

INNOVATOR 100TH ISSUE



Innovator Reaches 100th Issue Milestone

The 100th issue marks more than 16 years of sharing innovation news and resources.



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Innovator Reaches 100th Issue Milestone

The 100th issue marks more than 16 years of sharing innovation news and resources.

More than 20,000 subscribers turn to the **Innovator** newsletter to learn about innovative technologies and processes in the highway community. Launched by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 2007 under **Highways for LIFE (HfL)** and continuing under **Every Day Counts (EDC)**, the bimonthly publication now consists of 100 issues chronicling innovation success stories, highlighting notable practices, and advancing the implementation of innovative technologies and processes.

Supporting Highways for LIFE

Innovator began under FHWA's HfL initiative, a pilot program established by Congress in 2005. HfL advanced the design and construction of highways and bridges to make the process safer, faster, and more cost-efficient by accelerating the adoption of proven innovations.

FHWA developed a technology deployment process that enlisted dedicated teams to reach State and local agencies through a variety of methods such as workshops and demonstration showcases, and *Innovator* helped expand that reach by highlighting notable deployments, sharing best practices, and promoting new resources to readers throughout the country.

Spreading the Word on Innovations that Work

Early *Innovator* issues reported on the first innovations promoted by HfL, which included prefabricated bridge elements and systems (PBES), road safety audits (RSAs), and techniques for making work zones work better.

PBES are structural components of a bridge that are built offsite then brought to the project location for installation. This method shortens onsite construction time, minimizing traffic impacts and increasing traveler and worker safety, and it can also offer superior durability.

Innovator highlighted a notable PBES deployment by the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) in its **first issue** and, in future issues, featured deployments by agencies across the country. Later stories on PBES helped spread the word on an advanced construction material called **ultra-high performance concrete** that offered stronger, more durable PBES connections. In 2019, *Innovator* **reported** that PBES is today's most widely used accelerated bridge construction technology. FHWA now considers PBES to have advanced to mainstream, widespread use and practice.

INNOVATOR HISTORY TIMELINE



The **first issue** of *Innovator* is printed and mailed to subscribers and posted online.

2007



Innovator introduces **Every Day Counts** and reports on the first **EDC Summits**.

2010

Issue 39 of *Innovator* introduces the **STIC Incentive Program**.

2013

2008

Innovator highlights importance of **marketing** to deploy innovation.

2012

The **States Innovate!** section, a regularly occurring feature with short innovation highlights from agencies across the country, debuts in **issue 33**.

RSAs are safety performance reviews of existing or proposed roadways or intersections by an independent, multidisciplinary team. RSAs qualitatively estimate and report potential road safety issues and identify opportunities for safety improvements. While traditional safety reviews often concentrate on motorized traffic, RSAs consider all potential road users, including road user capabilities and limitations.

Innovator first featured RSAs in **issue 4**, highlighting RSA deployment as a standard practice by the South Carolina DOT, and pointed readers to training courses, workshops, and other resources on how to conduct RSAs. In 2012, *Innovator* **reported** that conducting audits to improve road user safety was picking up momentum as transportation professionals learned more about the process, with 34 States having made audits part of their Highway Safety Improvement Program.

Later RSA articles continued highlighting successful practices, including a 2017 feature describing how the Missouri DOT used RSAs to identify **cost-effective countermeasures** on a busy highway corridor and a 2020 highlight of Johnson County, Iowa's success in using RSAs to **identify and recommend solutions** for a location where lane departures were occurring. Since that time, DOTs have also developed new RSA resources and practices, including additional considerations for equity and the growth of active transportation and micro-mobility.

Early *Innovator* **issues** also highlighted FHWA's Making Work Zones Work Better program, which encompassed several **strategies** for improving traffic flow and safety with a goal of reducing

the number of work zones needed, reducing how long work zones are in place, and enhancing work zone safety. Current issues continue coverage of these focus areas, including

recent features on technologies being piloted in Missouri that can **make work zones safer** and use of crowdsourcing for **work zone management and traveler alerts**.

