick, Utah  
 X, Idaho  
 X, Idaho

#### Private Sector

Jay Foley, Montana  
 Tom Skancke, Chair, Nevada  
 Kent Tingey, Idaho  
 Peter Woog, Arizona

#### Executive Director

Marisa Paula Walker

Participants identified several next steps:

- Meet with respective tourism, economic development and telecommunication sectors to determine interest, goals and opportunities for engagement.
- Identify project(s) that can be completed within the next 12 months.
- Reestablish importance of the Corridor to the Governors and gage support for member expansion and a new MOU.
- Provide a brief report on each state's Corridor related improvements since 2001 and list earmark funding for future projects.
- Develop an annual work plan and estimated budget based on Coalition Priorities
- Prepare annual report beginning February 2005.
- Have Jim Lynch (Director, Montana Department of Transportation) assume the chair position at the next meeting scheduled later this fall.
- Select a new Vice Chair among the private sector representatives at the fall meeting.

The following information summarizes the discussions.

### **Approval of the 1 April 2004 Minutes (see tab 3, second item)**

Woog made a motion to approve the 1 April 2004 meeting minutes held via video conference from Salt Lake City, Utah. Skancke seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

### **Mission and Priority Projects (see tab 3, first item and tab 4, all items)**

Skancke revisited the CANAMEX initiatives, drawing attention to the five bold initiatives that arose from the strategic plan funded by the Federal Highway Administration in 2001. In 2003, the Coalition endorsed moving forward on three of these: Smart Tourism, Smart Freight and Advanced Telecommunications.

The Coalition has been nascent with the transition to a new executive director. The Coalition is at a critical juncture and needs to determine how to proceed. Key considerations include whether the collaboration brings value and should be continued; whether or not to include additional sectors (telecommunications, tourism and economic development); and what should be the short, mid and long term priorities.

### Continue Support & Organizational Value

Participants agreed that the Coalition was valuable and should be continued preferably as a multi-sector initiative.

### Mission & Sector Expansion

Since its inception the Coalition has been driven and defined primarily by the Departments of Transportation. The CANAMEX goal is broader and vigorous outreach to expand membership needs to be undertaken. The inclusion of the other sectors distinguishes CANAMEX relative to other Corridors of National Significance. Previous expansion efforts have not met with much success. Only Utah and Montana have Tourism representatives officially designated and there are no economic development representatives.

- An effort to map out cellular dead spots along the corridor and bring in the wireless industry to craft a solution was stalled due to right of way disagreements.
- Tourism directors after several meetings were unable to agree on how to brand the Corridor.

Opportunities for expansion exist. In March 2005, verbal support was provided by the Governors' offices to explore an economic development strategy among the five states. Economic Development representatives contributed data to a matrix to identify the logical points of cooperation.

The five state Tourism Directors convened Saturday, August 13 2005 in Idaho. The Tourism directors strongly supported collaboration with the DOTs to include tourism in the 511 system and increase interoperability between the states.

Limited budgets, small staffs and adopting a regional approach to market development are potential challenges to multi-sector partnership. However the 2001 Corridor Plan included significant input from Tourism and Economic Development. These sectors are interested in participating, but the Coalition has not delivered a sufficient incentive for their engagement. All DOTs consider economic development and tourism in their planning decisions and should anticipate driving CANAMEX in the future. The Coalition members must take decisive steps to get the other sectors engaged. Succeeding on a project, e.g., a logo, implementing technology improvements with 511, capitalizing on Asian trade, is imperative.

The issue of expanding the Coalition's membership must be posed to the Governors. The message should underscore the importance of the Corridor to substantiate the request for additional resources and representation. In addition, the Coalition should solicit information on the needs and goals of the other sectors.

### Priority Projects:

The staffs for Senator Baccus and Senator Reid indicate that discussions on the 09 bill will begin as early as January 06.

