

UofM's Intermodal Freight Transportation Institute Is Recognized as Tier 1 Center

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) has announced that the Intermodal Freight Transportation Institute (IFTI) at the University of Memphis, in a consortia partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Madison, competed for and was awarded the coveted designation as a Tier 1 University Transportation Center (UTC).

The UTC program awards grants to universities across the United States to advance state-of-the-art research in transportation and to develop the next generation of transportation professionals. Of the 63 University Transportation Center applications received, RITA awarded 22 grants, each worth \$3.5 million dollars. Forty-six of the applicants competed to be one of the 10 Tier 1 Centers that the University of Memphis and University of Wisconsin consortium was named.

In light of the University of Memphis' receiving the designation, U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen, who serves on the U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and who is a strong supporter of IFTI, said, "The University of Memphis is serving a vital role preparing the nation's future transportation engineers and making our freight transportation system more innovative, safe, and efficient. I commend the University for this distinction, and I look forward to seeing years more of their outstanding work."

U of M President Shirley C. Raines, said, "Having a position of leadership in one of the UTC programs strengthens the University of Memphis' goal of being a great metropolitan research university. Since Memphis is America's distribution center and the University of Memphis is involved in the Aerotropolis development, the transportation center award is particularly meaningful for the University."

Dr. Martin Lipinski, director of IFTI at the University, said, "This selection has a lot to say about the past work and partnerships established by the University of Memphis. Our friends at the

Tennessee Department of Transportation, the Canadian National Railroad, and other local businesses have played a large role in our success.”

Lipinski continued, “Freight transportation is an important research area for the University and for Memphis. Freight is a major economic engine for the city, so it is important that we constantly work to improve the flow of goods in and through our community.”

The University of Memphis/University of Wisconsin-Madison consortium is called CFIRE (National Center for Freight and Infrastructure Research and Education) and is composed of 10 universities. The consortium encompasses a geographical area that serves the majority of freight traffic in the United States.

The University of Memphis will coordinate the “southern hub” which includes Vanderbilt University, the University of Alabama-Huntsville, and the University of Southern Mississippi. The University of Wisconsin-Madison will serve as the lead institute of CFIRE and will lead the “northern hub,” which includes the University of Wisconsin-Superior, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the University of Toledo, the University of Illinois-Chicago, and Michigan Technological University.

The consortium’s winning proposal, *Making Multimodal Freight Systems Work for Economic Recovery and Quality of Life*, detailed research, education, and technology transfer activities that will maximize the effectiveness of multimodal and intermodal development in our region and in the nation to move products efficiently from border to border and abroad, which creates an unprecedented opportunity for job creation and sustained growth.

David Wedaman, with Memphis- based ReTransportation, said of the impact this award will have for Memphis area research, “This is great news for the University of Memphis, the community, the University’s students, and the transportation industry. As CEO and president of a transportation company, I am thrilled that the Institute will continue its important and relevant research. This award further solidifies the University of Memphis as a premier research university on a national level.”

IFTI addresses critical issues affecting the planning, design, and operation of the nation's intermodal freight transportation systems, with an emphasis on the intermodal issues that have local significance with national and international implications. The extensive transportation infrastructure in the Memphis region that supports a vibrant logistics/distribution industry provides the perfect working laboratory for IFTI to solve critical problems facing the freight industry and generate educational opportunities to develop tomorrow's leaders.

More information about IFTI is available online at www.Memphis.edu/IFTI. More information about the University Transportation Center Program is available online at <http://utc.dot.gov>