Looking ahead in 2024, *Innovator* will include an article series exploring how several innovations in these categories and others progressed from state of the art at the time the newsletter first reported on them to current standard practice at DOTs around the country.

Making Every Day Count

In 2010, *Innovator* introduced readers to the EDC program, which built upon the HfL pilot, assembling implementation teams for each innovation to expand market penetration to a national scale. *Innovator* was key in helping raise awareness of FHWA's innovation initiative and continues to be a tool to transfer technology to the transportation community.

Highway Innovations Then & Now

What's the latest deployment news on prefabricated bridge elements, road safety audits, and work zone safety technologies? Stay tuned for upcoming issues with articles on how these and other innovations have evolved from when they were first reported on in *Innovator* until now.

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INNOVATOR HISTORY TIMELINE

FHWA converts *Innovator* to all-electronic delivery.

Innovator reports inaugural **STIC Excellence Awards**.

Innovator becomes weekly feature on FHWA social media channels.

2014



Issue 45 announces the first projects to receive grants under FHWA's AID Demonstration program.

2017



2018

A newly redesigned *Innovator* helps kick off EDC-5.

Information dissemination is an essential component of expanding awareness of transportation innovations and helping agencies use them effectively. During the first EDC regional summits, *Innovator* introduced readers to the innovations advanced during round one (EDC-1) and has since served as the window into EDC for innovation champions who have not been able to attend the in-person EDC summits.

“*Innovator* has really helped keep readers abreast of developments and successful deployments,” said Jeff Zaharewicz, Director of FHWA’s Center for Accelerating Innovation, “and the inclusion of stories like those found in the recurring **States Innovate** and **Homegrown Innovations** features demonstrates that *Innovator* covers both transformative innovations and the everyday-type innovations that also make a difference.”

Building a Culture of Innovation

In addition to effective communication, technology deployment also requires engaged and collaborative leadership. FHWA encouraged the formation of State Transportation Innovation Councils (**STICs**) to bring the diverse highway community in each State together to identify the best innovations for their program and help lead the way in deployment. *Innovator* boosted awareness of STIC activities and successes as each council was formed, and in **issue 56**, *Innovator* reported that the STIC network was complete—all 50 States plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Federal Lands Highway had signed STIC charters.

Innovator also spreads the word to the highway community on the FHWA funding opportunities designed to help move innovative technologies and processes to widespread use and practice, including the **STIC Incentive, Accelerating Market Readiness (AMR)**, and **Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration** award programs. *Innovator* is one of FHWA’s dedicated platforms to recognize STIC Incentive, AMR, and AID Demonstration, as well as recipients of the **STIC Excellence Awards**.

Over the past 16 years, *Innovator* has chronicled a nationwide movement to deploy innovation that is improving the way highways and bridges are built and making the Nation’s transportation system more adaptable, sustainable, equitable, and safer for all and will continue as a trusted resource to assist agencies in building a culture of innovation.

MORE INFORMATION

- Visit the **Innovator archive** to access past issues for articles you may have missed or want to newly explore.
- 📄 Send future issues of *Innovator* to your mobile device by texting “FHWA Innovation” to 468311.
- @ Contact **Julie Zirlin**, FHWA Program Manager for Every Day Counts, for more information.



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INNOVATOR HISTORY TIMELINE

Innovator becomes a **web-based publication**.

2019



Innovator announces the **first round of awards** from FHWA’s Accelerating Market Readiness program.

2021

Innovator adds a **State and local Homegrown Innovations** feature.

FHWA publishes the **100th issue** of *Innovator*.

2024

2022

25% of subscribers now use a mobile device to read *Innovator*.

The Power of Demonstration: Celebrating 10 Years of Deploying Innovative Practices and Technologies

It has been said that transportation is a testament to human ingenuity, pushing the boundaries of what is possible and redefining limits. FHWA's **Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration** program is at the intersection of innovation and transportation, playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of the world's leading transportation system.

