Call to Order & Opening Remarks
Chairman Amadeo Saenz called the meeting to order at 8:42 a.m.

Roll Call & Minutes from September 29, 2007
New members were introduced: Mike Lonergan (CT), Kathleen Penney (DC), Christine Reed (IL), Laura Hollingsworth (FL), Frank Tramontozzi (MA), John Barton (TX) and Jerry Lenzi (WA). Other representatives were welcomed: Tim MacDonald (OH) and Scott Rawlings new chairman of the Subcommittee on System Operations and Management.

Minutes of the September 29, 2007 meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin were approved.
[Motion-MD / Second-WY – Approved]

Call for Agenda Amendments
Agenda Item XI will be expanded to cover some technical agenda items.

Motion was made and passed to accept agenda item IV. Summary of SCOH Ballots, and items V.A through V.E as a Consent Agenda.
[Motion-VA / Second-WV – Passed]

The representative from Wyoming gave an update on TIG: three of eight new ideas considered were recommended for implementation by TIG; there was a discussion of the effects of SHRP-2 implementation on TIG’s activities and what are the expectations – will need new direction from SCOH and additional funding; and TIG will have a proposal for SCOH at the annual meeting.

John Njord gave an update on the Project Management and Delivery Task Force: the charter is to review crosscutting issues with project delivery (the “how” we deliver transportation goals) and see how to complete the CSS work program. The Warne status report was distributed.

Paul Mattox reported on the AASHTO–ACEC meeting: updates were discussed on bridge design, improving contract plans, the USDOT OIG audit of executive compensation and overhead rates for consultants, the FHWA work zone safety grants, and the status of the Center for Environmental Excellence.

Resolutions/Motions
Proposed Policy Resolution Continuance of Technical Service Program Financial Support of AASHTO National Transportation Product Evaluation Program (NTPEP) presented by the representative from Louisiana.
[Motion-MT / Second-MD – Approved]

Presentations
FHWA Activities - King W. Gee, FHWA

Three of the five finalist projects for ASCE’s 2008 Outstanding Civil Engineering Award were transportation projects. Congratulations to WSDOT for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge Project being a finalist; and to MD/VA/DC for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project winning the ASCE 2008 Outstanding Civil Engineering Award.

FHWA’s key personnel changes include the appointment of Chief Counsel Jim Ray to be Deputy Administrator, the retirement of Executive Director Bud Wright and the resignation of Administrator Rick Capka. Thus, Jim Ray is the Acting Administrator. Jeff Paniati has been appointed as the Executive Director, the top career position in FHWA. Mr. Paniati was formerly the Associate Administrator for Operations. Additionally, twelve of FHWA’s other executive leadership positions are changing, most notably the retirement of Ed Kussy, long time Deputy Chief Counsel who has been replaced by Tom Holian.
A number of actions have been taken to address the safety and aging of bridges to assure healthy bridges. The NTSB released an interim report on the I-35W bridge collapse in Minneapolis with a number of recommendations and FHWA responded with a Technical Advisory to include gusset plates in the load rating of truss bridges whenever planned modifications or operational changes may significantly increase stresses. As the bridge population ages, they begin to behave in ways that may not be anticipated. Notably over the past few years, a number of Interstates have been closed unexpectedly to deal with some structural problem on bridges. As a start, states must know what is happening with the bridges and FHWA has heightened sensitivity to NBIS compliance (inspection procedures, load rating & posting practices, inspection of fracture critical members); and stressed the assessment of scour vulnerability of bridges and the determination of unknown foundations. Guidance and new target dates for the latter two items have been issued earlier this year.

FHWA is assisting with the challenges by establishing the Long Term Bridge Performance Program with a consortium led by Rutgers University to gather data on how bridges behave over time with which to make informed program decisions; and facilitating the transfer of bridge information data during bridge planning, design, fabrication, construction, operation and maintenance processes to avoid repeated and error-prone manual transcription of data, non-transfers.

