



*The mission of the State Smart Transportation Initiative is to promote practices that advance environmental sustainability and equitable economic development, while fostering government efficiency and transparency. This series of smart transportation snapshots is intended to highlight innovative practices at the state level that advance these goals.*

### **Web-based Employee Collaboration**

In the fall of 2009, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) established the E-magination JAM (E-JAM), a web-based program that allowed employees to submit ideas for how to improve the organization and to comment and vote on submitted ideas. Five hundred-thirty ideas were submitted over five days, and nearly 1,000 employees cast votes in support of one or more of the submitted ideas. The ideas were then categorized under one of seven themes: Workplace of Choice, Tech Connections, Sustainability, Operational Innovations, Scope Incentives, Public-Private Partnerships, or Targeted Transparency.

Three of these themes—Technology Connections, Workplace of Choice, and Sustainability, have since been identified by Mn/DOT as Flagship Initiatives to be further pursued and expanded upon. Project managers have been hired to lead each of these three initiatives and progress is now underway:

- The **Technology Connections Initiative** is focused on enhancing online communication, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing between Mn/DOT employees, with the goal of providing employees with easy access to information and resources, and creating an open forum for discussion.
- The goal of the **Workplace of Choice Initiative** is to help Mn/DOT attract and retain a highly talented workforce and to strengthen Mn/DOT's relationship with the community. Projects currently under review by the Initiative include optimizing and retaining the Mn/DOT workforce, planning for organization-wide succession and leadership development, supporting flexible work schedules, and modifying Mn/DOT's cellular phone policy.
- The **Sustainability Initiative** promotes innovative solutions to ensure that Mn/DOT business practices, services and facilities support economic opportunity, community well-being, and the natural environment. The Initiative will build on ideas submitted through the E-JAM related to "green" buildings, waste reduction and energy savings, sustainable highway construction, sustainability in planning and project development, and work-related travel.

E-JAM has proven to be an effective way to harness the creativity of Mn/DOT employees to strengthen the Department's strategic vision. The use of web-based communication tools such as E-JAM may hold promise for other departments of transportation and other public agencies

interested in leveraging their institutional knowledge base to develop solutions to new and emerging challenges.

**More information:**

**“Employee E-magination JAM ideas are becoming reality”, MNDOT Newsline (July 14, 2010): <http://www.newsline.dot.state.mn.us/archive/10/july/14.html#Z4>**

**Schaffner, Philip “Mn/DOT's E-Jam and Sustainability Initiatives,” (October 12, 2010): <http://prezi.com/sd2rh5v5urkl/mndots-e-jam-and-sustainability-initiatives/>**