Since AID Demonstration launched in 2014, FHWA has awarded more than \$95.7 million for 127 grants to help agencies accelerate the use of innovative transportation practices, tools, and technologies, including those promoted under FHWA's **Every Day Counts** (EDC) program. The AID Demonstration program relates to all aspects of highway transportation, including planning, finance, operations, structures, materials, pavements, environment, construction, and the duration of time between project planning and project delivery.

AID Demonstration is a competitive discretionary grant program, which allows Tribal Governments, Federal land management agencies, State departments of transportation (DOTs), and local governments, as State DOT subrecipients, to accelerate the implementation and adoption of proven innovation in highway transportation and demonstrate state-of-the-art technologies. The grants help these entities offset the risk of trying or implementing proven innovations for the first time. As the AID Demonstration program approaches its 10th anniversary in 2024, this milestone provides an opportunity to reflect on its diverse portfolio of awardees and look ahead to its future.

"Innovation is essential for the future of transportation infrastructure and these grants will help our State, local, and Tribal partners to improve safety, increase the resilience of our transportation infrastructure, and combat the climate

crisis," said FHWA Administrator Shailen Bhatt in an agency [news release](#). "The grants, along with additional funding from the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will bring more innovations to America's road, highway, and bridge projects."

AID Demo Accelerated Innovation Deployment

Over the years, there has been a considerable amount of diversity in AID Demonstration grant recipients and projects.

In 2023, the Texas DOT's (TxDOT's) traffic speed deflection device project was selected to collect data on the structural condition of pavements across two of its districts using a non-contact Doppler laser without the need for traffic control. Data collected from this project are expected to improve TxDOT's annual pavement treatment planning program.

In 2017, the Missouri DOT (MoDOT) and the city of Mexico were selected to implement the use of compacted concrete pavement on Holt Street, a two-lane concrete roadway connecting Business Route 54 to one of the city's major manufacturing plants, which was deteriorating from years of heavy truck traffic. This project included roadway and sidewalk improvements while utilizing two EDC initiatives: **pavement preservation** and **Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian**.

The U.S. Forest Service (2014) and Ohkay Owingeh Tribe (2015) received awards to implement two innovations promoted under EDC: the **Geosynthetic Reinforced Soil-Integrated Bridge System** (GRS-IBS), an innovation that reduces construction time and cost, allowing projects to be completed in weeks due to the ease of construction and the use of readily available

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materials and equipment, and **prefabricated bridge elements and systems** (PBES), which offers time and cost savings, safety advantages, and traveler convenience.

The Forest Service's **Layout Creek Bridge** replacement was an aquatic restoration project to return the undersized crossing to a more natural state through the replacement of the culvert with a substructure designed using GRS-IBS, while the superstructure was designed with PBES.

Using GRS-IBS, the Ohkay Owingeh Tribe was able to reduce construction time for the **White Swan Bridge** by 2.5 months, and the cost was less than half that of a conventional bridge. Workforce development was an additional benefit of the project, as the Tribe employed the use of their own crew for construction.

Another important function of AID Demonstration, which may be less obvious on the surface, is to promote and support technology transfer.

"FHWA does not only want to award grants, but to also share the demonstration experiences," said AID Demonstration Program Coordinator Fawn Thompson. "Sharing these stories promotes tech transfer, as we ultimately want to see these innovations move to widespread use. Each project is one more data point transportation agencies can use to make the case for implementing innovations."

The current AID Demonstration **notice of funding opportunity** extends through fiscal year (FY) 2026, and the funding amount for each year is anticipated to grow from \$10 million in FY 2023 to \$12.5 million in FY 2024–2026.

AID Demonstration Grants Awarded

FHWA **has announced** recipients of \$8.8 million in **AID Demonstration** grants for 10 projects in eight States plus the District of Columbia employing transportation innovations that will enhance safety and save time, money, and resources.

