

**Season 3 Episode 6 of the InfraTalk Podcast:  
Dr. Shawn Wilson: Building a Better Tomorrow**

**Intro:**

Hi, I'm Greg Nadeau, publisher of InfraTalk America. In this episode of the InfraTalk podcast, I sit down with former Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and my good friend, Doctor Shawn Wilson. It is important to note that this episode was recorded the day after the Key Bridge was struck in Baltimore. During our conversation, we discussed the tragic bridge collapse.

Shawn's extensive career in Louisiana state government, his term as AASHTO president, the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials, including serving as the first African American president in the organization's 107-year history. We also discussed the importance of equity and diversity in the transportation sector. This is the InfraTalk podcast.

**Greg Nadeau:**

Dr. Shawn Wilson, welcome to InfraTalk America.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Thank you for having me. Looking forward to spending some time with you today.

**Greg Nadeau:**

And that's what I'd like to do. It's, it's something I've been looking forward to for a while, but, before we do. Obvious, we are recording this conversation the day after the tragic events in Baltimore and, and the Key Bridge, and I simply wanted to, say that certainly on behalf of the InfraTalk America team, our condolences to the families of, of those lost and, our absolute, you know, along with the rest of the nation, support for Maryland, Baltimore, the port and all that it means to the economy of the United States. And, wanted to give Shawn, an opportunity, given his, his career and role in transportation, an opportunity to share his thoughts.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Thank you. Greg. You know, it's one of those days that you wish would never occur when you were secretary of transportation. And I reached out to Paul to, extend my condolences for those individuals who were lost, but more importantly, to encourage them in this very devastating moment.

I can recall, we had a few bridge collisions, and we only had maybe 15 to 20,000 ADT, and it wasn't an interstate bridge, and it wasn't leading in and out of a port in terms of blocking the waterway. So, I can only imagine the exponential impact that this has. You know, I shared with some of the public, yesterday that this had nothing to do with the condition of the bridge.

This was an error that was beyond anyone's wildest imagination. I'm not sure that there's ever a bridge built that could withstand such an impact of, you know, 100,000 plus tons of deadweight steel impacting a bridge pier. The only silver lining in this, it speaks to the culture of safety and the importance. And one of the little nuggets that I heard was, after the 2nd or 3rd May day, the construction workers immediately began, fanning down traffic and waving them away to try and minimize fatalities and impacts.

And, I know there's still some, some individuals who have not been recovered. So, on behalf of me and my family and all of those impacted in this industry, our hearts go out to you. We're praying for those families and, encourage this Maryland Department of Transportation and the governor, and of course, the Biden administration, who's already committed to helping, cover the cost of replacing this bridge.

It fits right in line with his commitment to infrastructure and building a more resilient and more robust, and more economically feasible, future for our infrastructure. So, my heart goes out to them.

**Greg Nadeau:**

Well said Shawn, much appreciated. Now we're going to jump right into our conversation and, as I sat down to sort of prepare for this, I, I, I realized very quickly that, you know, we're scheduled for, for an hour, and there's no way we could talk about everything on my list in an hour.

So I had to narrow it down to some things. But first, before I do that, we we really work hard to sort of broaden our audience, our listeners, to include sort of policy level folks, particularly in the state and local governments. That's a that's a real important time. But obviously at the federal level, and, so I'd like to introduce people who are, I think, sort of stand out in, in, in our industry.

And you're certainly among them. But, your unique background, I think, not so unique as it used to be when you with the perception of a state DOT CEO, you know, 20 was on top of, you know, your total 25 year or so career and Louisiana state government, eight of those years were with the Department of Transportation and Development under governor Bill Edwards.

You know, but Louisiana DOT and certainly the numbers I looked at about 4,200 employees, you know, \$3 billion plus budget. These are very, significant operations, and, the impact they have

on the total community is, is evident. But we'll talk more about that. But you're a personal and academic, born and raised in the great city of New Orleans,

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

New Orleans, Louisiana, that's home.

**Greg Nadeau:**

Yeah. New Orleans, Louisiana and bachelor's degree in urban and regional planning from the University of Louisiana, master's in public administration, from Southern University. And your doctorate in public policy from Southern University. So you are a home-grown boy from beginning to end.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Have never lived a day outside of the great state, outside of the boot. And, you know, Greg, I would tell you, it's it's been an amazing career for me. One that I've allowed my experiences to kind of shape my direction. First starting off in student leadership at a very early age in elementary school and, through high school, served as student council president...

**Greg Nadeau:**

And to interrupt, I saw a video by Sandra, your mother.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Oh my goodness.

**Greg Nadeau:**

She taught that whole story in ways nobody else could.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

She's headed this way to visit us.

