Call to Order & Opening Remarks
Chairman Allen Biehler called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.
The Chair acknowledged Vice Chair Neil Pedersen’s leadership of the Technical Meeting in making it more interactive and very productive. He thanked Arizona DOT staff for their great support of the meeting.

Roll Call & Minutes from October 28, 2006
Minutes of the October 28, 2006 meeting in Portland, Oregon were approved.
[Motion-MD / Second-WY – Approved]

Call for Agenda Amendments
The Chair pulled the proposed Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) resolution and had outgoing CSS Task Force Chair Neil Pedersen (MD) review the issues with the resolution. Questions had been raised about the proposed special committee’s membership, the specific need for the special committee, and possibly including a sunset provision. Pedersen noted the follow-up actions taken by CSS work-groups composed of state and FHWA representatives that resulted in a strategic plan working document and proposed that the relevant SCOH subcommittees and other standing committees discuss the work document and report back at the Fall meeting how CSS will be incorporated into their respective work plans. The task force will serve as the coordinating point.

Incoming task force chair John Deatrick (DC) noted his plans to participate in the summer meetings of SCOP, SCOE and the Subcommittee on Design to facilitate such discussions. The task force work plan was commended to the SCOH members to review and comment back to Deatrick. The whole aim of the CSS efforts is to blend CSS into the way the DOTs do business, not to create a stand-alone organizational element within a DOT.

WY noted that the council of subcommittee chairs should discuss this matter in its first conference call and Pedersen concurred that it was an appropriate cross cutting issue for the council.

Deatrick discussed the proposed consultant support to advance the CSS work plan in parallel with the SCOH council focus. The Chair noted President Mendez having made CSS an emphasis area because all DOTs have a stake in CSS. All DOTs have practiced some form of CSS albeit under other labels. AASHTO and FHWA joint efforts since 1990’s have brought CSS along. So the proposed way forward seems reasonable in an evolutionary process: Deatrick on the road; Pedersen through the council; and the Chair reaching out with other standing committees.

The Chair acknowledged the following new members of SCOH: Gail Hutton (CO), Scott Rawlings (NV), and Steve Varnadoe (NC); and the following new chairmen: Gary Ridley – Subcommittee on Construction, Jim Lynch – Subcommittee on Highway Transportation, and Harold Linnenkohl – AASHTO-ACEC Joint Committee.

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

Reports
AASHTO/ACEC Joint Committee – Harold Linnenkohl, GA
Reports were received from AASHTO & FHWA. The environmental documents improvement initiative was reported out. AASHTO noted the seven policy reports that were being developed. ACEC stated its support for TRAC. Discussions were held on the OIG audit of overhead costs and the GAO review of outsourcing by the states that had been requested by Congressman Oberstar. A working group was established to look at improving contract plans. Messrs Chesnik and Murphy were welcomed as new AASHTO members.
Resolutions/Motions
PROPOSED POLICY RESOLUTION: National Unified Goal for Traffic Incident Management – John Conrad, WA
[Motion-WA / Second-WY – Approved]

Presentations
The Chair noted the following information handed out: AASHTOware. Route Numbers Report, SHRP-II Status, AASHTO Transportation Management Conference information, and the National Workshop on Asset Management Inventory & Data Collection (Fall 2008 in NC).

Executive Director’s Report on AASHTO Activities – John Horsley, AASHTO

AASHTOWare – Tony Kane, AASHTO
Products update and appeal was made for feedback. The overall mission is to provide tools for DOTs to use through pooling of resources. Niche areas are identified from the bottoms up. All states share in using one or more products. Standardized software is guided by state DOTs. Annual revenues of $25 million are realized through software licensing and use. Current applications are listed and include 10 states using asset management software program – trade-offs across asset classes.

Larson Fund for Excellence – Chair Biehler, PA and Tony Kane, AASHTO
Kane stated that the Fund is being created at PennState and is intended to share knowledge of benefit to all states. This is to acknowledge Thomas Larson’s leadership as the Federal Highway Administrator and Secretary of the Pennsylvania DOT. Larson was a man of innovation and international outreach. AASHTO has raised $250,000 towards the $1 million endowment sought. The Fund is to sponsor guest lecturers and student travel internationally to seek new ideas and excellence. The Chair noted Larson’s influence on PennDOT and AASHTO and acknowledged his contributions.

