

# On the Technology Front:

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Symposium

Periodically, everyone wonders “how did we ever do without....?” People have made that statement about the internet, cable TV, cell phones, 2 car families and an ever growing list of items. For the planning business, one of those necessary additions has been Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Being a business concerned with understanding the travel patterns in our cities, and creating solutions to make them, the ability to visualize, analyze and explain trends is vital. Consequently, geospatial tools have become a major component of planning for all MPOs and State DOTs. How can we keep abreast of the latest information about this vital resource? AMPO and The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) are working together to provide a forum for sharing the best geospatial practices of those agencies in achieving transportation goals and a method of disseminating technology changes to the MPOs.

AASHTO, along with USDOT, AMPO, the Urban & Regional Information Systems Association, the Transportation Research Board, the American Society for Photogrammetry & Remote Sensing, and the Highway Engineering Exchange Program, sponsor the annual GIS for Transportation Symposium. It is a chance for persons in government and private industry

who are interested in the use of GIS for transportation purposes to get together and share experiences, see state-of-art software, and learn more about this field. It annually attracts about 400 registrants and additional exhibitors.

Come visit us at the sixteenth annual GIS-T Symposium. It will be held in Colorado Springs March 16-19, 2003 at the Doubletree World Arena. Within a short distance is the Air Force Academy, the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, Garden of the Gods Park, Pikes Peak and the U.S. Olympic Training Center.

For the Symposium to be effective in addressing the issues of MPOs, the involvement from those agencies is desired and needed. Want to get involved? The program is currently under development. Why not submit a presentation abstract about your latest accomplishments to the Planning Committee at <http://www.gis-t.org/callfor.htm>.

For more information, check out the Symposium web site at [www.gis-t.org](http://www.gis-t.org). From the website you can find the pre-Symposium educational workshops, technical tours, view the Preliminary Program in January or get included on a listserv with latest up-to-date confer-



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ence announcements. The Symposium aims to further your knowledge of GIS. Presentations and papers from past sessions are accessible from the web site.



Les Sterman,  
Executive Director,  
East-West Gateway  
Coordinating Council

## AMPO Introduces its Newest Board Members

AMPO is proud to introduce Les Sterman and Jim McKenzie as the newest members of its Board of Directors.

Since 1983 Les Sterman has served as the Executive Director of the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council. While with the Council Les has played a pivotal role in realizing the region's largest and most visible projects such as the MetroLink light rail system. In addition, he is an active proponent for metropolitan transportation, urban development and environmental issues.

We are proud to have Les as a current Co-Chair and founding member of AMPO. Other organization affiliation highlights include Member, Executive Committee, Transportation Research Board, National Academy of Sciences; and Member, Steering Committee, Surface Transportation Policy Project.

According to Les, “The better we can understand the role transportation plays in the development of healthy, sustainable communities and metro regions, the better prepared we are in developing plans to make such communities a reality.”

Les holds a B.S.C.E. in Civil Engineering and a M.S. in Urban and Environmental Studies from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and has published transportation articles for the Transportation Research Board, St. Louis Currents, and other local and national publications.

Since 1988, Jim McKenzie has been Executive Director of Metroplan, a council of local governments in central Arkansas, which is also the MPO for the Little Rock-North Little Rock region.

As an active community leader, Jim has served various organizations such as the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce Leadership Institute, the Board of the Quapaw Quarter Association, and the Pulaski County Quorum Court. In addition, he has also taught American National Government and Metropolitan Government as an adjunct professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Jim has served as a panelist and lecturer at local, regional and national conferences regarding urban planning and transportation including the national Main Street Program, the American Planning Association, the National Transit Institute, and the Transportation Research Board.

According to Jim “Our [AMPO's] immediate challenges are the successful passage of TEA 3, the integration of operations and management planning into the MPO process, and the mentoring of the many new MPO's that will be created as a result of the 2000 Census.” And he continued, “I am convinced that we can and will do a good job at each of these tasks.”

Jim holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science.

In addition to being a native Arkansan, Jim very much enjoys his wife, children and grandchildren. And an interesting tidbit for chatter at the next Annual Meeting, Jim is a Certificated Instructor of Scottish Country Dancing by the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Edinburgh.



Jim McKenzie,  
Executive Director,  
Metroplan

## AMPO and Members Hit the Hill

Communities across the United States are besieged with congestion, unreliability issues and seemingly endless project delays. As Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), we have a proven track record of finding ways to overcome these obstacles. As such, we are in a unique position to move the next round of transportation legislation forward and to see that it continues and strengthens our ability to find solutions to community transportation dilemmas.