In anticipation, the Coalition could:

- Organize a strategic planning session to reconcile the priorities that the five-state coalition could endorse.
- Utilize the Western Governors' Association adoption of a transportation agenda and the design of a work plan to emphasize CANAMEX as a major trade corridor for the west. WGA is holding its winter meeting, "People, Places and Prosperity" in Phoenix, AZ on 8-9 November 2005; and its annual

### **Other Corridors of National Significance:**

North American SuperCorridor Coalition, Inc.:  
<http://www.nascocorridor.com/>

I-95 Corridor:  
<http://www.i95coalition.org/>

Ports to Plains Trade Corridor:  
[www.portstoplains.com](http://www.portstoplains.com)

### **Potential Projects:**

- Design a new logo; install signage along the Corridor; create a newsletter; redesign and update the website
- Initiate a 511 deployment project with Tourism Sector.

### **Next Steps by November 15:**

- List improvements (infrastructure, technology, etc) since 2001.
- List earmarks for future projects
- Consult with other sectors to identify 1-3 potential short term projects
- Explore requirements/ value of expanding Corridor to Alaska and other states
- Explore merits of International Scenic Byway designation and identify point person in each state to serve on technical advisory group.
- Review the SAFETEA-LU to identify funding opportunities
- Submit regular updates on activities to inform press releases and newsletters

meeting in Sedona, AZ on 11-13 June 2006. AZ Governor Napolitano is the new incoming chair.

- Explore the use of enhancement programs to finance potential projects.
- Prepare a brief report listing improvements to the Corridor since 2001 and what earmark funding has been obtained for future projects. When the 2001 plan was completed the Hoover Dam bypass, a considerable improvement, was only under consideration. The list should include technology enhancements, for instance the status of 511 deployments.
- Identify in consultation with tourism and economic development officials up to three projects that could be implemented in the short-term, next 12 months. Based on the identified items, the Coalition could select one or more projects to undertake.

General discussions on specific projects such as branding, commercial enhancement lanes and an international scenic highway designation included:

#### *Branding/Marketing::*

- In May, the DOTs participated in a conference call and agreed to seek a \$43 M authorization request to procure early funding for ITS infrastructure to support the Smart Initiatives. Although unsuccessful, the "Safe, Smart and Secure (S<sup>3</sup>) Corridor" tag was coined by Charlie Roundtree in Idaho. All subsequent materials will incorporate this information.
- CANAMEX needs to be branded and have its identity established. Marketing and collateral materials should be developed, e.g., newsletter, revamped website.
- Branding the Corridor, beginning with a new logo, and installing signage along the corridor would provide more clout and visibility for the Coalition.
- Nevada, specifically Las Vegas, has enlisted celebrities for video clips to increase visibility for key issues. With the bridge scheduled for completion in 2008, the Coalition should begin planning for an "out of the box" kick off event.
- The Hoover Dam Bypass is a monumental accomplishment for the Corridor. Collectively the Coalition should be credited for projects irregardless if all the states are participants. The Coalition should support individual state projects that improve or enhance the Corridor.

#### *International Scenic Byways Designation*

- Nominating the Corridor as an International Scenic Byway could provide additional resources, however more research needs to be undertaken to ensure that such a designation would not result in federal restrictions on design standards or functionality. This designation is intended to bring communities together to create a unique identity and allow DOTs to develop a logo legally.
- It was not known whether an interstate can meet the requirements for this designation.
- Each state will need to review their respective statutes.
- Each state should identify a point person to explore the Byway designation in coordination with the National Scenic Byways Center located in Minnesota (Henry Hanka).

#### *Commercial Enhancement Lanes*

- Representative Don Young (Alaska), outgoing chair of the Transportation Committee, supported the concept of truck designated lanes, or commerce enhancement lanes. SAFETEA-LU includes some language for pilot projects to advance this concept through public private partnerships.
- Each of the DOTs should review the language with this and other opportunities in mind. Nevada has a consultant who may be able to provide some assistance.

#### *General Discussion Points*

Representative Tom Petri from Wisconsin's 6<sup>th</sup> District helped secure funding for a study to explore the feasibility of usage fees to replenish the highway trust fund. Instead of a gas tax, users would be charged via a radar tracking device based on the hours or miles traveled. The Coalition should be positioning itself to participate or testify on this and other relevant issues which could have a significant impact.

Mexico and Canada are partners in the CANAMEX Corridor. The Coalition needs to consider how it will interface with these entities. Canadian representatives have advocated for the inclusion of Alaska. This inclusion may require a federal designation. The Coalition may want to consider whether or not to invite other states. As the reauthorization process has shown, coalitions and multi-state initiatives benefited the most.