AASHTO’s Frequency Coordination Business – Valerie Briggs, AASHTO
An information briefing was provided on AASHTO’s frequency coordination role and the Wireless Technology Committee. AASHTO assigns radio spectrum for different purposes like field radio communications and DSRC. The challenge is that there is a growing need for radio communications but a limited spectrum. The FCC has designated AASHTO as the radio frequency coordinator for transportation purposes. DOTs apply and AASHTO files to FCC. AASHTO has outsourced its role to RadioSource. AASHTO won the contract for all radio frequency coordination in the state of California including safety communications. AASHTO has a revenue sharing arrangement with RadioSource and will be able to serve DOTs better. Bill Brownlow is the Radio Frequency Coordinator. Applications are turned around within 10 days. The Special Committee on Wireless Technology oversees AASHTO’s radio frequency coordination role. The Special Committee membership is by region and a list was handed-out.

Logo Launch – Sunny Schust, AASHTO
Erin Grady from AASHTO’s publications department reported that AASHTO’s new logo was launched at this spring meeting. The new logo, AASHTO as “The Voice of Transportation” reflects AASHTO’s name and mission as being scientifically based and covering all modes of transportation. The old AASHTO seal will still be used for technical publications and specifications.

FHWA Activities – King W. Gee, FHWA
The following executive appointments and moves within FHWA have been made since the last meeting: Gloria Shepherd as the Associate Administrator for Planning, Environment & Realty; John Baxter as the Associate Administrator for Federal Lands Highway Program, Peter Stephanos as Director of the Office of Pavement Technology, and Dave Geiger has retired as Director of the Office of Asset Management.

The Planning Regulations were published on February 14, 2007 and deal mainly with fiscal constraint and linking of planning and NEPA. On fiscal constraint, the STIPs and TIPs will need to be in year-of-expenditure dollars, and metropolitan plans and TIPs must have reasonably expected resources. Cost ranges are allowed for outer years of metropolitan transportation plans. Regarding planning and project development/NEPA, the stand-alone MIS requirement was eliminated, and metropolitan planning is linked to project development involving FTA’s alternative analyses. The schedule is for amendments to
STIPs, TIPs, long range and metropolitan plans after July 1, 2007 to conform, but administrative modifications do not have to conform.

The USDOT Congestion Relief Initiative is aimed at relieving urban congestion, unleashing private sector investment resources, promoting operational and technological improvements, establishing a “Corridors of the Future” competition that target major freight bottlenecks and expand freight policy outreach, and accelerating major aviation capacity projects while providing a future funding framework. The Urban Congestion Partnerships (UPA) solicitation closed on April 30 with a strong response – a short list of potential UPA partners will be announced in early June and final UPA partners/awards will be announced in early August. The Corridors of the Future received 38 expressions of interest and eight corridors were selected for Phase II, which applications are due May 25. The Corridors of the Future selections are to be made this summer.

Other recent initiatives that support congestion relief include: public-private partnerships (PPP) model state legislation that was distributed in January; a PPP tool kit and technical assistance available from FHWA; criteria for HOV/HOT conversions; a bottleneck mitigation primer to be released in May; guidance, training, peer assistance for Congestion Management Process available beginning in May; incident management improvement tools in the largest (top 40) metro areas; and traveler information such as 511 and the posting of travel time on DMS in metro areas.

The Highways for LIFE 2007 project selections are to be announced soon and the 2008 solicitation for Highways for LIFE projects is out. For 2008, applications will not be required to be submitted through grants.gov but all applications from the States must be submitted to the respective FHWA Division Offices. FHWA is still looking for 2-3 “pilot” states to work with to advance the concept of Performance Contracting. A workshop was held in Michigan three weeks ago and we are beginning to work with Florida. The solicitation for Technology Partnerships closed on May 2nd and proposals are being evaluated with awards anticipated later this year.