We see three key issue areas as the foundation to making MPOs and our transportation systems stronger and more adept to handle the ongoing transportation challenges.

First, we need to focus funding on existing problems. For example, by increasing the metropolitan planning breakdown to 2%, we could support the new MPO's dictated by the 2000 census without further taxing existing MPO funding sources.

Next, we need to provide a means for new and existing transportation system efficiency. For example, TEA-3 should allow the use of Department of Transportation or Homeland Security funding to build the “infrastructure” needed to operate the transportation system and provide traveler information.

Finally, we need to streamline the project delivery and air quality conformity processes such as reducing the gap between state air quality and transportation plans and focusing the conformity process on the regional transportation plan—not the Transportation Improvement Program.

We are calling on our member MPO's to take an active and visible role in bringing the key improvements listed above and others to fruition. (Please see [www.ampo.org/policy/AMPOtea32.pdf](http://www.ampo.org/policy/AMPOtea32.pdf) for our complete TEA-3 Legislative agenda). Just how can you play a role? By working within the communities you know best. Be it at the local level, working with state organi-

zations such as Departments of Transportation (DOT) or communicating your regional needs to congressional representatives.

Phone calls, face-to-face meetings in your home states or setting up meetings while in Washington, letters to congressional representatives, op-ed's and letters to the editor in local papers are all great ways to voice your community's needs. For congressional contact information, please see [www.ampo.org](http://www.ampo.org).

At AMPO we have already called on a few MPOs to assist us in getting our message out directly to congressional members at hearings on Capitol Hill. We'd like to thank the following for their testimony to Congress over the summer: Steve Heminger, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission; Jacob Snow, Executive Director of the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada; Andrew C. Cotugno, Metro Planning Director, Portland, Oregon; and Ronald Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.



## What is TEA-3?

TEA-3 is the third round of transportation legislation first enacted by Congress in 1991 through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and continued in 1998 with the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

## Timeline Milestones for TEA-3 Reauthorization

- Fall 2002 Submission of US DOT Proposal to the Office of Management and Budget
- November Midterm elections effect congressional and state leadership positions
- January Activity begins by congressional committees with jurisdiction over transportation
- January Administration is expected to submit its proposal to Congress

## 2002 AMPO NATIONAL AWARDS WINNERS



**OUTSTANDING OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT  
MPOS OVER 200,000**  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission,  
Oakland, CA  
Submission: *Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC)*

*The Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC)* is a unique program with a multi-faceted approach to integrating transportation and land use planning in the metropolitan area. It supports plans and projects that strengthen the link between transportation, community goals, and land use by providing funding and incentives for programs that encourage pedestrian, transit or bicycle trips, and promote the compact development of housing in downtowns and regional activity centers. Since

TLC's inception in 1998, over \$59 million in planning, capital, and Housing

Incentive Program grants have been awarded to almost 140 projects in communities around the Bay Area.

**OUTSTANDING OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT  
MPOS UNDER 200,000**  
Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Dover, DE  
Submission: *Maximizing Public Involvement/Education Resource*

Since 1992, the Dover/Kent MPO has made it a priority to maximize public participation in the metropolitan planning process by taking advantage of partnerships, networks, volunteers, and traditional media outlets. Examples include:

- Partnerships with Delaware Department of Transportation and City of Dover to promote Bike to Work Month and bicycle safety programs;
- Bi-monthly meetings held by the Public Advisory Committee; and the
- Elderly Mobility Initiative which works to address the transportation needs of the elderly community.

**Next Issue: Meet Councilman Phil Mendelson from Washington, DC**

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2002 AMPO National Award Winners

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# Survey Says

AMPO Research Supports Increased PL Funding

Since the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act (ISTEA) enacted by Congress in 1991, MPOs have seen increases in responsibilities on numerous fronts without additional dollars to support those new activities. Each dollar of increased metropolitan planning funds spent in FY02 had to support 80% more program dollars than each dollar spent in the first year of ISTEA. In addition, more MPOs will likely be created as a product of the 2000 census

On the M&O side, MPOs have seen increases in tasks since the inception of ISTEA. With the increase in congestion across the country, MPOs introduced new programs at the local level to deal with the growing problem. Particularly important at the local level was the introduction of Transportation Demand Management strategies. MPOs used various strategies to reduce peak period trips, including travelers' information programs, alternative route information and ride sharing.

