



February 3, 2005

## **Governments Of Canada And Alberta Announce Contribution Agreements For Intelligent Transportation Systems**

Ottawa... Anne McLellan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, on behalf of Transport Minister Jean-C. Lapierre and Environment Minister Stéphane Dion, along with Dr. Lyle Oberg, Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation Minister, today announced the signing of two contribution agreements between the Government of Canada and the Province of Alberta for Intelligent Transportation Systems in the province.

Under the agreements, the federal government and the province will each contribute \$652,400 for the acquisition and installation of 19 Road Weather Information System stations along the National Highway System in Alberta. The Government of Canada and the Alberta government, with its partners, will provide an additional \$500,000 each for Intelligent Transportation Systems research and development.

"These systems will enable Canadians to do their part for the environment by better planning trips and reducing travel times," said Minister McLellan. "It will also prove to be cost effective for taxpayers."

"This partnership allows us to make further use of Intelligent Transportation Systems technologies such as the Road Weather Information System," said Dr. Oberg. "These technologies will enhance safety and efficiency on Alberta highways."

"The agreement to acquire and install innovative transportation technologies in Alberta is one example of cooperation between provincial and federal governments to enhance safety," said Minister Lapierre. "The funds devoted to the research and development agreement reaffirm the Government of Canada's commitment to innovation through partnerships that enhance the transportation system."

"By collecting data from sensors along Alberta's highways, the Road Weather Information System will help the province's road authorities make informed decisions regarding snow and ice control resulting in safer roadways and less damage to the environment," said Minister Dion.

Road Weather Information Systems comprise automated weather reporting stations with special sensors embedded in and below the road and on nearby towers. These systems collect detailed data on weather conditions at and near the road surface, which can help weather forecasters and highway maintenance personnel to predict icing conditions. The Road Weather Information Systems initiative is a joint provincial, territorial, Transport Canada and Environment Canada program to provide Canadians and highway maintenance personnel with timely road weather information.

Transport Canada is concluding funding negotiations with the provinces and territories for the development of a cross-Canada Road Weather Information Systems network. The department will pay up to 50 per cent of eligible costs relating to the acquisition and installation of the system components, subject to the successful conclusion of contribution agreements with the provinces and territories, which are expected to pay the balance as well as the ongoing operation and maintenance costs. As a condition of funding, provinces and territories are also required to enter into a data-sharing agreement with Environment Canada.

Under the second contribution agreement announced today, the Province of Alberta and its partners will undertake ITS research and development projects in the area of road safety. The first project to be funded under the new agreement will be a wireless communications pilot for commercial vehicle inspection. Inspectors will test technology that allows them to access information from central computer systems and databases with laptop computers in the field. The agreement will partner Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation with interested stakeholders to complete the research. These stakeholders include the Centre for Transportation Engineering and Planning, which includes the Universities of Alberta and Calgary, municipal governments and members of the transportation engineering industry.

Federal funding will be provided under the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program (SHIP), a \$600 million program to improve highway infrastructure across Canada. Part of the SHIP funding - \$100 million - is for initiatives that better integrate the country's transportation system. One of these is the ITS initiative, which includes applications such as advanced systems for traveller information, traffic management, public transport, commercial vehicle operations, emergency response management and vehicle safety.

Funding for this program is built into the existing financial framework.

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Backgrounders with further information on Road Weather Information Systems and Intelligent Transportation Systems are attached.

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## Backgrounder

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### ROAD WEATHER INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Road Weather Information Systems are automated weather reporting stations with special sensors embedded in and below the road and on nearby towers. These systems collect detailed data on weather conditions at and near the road surface, which can assist weather forecasters in predicting road surface conditions. Road maintenance crews can use "real-time" road weather information to decide if road treatment is necessary, when to treat, what chemicals or mixtures to use, and how much is required.

Road Weather Information Systems have two major benefits. First, by enabling maintenance crews to treat roads in advance of icing conditions, winter driving safety can be enhanced. Second, by reducing the

overall amount of road salt used, they can help mitigate the negative impact of road salt on the environment.

Canada already has more than 150 roadside sensor sites, installed by various jurisdictions. Since these sensors were installed at different times using different technologies, jurisdictions cannot all share information. An integrated system will provide consistent weather information for all jurisdictions. With the implementation of a national Road Weather Information System, Canada will be a world leader in large-scale, integrated road weather technology.

Since 1999, Transport Canada and Environment Canada have worked with the provinces and territories to create a cross-Canada network of high-quality road weather systems that would be installed on the National Highway System.

The federal government is negotiating with the provinces and territories to finalize contribution and data sharing agreements for these systems. Once an agreement is in place, construction of the environmental sensor sites along the National Highway System can begin. The negotiations, construction and activation are expected to take up to two years.

## INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Intelligent Transportation Systems are a broad range of diverse technologies applied to transportation to make systems safer, more efficient, more reliable and more environmentally friendly, without necessarily having to physically alter existing infrastructure. Since 1999, Transport Canada has been promoting them aggressively and has provided more than \$18 million in support of Intelligent Transportation Systems projects and research in Canada.

The field of Intelligent Transportation Systems encompasses new products and information and communications technologies for the development, operation and management of the transportation system. They include applications such as advanced systems for traveller information, traffic management, public transport, commercial vehicle operations, emergency response management, and vehicle safety. They all have in common the application of advanced technologies, including information processing, communications, and sensing and control - technologies that put transportation systems at the core of an innovation revolution.

The Government of Canada's *Intelligent Transportation Systems Plan for Canada: En Route to Intelligent Mobility (1999)* sets out the strategy for stimulating the development and deployment of Intelligent Transportation Systems across urban and rural Canada. More information on that plan can be found at [www.its-sti.gc.ca/en/its\\_plan\\_for\\_canada.htm](http://www.its-sti.gc.ca/en/its_plan_for_canada.htm). The goals are to maximize the use and efficiency of existing infrastructure and meet future mobility needs more responsibly. The Intelligent Transportation Systems Plan provides leadership and support to advance the application and compatibility of Intelligent Transportation Systems technologies and to increase the safety, integration, efficiency and sustainability of Canada's transportation system.

For further information, please visit the Intelligent Transportation Systems website at [www.its-sti.gc.ca](http://www.its-sti.gc.ca).

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