

## **Idaho Transportation Department**

### **Director Brian Ness**

A life-long transportation professional, Brian W. Ness was appointed Director of the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) in November 2009. He is responsible for an annual budget of approximately \$800 million and provides leadership and vision for more than 1,650 employees.

Director Ness is a member of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) Board of Directors, the Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (WASHTO) Board of Directors, the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) Board of Directors, the American Road and Transportation Builders Association's (ARTBA) Board of Directors, and the Idaho Rural Partnership's Board of Directors. He is also a member of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Idaho Council, and was appointed by the Governor to chair the Idaho Autonomous and Connected Vehicle Testing and Deployment Committee.

In 2019, Director Ness became President of the ARTBA's Transportation Officials Division. ARTBA represents the combined interests of the contracting industry, the consulting community, and the owners of the transportation system. Functioning as a non-partisan federation based in Washington D.C., ARTBA advances public policy designed to increase federal transportation investment and improve the efficiency of the project-delivery process.

In 2018, Director Ness was appointed to TRB's Executive Committee and in addition serves on their Subcommittee on Planning and Policy Review (SPPR). The TRB is a unit of the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, and serves as an independent adviser to the President of the United States, the Congress, and federal and state agencies on scientific and technical transportation issues of national importance.

Director Ness served as Chair of the AASHTO Special Committee on Research and Innovation until 2017. He testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Research and Technology in 2019 on "The Need for a National Surface Transportation Research Agenda."

Director Ness chaired the AASHTO Special Committee on Transportation Security and Emergency Management (SCOTSEM) until August 2017. Through his leadership of SCOTSEM, he achieved national recognition for applying his organizational model to emergency management and security, which has helped reshape SCOTSEM's strategic plan.

In 2015, Director Ness was President of WASHTO. In this position, he served as a regional representative to AASHTO's Executive Committee. In addition, Director Ness sponsored the WASHTO Highway Transport Committee, and was the creator and sponsor of WASHTO's Emerging Leaders Program.

Under Director Ness' leadership, the Idaho Technology Council recognized the department as a finalist for Innovative Company of the Year in 2016, and for a second time in 2019. On both occasions, ITD was the only public-service state agency selected as a finalist. Director Ness received the 2016 Navigator Award from the national organization, Route Fifty. The award, in the "Agency and Department Chiefs" category, is based on his citizen-focused approach to government and transformative style. Director Ness was named Trine University's (formerly Tri-State University) 2014 Alumni of the Year.

ITD began an employee-driven innovation program in 2014. Since that time, the department has implemented more than 1,700 innovations, saved nearly \$35 million, created 691 customer-service improvements, and saved 540,000 contractor and employee hours.

In 2013, ITD earned AASHTO's President's Award for Administration for its realignment efforts. Director Ness was honored in 2012 as Leader of the Year by the Treasure Valley Chapter of Women's Transportation Seminar, and since Director Ness joined the department, ITD has received nearly 170 national awards for its programs and projects, including the prestigious Francis B. Francois Award for Innovation. Under Ness, ITD has won 17 AASHTO President's Transportation Awards, competing against all other state departments of transportation. Statistically, ITD should have only won two or three of these awards.

Director Ness is a nationally recognized authority on organizational realignment and speaks regularly at national conferences for both the public and private sectors about how to structure a more effective and accountable state government. He conducts seminars each year on his "Nine Steps to a Results-

Focused Culture” for the National Transportation Leadership Institute’s (NTLI) senior and executive-level management courses.

Director Ness earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Tri-State University and a Master’s degree in Public Administration from Western Michigan University. He is a licensed professional engineer in Michigan and Idaho. Before becoming director at ITD, he worked for 30 years at the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), holding a variety of positions in research, operations, aeronautics, construction, and project development. Director Ness ended his career with MDOT as the North Region Administrator/Engineer.