**Greg Nadeau:**

Yeah, and my visit to New Orleans, I remember at the AASHTO meeting, you know, she she she was clearly visible there as a force of nature.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

She's a proud mama, and she she is a force of nature. And she, you know, she she helped, her and my father both helped shape my engagement in the political process.

But more importantly, I think my years in student leadership and student involvement got me more into the structure in the organization itself, and not just the politics of it. And so, I found myself, being involved in things that complemented my undergraduate degree while I started off in nursing, urban and regional planning is where I landed after my father passed away.

And I was actually doing the work of planning, as a student working in terms of, getting better conditions on campus, providing better resources, helping improve accessibility for those folks who were physically challenged, you know, looking to improve housing, all of the things that you learn and planning, even transit, to a certain extent. While the university's transit system was very small, it went from the parking area over by the football field to the main campus.

We dealt with those issues of how do you electrify or clean fuel that system. And, you know, very, very early on in the 90s talking about how do we do a better job with that system? And so it really, shaped my commitment, and out of college I worked at the Planning Commission and worked on a major infrastructure project called I-49 South.

Here in Louisiana, and then began working on the university campus and then got into national service, where it was really all about people and building a future and building a bench of leaders to impact things like education, housing, climate. I remember doing environmental service projects, and so that was a wonderful experience for me. And then I got to the big leagues where I worked with, then lieutenant governor, as she ran for governor, became our state's first female governor. And I moved into her office as Deputy Legislative Director.

I also did transportation policy and Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Natural Resources. So all of those are issues that fit very well with the future I would eventually have. Shortly before Katrina, I remember transitioning into the Department of Transportation and Development, in a Chief of Staff role. And I did that for about ten years and continued to do policy for the governor from the Department of Transportation.

You know, the recovery was the most important thing that we did after 2005, when Katrina hit. And so, the governor did not run for reelection. And Republican governor by the name of Bobby Jindal became governor. And I stayed in the department, continued to work, with Doctor Anchner and then Sherry Labar and really, you know, hone my experiences and my policy chops, if you will, and worked very closely with our industry. And soon after, that tenure ended for Governor Jindal. I then was asked by Governor John Bel Edwards to serve as his secretary.

And I will tell you, it was the height of my career professionally, I brought forth everything I had experienced, from student leadership to urban planning to being involved in the public administration program at Southern and having just completed a PhD to apply that to actually being a transportation secretary.

**Greg Nadeau:**

What a great opportunity.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

It was wonderful.

And I remember the day I was appointed, going back to the department and talking to the executive staff, many of whom I didn't know, whether they would be on my team or not, whether they would stay. But I mentioned to them to help frame a perception of what leadership at the department was going to be like. And I said, if I had to spend all of my waking days in the Department of Transportation, I wouldn't be successful.

I really wanted to be out in the community. I wanted to be out in the industry. I wanted to talk to our partners and our allies and our constituents to understand, and then bring that information back and work within the department to deliver the types of projects that they've been talking about. And, it's just been a stellar career and a wonderful experience.

And then, you know, the leadership opportunities afforded me the opportunity to work with folks all across the country, yourself included, when you were federal highways, you know, we got a chance to see, what transportation was going to be in this country because I was there and you were there when it started to transition. And we were actually living in that transition as we speak, both in terms of electrification and policy, but dealing with carbon and climate.

But more importantly, the reinvestment and rebuilding an infrastructure that's so very much needed. and in a way that's going to leverage and maximize quality of life for people, because it's more than just the bricks and mortar. It's really how we use it and how we interface with it. And so, all of that shaped who I am, my philosophy of this business, and my approach and hopefully individuals and constituents, both in state now, today, will will appreciate that and see value.

**Greg Nadeau:**

Well and the opportunities to do something about it. And certainly, as evidenced by your eight years as a, as the CEO...

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Which by the way, is, you know, is a rarity. We don't last long in that business. I think the average lifespan or tenure of a secretary is only like 3 years and some change

**Greg Nadeau:**

3.5 years or something.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yeah. And when I retired, I was like the eighth or seventh longest serving secretary in the country, which was really odd.

And there was a large cohort of people who all came in together. And I was actually the longest serving one in the state of Louisiana's history. So it's been a it's been a fun ride.

**Greg Nadeau:**

And it is rare. And I've always and in that context, I've always said it, it sort of underscores the importance of, what we affectionately call the bureaucracy.

But, in the federal service, it was the career staff.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yeah.

**Greg Nadeau:**

And that's what that's what, ensures the continuity and the the constant availability of, you know, remarkable talent. And that's at the federal and state level. So, that's something I always like our listeners to learn more about. And that's the context, these organizations and what they bring to the table, it's really extraordinary.

And we're about to see that once again in, in stark fashion as we work toward the recovery. And, in Baltimore.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Absolutely.