Next Generation Freeway and Arterial Work Zones

This project, sponsored by the Arizona Department of Transportation (DOT) and Maricopa County, will implement the use of **smart work zone technologies** to share real-time data from active construction areas that can improve agency monitoring processes, enhance safety for workers, and improve traveler information tools.

Ultra-High Performance Concrete (UHPC)

The District of Columbia DOT will use **UHPC** to prolong the life of Bridge 0070, which is located on Southern Avenue over Suitland Parkway in Anacostia, while reducing the environmental and social impacts associated with future major repairs or reconstruction.

The Oklahoma DOT will use UHPC to repair and replace expansion joints and fixed joints on the Northbound and Southbound I-35 Cimarron Overflow bridges. The project minimizes environmental impacts by reducing construction time and making more durable repair.

Validated Intelligent Compaction and Geospatial Data Collaboration

The Iowa DOT and Buena Vista County will use these technologies to map and identify Iowa's gravel road network. This will develop an asset management tool for county engineers across the State and be used to calculate performance indicators and identify roadway service life.

Asset Management

Iowa DOT will also conduct an asset management pilot project designed to schedule timely and critical repairs. The project will use **e-Ticketing and digital as-builts** and other technologies and feature a digital delivery workflow to transition Iowa's project delivery to a three-dimensional environment encompassing a digital twin of the infrastructure.

“This multi-year AID Demonstration funding opportunity further demonstrates FHWA’s commitment to provide tools in support of transportation innovation,” Thompson said. AID Demonstration is one of FHWA’s tools to support transportation agencies that push boundaries and redefine limits for the benefit of transportation improvements.

To see additional examples of AID Demonstration awards, visit FHWA’s [AID Demonstration project webpage](#). The list of awards can be sorted by award recipient or innovation, and many projects on the list include links to additional information.

MORE INFORMATION

- 📄 Read FHWA’s official [news release](#) on the latest round of AID Demonstration grants.
- Visit the AID Demonstration program [webpage](#) for details on how to apply for the current round of funding.
- @ Contact [Fawn Thompson](#) of FHWA’s Center for Accelerating Innovation for information on the AID Demonstration program.
- Go to [grants.gov](#) to apply for an AID Demonstration grant.



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With its award, the Montana DOT (MDT) will develop and deploy an asset management program for retaining walls along the nearly 13,000 miles of MDT routes that are currently undocumented. MDT will establish a comprehensive database for tracking, inspecting, and rating the walls and develop a planning tool to guide MDT decision-making, improve infrastructure resilience in response to climate change, and minimize adverse effects on low-income and minority populations caused by future detours and road closures.

Crowdsourcing

In Maine, the DOT will embark on an operations journey to enhance real-time roadway operational awareness by establishing an enhanced and scalable process for management, analysis, integration, and display of [crowdsourced](#) datasets. The project will use an artificial intelligence platform in coordination with an existing tri-State advanced transportation management system.

Oversized Vehicle Measuring System

North Dakota will address issues associated with vehicles striking bridges due to incorrect routing based on the vehicle’s size, inaccurate measurements, or incorrect permitting. The DOT will deploy an oversized vehicle measuring system technology pilot in Minot and near Mooreton.

Targeted Overlay Pavement Solutions

In Pennsylvania, the DOT will deploy [stone matrix asphalt](#) and [highly modified asphalt](#) on projects in five different districts. These [targeted solutions](#) will enhance overlay performance for both asphalt and concrete pavements, reduce maintenance, maximize previous investments through extended service life of pavement structures, reduce congestion through the need for less work zones, increase skid resistance, improve resiliency in flood-prone areas, and reduce noise.

Traffic Speed Deflection Devices

The Texas DOT (TxDOT) will use this technology to evaluate pavement condition and to plan at the network level in select TxDOT districts. This project will use a non-contact Doppler laser to collect data on the structural condition of pavements with no need for traffic control. Project data is also expected to improve TxDOT’s annual treatment planning program.

