

Iowa DOT Research staff Khyle Clute and Brian Worrel presented high-value Iowa research at the 2020 TRB Annual Meeting, a yearly event that offers a forum for states to share research successes and best practices.

RESEARCH SOLUTIONS

Long-standing partnership with TRB helps bring resources and relationships to Iowa

The **Transportation Research Board (TRB)** has a singular goal: to advance transportation-related research nationwide. By bringing every state's department of transportation (DOT) and thousands of professionals together from all areas of transportation expertise, TRB has collected a vast amount of knowledge and data for states to use. As an active leader in TRB activities, Iowa DOT draws upon this knowledge base to improve transportation systems at home while also helping to steer the direction of national transportation research for decades to come.

BACKGROUND

Under the umbrella of the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, a nonpartisan advisory organization that informs and guides policymakers on issues of national importance, TRB was formed in 1920 to champion progress in every mode of transportation. It has since grown to involve more than 7,000 scientists,

researchers, and other experts who routinely contribute to solving increasingly complex transportation challenges.


PROGRAM

TRB aims to help states identify common interests and work together to discover and implement transportation improvements with

broad appeal. This collaboration helps to increase safety across the country, improve cost-effectiveness in materials and construction, and identify shared goals for future improvements.

Nearly half of TRB's funding comes from state DOTs. In 2019 Iowa DOT contributed approximately \$117,000 of TRB's \$16.7 million budget—

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“Iowa DOT’s relationship with TRB spans decades and has helped Iowa become the national transportation leader that it is today.”

— PEGGI KNIGHT,
Director, Iowa DOT Research and Analytics Bureau

leveraging \$143 for every \$1 invested. In exchange, Iowa DOT is officially represented in TRB’s decision-making processes and earns free or reduced-cost access to all of TRB’s programs and products.

SUCCESS STORIES

TRB’s investments produce an array of benefits for Iowa.

- **Collaboration.** To encourage states to discover and implement solutions with broad appeal, TRB manages a variety of **cooperative research programs**. The **National Cooperative Highway Research Program** (NCHRP), the oldest and largest of these, focuses on finding coordinated solutions that benefit multiple states or address regional highway-related challenges. These programs are funded separately from TRB’s core programs; in 2019 Iowa DOT contributed more than \$575,000 of NCHRP’s nearly \$46 million budget, leveraging \$80 for every \$1 invested. Other cooperative research programs are devoted to supporting efforts in transit, aviation, and other areas.
- **Education.** TRB sponsors more than 50 meetings and specialty conferences each year; the largest of these is TRB’s **Annual Meeting**, which brings together nearly 14,000 transportation professionals and offers more than 800 educational sessions and workshops. Representatives

from Iowa DOT not only attend this meeting but are also frequent speakers and contributors—demonstrating Iowa’s importance in the national conversation, increasing access to state-of-the-art research, and building personal relationships that can benefit future collaborations.

- **Influence.** With more than 200 **standing and special committees**, TRB has a group dedicated to addressing just about every transportation-related topic. Iowa DOT staff serve on 75 TRB **committees and project panels** and chair seven of these, providing expertise and input that help to identify opportunities for promising research and to deliberate transformational policy and decision-making at an issue-focused level.
- **Support.** TRB representatives regularly visit Iowa to observe and discuss challenges with Iowa DOT staff in person.
- **Resources.** Some of TRB’s tangible products include:
 - **Publications.** TRB produces hundreds of publications each year, from books and reports to a bimonthly magazine. It also compiles the *Transportation Research Record*, a collection of peer-reviewed papers that provide critical insights into the latest domestic and international transportation research.

- **Webinars.** TRB produces approximately 100 webinars per year on a variety of topics.
- **Archives.** TRB manages multiple databases to aid in transportation research. The largest, TRID (Transport Research International Documentation), offers more than a million records from around the world.

IOWA BENEFITS

Involvement in transportation research at the national level helps Iowa stay abreast of cutting-edge developments. This knowledge allows Iowa DOT to avoid duplicating other agencies’ efforts, instead using Iowa’s valuable research dollars to build on existing research and find the best solutions to the challenges Iowa faces.

Through its contributions to TRB, Iowa DOT helps shape the trajectory of national transportation research and ensure that Iowa’s interests are consistently represented.

BY THE NUMBERS

28 In 2019, **TRB welcomed 28 Iowa DOT employees** to its Annual Meeting at no charge. This amounted to \$33,180 in saved registration fees for Iowa.

80 Through its involvement in NCHRP research, Iowa DOT leverages **\$80 for every \$1 contributed**.

ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

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