It's it's going to be the best and brightest and most advanced solutions, available, you know, right before our eyes.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

In every crisis, there's an opportunity to do better, because I'm sure there were things that, the city of Baltimore and, and the Maryland Department of Transportation all thought would've it have been great if this was the case or if that were the case.

This opportunity, this, this, this crisis that's going to give birth to a new bridge is going to really change the functionality of what happens on that harbor and in the community around it, both in terms of safety, but more importantly, in terms of its utility, because, you know, the safety comes in handy every day, but we tend to take it for granted until something happens.

But the reality is we want that to work better. We want to move goods and services in and out of that harbor and across that bridge.

**Greg Nadeau:**

Yeah. That's what this, episode, this tragedy, is going to demonstrate because the impact of this bridge collapse. In the on the, on the global economy, it's going to be stark, given the role that the Port of Baltimore plays.

So, so, and I think we saw this in the aftermath of Covid, and the pandemic, how the, you know, supply chain was greatly affected. But the the remedies, the solutions, the work, many, many interested together since Covid, since the pandemic, I think is going to probably better prepare everybody to deal with this because this is, you know, obviously not of the scale ... (inaudible)

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

And it will be significant for those folks on the harbor, those folks who use that bridge daily to commute. It's going to be, it's going to be a transition the closer you are to that project.

**Greg Nadeau:**

It is. I told you we could talk the whole show about this topic, and we could, and someday we probably will. But, I really want to go next to what that prepared you for as well, which was, your term as AASHTO president.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yeah.

**Greg Nadeau:**

And, serving as the first African American I mentioned earlier. You made history. You served as the first African-American president of AASHTO in their 107-year history.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yes, that was amazing isn't it?

**Greg Nadeau:**

It blew me away. And, and during your term, I also read a quote where you talked about, when you first arrived as secretary to AASHTO. You were the only African American at the table.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yeah.

**Greg Nadeau:**

And you talked about how that evolved in, in the course of your term. So, as in becoming AASHTO president, the tradition is that AASHTO presidents get to establish what they call their, emphasis areas.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yup.

**Greg Nadeau:**



And, I'll just, you know, I'm going to let you describe them. But, you know, I think it, they're very relevant to someone and who made the kind of history you did because you come from a place where you really understand these issues. But, they also dovetail into another current and significant challenge for all DOTs across the country and a lot of industries. And that's workers.

And, so can you, you know, the pathways to equity and partnering to deliver were the two emphasis areas.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Those were those two emphasis areas.

**Greg Nadeau:**

Then we're going to sashay into the, the the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law...

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yeah.

**Greg Nadeau:**

And the water tools. And how did you put all those things together, starting from your sort of the early stages of even the emphasis area launch and what's happened since.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yeah. So, you know, great question. Greg. And I mentioned earlier that, when I became secretary, I let my experiences kind of help shape the way I would lead. And that was no different than being AASHTO president. I reflected on the day I became, secretary and my first AASHTO meeting while I'd been around AASHTO for about ten years. You know, and I'd seen different folks, in leadership. I'd seen some of the lack of diversity that we had in terms of gender, as well as ethnic diversity and, I was so moved by that, I was moved to tears, actually, the day that I assumed the leadership, because I was the first and it didn't dawn on me at the time that that was such a historic thing.

But the reality is that 107 years for positions that are appointed by governors and commissioners, of which at the time we didn't have any African American governors, there's only been five in the history of the United States. So clearly, you have to see that this isn't about race specifically as it relates to DOTs. It's really about how government has diversified or not.

When you look at the United States Senate, when you look at the Supreme Court, when you look at fortune 500 companies in the C-suites, what does that look like? And so, I was I would not have been the leader I am if I had not addressed that issue in some form or fashion, not because it was important for just AASHTO, it was really important for the world.

When you think about the social unrest that we had seen, when you think about the disruptions, when you think about some of the biggest challenges that we're facing in this country, I have to believe, inclusion and issues of race permeate all of them. And I thought it would be neat to spend an entire year focusing on how to create a pathway to a more equitable leadership process within the departments of transportation, within AASHTO.

So and how does that shape other organizations? And so creating pathways to equity was important because you can't just snap your fingers and make it happen. You've got to work and be intentional at cultivating that and bringing forth opportunities for people to excel, without compromising quality, without compromising competence, and without, any disrespect or, impact on some other ones, the communities that are going to be disproportionate.

And so that was an important thing for me. And, I also thought about where at the Biden administration was and the importance of equity, in that space in terms of ...

**Greg Nadeau:**

(Inaudible)...there for our listeners, basically three pillars.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yeah. I mean, it's every every agency that permeates their policy. I mean, when you look at justice 40, but for transportation, when you think about the fatalities on our roads and the inequities that exist in terms of the socio economic and racial impact of those people who die on our roads, it speaks to a larger policy issue.

