



## TransComm 2020 Award Categories and Judging States

### General Conditions

- Eligible entries must have been projects completed or initiated from May 1, 2019 to May 1, 2020.
- Each state may submit no more than six Skills Contest entries per year—this does NOT include individual award nominations. If more than six entries are submitted, all entries may be rejected. Only one entry per sub-category may be submitted by each state.
- Each entry may only be submitted once, meaning the same entry cannot be submitted in multiple categories. However, pieces of a campaign can be split up and entered into their respective categories.
- “Without a Consultant” categories mean that there was no support from outside the DOT, either paid or unpaid, for production of the materials or development of the concept.
- There are general limitations for 10 PDF pages (typically converted from PowerPoint slides). This means that judges will evaluate the entry based on the first 10 slides/pages; any additional slides will be viewed as supplementary material. States are encouraged to closely follow the 10-slide/page limit.
- If an entry appears to have been submitted in the wrong category, judges and the Skills Contest committee may contact the submitting state to recommend moving the entry to a more appropriate category.
- Deadline for submission of all entries is **Friday, May 29, 2020 at 5 p.m. ET** via the AASHTO portal. Submission directions to follow.
- Questions should be submitted to Dawn Garner, [garnerd1@michigan.gov](mailto:garnerd1@michigan.gov).

### Judging Criteria

- How well does the effort reflect strategic planning, analysis, or research to develop its approach? (on a scale of 0 to 10, 10 being the highest)
- How well did the entry meet stated goals and objectives and/or support the agency’s goals and objectives? (on a scale of 0 to 10)
- How original or creative was the approach? (on a scale of 0 to 10)
- How clearly and consistently was/were the message(s) communicated? (on a scale of 0 to 10)
- How well were measurable outcomes/results achieved (be sure to have identified what those measurements were at the beginning)? (on a scale of 0 to 10)

### 1. Excel

This represents AASHTO's highest awards for public relations programs and campaigns. The entries in this division recognize the specific techniques that made a pivotal contribution to the overall success of a broad-based communication endeavor that uses two or more public relations tools. Entrants in the Excel Division should bring a copy of their PDF/PowerPoint entry to TransComm. In the event that you are selected a winner, you will be asked to make a presentation describing your entry during one of the TransComm sessions.

1a) With a Consultant

Method of electronic submittal: PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **Washington State**

1b) Without a Consultant

Method of electronic submittal: PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **North Carolina**

## **2. Publications (Print and Electronic)**

2a) Internal Publication

Print or electronic publication of a single article or collection of articles meant to be read together and produced primarily for an internal audience (typically employees). This could include regular publications, emailed or printed newsletters, and brochures. Method of electronic submittal: PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **California**

2b) External Publication

Print or electronic publication of a single article or collection of articles meant to be read together and produced primarily for an external audience, such as customers, stakeholders and/or legislators. This could include regular publications, emailed or printed newsletters, media kits, and brochures. Method of electronic submittal: PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **Florida**

2c) Best of the Rest

Annual reports, posters, manuals, books, booklets, calendars, or other print publications designed to inform a targeted audience about an organization, program, service, activity or issue. Method of electronic submittal: PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **Georgia**

## **3. Marketing/Advertising**

3a) Indoor or Outdoor Advertising

A graphical or three-dimensional display that may be placed inside or outside (example: airport or mall; on a taxi, bus, commuter rail, or streetcar; used to wrap an object or vehicle; placed on top of a news rack or gas pump; affixed to a fuel nozzle; used on a billboard; or displayed on a building). Method of electronic submittal: JPEG or PDF file of either the actual image file or a photo taken of the advertising display. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **Nebraska**

3b) Print and Electronic Marketing

A single ad or series of ads produced to run in print publications or through electronic venues such as websites (includes Facebook other social media ads, and instant messaging services). Method of electronic submittal: JPEG or PDF file. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **TBD (no 2020 winner)**

### 3c) Interactive Marketing (**combine 8c and 8d and move it here**)

Any form of marketing that is designed to engage the public in an activity that educates or informs about a DOT project or initiative. Includes tradeshow or exhibit booths that encourage interaction; computer programs/kiosks that are interactive, or any other means of marketing that features the public interacting with the display or program itself or with DOT employees. Method of electronic submittal: JPEG or PDF file. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **TBD (new combined category)**