The Strategic Highway Safety Plans required under SAFETEA-LU have been approved in 33 states. The response to Highway Safety Improvement Program reporting requirements has been excellent. A variety of reports are required (HSIP Report, High Risk Rural Roads Program Report, “5% report” (listing a minimum of 5% of locations with the most severe safety needs in a state) and highway-rail crossing report). As required by legislation, the “5% reports” are on the FHWA website:

http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/fivepercent/index.htm

SAFETEA-LU lowered the dollar threshold for defining a “major project” from $1 billion to $500 million. Immediately, the number of active Major Projects went from 20 to 39, with another 90 in the pipeline. Major Projects’ guidance is available for Financial Plans, Project Management Plans, Cost Estimating, and Scope - Timing/Phasing. These are all good management practices as well as for building and maintaining public confidence. FHWA shares good practices through the internet, project managers’ meetings, and networking and cross sharing of experiences.

Construction cost growth has caused many states to reduce the number of projects advancing to construction. In collaboration with AASHTO, ARTBA and AGC, FHWA will co-sponsor a construction cost growth forum on response strategies later this summer. Tentative forum objectives include sharing state experiences regarding mitigating the impacts of cost increases, capturing industry’s viewpoints on state measures, and gaining ideas on what else can be done. The principal contacts are Jerry Yakowenko (FHWA) and Jim McDonnell (AASHTO).

In a number of joint FHWA-AASHTO efforts on pavements, the Mechanistic-Empirical Pavement Design Guide (MEPDG) and a new Friction Manual have been produced.

The National Partnership for Highway Quality (NPHQ) has set its 2007 annual conference for November 13-14, in San Diego. The major topic is to be new methods for measuring the quality of completed highway work. States were encouraged to respond to NPHQ’s Call for Presentations on new methods of measuring quality being implemented and used in their programs. The conference will also showcase the winners in NPHQ’s 2007 National Achievement Awards program. FHWA is highly supportive of the NPHQ program because the quality of completed highway work is of the utmost importance and the State-Federal-Private Industry partnership that exists in NPHQ is critical to improving the quality of highway projects.

Executive Director’s Report on AASHTO Activities (continued) – John Horsley, AASHTO

AASHTO ‘s finances are doing well.

The technical staff assembled by Tony Kane is excellent. The Board of Directors will pass a resolution asking Congress to stop rescissions because of impacts on DOT flexibility to re-program.
rescissions have increased from hundreds of millions of dollars to $4.2 billion. In some cases rescinded funds go to non-transportation uses. The amounts have risen to the point where AASHTO needs to speak up.

A number of policy documents have been produced: a Red book that articulate needs on the Interstate Highways; a Blue book that encompasses the body of policy resolutions by the Board of Directors; a report on freight noting that 80% of freight is moved on highways that is authored by Gordon Proctor; a Green book that lays out the revenue options in light of the revenue crunch due to spending down of the Highway Trust Fund – in the Fall 2008, there could be $2.5 billion cut for FY’09, and $18 billion cut the following year, thus either increased revenues or a totally new ball game is needed for the Federal Aid Highway Program. An NCHRP study led by Parsons-Brinckerhoff is underway to capture Interstate Highway preservation needs - interchanges, bridges, capacity, etc..

The CSS direction set by SCOH was also acknowledged.

Reports – Action Items

SCOR Report (information) – Susan Martinovich, NV
SCOR reviewed 146 candidate projects totaling $46.5 million and approved $19.5 million for 49 projects with 8 contingency projects. $9.6 million are for continuation projects, including 20-7 for SCOH. The Board will be asked to approve these projects when they next meet. 60 proposals were submitted by DOTs of which 16 were selected; another 57 were submitted by AASHTO committees of which 25 were funded, and 4 were by FHWA of which none were selected.

Future research requests should meet subcommittee action plans and AASHTO strategic plan objectives; e.g., subcommittee task forces proposed some projects apparently without the parent committee’s review. Subcommittees need to prioritize their proposals. Research that will need follow-on funding should have a multi-year plan laid out in the proposal.

The Chair acknowledged Susan Martinovich’s service as chair of the panel and SCOH vice chair.

Presentations (continued)

American Hero Program – King W. Gee, FHWA
In 2005, FHWA started the American Hero Support Program (AHSP), a program designed to provide internship opportunities for wounded soldiers returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan to receive rehabilitation. Also in 2005, AASHTO adopted a resolution stating its commitment to the program and a willingness to find state support. FHWA is seeking to re-emphasize the program. Virginia DOT started the “Virginia Transitional Work Initiative for Wounded Warriors” in 2006; and there are currently four veterans participating. States were urged to develop similar programs for active duty soldiers returning home for physical rehabilitation.