FHWA's STIC Incentive Program: A Decade of Helping Move Innovative Solutions into Everyday Practice

Over the past 10 years, State Transportation Innovation Councils (STICs) have brought good ideas into mainstream use with help from funds offered through FHWA's **STIC Incentive program**. Now in its 10th year, the program has provided approximately \$40 million to support efforts to improve transportation project delivery as well as create a culture of innovation that will continue to nurture good ideas and move them forward.

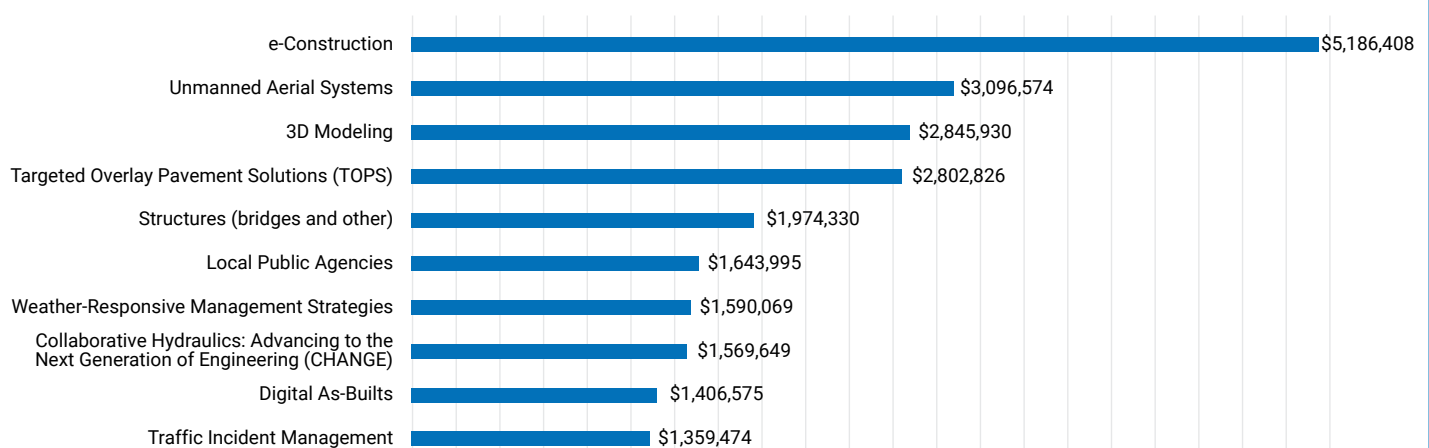
The STIC Incentive program provides up to \$125,000 in Federal funds per STIC per Federal fiscal year to support or offset the costs of standardizing innovative practices. The STICs, which are active in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Federal Lands Highway, can use the funds to support one project or multiple smaller projects deploying innovations from the EDC program or other topics. STIC Incentive funds provide a Federal share of 80 percent on a project, and project sponsors supply the 20 percent non-Federal match.

Driving Innovation

In 2014, the New Hampshire STIC was the first to receive STIC Incentive funds from the new program, dividing the funds among three projects: developing a State historic architectural and archeological resource database that the New Hampshire Department of Transportation could use to streamline **programmatic agreements**, developing design standards to support use of **3D engineered models** for construction, and employing an innovative approach to collecting data for pavement and bridge projects using ground-penetrating radar equipment and software.

In an **Innovator article** highlighting these first STIC Incentive projects, the New Hampshire FHWA Division Office noted that the extra dedicated funding is what was needed to make these activities a priority and encouraged other STICs to take advantage of the incentive funds by looking for the small opportunities that can make a big difference. Sharing a similar message, Pennsylvania's STIC created videos highlighting

STIC Incentive Funding by Innovation



Credit: FHWA

The top 10 innovations funded over the past 10 years through FHWA's STIC Incentive program.

the State's deployment of the **Geosynthetic Reinforced Soil-Integrated Bridge System** and expansion of its **Traffic Incident Management (TIM)** training capability to show just how far \$100,000 can go to help advance innovation statewide.