Another valuable M&O initiative driven first by ISTEA and then TEA 21 was introduction of ITS architecture to provide a basis for metropolitan-wide transportation system management.

Such applications include coordinated traffic signalization, traffic operation centers, variable message signs, geographic positioning systems (GPS) on buses and the soon to be 511 phone number that will provide nationwide traffic information by phone. What works well in one region may not work well in another, which is why the MPO is in a key position to customize such technology to its region's needs.

To address the funding issue, AMPO and its member MPOs have been urging legislators to increase the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Project Level (PL) funds to 2% of source programs and to double Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5303 funds to provide adequate resources to account for additional MPOs, new programs, such as security and operations, and increases in overall projects.

Small MPOs are struggling to fulfill statutory responsibilities as well as local project implementation with limited staff and financial resources.

- 58% of small MPOs do not have adequate resources to hire consultants to assist with modeling or forecasting.
- 16% of small MPOs do not have a full-time transportation planner.
- Small MPOs are shouldering three-quarters of the state/local matching requirement for federal funds.

Source: AMPO Small MPO Survey, conducted by Melissa Merrell, Summer 2002

and many of these will be small MPOs, which have been historically underfunded.

The first area causing stress in funds for MPOs is the increase in responsibilities, be it from new legislative demands, changing social concerns, or simply more people living within urbanized areas.

The two major areas of increasing responsibility are security issues in the post 9/11 world, and additional Management and Operations (M&O) tasks. In the security arena, MPOs indicated that they see a growing role for their involvement in traffic modeling for evacuation plans, airport facility planning, emergency preparedness, statewide assessments of critical assets and vulnerable facilities, and coordination with E-911 services which need to be addressed after 9/11.

78% of MPOs surveyed indicated that security concerns have caused changes in their metropolitan transportation planning process.

Examples of changes that have already taken place for many MPOs:

1. The Regional Emergency Management Technical Advisory Committee for the Portland metropolitan area is working very closely with local transportation planning agencies to develop its regional emergency transportation routes
2. There is increased coordination among agencies that plan and provide transportation. For example, the seaport, airport, mass transit, and other modal agencies have enhanced their communications with one another
3. Inclusion of Emergency Management Director on MPO Technical Committee which is also the Intelligent Transportation (ITS) Steering Committee
4. Statewide assessment of critical assets and vulnerable facilities has been completed, including regional prioritization (by the state DOT)
5. Revision of ITS Architecture (underway) to strengthen emergency management/incident management relationships

Source: AMPO Security Survey, conducted by Melissa Merrell, summer 2002

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## OUTSTANDING PROJECT AWARDS

Applicant: Springfield Area Transportation Study Organization  
Springfield, MO

Submission: *The Road to Transportation Management Area Status*

Many MPOs find the transition to TMA designation to be an arduous and difficult process.

With the possibility of exceeding the 200,000-population threshold and pending classification of TMA designation, the Springfield, Missouri MPO began planning early by expanding membership of the Technical and Policy Board to include additional modal partners and representatives from neighboring communities. They carried out what is normally unsettling in a calm and professional manner.

Applicant: *Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA*  
Submission: *Destination 2030*

Adopting a regional plan such as Puget Sound's *Destination 2030* is a fundamental responsibility of an MPO. As a coordinated strategy for the region's transit, freight, ferry, roadway, rail, aviation, bicycle, and pedestrian systems for the next 30 years, the plan supports growth and transportation planning by local communities while assuring a comprehensive transportation system that works for the entire region. The transportation investments in *Destination 2030* promote the region's pioneering growth strategy that calls for a development pattern of urban centers connected by an efficient multi-modal transportation system.

## INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

### Individual Leadership Award

AMPO's Individual Leadership award is presented each year to a member of the MPO community whose demonstrated vision and leadership have been instrumental in successful metropolitan planning projects.

**Jacob Snow**, General Manager  
Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC)

Jacob Snow's tenure at the Regional Transportation Council of Southern Nevada has embraced innovation and creativity in solving the transportation needs of his area.

He has provided leadership and direction for a public/private partnership with the Las Vegas Monorail Corporation to bring the first urban transit-grade monorail to the United States and was instrumental in passing the Congressional bill allowing \$650 million in private bonds to be used as local match for federal funds. Jacob also spearheaded the negotiations and legislative activities to bring cutting-edge, optically-guided-bus rapid transit technology to the area and his work with a local citizens' group will result in a ballot initiative to fund \$2.7 billions in street, highway and transit projects for Las Vegas.

In addition, Jacob's organization is a recent member of AMPO and in the past year, Jacob has been active with AMPO's reauthorization efforts and building our membership.