Other areas of focus include the weaknesses of state oversight of locally administered projects which were identified through a national program review in 2006. This with recent audits of the Highway Trust Fund and of FHWA financial management have pushed FHWA toward a firmer stance and thus the Divisions were charged to assess their particular state’s oversight activities and report to Headquarters by October 1, 2007 – the results indicate a continual need to have annual assessments for now.

The USDOT continues to advance initiatives on Congestion Reduction, Freight Mobility, and Rural Safety. The Urban Partnerships and Congestion Reduction Demonstrations are proceeding in Miami, Minneapolis-St Paul, Seattle, and San Francisco; and because the initiative was stopped in New York City for lack of action by the NYS legislature those funds have been re-assigned to Chicago and Los Angeles; and a new solicitation is expected for FY 2009. Corridor Development Agreements are being negotiated for the seven identified under the Corridors of the Future initiative. The Rural Safety Initiative announced in February is aimed at rural fatality rates (which are double that of urban rates) and has five key goals: Safer drivers, Better roads, Smarter roads, Better trained emergency responders, and Improved outreach to stakeholders and partners - 97 proposals were received from 28 states which are being reviewed with a request for second phase proposals to go out next week.

The FY 2008 funding for the Highways for LIFE Program was rescinded, but the program is continuing with a number of technology and workshop initiatives. While FHWA was unable to offer incentive funding for pilot demonstration construction projects, match-waivers continue to be available. 18 projects are already in the program from 16 states. The FY 2009 pilot demonstration construction projects solicitation is expected in late May or early June. Five Technology Partnership grants were awarded to advance promising innovations to be commercially available. FHWA is looking for States willing to field test and evaluate these technologies. A second round of solicitations for Technology Partnership grants may be announced this summer. Dissemination of program information is via the Innovator and FOCUS newsletters and FHWA’s website: www.dot.gov/hfl

FHWA appreciates the multi-year collaboration with AASHTO on CSS to promote and support the use of CSS principles to balance competing values collaboratively, and not just in design, but all through the project development process. Sandy Otto, Division Administrator in Arkansas has been on a three month detail to focus attention on what FHWA Divisions need to know to advance CSS. An action plan is to be considered by FHWA leadership this month. The September memo on CSS sent to the Divisions was an internal memo to help Divisions understand the state of play for CSS and it was not to rate or rank states, but to gauge needs for information and assistance.

FHWA has a study underway on the effects of changeable electronic variable message signs (CEVMS) on driver attention and distraction. This study will focus on the effect of CEVMS on driver attention and to evaluate their potential risk to safety and their role in congestion. The report is expected by December 2009 and further guidance may be provided. Since the evaluation and methods required are extensive and expensive, it is anticipated that FHWA may seek additional funding and allied research partners to confirm and expand on the findings.

AASHTO Standing Committee on Highways
Spring Business Meeting – Branson, Missouri – May 6, 2008
The Gulf Coast climate change report was issued in March 2008 and addresses impacts on transportation infrastructure and services in the central Gulf Coast. This is different from other studies of this type because it attempts to quantify the impacts that sea level rise, increased intensity of storms and other climate effects might have on all transportation modes, including highways. This was released almost simultaneously with the TRB report that reaches very similar conclusions. The Gulf Coast Study indicates that climate impacts can be significant to transportation and should be taken into account in planning and project development. FHWA will be examining how to engage AASHTO and other stakeholders on these issues.

FHWA recently completed a quick review of complex interchanges for the driver-challenges in understanding signing for such interchanges. Signage that conforms to the MUTCD may still be problematic to driver comprehension and expectations. The Offices of Infrastructure, Operations, and Safety are considering how best to approach the issue.

Mal Kerley (VA) stated AASHTO’s appreciation for being able to collaborate on the technical advisory on gusset plates and for technical cooperation. AASHTO hopes that the cooperation will continue.

Texas noted its particular interest in CEVMS.

