

# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Transportation Corridor Agencies CEO Samuel Johnson Named Man of the Year

### ***Women's Transportation Seminar Orange County recognizes Johnson's outstanding contribution to the transportation industry***

**IRVINE, Calif. (December 3, 2021)** — Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) CEO Samuel Johnson received the Honorable Ray LaHood Award (Man of the Year) from the Orange County Chapter of Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS-OC) during a virtual ceremony held Thursday, Dec. 2.

The annual award honors a man who is a leader in transportation and has made an outstanding contribution to the transportation industry.

In selecting Johnson for the award, WTS noted his direct contributions toward the advancement of women and minorities through programs and opportunities in the transportation field.

Additionally, Johnson was recognized for leading by example, seeking out opportunities to advance and advocate for women within TCA, actively ensuring that women can compete for key positions of authority.

Since becoming CEO, 77% of the management team at TCA is either a self-identified female and/or part of a minority group. Johnson also appointed Valarie McFall as TCA's first Deputy CEO, making her one of the highest-ranking women in Orange County transportation.

TCA celebrated a major milestone under his leadership when the Oso Parkway Bridge Project opened to drivers in January 2021. The award-winning project – a multiagency collaboration between TCA, the County of Orange and Caltrans – improves safety, mobility and connectivity in the region, with TCA funding the nearly \$40 million project.

Uniquely, the project was led by two women: a female project manager at TCA and a female project manager leading the consultant team under contract to TCA. The project was also supported by the leadership of an all-female TCA public outreach team and one of the construction contractor's lead staff.

TCA has also been recognized for its financial strengths and innovative approaches to reducing debt, receiving an "A" rating for the San Joaquin Hills Transportation Corridor Agency's bonds and an award for the Foothill/Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency's recent debt reduction of \$214 million as Bond Deal of the Year.

Outside of TCA and in his free time, Johnson recently initiated several programs that contributed to the advancement of women and minorities through programs or opportunities, earning him several other industry awards and recognition.

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He created a scholarship program to encourage and support students enrolled at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) who are pursuing academic degrees that can lead to a rewarding career in transportation. The program awards up to five undergraduate and one graduate scholarship of \$5,000.

He also founded the industry's Tolling Immersion Program, an internship program focused on attracting the best and the brightest college students and young professionals to the transportation industry by providing split employment where they spend time working, both, with toll agencies and private sector businesses.

Finally, Johnson launched the transportation industry's Task Force on Diversity, Social and Racial Inclusion. The Task Force's mission is to listen to the voices of those in the transportation industry and society who truly understand and recognize the depth of the inequity caused by racial and social injustice. The Task Force works to implement practices and programs that contribute to racial and social justice.

"I am humbled and honored to receive this award. Throughout my career, I have tried to champion the contributions and accomplishments of people of all colors, ethnicities, identities and backgrounds.

"Diversity of thought is vital in identifying solutions that work for all and that dictates that an organization's talent pool not be limited. As someone who is a believer and enthusiast of providing mobility solutions, I am grateful to assist others in pursuing those same passions," Johnson said.

Earlier this year, Johnson was recognized with the 2021 International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association's (IBTTA) Distinguished Leadership Academy Alum of the Year Award, the Transportation Trailblazer award from the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials Southern California (COMTO SoCal) chapter and a humanitarian award from the Women In Tolling Council.

An accomplished tolling executive and forward-thinking industry leader with nearly 30 years of public agency experience, Johnson joined TCA in 2015 as Chief Toll Operations Officer.

During his tenure, his strategic contract approaches improved the Agencies' fiscal position by saving millions of dollars per year and he led key initiatives such as the statewide effort to adopt sticker technology. He has overseen revenue management, violation processing, toll compliance, customer service, customer experience communications, information technology and more.

His strong history as a trusted leader in transportation and mobility led to Johnson being named interim CEO of TCA in April 2020. His retained the role with a unanimous vote by the Boards of Directors in September 2020.

He is the first person of color to hold the top position at the Agencies and is the highest-ranking Black leader in Orange County transportation, overseeing the Agencies that operate the largest network of toll

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roads in the state, and with the responsibility for an annual average budget of nearly \$400 million and investment portfolios of more than \$1.5 billion.

Since Johnson was named CEO of TCA, under his direct guidance the Agencies reformed their internal audit function for increased transparency; created a more robust consumer privacy policy; and working with Board leadership, reduced their annual budget by 51%, while preserving jobs and prioritizing key projects.

Prior to joining TCA, Johnson spent 12 years with the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) overseeing countywide efforts to implement innovative transportation solutions and serving as part of the executive team responsible for the region's tolling enterprise, including the State Route 125 toll road and the I-15 Express Lanes, the nation's first dynamically priced toll facility.

Johnson earned a Bachelor of Science in business management with an emphasis in accounting from San Diego State University.

For more information or to schedule an interview with Samuel Johnson, please contact Eugene Fields at [efields@thetollroads.com](mailto:efields@thetollroads.com).

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***The Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) are two joint powers authorities formed by the California Legislature in 1986 to plan, finance, construct and operate Orange County's public toll road system comprised of the 73, 133, 241 and 261 Toll Roads.***