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INNOVATOR

Accelerating Innovation for the American Driving Experience

Collaboration Vital to Innovation Success, Industry Leaders Say

Creating a compelling vision of the future is one of the best ways for an organization's leaders to encourage innovation, according to James Sax of 3M. "Setting up a roadmap toward that future creates an opportunity for people to start thinking about what the future could look like and coming up with innovative ideas," the research and development vice president said.

Collaboration is another key to innovation success, said Sax, who spoke at the "Providing Leadership in Transportation Innovation" session at the January 2013 Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. "Open up to as many collaborative partners as possible, both within your organization and outside your organization, to build that vision for the future."

Willingness to change is also important, said Kirk Steudle, Michigan's state transportation director. "No one person has a corner on intelligence," he said. "We all have great ideas and we've got to be open to listening to them. It doesn't matter if you're the leader or the line worker or anywhere in between, you've got to be open to change."

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Innovation helps the highway community give taxpayers the best value for their money, FHWA Administrator Victor Mendez told TRB annual meeting participants.

Highways for LIFE Shines Spotlight on Innovation, Survey Shows

The Highways for LIFE initiative is a good program that focuses needed attention on innovation, participants in a survey on the initiative reported, and it will be a loss when it ends.

"It served as an innovation incubator," one survey respondent said. It provided "the invitation to think outside the box," said another.

The December 2012 survey was part of an effort to gather information from key stakeholders as the Federal Highway Administration program winds down. Focus groups and phone interviews were also conducted to get feedback. The findings will be used to improve and initiate other FHWA programs on innovation deployment, such as the Every Day Counts initiative to implement innovation to speed the delivery of highway projects.

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> "Programs like Highways for LIFE help lay the foundation for top leadership and industry to accept and promote innovation-driven contracts."
>
> – *Owner*

The survey targeted stakeholders in four groups—owners (government agencies), industry suppliers, highway users and industry professionals. Most of the respondents represented owners.

The U.S. Congress established Highways for LIFE in 2005 as a pilot program to improve America's driving

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