

## Improving communications between U.S. transportation agencies and tribal governments

The Center for Transportation Research and Education recently facilitated an historic event when the Iowa Division of the Federal Highway Administration and the Iowa Department of Transportation hosted a first-in-the-nation summit with representatives from Indian tribes having current or historical interests in Iowa.

The goal: Develop common ground for agency-tribal communications about historic preservation and transportation.

### Complying with Section 106 of NHPA

Through the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), enacted in 1966, congress established a comprehensive program to preserve the country's historical and cultural foundations.

Section 106 of NHPA requires agencies to consider the effects of their actions (including road construction and other road-related activities) on historic properties and to provide Indian tribal communities with an opportunity to comment on federal projects, including highway projects, before the projects are implemented.

If the federal government is involved in a road project, the state, city, or county owner-agency must initiate a "Section 106 review" with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). If tribal lands are involved, a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), designated by each federally recognized Indian tribe, will also participate in the review process.

Part of the Section 106 review process includes

- exploring alternatives to avoid or reduce harm to historical properties and
- reaching an agreement with tribal and state officials about measures to deal with or mitigate any "adverse effects."

If it's determined that historic properties will be harmed, a Section 106 review usually ends with a legally binding memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the agency and interested parties (e.g., Indian tribes). The MOA establishes how the agency will address identified adverse effects.

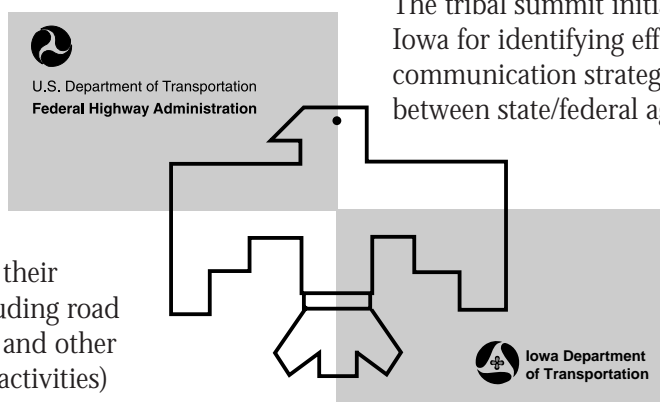
### What was accomplished at the summit?

The tribal summit initiated a process in Iowa for identifying effective communication strategies (consultation) between state/federal agencies and Indian

tribes with interests in Iowa lands. An important first step is being planned:

Tribal representatives will be invited to

visit a state project corridor at various stages in the project planning process. At each stage, agency and tribal representatives will review the historical, archeological, and related information that's been collected about the corridor. Through this process, tribal representatives will gain a better understanding of the project planning process. Both tribes and agencies will then work together to identify those critical points in the project planning process where tribes will be consulted.



## Update on Iowa urban standards

In the next couple of years, Iowa will be the first state to implement statewide urban design and specifications manuals for public infrastructure improvements. CTRE, the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), contractors, the Iowa chapter of the American Public Works Association, county engineers, and the Statewide Urban Standard Design and Specification Manuals Steering Committee will be working together to create and implement *Statewide Urban Standard Design and Specification Manuals for Public Improvements*.

The proposed statewide manuals will be based on *the Central Iowa Standard Design and Specification Manuals*, originally developed by 34 Iowa jurisdictions. The statewide manuals will also include design and construction details unique to specific jurisdictions across the state and will address considerations like materials availability and soil conditions, which may vary among the six state districts.

Dale Harrington, CTRE's associate director for pavements, and Harold Smith, CTRE's pavements training and public works engineer, have met with 23 statewide planning organizations committed to participating in this project.

The next steps will be accomplished in the following order:

- develop a work plan for the next two years
- submit an amended interagency agreement to the original 34 jurisdictions for a license to use their design guides and specifications as the starting documents
- appoint members for a statewide steering committee, which will include representatives from Iowa cities, counties, contractors, the Iowa chapter of the American Public Works Association, and stakeholder associations
- organize district subcommittees to identify design and specification particulars to be included in the statewide manual

District subcommittees will be composed of engineering personnel from city, county, and state governments that cover the areas of regional planning associations, metropolitan planning organizations, and technical management area organizations. The resulting manuals will be truly a product of statewide cooperation and input. •

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### For more information

Summit proceedings will soon be published summarizing the event's activities and results. You'll be able to access the proceedings from the Iowa DOT and CTRE web sites ([www.dot.state.ia.us/](http://www.dot.state.ia.us/), or [www.ctre.iastate.edu/](http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/)). Hard copies will be available for loan through CTRE's

library; contact Jim Hogan, library coordinator, 515-294-9481, [hoganj@iastate.edu](mailto:hoganj@iastate.edu).

For more information about the summit, contact Gerald Kennedy, Federal Highway Administration, Iowa Division, 515-233-7300, [gerald.kennedy@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:gerald.kennedy@fhwa.dot.gov). •