## **4. Special Events**

### 4a) Transportation Events

Events highlighting specific transportation improvements such as groundbreakings or ribbon cuttings on highways, bridges, ports, transit facilities, airports, etc. Method of electronic submittal: PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **Washington State**

### 4b) Public Awareness Events

Events promoting informational or public policy issues such as work zone awareness, safety belt usage, transportation funding, DOT services, etc. Method of electronic submittal: PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **Colorado**

## **5. Audio/Video Production**

### 5a) PSA (video or radio)

Public service announcement in either audio or video form. Method of submittal: MPEG, QuickTime or WMF file, or a YouTube link. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **Virginia**

### 5b) Video Production: Internal

Video created and produced in-house for internal use (e.g. training, education, employee news). Method of electronic submittal: MPEG, QuickTime, WMF file or online link. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **Virginia**

### 5c) Video Production: External

Video created and produced in-house for external use (e.g. public information, public education, public awareness, news release, documentary, event coverage, etc.). Method of electronic submittal: MPEG, QuickTime, WMF file or online link. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **Washington State**

#### 5d) Video Production: Long Form

Single video production that exceeds 7 minutes. Method of electronic submittal: MPEG, QuickTime, WMF file or online link. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **Idaho**

#### 5e) Video Production: Series

Video product that includes at least three separate videos as part of a series. For nomination purposes, all videos must be combined into one single file for attachment (with short spaces in between each section of the series to see where each ends and begins). Method of electronic submittal: MPEG, QuickTime, WMF file or online link. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **Virginia**

#### 5f) Audio Production

A single audio production (such as podcasts, radio shows, etc.). Does not include PSAs (see category 5a). Method of electronic submittal: MPEG, QuickTime, WMF file or online link. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **Nebraska**

## **6. Writing**

#### 6a) News Release

Any document prepared and released to the media as a news item; entry must include release and print media coverage generated. Method of electronic submittal: Microsoft Word file or PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) and scanned copies of related newspaper coverage in JPEG or PDF file.

Judging State: **Arizona**

#### 6b) Article or Guest Blog with a DOT Byline

An article, op/ed, guest column, guest blog, or other piece published or posted by a third party (non-DOT organization) that carries the byline of a DOT staff member. Method of electronic submittal: Scanned published article in JPEG or PDF file format or PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **Alaska**

#### 6c) Best Blog

This can be in the form of an official blog or a regular, on-going feature column in an electronic or print newsletter. Submission must include at least 6 blog entries (articles) from the eligible time period. Method of electronic submittal: Submit link address, Word document or PDF of the blog. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **Arizona and Georgia (tied last year)**

## **7. Issues/Crisis Management Communication**

#### 7a) Issues/Crisis Management Communication

A program or actions undertaken to deal specifically with a public relations crisis or other event that has an extraordinary impact on the organization. Method of electronic submittal: PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **Alaska**

7b) Public Involvement Approach: with consultant

A specific activity or campaign used to gain public input and buy-in on transportation improvements or public policy changes. Method of electronic submittal: PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **Florida**

7c) Public Involvement Approach: without consultant

A specific activity or campaign used to gain public input and buy-in on transportation improvements or public policy changes. Method of electronic submittal: PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **Illinois**

## **8. Graphic Design**

8a) Logo, Illustration and Infographic

The graphic element, symbol, typeface, icon of a trademark, brand designed to represent a department, work unit, program, destination, product or service, a visualization such as a drawing, painting, digitally altered photo or other work of art; illustrations/infographics can be used to display a wide range of subject matter and serve a variety of functions like giving faces to characters in a story or visualizing step-by-step instructions in a technical manual. Method of electronic submittal: JPEG or PDF file (limited to 10 pages/slides).

Judging State: **Kentucky**

8b) Photo

Any photo taken by a DOT employee that supports a public relations objective. Method of electronic submittal: In a common file format suitable for viewing using photo management software (Photoshop) or viewer, such as JPEG or TIFF. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **Oklahoma**

## **9. Website/Technology**

9a) Website, with consultant

Recognizing outstanding consultant-developed Internet or intranet sites from design, communication and navigation standpoints. Method of electronic submittal: Submit the website address if the site is currently available on the Internet for viewing by the judges; or send HTML files, if site is no longer active and available for viewing by the judges. Also, PDF or (limited to 10 slides/pages) including screen captures of web pages.

