



NEWS RELEASE

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District 7: Los Angeles & Ventura Counties

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALTRANS AND CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL WIN PRESTIGIOUS AWARD FOR HIGH-TECH TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT CENTER

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) won first place honors and national recognition from the National Association of Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) for outstanding achievement in leadership technology projects and large project management; specifically for their world-class Los Angeles Regional Transportation Management Center for the category "Cross-Boundary Collaboration and Partnerships." The LARTMC is a state-of-the-art facility co-managed by the two sister agencies -- in partnership with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Management Authority (Metro) -- and is responsible for the day-to-day traffic management and emergency response efforts for nearly 525 miles on 42 busy Los Angeles and Ventura County freeways and state highways.

"This new LARTMC facility, these centers, are built with the basic idea of managing freeway traffic to achieve the goal of reducing traveler commuting times, maximizing roadway capacity, and in the end providing a safer traveling medium for the general public," said California Business, Transportation and Housing Secretary Dale Bonner.

The NASCIO announced five total awards to the State of California: one first-place award to the CHP and Caltrans – and four finalists: CAL FIRE, the Department of Finance, the Department of Insurance and the Office of Systems Integration within the California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS). There were more than 114 submissions to this year's competition in 10 categories by 30 states. NASCIO's Recognition Awards Program emphasis was placed on recognizing programs that exemplify best practices, support the public policy goals of state leaders, represent an innovative use of existing technology or a use of new technology, assist government officials to efficiently execute their duties, provide cost-effective service to citizens and are transferable to other agencies or units of government.

"California is proudly leading the way in improving the efficiency of state operations and providing access to government information and services to better serve our constituents through the use of technology," added Teri Takai, California's Chief Information Officer. "I would like to congratulate all of the innovative, dedicated and hard-working technology professionals that have contributed to this tremendous achievement and made the LARTMC a success, the Golden State being nationally recognized for outstanding accomplishments in information technology."

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Caltrans uses innovative information gathering and communication technologies to transform the Los Angeles freeway system into an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). ITS encompasses a broad range of wireless and wire line communications-based information and electronic technologies. The system is “intelligent” because it gives information that allows freeway management officials in the LARTMC to pinpoint where an incident or congestion is occurring and receive all relevant data on that congestion. Caltrans engineers, along with CHP dispatch teams, can then determine, in real time, to either dispatch emergency personnel if the congestion is caused by an accident, or alter on-ramp metering to ease the congestion on that specific stretch of freeway.

For the optimum system efficiency, the LARTMC has leveraged Caltrans’ major investments in innovative technologies that increase data gathering and integration capability that provides the ability for government to communicate real-time traffic information with commuters. These investments include:

- More than 340 miles of fiber-optic cable to transmit data
- More than 10,000 inductive loop sensors, or detectors, imbedded in freeway pavement to measure vehicle volume and speed
- 1,280 Vehicle Detector Stations (VDS) to monitor freeway traffic flow conditions and level of congestion.
- 360 closed-circuit televisions (CCTV) to verify and respond to incidents
- 960 Ramp Metering Stations (RMS) – to meter the time between allowing vehicles on the freeways. This facilitates better merging and traffic flow, which decreases the likelihood of an accident.

The LARTMC and ITS solution also encompasses Caltrans’ 109 overhead electronic freeway Changeable Message Signs, which give time estimates to drivers already on the road; 15 Highway Advisory Radio Stations to give traffic updates when needed; and automates the dissemination of real-time traffic information to 20 websites/Internet Service Providers (ISPs). This puts traffic information directly into the hands of the traveling public, assisting them in making informed choices about their commutes. It makes commuters themselves partners in LARTMC traffic relief efforts.

Since its opening in October of 2007, the LARTMC and ITS have realized the anticipated benefits of the project: increasing mainline freeway speeds, decreasing the duration of traffic delays, reducing incident response times, relieving congestion on Los Angeles and Ventura County freeways, decreasing travel times and increasing freeway safety. In addition, a cost-benefits analysis of the technologies within the LARTMC/ITS solution has shown that the reduction of traffic congestion increases economic opportunities in the region and increases the prosperity of the people of Southern California; or in other words: it improves the quality of life. And the effective collaboration and partnership with different state and county entities has improved government operations and serves as an example of best practices in freeway management and cross-boundary collaboration. (More...)



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That collaboration of government agencies that makes LARTMC a success extends past the bounds of incident and congestion management and into long-term congestion relief. All data collected by the ITS is sent from the LARTMC to the University of California at Berkeley to be analyzed to determine where valuable and scarce transportation infrastructure money would be best put to use. This means as Los Angeles County continues to grow, and the number of commuters continues to climb, California will spend its valuable transportation funding in the wisest and most beneficial ways.

Los Angeles County's current transportation infrastructure supports more than 9.6 million people who travel more than 92 million vehicle miles every day. Estimates predict that by 2025, this usage will increase by 42 percent. Overall, the collaboration between Caltrans, the CHP, and Los Angeles County Metro, and the subsequent collaboration between Caltrans and UC Berkeley, has improved traveling time and freeway safety with cost-efficient technologies. The LARTMC is a success in government collaboration because it leverages Caltrans' major investments achieved into real-life benefits for citizens.

Takai concluded, "This award is an example of how the talent and dedication of ITS employees can transform the way we do business in California."

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