STIC Incentive projects have included a Missouri DOT (MoDOT) system for advancing **TIM data collection** that combines incident and work zone data with probe data in one system to enable better analysis, reporting, and situational awareness. MoDOT uses the combined data on performance measures in its state-wide tracker, and the agency's Southwest District is using the data to create visualizations of congestion from crashes for incident after-action reviews.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation used STIC Incentive funds to develop **design-build documentation and tools**, including a sample request for qualifications (RFQ) and RFQ scoring criteria, an example design-build schedule, a process for using alternative technical concepts with design-build, and an alternative delivery decision matrix.

The Wisconsin DOT used STIC Incentive funds to develop and implement its **Standard Bridge Design Tool**, which produces **standardized plans for local roadway bridges**. By automating a large portion of the design and drafting work for this type of structure, the tool decreases the monetary resources needed within the design phase of relatively simple bridge projects.

The Virginia Transportation Research Council (VTRC) applied STIC Incentive funds toward a **wildlife fencing project** that is improving safety by substantially lowering the number of deer-vehicle collisions along a busy interstate corridor. The first year after installation, VTRC recorded a 90-percent reduction in deer-vehicle collisions. After 2 years, **VTRC reported** the cost savings of fencing averaged over \$2.3 million per site.



Pennsylvania's STIC created a [video](#) highlighting its use of STIC Incentive funds to deploy the [Geosynthetic Reinforced Soil-Integrated Bridge System](#).

Credit: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Find out more about which technologies and practices STICs in each State are advancing by visiting the FHWA **STIC Incentive Projects** webpage. This extensive list of projects, created over the past 10 years and counting, serves as a resource for the highway community to explore and pursue small opportunities for innovation using STIC Incentive funds that can make a big difference in their programs.

MORE INFORMATION

- Visit the **STIC Incentive program** webpage for information on funding eligibility requirements.
- @ Contact **Jeff Zaharewicz**, FHWA Center for Accelerating Innovation Director, for additional details on the STIC Incentive program.



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States **innovate!**

Arizona Uses VPI to Enhance Long-Range Planning

The Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT's) recently adopted **2050 Arizona Long-Range Transportation Plan** benefited from **virtual public involvement** techniques that helped gather input from across the State. According to an ADOT **news release**, using VPI helped the agency reach a broad cross-section of Arizonans. ADOT's virtual outreach included an interactive online survey, **telephone town hall**, online public meetings, and a self-guided online meeting room to supplement traditional methods for obtaining citizen and stakeholder feedback.

Connecticut Slides-In Bridges on I-95

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) employed **accelerated bridge construction** to replace an aging bridge on a busy interstate corridor over the course of two weekends as part of its **I-95 Norwalk Westport** project. CTDOT used a lateral slide technique, also known as slide-in bridge construction, to replace both the northbound and southbound lanes of the bridge. The technique involves building a new bridge on temporary supports, usually parallel

to the existing bridge. When that construction is completed, the road is closed temporarily, the existing structure removed, and the new bridge slid into place. A CTDOT **news release** reported that the method helped improve construction time and minimize impacts to the thousands of motorists who travel the corridor daily.

Missouri Uses Project Bundling to Improve 17 Bridges

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) combined 17 bridge improvements across the southeast corner of the State, known as the "bootheel," for its recently completed **Bootheel Bridge Bundle Project**. MoDOT used **project bundling**, a procurement process where a single contract is used to rehabilitate or replace multiple projects, along with the **design-build** procurement process. Combining project bundling with design-build helped MoDOT maximize the number of locations addressed and minimize public inconvenience through increased construction speed and scheduling flexibility.

Nebraska Partners to Promote TIM

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) partnered with the Nebraska State Patrol to support a **Traffic Incident Management (TIM)** exercise involving law enforcement officers, fire and rescue personnel, emergency medical services, transportation agencies, towing and recovery professionals, notification and dispatch personnel, hazardous materials management responders, coroners and medical examiners, and public works professionals from across the State. The live field exercise was designed to give all disciplines exposure to different aspects of crash response. Scenarios included hazardous materials spills, air ambulance services, and a livestock trailer crash. According to an NDOT **news release**, the exercise was part of a state-wide effort to improve TIM on its roadways and keep emergency responders, crash victims, and motorists safe.



