WASHINGTON, DC – Despite years spent explaining their funding challenges, transportation agencies have had a difficult time gaining broad public support for increased transportation investment.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials today released a peer exchange report, "Communicating Transportation Funding Issues," that offers transportation agencies practical approaches to more effectively make the case for transportation investments to the general public and key decision makers.

"Those who read this report will have a better appreciation for the connection between effective communications and public awareness and acceptance of transportation investment," said Mara Campbell, customer services director of the Missouri Department of Transportation. "The transportation funding gap is growing and we believe that, if the public knows what's at stake, they'll support greater transportation investment."

Campbell was one of 24 senior state DOT executives who participated in the peer exchange in Irvine, California in June. The report based on the peer exchange focuses on four key elements of communication: audience identification, market research, message design, and message delivery.

The peer exchange and report were sponsored by the AASHTO Center for Excellence in Project Finance and the Federal Highway Administration. The final report can be downloaded here.

The report includes best practices from state DOTs in California, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin which have effectively communicated complex issues surrounding finance, funding, planning, and project selection. In addition, the peer exchange identified successful case studies of communication techniques that improved the public's understanding of transportation investment needs, funding options, and program management and implementation.

"When public resources are stretched and funding priorities are being set, transportation agencies need to help their communities understand why investments must be made," said Kirk Steudle, AASHTO president and director of the Michigan Department of Transportation. "This report will help agencies to adopt a more strategic approach to communications and give the public a greater appreciation for the investments being made nationwide."

For more information on the Center for Excellence in Project Finance or the peer exchange report, visit http://www.transportation-finance.org.
The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is the “Voice of Transportation” representing State Departments of Transportation in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. AASHTO is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association serving as a catalyst for excellence in transportation. Follow us on Twitter at http://twitter.com/aashtospeaks.

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