

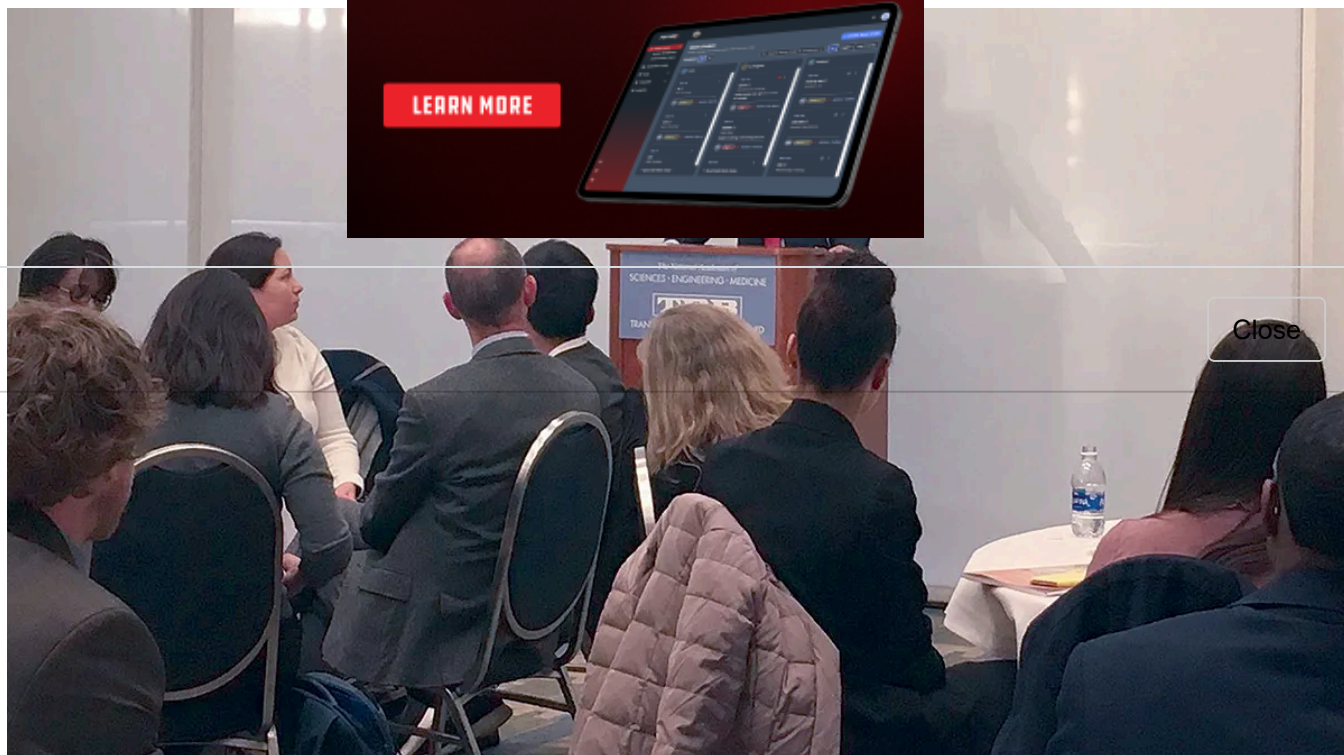
TRB Annual Meeting Goes Virtual

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Eleanor Lamb | Staff Reporter

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TRB Executive Director Neil Pedersen at the 2019 meeting. (Transportation Research Board via Twitter)

The Transportation Research Board's 100th annual meeting will be held virtually this winter due to concerns over COVID-19.

The meeting, which assembles transportation officials, experts and academics from around the world, was slated to take place in Washington in late January. TRB recently announced plans for a virtual meeting, which will take place over a series of dates throughout January.

According to TRB's announcement, the in-person annual meeting brings together more than 14,000 transportation professionals. Attendees will be able to participate

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Pedersen noted the tight deadline for paper submissions, which is rooted in the Aug. 1 deadline for paper submissions. Those who are seeking to present their subjects at the meeting must submit it to the paper authors to let them know it would be a virtual meeting before the deadline.

Another contributing factor Pedersen identified was a survey TRB conducted of transportation industry representatives. He said TRB received more than 1,000 responses, the majority of which indicated people would not be able to travel to an in-person meeting but would be able to participate in a virtual meeting.

Pedersen said he hopes more people than usual can participate, especially if they are unburdened by costs associated with airplane tickets and hotels. In particular, he said he hopes more people from field offices can attend, in addition to the typical cadre of those representing headquarters offices.

“I think that’ll particularly be the case, for example, for state departments of transportation and other government agencies,” Pedersen said.

The virtual meeting's program, like the in-person format, will cover all modes of transportation and will include material geared toward policymakers, technical experts, industry leaders, government officials and researchers. The theme for the 2021 meeting is "Launching a New Century of Mobility and Quality of Life."



The components of the event that characterize the in-person meeting, including **ATTISEMENT** keynote addresses, exhibits and networking opportunities, as well as plenary,

breakout and poster sessions, will be available virtually to full-registration participants.

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“All the state departments of transportation will have representation at [the annual meeting], as will many federal, state and local agencies, private sector companies and academic institutions,” said Carlos Bracerias, chair of TRB’s executive committee and executive director of the Utah Department of Transportation. “There will be many experts interacting in meaningful discussions with conference attendees, in group as well as one-on-one discussions, and we are looking forward to their participation.”

According to TRB, registration fees, which will be announced prior to registration opening in September, will be reduced. TRB has yet to determine exact dates for the event.

“The annual meeting is a critical event for transportation researchers all over the world,” said Susan Shaheen, vice chair of TRB’s executive committee and professor of engineering at the University of California, Berkeley. “As TRB turns to its next 100 years,

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this community of volunteers, whether in-person or virtually, will continue leading impartial research, facilitating objective dialogues and fostering innovative strategies.”

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TRB is one of several transportation-related events to move online due to the coronavirus pandemic. FMCSA, the Women In Trucking Association and the Technology & Maintenance Council have also announced plans for virtual events.

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