Transportation: Collaborative Possibilities Beyond the “Usual Suspects”

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Beginnings of the NU Public Policy Center (PPC)

• In 1997, NU President Smith created a task force to determine how the University could make public policy expertise and resources more available to Nebraskans

• Task force recommendations:
  ➢ Create a system-wide Public Policy Center
  ➢ UNL serve as host

• PPC began its operations July 1998
Primary Research Areas*

• PPC has 5 general focus areas:
  – Access, Equity, and Fairness in Justice and Other Governmental Services
  – Behavioral Health
  – Health Information Technology, Information Systems, and Health and Human Services Information and Referral Systems
  – Law, Policy, and Water Science
  – Deliberation, Democracy, and Public Participation

*See Results for Nebraska, Models for the Nation for more information
Many Opportunities for Policy and Social Science Involvement in Transportation Research

An Example Regarding Policy from the PPC: Public Participation

- Techniques of Public Participation: Are There Advantages to Using One Technique Over Others?
- Federal Docket Management System & E-rulemaking Initiative
  - see http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/c-3-1-er.html
  - DOT has been a leader in public input re transportation rulemaking
    - highway development, bridge siting, environmental impact, etc.
  - Interdisciplinary and inter-university study being developed to examine whether electronic input impacts quantity and quality of comment in DOT administrative rulemaking
Possible Policy and Social Science Collaborations
(as well as collaborations with other, non-technical fields)

• Health & Welfare
  – Decreasing substance abuse by truckers (POE: SA – Rick Bevins and Ian Newman)
  – Enhancing family relationships for long-haul drivers (POE: BH – Dan Hoyt; and POE: CYFS – Sue Sheridan)

• Safety and Risk
  – Bioterrorism: Threat assessment in transportation (Mario Scalora)
  – Profiling: Latino immigrants (Miguel Carranza; MJIC)

• Optimizing Railway Traffic
  – Human (e.g., John Flowers) & Computer Factors (JD Edwards Program students)
Possible Collaborations, cont.

• Planning for Change
  – Does the Hwy 81 by-pass inevitably mean a loss of revenue for rural communities? (Kip Hulvershorn’s CRP senior “Planning Studio” class in Polk County)

• Optimizing Employee Benefits Plans in Transportation Sectors
  – Strategies and limitations (Colleen Medill)

• Public Financing Plans
  – Ethical (e.g., Center for the Teaching and Study of Applied Ethics – Susan Poser) and Business/Economics challenges (John Anderson and Eric Thompson)
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