



Center for Environmental Excellence by AASHTO  
One Stop Source of Environmental Information for Transportation Professionals

# Information Exchange & Marketing Plan

# Introduction

## Situation

In 2001, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) established the Center for Environmental Excellence (CEE) in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as a continuation of its efforts to find innovative ways to assist state transportation agencies and their partners in incorporating environmental stewardship and sustainability into transportation planning, project development, construction, maintenance, and operations; and to streamline the delivery of transportation programs and projects. The AASHTO CEE offers a wide range of products and services to assist transportation agencies in achieving environmental excellence in delivering their transportation programs and projects, including information sharing, technical assistance, partnership building and training resources.

The purpose of the CEE is to serve as a forum to promote and support a strategic national program for environmental excellence in surface transportation. To develop this national strategic program, AASHTO will directly engage a broad spectrum of transportation stakeholders through its existing networks and partnerships to identify environmental issues, challenges, research needs and opportunities related to surface transportation and the environment. The CEE will act as a repository of this information and work with the Technical Working Group to consider this information in the development of a strategic plan and associated work products. The new CEE will build upon what AASHTO and FHWA have already developed through the CEE to expand the types of tasks it will undertake and the stakeholder's that provide input to and benefit from CEE services.

The overall goal of CEE will continue to be encouraging transportation stakeholders to incorporate environmental compliance, and stewardship into transportation planning, project development, construction, maintenance, and operations; therefore directly assisting the surface transportation industry stakeholders in achieving environmental excellence in delivering their transportation programs and projects. The CEE will provide predictability and dependability, as inconsistencies across different agencies can be a major roadblock for transportation agencies. Information sharing and peer exchange will be of the utmost importance to this overall goal.

In order to support the CEE moving forward, this Information Exchange and Marketing Plan highlights the proposed communication goals for CEE, key messages to guide all communication and marketing efforts, target audiences for said messages, and the strategies and tactics to employ in order to reach those goals.

## Proposed Goals/Objectives

- Build upon CEE's previous successes by broadening its network of participating stakeholders from all levels of government.
- Foster a stronger environment for peer exchange, collaboration and information exchange between all interested parties to enhance the practice.
- Promote the CEE as a resource to surface transportation stakeholders on how to incorporate environmental compliance and stewardship into transportation planning, project development,

construction, maintenance, and operations, which will ultimately lead to environmental excellence.

### **Proposed Key Messages**

- At its heart, CEE is a place for all transportation professionals to share ideas and information with peers. Information exchange among stakeholders is essential in fostering a more collaborative delivery process.
- CEE promotes environmental stewardship and through all phases of transportation, including delivery, operation, maintenance, performance, etc.
- CEE serves as a resource for transportation professionals and other stakeholders looking for assistance, training, partnership-building opportunities, and quick and easy access to environmental tools.

### **Proposed Target audiences**

- States
  - State DOT officials (including but not limited to those in planning, construction, maintenance, operations, communications, etc.)
  - State agencies (state environmental protection agencies, for example)
  - Communities of Practice organized and facilitated through the Center
- Local government officials
  - MPOs and local planning organizations
  - Towns/cities/counties
- Federal government
  - Federal transportation agencies
- Non-governmental Organizations
  - Trade associations (Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, National Association of City Transportation Officials, etc.)
  - Private sector organizations (engineering firms, equipment manufacturers)
- Resource agencies
  - Division offices

### **Proposed Strategies/Tactics**

In order to broaden the network of practitioners engaged with the CEE, the main goal highlighted in this communications plan, staff will focus on the following strategies:

- Leverage online communication channels whose audiences coincide with those of the CEE
  - Promote CEE events and resources through existing AASHTO social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) and email lists
  - Publicize newsworthy CEE events and announcements through publications such as the AASHTO Journal and the Daily Transportation Update
  - Include CEE in the rolling banner on Transportation.org when fresh content becomes available

- Leverage AASHTO and FHWA's extensive relationships (members, liaisons, fellow trade associations, etc.) to generate awareness of the resources available to transportation professionals
  - Build a collaborative website which will enable stakeholders to share information and ideas as well as seek input and best practices from peers OR create a community on an existing platform (Yammer, a private Facebook group, etc.). Platform will need file-storing capabilities.
  - Utilize other AASHTO groups to get out CEE announcements and promote engagement with new audiences (for example, groups like AASHTO's Subcommittee on Transportation Communications could both get information out internally but also may benefit from information being shared by CEE).
  - Ask all state DOTs to create a widget on their web pages to link back to the CEE website.
  - Create a general PowerPoint presentation on the CEE to be used for speaking opportunities (can be updated for each presentation).
  
- Seek third party endorsements through media coverage of the center and speaking engagements
  - Actively seek and commit to speaking opportunities at various stakeholder meetings as a way to introduce the CEE and its benefits to potential new community members.
  - Send the CEE newsletter (and any newsworthy story ideas) to various trade publications or media contacts with an interest in CEE activities.