Credit: Connecticut Department of Transportation

The Connecticut DOT used slide-in bridge construction for a replacement project on Interstate 95.

Tennessee Replaces Railroad Viaduct via CM/GC

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) used the **construction manager/general contractor (CM/GC)** delivery method to replace an aging bridge along a heavily traveled corridor in downtown Nashville. The **State Route 1 (US 70) Broadway Viaduct**, built in 1948, was in close proximity to historic sites and crossed over several active CSX railway lines. TDOT reported that it used CM/GC delivery, which allows a project owner to engage a construction manager during the design process to provide constructability input, and **prefabricated bridge elements and systems** to shorten the project length to 1 year rather than the standard 3 to 4 years a project of this magnitude would traditionally require.



The Tennessee DOT combined accelerated bridge construction techniques with alternative delivery methods to replace a railroad viaduct in Nashville.

Credit: Tennessee Department of Transportation

Utah Strategy Improves Snowplow Operations

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) is using connected vehicle (CV) technologies to support **weather-responsive management strategies (WRMS)** during inclement weather. UDOT's **Snowplow Preemption Project** leverages CV technologies by equipping its snowplows with onboard units that can preempt an upcoming signal when they are actively plowing, changing a red light to green to allow the snowplow to move through the intersection at efficient speeds. This practice improves the efficiency of plowing operations and improves safety by facilitating a faster removal of snow and ice from roadways. UDOT plans to continue expanding the current number of intersections across the State equipped for snowplow preemption using CV technology. Read an FHWA **case study** to learn more about the Utah deployment as well as two demonstration projects in Minnesota.



Credit: Nebraska Department of Transportation

Nebraska DOT helped improve Traffic Incident Management with an exercise involving multiple disciplines and scenarios.



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INNOVATOR

INNOVATOR, published by the FHWA's Office of Innovation and Workforce Solutions, advances the implementation of innovative technologies and accelerated project delivery methods in highway transportation.

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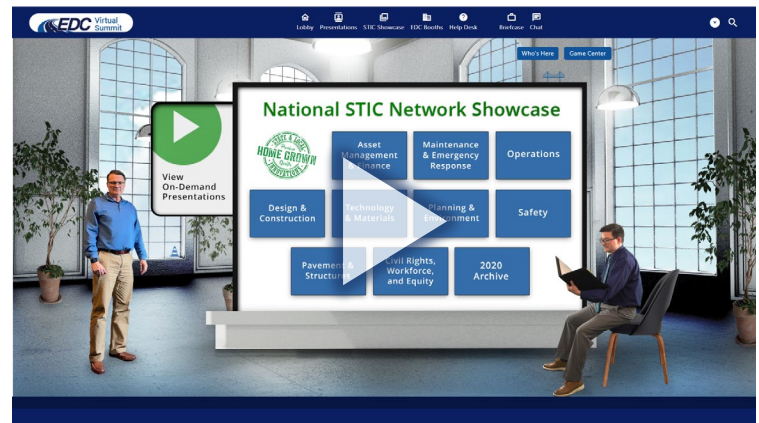
Discover Homegrown Innovations

The Every Day Counts round seven (EDC-7) **virtual summit** provided an opportunity for State Transportation Innovation Councils (**STICs**) to share more than 100 homegrown innovations developed and deployed in their States with a wider audience to expand their potential use and impact. Topic areas included safety, operations, pavements, workforce development, construction, emergency response, environment, and more.

Presentations on many of these homegrown innovations are available to watch on-demand through February 2024. **Register now** for access. Factsheets on all of the homegrown innovations featured at the summit will remain available on the **STIC Network Showcase webpage**.



Credit: FHWA



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