



Thursday, December 31, 2015

USDOT reflects on 2015 research efforts

Tweet Like Share Share G+ G+ Share

In a *Fastlane* blog post Dec. 31, Greg Winfree, U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) assistant secretary for research and technology, recapped 2015's research endeavors.

"The new year is an occasion synonymous with hope —an opportunity to take the lessons of the past and apply them to the future," he wrote. "And there is no better time than the holiday season to take a moment and reflect on what was accomplished over the past 12 months before turning the page and focusing on the work that needs to be done in 2016. As someone who has led a research-focused organization for nearly five years, I have come to recognize the true value and versatility of transferable lessons."

One moment this past year Winfree says stood out for him is when he took part in Transportation Leaders' Summit: Restoring the Nation's Pollinator Habitat, which was coordinated by President Obama's Pollinator Health Task Force and, although the summit addressed a nationally-significant issue one may think would be far afield of transportation, "it demonstrated the breadth of issues that transportation assets and infrastructure can impact," he said.

Winfree pointed out that research pays off for taxpayers when it leads to enduring, innovative solutions and real progress and when it ensures that the problems of today aren't left for the next generation to solve. He says that this year, USDOT made tremendous progress in advancing safety, mobility and environmental sustainability through new opportunities for cooperative transportation research and innovation. Some highlights included:

- Secretary Foxx kicked off the Smart City Challenge, a nationwide competition which will make up to \$50 million available for the winning city to test pioneering Intelligent Transportation Systems technologies, including automated vehicles.
- USDOT launched the Connected Vehicle Pilots Initiative in September at three sites, which will provide up to \$42 million for the implementation of cutting-edge connected vehicle applications, including vehicle automation.
- The Bureau of Transportation Statistics and Volpe National Transportation Systems Center provided data and outreach for the secretary's draft framework for the future, *Beyond Traffic: Trends and Choices 2045*, a broad, data-driven analysis outlining the challenges and choices facing the transportation system in the years ahead.
- USDOT-supported University Transportation Centers, such as the Rail Transportation and Engineering Center at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, across the nation continued to educate the next generation of transportation professionals through world-class research and facilities.

"Research, like the start of a new year, offers the promise of greater clarity —it provides a vantage point for effective decision-making and solutions to problems like pollinator health and transportation land use," he explained. "It can help us understand how we can improve the way we get around and how we can meet the freight challenge created by a growing population."