



State of Illinois
JB Pritzker, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation
Omer Osman, Acting Secretary

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Top national diversity award for IDOT, Acting Secretary Osman

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Transportation and Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman have received top national honors from Women’s Transportation Seminar International, a professional association that promotes the development and advancement of women in transportation. A 31-year IDOT employee who has led the agency since 2019, Osman has been named recipient of the WTS Recognition Honorable Ray LaHood Award for his longtime efforts to promote diversity.

“At IDOT, we’re committed to ensuring equitable opportunities across the board,” said Osman. “Whether it’s promoting women to leadership positions or ensuring women- and minority-owned businesses have a level playing field in our industry, we are dedicated to creating a culture of equality and a team that is representative of the full spectrum of our great state.”

Each year, WTS International gives the award to a leader who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to the advancement of women and minorities and helped elevate the reputation of professionals in the transportation industry. Osman was nominated for the national honor by WTS Greater Chicago after receiving the regional equivalent of the award.

“Secretary Osman embodies the spirit of the WTS Honorable Ray LaHood Award as a dedicated advocate working to eliminate barriers for women and minorities in the transportation industry,” said Paula Hammond, chair, WTS International Board of Directors. “His support of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, minority and women owned businesses at IDOT is outstanding. Secretary Osman is truly a champion of diversity and equity. WTS is honored to present this award to such a deserving transportation thought leader.”

Osman has made building the most diverse executive team in the history of IDOT one of his top priorities. As secretary, he appointed Black women to the top administrative spots: chief of staff and chief operating officer. He has also promoted women into additional leadership roles and played an integral part in statewide recruitment efforts to diversify personnel in all state job classifications. He remains an advocate for eliminating barriers and increasing access to IDOT through partnerships with Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program and minority- and women-owned businesses.

The award was formally presented today during the 2021 WTS Annual Conference.