Executive Director’s Report on AASHTO Activities - John Horsley, AASHTO
John Horsley acknowledged and thanked Amadeo Saenz for agreeing to chair SCOH. AASHTO staff continues to do very good work. Mark Bush from Michigan DOT will focus on operations and Charles Myer from Colorado DOT is the current engineering fellow. A number of SCOH members are leading reauthorization topic committees: Neil Pedersen (MD) on highway programs, Rick Land (CA) on project development, Don Vaughn (AL) on freight analysis. A collaborative effort with ARTBA that will benefit all states is being led by Victor Mendez (AZ) to define and bring resources to the problems.

The good news is that the technical corrections bill was passed by Congress and the President is expected to allow it to become law. SHRP-2 will have $20 million added and thus free up funds for FHWA research and the university transportation centers. AASHTO will ask for funding in reauthorization to complete the scope spelled out in SHRP-2. The bad news is Senator Baucus’ remedy for the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) with a $5 billion fix will not advance because of Senator Hutchinson’s amendment to knock out the fix from the FAA bill. If there is no remedy, there will be a $13 billion cut in the Federal-Aid Highway Program (FAHP) in FY09. The President and some Republicans do not like the fix.

SCOH members were appreciated for participating in the ten reauthorization committees. All committees are coming up with good ideas. Among the many issues, Congress will demand better accountability. In support of the reauthorization, AASHTO has a marketing and communications initiative underway. The “bridge to no where” and 6000 earmarks were black eyes to the FAHP and AASHTO needs to show that SAFETEA-LU was very beneficial to American transportation. Working with ARTBA, AASHTO has initiated “America’s Transportation Awards” to be awarded at the summer regional meetings. The awards categories are projects: under $25 million; under $200 million, and over $200 million that have particularly benefited the community. Nominations are being solicited.

To be prepared for the anniversary of the I-35W bridge collapse in Minneapolis, AASHTO is soliciting information on “what we’ve done” to respond to that event. During the 50th anniversary of the Interstate Highway System, AASHTO documented needs and the study is to be rolled out soon with identification of the most important Interstate in each state. AASHTO is seeking state input on needs in the following areas: preservation, additional capacity, interchange modernization, national freight network improvements, and urban Interstates.

John Horsley will meet with three subcommittees this summer, and would like to attend all of the other subcommittee meetings next year. The task force linking project delivery and CSS will focus on improved service delivery and where these cross cutting issues belong within the AASHTO committee structure. CSS is our way of being responsive to community concerns and delivering a better product. A lot of progress has been made, much more progress is needed, but AASHTO wants to advance in ways that are workable for all states. It is taking too long to get projects done and more community support is needed and earlier.
SCOR Update - Susan Martinovich, NV
Chris Jencks (TRB) reported that SCOR met and determined the 2009 NCHRP program. SCOR reviewed 150 problem statements and allocated $28 million - 23 are new projects, 28 are continued, and 9 are contingent projects because of the questionable 2009 funding level. Having the subcommittees rank the problem statements in their areas was very helpful. SCOR set aside $5 million for project 20-83 for long term strategic research for the highway community and a panel was formed to review ideas. The panel may ask SCOH for research ideas on what are the needs in the future that we need to look at now - “Long Range Strategic Issues Impacting the Transportation System.” The new program was announced last week and NCHRP is seeking panel members.

The SCOR reauthorization recommendations for research and development were presented yesterday and the Authorization Steering Committee approved these recommendations to the Board of Directors. The SCOR strategic plan was updated in March 2008 and provides direction for SCOR in coming years.

Federal Register Notice on the MUTCD - Ken Kobetsky, AASHTO
The MUTCD was last published in 2003. The current NPRM has 300 changes proposed. The Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering started reviewing the proposed changes in January, and will complete its review in mid-June. The FHWA webinar reviewing the proposed MUTCD changes was very successful. The NPRM comment period ends in July 2008 and FHWA plans publication in July 2009. ATSSA, ITE and AASHTO will then print and sell the document.

Asset Management Subcommittee Update - Neil Pedersen, MD
The joint subcommittee under SCOP and SCOH, chaired by Kirk Steudle (MI), to advance the state of the practice of asset management has articulated five goals: use of peer exchanges as one of most effective ways of sharing experiences – the next one will be at a joint meeting of the committees for maintenance, environment and asset management in Monterey in July 08; use of international scans – has already produced useful results; formation of a national asset management steering committee; domestic scans – already scanned four states with several good products; and NCHRP research to close gaps - including earth retaining structures to be proposed for NCHRP 20-7.

