

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Pete K. Rahn '76, '77



“I am hugely grateful for the innumerable people who went out of their way to help me and inspire me over these many years.”

Pete K. Rahn’s ’76, ’77 distinguished career in transportation leadership spans four decades. He served as Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, Director of the Missouri Department of Transportation, and Secretary of Transportation for Maryland — the only person to have led transportation agencies in three states.

In New Mexico, Pete oversaw 11,600 miles of highway, 2,600 employees, and a \$1 billion budget. In Missouri, he managed 32,400 miles of highway, 6,400 employees, and a \$2.4 billion budget, plus 114 airports, and 15 water ports. In Maryland, he led more than 11,000 employees, directed a \$6 billion budget, and oversaw rail networks, toll facilities, Baltimore/Washington International Airport, and the Port of Baltimore, in addition to the highway system.

He earned a national reputation for transforming the way major transportation projects are delivered. Known for his focus on quality performance management, his innovative approaches gave contractors greater flexibility while holding them to rigorous standards and challenging them to deliver the greatest value within available budgets.

Pete served as president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and his honors include Most Distinguished Government Leader of the Year from the Maryland Washington Minority Companies Association, Person of the Year from The Traffic Club of Baltimore, and the Federal Highway Administration Environmental Achievement Award for responsible infrastructure development.

Pete credits mentors at NMSU Alamogordo with “lighting the fire that gave me the foundation to go to the main campus and perform. They made my life as it is today possible.” He also credits an early job at a gas station with teaching him the importance of good manners and being polite.

Of all his accomplishments, Pete is proudest of saving lives through safer highways, transportation safety programs, and successful efforts to reduce drunk driving. ▲