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U.S. Department of Transportation Seeks Technology Solutions to Improve Safety and Reduce Congestion on Nation's Roadways

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) today issued a request for information (RFI) to private industry, research organizations, and state and local governments seeking information about commercially available technology applications designed to fight congestion and improve the safety and performance of the nation's transportation system.

"The solution to today's traffic problems does not have to be just about building new roads and infrastructure," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters. "By harnessing existing technology and adapting it for transportation needs, we can dramatically improve safety and reduce congestion for the traveling public."

After receiving input and ideas, RITA will identify technology applications and stakeholders interested in partnering with the Department on SafeTrip-21, a multi-application field test of safety and congestion-reducing technologies that will be launched at the 2008 Intelligent Transportation Systems World Congress in New York City and integrated into other test locations. SafeTrip-21 builds upon research into the use of information, navigation, and communications technologies to prevent accidents and alleviate congestion by providing drivers with real-time safety warnings, traffic and transit information, and advanced navigational tools.

"SafeTrip-21 will further the research and deployment of technologies that can warn drivers in real-time about dangerous and congested conditions, road hazards and other vehicles with enough time to avoid an accident or alter their route," said RITA Administrator Paul Brubaker. "SafeTrip-21 is focused on making travel safer and improving the reliability and efficiency of the transportation system for the American public."

A team from RITA's Volpe National Transportation Systems Center has been assembled to lead the SafeTrip-21 initiative, working closely with the automotive, ITS and consumer products industries, as well as other public and private sector partners. SafeTrip-21 is an important part of

the Department's restructuring of the Vehicle Infrastructure Integration (VII) program and is intended to accelerate the testing and deployment of safety and congestion-reducing technologies while continuing the foundational research necessary to determine the viability of a nationwide deployment decision.

SafeTrip-21 will incorporate lessons learned in operational tests currently underway in partnership with automakers, equipment suppliers, and state and local governments in Michigan, California, Virginia, Arizona, Florida, Minnesota, and New York.

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