### Outstanding Service to the MPO Community during their tenure on AMPO's Board of Directors

The next two awards are outstanding service demonstrated by their vision and leadership to AMPO during a time of change and growth at the association. These are not awards that we normally present, but such individual contributions, which brought strength and stability to AMPO, deserve special recognition.

**Linda Bolte** is the Deputy Director for the Chicago Area Transportation Study and was first elected to AMPO's Board of Directors in 2000. Linda currently serves as the Vice President of the AMPO Board and Chair of the Management Committee.

**Tom Swanson** is the Executive Director of the Pima Association of Governments and joined the AMPO Board in 1998. Tom is a past Vice-Chairman and currently serves as the Chair of the Policy Committee.

### AMPO Board of Directors Resolution: Special Recognition for Leadership

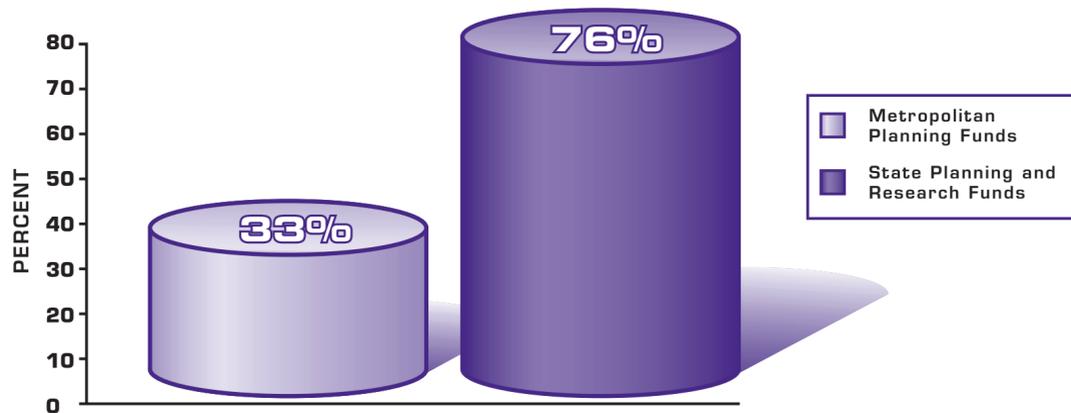
The AMPO Board also passed a resolution recognizing the hard work, leadership and vision of outgoing board member and past chair John Mason, Mayor of the City of Fairfax, Virginia.

*“If there's an innovative, new technology out there that could improve mobility in our community, bring it. We'll try it out.”*

— Jacob Snow, General Manager  
Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC)



## State Planning and Research Funds grew twice as fast as Metropolitan Planning Funds from ISTEA to TEA-21.



Compares full six-year funding amount in ISTEA with TEA-21. Metropolitan Planning Funds include FHWA PL funds and FTA 5303 funds. State Planning and Research Funds do not include research and NCHRP. Source: *Federal Highway Administration, US Department of Transportation*

## TEAM LEADER, Planning National Technical Service Team

The Team Leader will be located at one of five locations for the National Resource Center. The Team Leader will manage a team of experts in planning, in order to improve surface transportation planning, through delivery of technical assistance, training, and deploy technology to FHWA Divisions, State DOTs, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and other surface transportation organizations. The Team Leader will work closely with the FHWA Headquarters (HQ) and the staff of the Federal Transit Administration

The annual salary ranges from \$77,043 to \$127,798, and will be based on the locality pay for one of five regional locations including: Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Olympia Fields (Chicago area), Illinois; San Francisco, California; and, Lakewood (Denver area), Colorado.

**THIS ANNOUNCEMENT OPENS MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2002.** For more information, visit the FHWA website at: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/vacancy/index.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/vacancy/index.htm), or call 202-366-0541.

*The Federal Highway Administration is an Equal Opportunity Employer*

## Meet the Staff at AMPO

**MELISSA MERRELL** is AMPO's Research Analyst and began working for the organization this past summer. Her research on metropolitan planning, CMAQ, staffing and operations and STP will be used to support AMPO's legislative agenda for TEA-3 and other policy initiatives.

Before coming to AMPO, Melissa was a project manager for the League of Women Voters Education Fund in Washington, DC. She oversaw project implementation for a national health dialogue sponsored by the Kaiser Family Foundation and non-partisan election mobilization efforts for the 2000 presidential elections.

Melissa is also a full time graduate student at George Washington University School of Business and



Melissa (second from the left) with her three sisters.