Judging State: **Missouri**

9b) Website, without consultant

Recognizing outstanding internally developed Internet or intranet sites from design, communication and navigation standpoints. Method of electronic submittal: Submit the website address if the site is currently available on the Internet for viewing by the judges; or send HTML files, if site is no longer active and available for viewing by the judges. Also, PDF (limited to 10 slides/pages) including screen captures of web pages.

Judging State: **Kentucky**

#### 9c) Mobile Web Application

Method of electronic submittal: provide access to mobile application. May also include a PDF (limited to 10 pages/slides) of additional information.

Judging State: **Arizona**

### **10. Social Media**

10a) Best Use of Single Social Media Platform (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Linked-In, Instagram, Google+, Pinterest, YouTube, Vimeo, etc.)

Use of any social media platform as part of an ongoing public relations program. Method of electronic submittal: Submit the website address if the site is currently available on the internet for viewing by the judges; or send HTML files, if site is no longer active and available for viewing by the judges. Also, PDF (limited to 10 slides/pages) including screen captures of web pages.

Judging State: **Virginia**

10b) Best use of Social Media in a Campaign

Method of electronic submittal: Submit the website address if the site is currently available on the internet for viewing by the judges; or send HTML files, if site is no longer active and available for viewing by the judges. Also, PDF (limited to 10 slides/pages) including screen captures of web pages.

Judging State: **Kentucky**

### **11. Individual Awards**

*Entries into the Individual Awards category do not count toward the maximum six entries that a state can submit. Nominators can put together a 10 slide/page presentation or a Word document not to exceed 2 pages.*

#### **Spirit of TransComm Award**

While communications directors provide strategic leadership for communicators, the real work -- implementation of successful communication tactics -- is up to the staff members of state DOT communication groups. The Spirit of TransComm Award is designed to recognize the efforts of those staff members who are not in leadership or supervisory positions. Public information officers, web designers, video producers, public involvement specialists and other communications professionals are eligible for this award. Nominees should demonstrate professionalism, expertise in their specialization, strategic results, innovation and impact on identified audiences.

Nominations are accepted during the call for nominations window established annually for the TransComm Skills Contest. Nominations shall be reviewed by the TransComm awards committee with a recommendation made to the TransComm Executive Committee.

#### **TransComm Vanguard Award**

New professionals to transportation communications often bring new innovations, outside perspectives and fresh ideas. The TransComm Vanguard Award would provide an avenue for recognizing communications professionals who are new to state DOT communications, even if they otherwise have decades of public relations, communications or marketing experience. To qualify, nominee must have three or fewer years of experience in transportation communications and demonstrate innovation, creativity and strategic results in their efforts. Nominations are encouraged from communications specializations, including creative services, public involvement, media relations and constituent services. Nominations are accepted during the call for nominations window established annually for the TransComm Skills Contest. Nominations shall be reviewed by the TransComm awards committee and, if appropriate, awards recommended to the Executive Committee for granting.

#### **Founder's Award**

The first Founder's Award was presented in 1989 to Keith Rounds of Wyoming. Subsequent awards have displayed either the "Founder's Award" or "Distinguished Service" title. The award is presented to individuals who have made long-term positive impacts on the public affairs profession, and served as a member of the AASHTO Subcommittee on Transportation Communications in the capacity as a regional representative, awards or site selection committee member, member of the Executive Team, or host of the TransComm workshop. Nominations are accepted year-round. Presentations are made when appropriate to those selected to receive the award. There is no guarantee that an award will be made each year. There is also no limit on the number of awards that may be presented in a single year.

#### **Public Relations Professional of the Year**

An individual who demonstrates superior professional character; exhibits exemplary professional achievements; creates a positive impact on the communications profession and department in which they work; and has earned the respect of peers and coworkers.

#### **Special Recognition Award**

This award is presented periodically in recognition of the unique contributions, unprecedented efforts or achievements of individuals, public figures or organizations, in advancing the causes and work of the Subcommittee on Transportation Communication. Nominations are accepted year round. Presentations are made when appropriate to those selected to receive the award. There is no guarantee that an award will be made each year. There is also no limit on the number of awards that may be presented in a single year.