

New Caltrans Director Hails from Transit City

Intelligent Vehicle advocates in California and nationwide are watching and waiting to see what changes may come from a pro-technology transit advocate organizational change czar — the newly named **Caltrans** director, **Jeff Morales**.

After distinguished inside-the-Beltway service within the Clinton administration (including extensive involvement in Vice President Gore's National Performance Review and posts serving the Transportation Secretary), Mr. Morales has been executive vice president for management and performance of the **Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)** since January 1998. At CTA, the second largest transit authority in the US, he is credited with improving service to riders, turning around a 15 year decline in transit ridership. Ridership is now up by 5 percent.

While commanding a budget of nearly \$7.5 billion, Morales will certainly be given an opportunity to affirm his

reputation as a master of working large, entrenched bureaucracies. Those who see Caltrans as a slow-to-change, highway-focused agency consider him a perfect fit for bringing new life and a new agenda into the Department.

Morales, who started with Caltrans on June 1, was hand-picked by California Governor **Gray Davis** to succeed director Jose Medina. Davis recently unveiled a new \$5.2 billion transportation plan that provides a roughly 50/50 split between mass transit and highway projects — a strong departure from highway-heavy budgets of the past — and the Governor reportedly is counting on Morales to help him get this plan through the state legislature.

According to the Orange County Register, those who know Morales expect that, while he may not support extensive construction of new highways, he will use technology to help drivers navigate better through traffic. Colleague **Morley**

Winograd, senior policy advisor to Vice President Gore, was quoted in the paper as saying, "I see him [Morales] having an increased focus on information technology — like smart highways and intelligent vehicles." Mr. Morales may not know it yet, but that technology is called Intelligent Transportation Systems.

Public transit advocates anticipate that more attention will be paid to improved transit systems in California, with Morales bringing extensive front-line experience in transit operations from Chicago. This meshes well with the aim of **Caltrans' New Technology and Research Division** to focus intelligent vehicle technology on buses and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). They are hopeful that Mr. Morales will fully support their plans for Demo 2002 and the funding and development leading to that point, as well as current efforts to implement intelligent vehicle technologies as part of BRT initiatives with in-state transit agencies.

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