

2013 Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership
Nomination of Daniel C. Smith
Organizational Achievement

In Mr. Smith's career with the Federal government, he has demonstrated his outstanding leadership skills on many high visibility, mission critical and sometimes politically charged projects. One of the best examples of Dan Smith's ability to achieve significant goals was in 2009 when he led the development and implementation of the Car Allowance Rebate System (CARS) program. Known popularly as "Cash for Clunkers," the CARS program provided consumers with monetary credits for trading in an older vehicle for a new one that is more fuel efficient.

The \$3 billion program, unprecedented in this country on a national scale, was an amazing success and clearly achieved the economic stimulus and environmental goals of the legislation. Nearly 680,000 new vehicles were purchased with an average EPA fuel efficiency rating 9.2 mpg greater than that of the trade-ins. The program was a significant factor in producing an increase in the gross domestic product in the third quarter of the year, increased consumer confidence, and created or saved up to 50,000 jobs in the affected industries. The operation of the newer vehicles, which in addition to being more fuel efficient have important safety features not found on the older vehicles, is expected to save 15 million barrels of oil and reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by 6 million metric tons.

NHTSA had just 30 days from President Obama's signing of the legislation on June 24 to establish and staff a new program office, create an informational website (www.cars.gov), issue implementing regulations, develop software to permit dealers to register and submit transactions through the Internet, retain contractors to review the dealer submissions, and design program elements to deter fraud. Mr. Smith directed a core team from across the agency made up of people with expertise in procurement, information technology, communications, law, human resources, and compliance. He led them through a very difficult process of identifying the countless issues and quickly finding solutions. He chaired meetings with several external organizations representing dealers, manufacturers, disposal facilities, and state organizations to obtain necessary information and insights. He adopted "failure is not an option" as the team's motto, personally bought coffee mugs for team members inscribed with the motto and the CARS emblem, and challenged the team to surprise those who doubted that meeting the statutory deadline was possible.

NHTSA met the deadline, issuing its rule on July 23 and opening the system to dealer submissions on July 27. The response was so overwhelming that Congress supplemented the initial \$1 billion appropriation with an additional \$2 billion in funds on just the twelfth day of the program. By August 24 NHTSA had to call a halt to new transactions because the projected number of transactions had exhausted the entire appropriated amount. NHTSA worked quickly to retain additional contractors to review dealer submissions. By early September NHTSA had 7,000 people around the country working on review of dealer claims. Mr. Smith and the CARS office director conducted ten live online webinars to educate thousands of dealers on how to submit acceptable claims and continued to refine the process used to review dealer claims. By late September-just 60 days after program

2013 Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership
Nomination of Daniel C. Smith
Organizational Achievement

began--the agency had paid 99 percent of the claims. The success of the CARS program is due to the intense dedication of scores of people in NHTSA and elsewhere in DOT, but Mr. Smith's leadership was an essential element.

Another example of Mr. Smith's outstanding and successful leadership on mission critical agency initiatives was in his previous role at NHTSA directing the enforcement of the nation's motor vehicle safety laws. His office investigated possible safety defects in vehicles and equipment and tested those products for compliance with NHTSA's safety standards. Where defects or noncompliance are established, the manufacturer must conduct a recall to notify the consumer and repair or replace the vehicle or equipment. In his five years as Associate Administrator for Enforcement, Mr. Smith successfully pushed his various offices toward more regular application of basic risk analysis principles in determining which matters to investigate and which investigations warrant priority. Of the hundreds of recalls that have occurred during his tenure, several major ones have required his personal involvement to persuade reluctant manufacturers that a recall was necessary. These recalls involved millions of vehicles, tires, motorcycles, and child seats. These have protected their users from significant safety risks. In late 2009, Mr. Smith ensured that Toyota's recall of 4 million vehicles for issues related to entrapment of accelerator pedals by floor mats would result in significant changes to the pedals and, in many of the vehicles, installation of technology to ensure that the brakes work even when an accelerator is stuck.

In 2005, Mr. Smith was the Associate Administrator for Safety at the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). In the wake of two very serious fatal train accidents, he developed and drafted the Rail Safety Action Plan to address the most serious risks in the rail safety area. The plan included elements to address the leading causes of accidents--track and human factors--and to ensure prompt dissemination of information after hazardous materials releases. One key step was implementation of a new risk-based National Inspection Plan to guide the work of FRA's 350 safety inspectors. The plan also involved acquiring two multi-million dollar track inspection vehicles and expediting research on technology used to detect cracks in track structures. Mr. Smith introduced the plan with the Secretary of Transportation and began its implementation in May 2005. The plan helped to reduce train accidents by more than 23 percent in the years 2005 to 2007.