### **Organizational Issues**

Walker highlighted the materials in the participant packets, drawing particular attention to tab 4 which included information that complimented the previous discussion, e.g. the 511 National Progress Report, a description of the Trans-Texas Corridor Initiative, and the recently released Security and Prosperity Plan. The latter outlines the federal priorities of the NAFTA nations and the anticipated milestones.

### *MOU*

The MOU between the five states expired in June. Each state must review the language to determine what additions or modifications are required and determine support by their Governor for renewal. Key issues include whether the document will reflect CANAMEX as a multi-sector initiative or purely transportation and whether it should extend beyond 2 years. The Coalition should consider whether the document is necessary, since each DOT has the discretion to advance projects that do not conflict with their statutory limits.

Due to the transition in securing a new executive director an annual report was not prepared. A report listing the Coalition activities should be completed to support the MOU.

### *Coalition Leadership Schedule*

The Coalition every two years rotates between a private and a public sector chair. Currie was designated during a previous meeting to succeed Skancke as the new chair in June 2005. However, with a new Governor and Transportation Director in Montana this succession did not occur.

Discussions centered around whether new leadership could be decided in the absence of an MOU and the input of the Governors who appoint individuals to serve as part of the Coalition.

Mendez made a motion to have Lynch assume the chairmanship, resending the original Currie nomination, and to have this transition effective in October 2005. Woog seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The Coalition agreed to consider a private sector vice chair during the next meeting and determine by June 2006 whether the leadership terms should be for two years.

### *Executive Report*

Walker provided a budget document prepared by ADOT's Transportation and Planning Division (TPD). As of 11 August 2005, available funds equaled \$202,682.19. These funds reflect a roll over from the previous year and financial contributions by ADOT (100,000) and Montana (9,500) for fiscal 05. The disproportionate allocation by ADOT to some degree represents a greater focus on Arizona priorities. Future contributions by all the states should be supported by a work plan detailing estimated resource requirements and contingent on the Coalition priorities.

### **Arizona CANAMEX Update**

Woog explained that Arizona reconstituted a smaller Taskforce which had expired in December 2004. The Taskforce is supported by five committees: 1) operations; 2) cyberport; 3) market development; 4) political outreach and 5) evaluation/metrics. The Taskforce met in June 2005 during the Arizona-Mexico Commission Plenary and endorsed three priorities:

- Position Arizona competitively relative to increased Asian trade by exploiting deep sea port developments in Mexico. One aspect of this strategy includes a study commissioned by ADOT to determine the realistic capacity of the Guaymas, Sonora marine port. Results are due in December.
- Deliver broadband to communities with a population of 500 and above and cellular service along every mile of major state highways and interstates.

- Support land port expansions and the implementation of cyberport principles. GSA completed a feasibility study for the redesign of the Mariposa Port of Entry in Nogales, AZ, which will significantly increase capacity. Arizona is identifying novel technology and process enhancements to expedite the movement of trade through its ports of entry. Part of the CyberPort recommendations, Arizona is breaking ground this fall on two new FAST lanes, these commercial designated lanes will accelerate shipments for certified cargo.

### **Mexico CANAMEX Update**

Walker indicated that Sonora had adopted Arizona's reorganization structure. The two sides met in June at the Plenary to begin to identify shared priorities. High level officials from Mexico's State Department (SRE) and their Secretariat of Transportation and Communications (SCT) participated in these discussions. SRE assumed a leadership role in organizing the Mexican CANAMEX states. Subsequently a meeting was held in Mexico City to identify public/private sector representatives from each state and to generate a list of potential projects. In July, the new Governor of Sinaloa traveled to Arizona. CANAMEX was a prominent feature of the discussions between the two governors.

### **Proposed Next Meeting**

Coalition members were encouraged to submit possible dates to establish an annual calendar. The conference call should be arranged in advance of an in person meeting, possibly in Salt Lake City later this fall.

Before adjourning, Coalition members acknowledge the leadership and strong voice of outgoing chair Skancke. Skancke indicated his pleasure serving and excitement for the new leadership and direction of the Coalition in the future.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.