

American Public Works Association Honors CEO Kempton with National Award

Officials from the American Public Works Association (APWA) awarded OCTA CEO Will Kempton with an award recognizing his work and dedication to public works projects at its annual awards ceremony in Boston last week.

APWA selected Kempton in May as a recipient of the award that industry leaders consider to be one of the most prestigious honors given by the 2,000-member organization.

The award recognizes individuals that have demonstrated professionalism, expertise and dedication to advancing the field of public works and improving the quality of life in their own communities.

“I am not surprised by this national recognition for Will because of his dedication to professionalism and accountability throughout his career,” OCTA Board Chairman Jerry Amante said. “He is an effective leader who gets the job done and motivates others to deliver top quality performance day in and day out.”

Southern California’s public works officials and civil engineers honored Kempton in May as one of the nation’s top 10 public works leaders in the U.S. and Canada.

Kempton, a 35-year veteran in the transportation industry, joined OCTA in 2009. Since taking over as the head of the agency, Kempton led the way in several key infrastructure improvements in Orange County.

With support from the board of directors, Kempton is leading the Riverside Freeway (SR-91) widening project, Orange Freeway (SR-57) northbound widening project and West County Connectors project. He also guides OCTA through the most difficult financial times in recent history, bringing forth fiscally sound policies that also brought financial stability to the agency.

Prior to becoming OCTA’s top executive, he was the director of Caltrans. One of Kempton’s greatest accomplishments was expediting the completion of massive repairs to a freeway overpass in Oakland following a tanker-truck accident in 2007. He was also known for improving the efficiency in operations within Caltrans by holding district directors accountable for their performance and helped promote and facilitate policy changes. During his tenure, all but one of 1,088 projects was completed on time, setting a record for the department.

Following the August 2007 collapse of the I-35 Bridge in Minneapolis, Minn., Kempton dispatched nearly all bridge inspectors at Caltrans, including some who were on vacation, to inspect and evaluate the structural safety of California’s 69 steel deck truss bridges. The inspectors completed their inspections within days.

Kempton appeared before the California State Legislature to tell them that he feels very confident about the safety of California’s bridges and Caltrans bridge inspection program, he would not hesitate to drive with his family over any of the 12,000 highway bridges in the state.

“I had the privilege of working with Mr. Kempton as a member of the San Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge Toll Bridge Program Oversight Committee (TBPOC),” said Bimla G. Rhinehart, executive director of the California Transportation Commission. “Mr. Kempton played a key role in problem identification and resolution, and his experience was evident in his efforts to ensure the successful completion of this complex project.”



OCTA CEO Will Kempton, eighth from right, garnered a prestigious national award at a conference in Boston, Mass. for his work to improve transportation. Photo courtesy of the [American Public Works Association](#).



OCTA Chairman Jerry Amante, with George Alvarez, president of the Southern California chapter of APWA, presenting OCTA CEO Will Kempton with an award earlier this summer during the OCTA board meeting for being one of the nation's top 10 public works leaders.