Program Delivery Improvement Tool (PDIT) – King W. Gee, FHWA
The PDIT tool was piloted by five states - Vermont, Maryland, North Carolina, Missouri, and New Mexico – and the results are being evaluated with the pilot states. Many constructive comments were received regarding needed changes to the PDIT format and content. Preliminary evaluation indicates that virtually all of these suggestions should be implemented. The pilots states all found value in the discussion and interaction between the Federal and State partners resulting from the use of the PDIT.

Several overarching issues were identified that the pilot states believe must be addressed to make the PDIT beneficial. These include: the purpose of the PDIT must be clarified to identify who will have access to the results and how the results will be used, particularly at the national level; the relationship between the PDIT and the risk assessment must be clarified and articulated; the process for sharing successful practices across the country must be developed; the next generations of the PDIT should be more dynamic and less process oriented.

Issues should be addressed such as the use of performance measures in the tool, advancing from a “silo-based” approach to a more “cross-cutting” approach, and prioritizing opportunities for improvement. Recommendations are expected to FHWA/AASHTO leadership within a couple of months.

Reports – Action Items (continued)

NCHRP 20-7 – Neil Pedersen, MD
Chris Jenks (TRB): reported that six of 21 projects were selected by the panel for a total of $420,000 and recommended for SCOH approval.
2. Modifications for AASHTO LRFD Bridge Design Specifications to Incorporate or Update the Guide Specifications for Design of Pedestrian Bridges - $70,000
3. Bridge Construction Practices for Temporary Works - $50,000
4. Observed Minimum Thresholds of LED (Light Emitting Diodes) Traffic Signals - $75,000
5. Outdoor Advertising Sign Regulation Study - $75,000
6. Utility Encasement Policy for Highway Crossings - $50,000

[Motion-MD / Second-VA – Approved]

Special Committee on U.S. Route Numbering – Mike Behrens, TX
Kevin Keith (MO) reported that Messrs. Sweeney, Vaughn and Keith represent SCOH on this committee. 19 requests were received, of which 17 were approved, with a conditional approval for I-95, and disapproval of the proposal for a new Interstate in North Caroline.

[Motion-MO / Second-TN – Approved]

SHRP II – Chair Biehler, PA
The Chair noted that he serves as chair of the SHRP-II Steering Committee and acknowledged Neil Hawks and Ann Brach for moving the program forward. Other SCOH members involved in leading SHRP-II include Ananth Prasad (FL), Neil Pedersen (MD) and John Conrad (WA). The program involves $150 million in collaborative research for 2006-2009 in four primary program areas.

During the first year, technical coordinating committees for each area were established along with expert task groups (ETGs) to review proposals. Ten new staff members were hired and the first loaned staff has arrived (Derek Sweet from Canada). The quarterly reports are on the SHRP-II website. The TRB sponsored a safety symposium to help shape the work program. All first and second year work plans were approved. The first series of RFPs resulted in 14 research contracts signed. The second wave of seven RFPs yielded 21 proposals which will be reviewed by ETGs.

An invitation was made for loaned staff to add experience to the quality of research; e.g., recent retirees, States can also be the focus for research, e.g., location of research. Neil Hawks was acknowledged for outreach to European and Canadian research groups.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) – Marty Vitale, AASHTO
Members were referred to the last document for those needing CEUs.

Special Order of the Day
TRAC Competition – Tate Jackson, AASHTO
The Chair acknowledged Tate Jackson’s good work with TRAC. The TRAC competition has two divisions that were represented by three middle school and three high school teams. The middle school teams hail from Mississippi (2) and North Dakota; and the three high school teams are from New York, North Dakota and New Hampshire. This year’s challenge was Balsa wood truss draw bridges.

Each team presented their entry and demonstrated their models. SCOH members cast ballots. The bridges will be weight tested in the afternoon, which results will be factored in, and winners will be announced tonight.

New Business – Chair Biehler, PA
2007 AASHTO Annual Meeting
The Wisconsin delegation welcomed all members to attend the Fall AASHTO meeting which will be held at the downtown Hilton Hotel - connected to MidWest Convention Center in Milwaukee. Technical tours will include the Marquette Interchange project and the Amtrak-Greyhound station.

Adjournment
The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

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