USU Joins the MPC and is awarded a UTC | Utah Transportation Center

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Utah State University is part of consortium awarded $3.5 million from U.S. Department of Transportation

Utah State University is part of a consortium of eight universities focused on transportation research that was awarded a $3.5 million grant awarded recently by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The grant was one of 22 awarded in the University Transportation Centers Program administered by the DOT’s Research and Innovative Technology Administration. Utah State University and other members of the Mountain-Plains Consortium received the award for the coming year to study transportation issues in the Upper Great Plains and Intermountain West. Utah State University’s share will be about $250,000.

The grant was one of 10 awarded to regional transportation centers. The other 12 grants were awarded to national centers. The Mountain-Plains Consortium includes Colorado State University, South Dakota State University, the University of Colorado-Denver, the University of Denver, the University of Utah, the University of Wyoming and Utah State University. North Dakota State University is the lead university of the effort and has led the Mountain-Plains Consortium with various partner universities since 1988.

“Each of the participating universities has key strengths and programs. The consortium will combine them into a comprehensive and coordinated program that addresses key transportation issues in the region,” Tolliver said. The consortium has on-going programs in several areas including transportation and sustainable energy development; bridge monitoring and performance; tribal transportation planning; transit oriented development and urban sustainability; workforce skill development; and development of on-line courses and training.

“These are areas where we’ve already identified needs and where our faculty and staff have developed excellent programs. This grant award gives us an opportunity to build on that foundation,” Tolliver said.

• Advancing the state of repair and sustainability of transportation infrastructure
• Enhance economic competitiveness through transportation
• Improving safety and enforcement
• Advancing livable communities through transportation

Collaborators from the cooperating universities will submit project proposals for review and selection within the next month. The grant will also support transportation-related education programs at the participating universities as well as technology transfer and workforce development activities. Funding under the grant is for one year, but may be used over the next two years if necessary.

“The states in this region share a number of common characteristics such as vast rural road networks, few urban centers and harsh climate extremes,” noted Denver Tolliver, consortium director and associate director of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute associate director at NDSU. “No single university can effectively address the complex transportation issues we face in this region, but the integrated efforts of eight universities along with support and partnerships in each state will have a significant impact.”

• Assessing the impact of energy development and climatic extremes on transportation