



2009 AASHTO NTPAW Skills Awards Entry Form

(Entry form may not exceed two pages.)

ENTRY INFORMATION

Division No.	4. Special Events
Category No.	4b. Public awareness event
Title of Entry	Maryland Highway Centennial Celebration

CONTACT INFORMATION

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ENTRY PROFILE

1) Situation, goals and objectives of public relations activity

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2008. Planning began in 2004 for a multi-pronged statewide outreach effort to its customers, and a celebration of Maryland's progressive tradition as a transportation leader. From the beginning, every deliverable of the celebration was designed to satisfy at least one or several of the following objectives:

1. Promote safety on the highways, the primary mission of SHA
2. Raise awareness of SHA as a customer-driven organization
3. Raise awareness among Marylanders about the contributions that highways make to our prosperity and quality of life
4. Engage younger audiences and promote the value of careers as transportation engineers

5. Provide private sponsors of the celebration opportunities to raise their own profile(s) among the traveling public and among their transportation industry partners
6. Recognize and enhance well-deserved pride among SHA employees for the work they do, and encourage greater safety awareness on the job

Primary and secondary research required significant resources for this project. A professor of history was hired to research and write a full-length "coffee-table" book, while a photo researcher was utilized to augment the text with relevant photographs. The researcher's work involved countless visits to the Maryland State Archives, Maryland Historical Society, Enoch Pratt Free Library, the Maryland Department of Transportation archives and in-person interviews statewide. In addition, the centennial team gathered artifacts and historically significant equipment from each District Office, for the purpose of displaying it photographically, in museum exhibits, and at public venues statewide.

Recognizing the need for consistent and substantive support from those in a position to help the initiative thrive, early efforts centered on enlisting some of the past and present stars of Maryland's transportation industry. The **Maryland Highway Centennial Executive Committee** was formed, with John D. Porcari, then Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary, as Chairman. Former Governor Harry Hughes, who served as Maryland's first Transportation Secretary in 1970, served as Honorary Chair. The remainder of the Executive Committee consisted of civic leaders, executives from other Department of Transportation modal, former transportation secretaries currently in private industry, and other civic and business leaders with an interest in transportation.

With guidance from the Executive Committee, plans were formulated, presented, refined and executed for the development of:

- A comprehensively researched and handsomely designed "coffee-table" book
- A television documentary broadcast statewide
- A website
- Commemorative centennial highway signs
- Appearances and displays at industry trade shows emphasizing the public/private partnership that builds Maryland's roadways
- A series of public outreach efforts
- Public and private events on a near-monthly basis

2) Target audience

- Maryland citizens
- Highway enthusiasts
- Transportation industry employees (past and present)
- Social and environmental groups

3) Measurable results

All of the preceding (and more) were executed utilizing a combination of public and private funds. The bulk of the funds were privately donated, with "seed" money from MDOT, SHA, the Maryland Transportation Authority, the Federal Highway Administration, the Maryland Quality Initiative (MdQI - itself a public private partnership), Maryland Public Television, and the Maryland Highway Safety Foundation, an organization that grew out of the centennial efforts and whose purpose is the ongoing promotion of safety statewide.

Earned media value for coverage of the centennial's history and safety messages was in the range of \$193,000 - \$200,000+. The ad and web campaigns for the documentary, presented through Comcast cable and internet services, alone produced more than 300,000 impressions statewide. When the documentary aired on Maryland Public Television on November 13, 2008, over 45,000 households comprised of more than 58,000 viewers tuned in. That is the equivalent of a 2.9 share, which is more viewers than the Fox Network, typically the leader in that time-period, and is double the share of the MPT mainstay, "Masterpiece Theatre." Because of the high ratings and positive feedback from viewers on the first air date, MPT chose, without obligation, to air the program again (free play) on March 12, 2009. With centennial highway signs on more than 30 major roadways throughout Maryland, and centennial displays in various museums and exhibit halls, millions of people have been exposed to the centennial messages. Maryland's Welcome Centers alone serve approximately 1,800,000 travelers per year. Throughout the year, the centennial website received more than 800,000 hits and received numerous requests for centennial email updates. Recently, among other awards, the Maryland Highway Centennial received a PRSA Silver Anvil Award of Excellence.