

Oberstar Era Leaves Lasting Legacy in Transportation

Our 117th Annual Alliance Membership Meeting with the Construction Forecast was held yesterday amid the news that Congressman Jim Oberstar – Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee was not re-elected to another term.

Congressman Oberstar will be greatly missed by many of us in the transportation community. He has been a champion for transportation for so many years and is a real leader in developing transportation policy. We all learned a great deal from his expertise and many years of experience. His knowledge was coupled with a passion for the issue that few other elected officials possess.

He has always been a strong supporter of the Transportation Alliance – going back to the days of Minnesota Good Roads

– and we greatly appreciate his support and his contributions to our organization over the years. His advocacy for transportation and his leadership made a difference for people in Minnesota. He leaves a legacy of safer highways, better bridges and an improved quality of life for people.



Sea Change in Political Make-Up Reviewed at Alliance Annual Meeting

The results of the November 2nd election mean big changes in the make up of the transportation committees and changes in strategy as transportation advocates approach the 2011 Legislative Session. While some legislative races may be subject to a recount, Republicans will have clear majorities in both the House and Senate.

Our Annual Meeting focused on the implications of the election results for transportation in Minnesota. A recount in the Governor's race means we will have to wait to see the final result and the length of the process will not only impact the appointment of agency heads, the process could delay the ability of the next governor to take the oath of office until after the start of the Legislative Session. That means that Governor Pawlenty would continue to serve as governor with a new Republican controlled legislature until a new governor officially takes office.

In the legislature, new committee structures are likely and new chairs for transportation will take over in January. Initial results show Republicans control the House 72-62, and for the first time in the modern era, the Senate, too, 36-31. The DFL previously held majorities of 87-47 and 45-22. Ranking Republican member Michael Jungbauer (R-East Bethel) is seen as the likely new Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee. In the House, Rep. Mike Beard (R-Shakopee) is the lead Republican on Transportation and may move up to Committee Chair.

Long-time member and former Transportation Committee Chair Bernie Lieder was not re-elected. Bernie brought his knowledge as a former county engineer to the position of committee chair and was well-respected by his colleagues on both sides of the aisle for his knowledge of transportation issues.

With many new legislators taking office, transportation advocates need to reach out to first-term legislators and to new leaders about the importance of transportation investments in creating jobs and improving the state's economy. Alliance staff will be busy meeting with legislators discuss our legislative agenda.

Results for individual races can be found at: <http://electionresults.sos.state.mn.us/20101102/>
Please reach out with an e-mail or note to those who will be taking office to congratulate them and urge their support for transportation investments. If you know of prospective legislators who are strong transportation advocates, urge them to seek a seat on the transportation committee.

We also want to thank Myra Peterson, Washington County Commissioner who will not be returning to the county, for her many years of service and strong involvement in transportation issues. Myra served on the Alliance Board of Directors for many years and has been a champion for increased transportation investments.

Transportation Alliance Recognizes Leaders in Transportation Community

As always, the Alliance recognized transportation advocates at our Annual Meeting. These leaders in the transportation community have gone above and beyond in advocating for transportation improvements through many years of dedicated service.



Julie Anderson, Mathiowetz Construction and Alliance President presents the Richard J. Mathiowetz Award to James Loaney, formerly with Hancock Concrete Products and past Alliance President.



Tony Kellen (left), with St. Cloud Metro Bus and President of the MN Public Transit Assoc. receives the Transportation Advocate Award from David Tripp of St. Cloud Metro Bus.



Margaret Donahoe presented the Transportation Advocate Award to Jon Olson, Anoka County Division Manager for Public Services.



Julie Anderson presented the William Koniarski Transportation Advocate Award to Alan Forsberg, Blue Earth County Engineer



Julie Anderson presented the Legislator Advocate Award to Rep. Terry Morrow