AASHTOWare – New Products - Jan Edwards, AASHTO
Reviewed background and benefits of the AASHTOWare program being guided by a special steering committee which products are self-supporting through annual license fees. In addition to products on Construction Life Cycle, Bridges and Roadway, the new products include DARWin ME, TurboRelocation, AssetManager Phase II, Next Generation Trns-port, Pontis 5.X, Environment Information Management & Decision Support System (EIM/DSS) , and SafetyAnalyst. Grant Levi (ND) was acknowledged as the outgoing chair of the joint development committee and there was a desire for another SCOH liaison.

Safety Management Subcommittee of SCOHTS - Larry Tibbits, MI
In fulfilling the responsibility of SCOHTS the Safety Management Subcommittee was created and member state DOTs were encouraged to nominate representatives to this new subcommittee. The focus of the six task groups under the subcommittee was reviewed. The chief engineers were encouraged to have their states be active on this subcommittee to help drive down the safety numbers.

Reports
NCHRP 20-7 - Neil Pedersen, MD
$1.2 million is available for 2008 including some recovered funds from four projects to be cancelled. A total of $745,000 was recommended by the 20-7 panel for nine of eighteen project proposals received.

[Motion-MD / Second-CA – Approved]
Mal Kerley (VA) noted the possibility of an NCHRP project on gusset plates that may arise from NTSB recommendations from the investigation of the I-35W bridge collapse, and would like to advance research on consistent procedures for the design and rating of gusset plates. NY and TX strongly support this initiative.

[SCOH by acclamation voiced support for such a proposal to SCOR]

Special Committee on U.S. Route Numbering - Don Vaughn, AL
Reported on actions of the special committee and recommended by way of a ballot (RN-08-01) two conditional approvals. There were six requests disapproved by the special committee.

[Motion-AL / Second-VA – Approved]

SHRP 2 - Neil F. Hawks, TRB
Neil Hawks thanked AASHTO for persevering and for obtaining additional funding from the technical corrections bill, and for staff volunteers for ETGs who write and evaluate proposals. There are 32 projects under contract, 161 contractors actively engaged, and by the end of 2008 SHRP-2 will have 80% of the work underway. This does not include the additional funding made available under the technical corrections bill. Highlights thus far include site selection for the Safety field study; Safety rodeo this fall to test roadside/roadway data collection capabilities; field trials that are expected for new Renewal technologies for durability and structural performance; and the implementation report due to Congress in February 2009. Congress is expected to provide new funding to underwrite implementation activities in the 2009 appropriations bill.

Neil Pedersen (MD) reported on the SHRP-2 track on New Highway Capacity and noted the following results: a collaborative decision making process for decisions that stick and are arrived at rapidly, to identify and expand on success factors, including what actions can be done in parallel; and 53 key decision points were identified in a Draft Collaboration Decision Making Framework. Seventeen projects underway for $18 million to close gaps with 9 projects ($7.825 million) on the collaborative decision framework.

Continuing Education Units - Marty Vitale, AASHTO
Information was provided on crediting CEUs for this meeting.

New Business
AASHTO Staff - Chair Saenz, TX
Mark S. Bush was introduced as the newest AASHTO staff member. Keith Platte has been promoted to be the manager for the NTPEP.

Solicitation – New AASHTO Engineering Fellow - Ken Kobetsky, AASHTO
The solicitation is open for the next AASHTO Engineering Fellow. This is the seventh year of the fellows program and past fellows have come from NY, KY, UT, OR and CO. A state DOT only needs to pay salary and benefits of the fellow and AASHTO will pay a stipend.

Next Meeting
The next meeting of SCOH will be in Hartford, CT on October 17-18, 2008

Adjournment
The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:54 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
King W. Gee
SCOH Secretary
FHWA, USDOT