

WisDOT: Secretary-designee Thompson selected to chair regional transportation group

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Embracing the opportunity to promote solutions to common transportation challenges throughout the Midwest, Secretary of Transportation-designee Craig Thompson will serve as President of the Mid-America Association of State Transportation Officials (MAASTO).

“From the moment Secretary Thompson joined the Board of Directors at AASHTO, his active participation has been felt,” said Mike McKenna, president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation officers (AASHTO), MAASTO’s parent organization. “Not only is he a transportation leader, his background shows he is an effective practitioner as well.”

“I served with Secretary Thompson on the AASHTO Transportation Policy Forum as we deliberated state DOT positions on federal surface transportation reauthorization and he helped shape this vital policy. I am excited to have Craig step forward and assume the regional president role at MAASTO - his leadership is needed, and the region will benefit from his stewardship,” McKenna said.

MAASTO’s mission is to foster the development, operation, and maintenance of an integrated and balanced transportation system that adequately serves the transportation needs of its 10-member states. Members of MAASTO include Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio. Thompson served as the group’s 2019-2020 Vice President.

“The states MAASTO represents have similar transportation needs and issues,” Thompson said. “They are predominantly rural, but also have major urban and

industrial centers to serve. Leading the effort to share perspectives and solutions among Midwestern transportation leaders is an important opportunity for WisDOT and for Wisconsin.”

“Wisconsin hosted MAASTO’s Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Summit in 2019, to discuss how we can work together to prepare for this new technology,” Thompson said. “It’s a great example of the way MAASTO helps Midwestern states work together to make sure our roads and bridges are ready for the transportation needs of the future.”

Thompson was appointed Transportation Secretary by Governor Tony Evers in January 2019. Significant accomplishments during Thompson’s tenure include:

- Traffic deaths in 2019 were at a five-year low, due in part to the return and rebranding of the “Zero in Wisconsin” campaign to remind drivers to follow speed limits, buckle up, and avoid distractions.
- Wisconsin devoted more resources to projects throughout the state that stop the decline in road conditions and moved toward sustainable funding for Wisconsin’s transportation needs.
- To better serve local governments, the agency is piloting a new program that cuts red tape and reduces costs for local bridge repair. Uncomplicated bridge repair that can be done without serious environmental risks should not have to wait.
- WisDOT expanded its Lean Government program to save hundreds of thousands of dollars of costs per year and devote staff hours where they are most needed. For the first time in years, the agency is conducting risk-based internal audits and program reviews to improve efficiency and compliance.
- For the first time in five years, Gov. Evers convened the state’s Transportation Projects Commission (TPC), an important step in improving transparency and communication between the legislature and WisDOT. The TPC meeting enabled saving taxpayers millions of dollars on highway projects.”