



ASSOCIATION OF
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MPO Executive Director Todd Ashby recognized nationally for leadership

Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Executive Director Todd Ashby has been recognized with a national leadership award for his work to establish the forthcoming Des Moines Transload Facility.

The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) named Ashby as this year's recipient of the Ronald F. Kirby Memorial National Award for Outstanding Individual Leadership. Ashby was nominated for the award by the Urban Land Institute Iowa, and the award was announced Wednesday at the 2015 AMPO Annual Conference in Las Vegas.



"I'm humbled and honored by the award and would like to say the entire MPO organization deserves credit," Ashby said. "I am fortunate to work with so many bright and passionate people on our volunteer committees and on the MPO staff."

Once complete, the Transload Facility will serve businesses within an estimated 150-mile radius of Greater Des Moines by connecting the trucking network to the rail network. This will be a significant improvement over the transportation options available in central Iowa today, expanding businesses' reach into potential markets and encouraging competitive rail rates among carriers. Estimates show that the average cost of shipping commodities will drop by 50 percent. The City of Des Moines, a partner in the project, has issued a request for proposal (RFP) for an operator of the Transload Facility and several companies have expressed interest. The Transload Facility is anticipated to open in 2016.

Ashby was singled out for this recognition because of his behind-the-scenes leadership in fostering an idea into action. The tangible impacts of his leadership include a completed Rail Market Analysis and Des Moines Rail Transload Feasibility Study, as well as securing a \$1.7 million, zero-interest loan from the Iowa Department of Transportation to build rail infrastructure such as tracks, switches and ballasts at the Transload Facility.

"Todd Ashby went beyond identifying an innovative solution to a problem that was not being addressed elsewhere – he stepped up to the plate and delivered," said Larry James, Jr., chair of ULI Iowa. "But for his efforts, the project might never have happened."

The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) acts as a regional forum to ensure coordination between the public and local, state, and federal agencies in regard to planning issues and to prepare transportation plans and programs. The MPO develops both long- and short-range multimodal transportation plans, selects and approves projects for federal funding based upon regional priorities, and develops methods to reduce traffic congestion.