How do we ensure that all communities have an equal opportunity and an equitable chance to achieve some level of safety, utility, mobility and success with our system? And so that was important in terms of the federal government. And if you think back to the year that I was appointed, we had just gone through, as you said in your intro, several years of building up to passing an infrastructure law, because we get them once every six years.

And the reality is sometimes it gets six or seven or eight years before you get one. And so I thought, let's seize the day. Let's make this a part of what is happening at the national level. And we did. And then I also thought it was important for us to, in light of having, passed the Infrastructure Law and we're on our way to implement and being able to partner, to deliver,

meaning there was some massive change for the first time in the history, I think, of the United States since the passage of, the development of the interstate system.

We saw some new programs, we saw some new initiatives, whether it's electrification, whether it's climate, whether it's renewable fuels, whether it's dealing with equity, whether it's dealing with safety. It was really pretty massive. And the idea that we needed to partner to deliver this. So, we had to partner with the equipment manufacturers, the OEMs, original equipment manufacturers in the world, the electrification.

We have to partner with the oil and gas industry. When you start talking about carbon sequestration and climate impacts, we have to partner with communities when you want to talk about safety and reconnecting those communities and ensuring that there's an equal opportunity for folks to parlay and take advantage of the benefits of being in government. And so those two really fit hand in glove for me, because in order for us to create a more equitable, bench of opportunity and leaders, we have to partner with folks and entities that have those populations that we want to bring to the table, not just in terms of gender, but in terms of race. In terms of age, in terms of discipline.

This was an opportunity to really cast a big net and grow our catch of what's going to lead the state in the nation in terms of transportation. And I think several departments saw an opportunity to build a workforce that was more diverse, to build projects and partner in a way that is going to be more, conducive to communities and increase the value of that community, in terms of that infrastructure, because we listened to them and we heard them.

So they were hand in glove and we spent an entire year integrating it into our awards program. We did trainings and best practices. We even provided books that focused on, how the fortune 500 community, are dealing with this issue of inclusion. And I think the idea that it is going to be around for some time and that we're not walking away from this desire to be more diverse, more inclusive in our thought, in our people, is only going to benefit infrastructure in a great way.

**Greg Nadeau:**

It's only good for business, too. I mean, if you want to look at it from that standpoint, we that we have no choice but to find strategic, creative and well funded ways.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

I've got a book somewhere here in my library that focus just on that.

**Greg Nadeau:**

Young women, young minorities, we've got to appeal to them and attract them to this industry. In my own sort of personal thesis is, you know, we do a lot of work on, digital project delivery policy and, when you look and one of the things I like to talk about is the more digitized the state DOT gets and local transportation agencies as well, the more appealing you're going to be to that next generation workforce.

Because there are there are antiquated systems today in many, in many organizations, that would cause, someone, you know, of, of, of the next generation to, to turn around and leave. so, well, what we see occurring right now before our eyes, and it's a very much the result of partnerships between, state DOTs in particular, many firms like your own, who are doing work not only with their clients in the context of delivering projects or advancing some other, need on behalf of, even a fellow federal agency.

A great example of that is, the, the road map, the BIM for Infrastructure Road Map that was published by Federal Highway. It was coauthored by, Jack Mallela of your firm. And other firms have been working on advancing open, open standards and collaborations with two national committees. So there's this massive effort that's been going on for a few years, but I think it's time to take it to a next level where you're going to digitize the process and make it, more sustainable, more environmentally friendly, more friendly to communities.

You get projects done faster, you get in out and stay out because you're also building, you're building structures with better materials or the last longer. All of that is envisioned and referenced in many respects in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yeah.

**Greg Nadeau:**

So do you see that that that that do you already see three years in to, some progress owing to the tools in that law? Whether it's to advance digital technology or advance these workforce opportunities based on these equity principles.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yeah. Look, I think it's a it's a yes. And it's a big a big capital YES because, we're seeing not only the tools, but we're seeing the resources to help deliver those. We're seeing the integration of the private sector to help facilitate that.

So when you think about, you know, safety and how local governments calculate and quantify that and understand the impact, when you think about how departments of transportation look at

equity in terms of where projects are going to be built in, the types of services and projects that are going to be offered. Clearly, we have grown up and matured in a way that's going to produce more value.

And when you said it, in the early, a just a minute ago, that it's good for business, it is good for business. It's good not just for our own business, but for the businesses that are going to be involved in providing services to and with government. And so I clearly see that in year three of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, dollars have been awarded, impacts have been made, and consideration has been given to all of these issues.

On big projects. I can think of a mega project that we received \$150 million for a bridge that has been, in the works for over two decades. That bridge is now going forward being built because of those resources, but it's being built in a way that's going to be more sensitive to the communities that are going to be negatively impacted by both from an environmental standpoint, but from a social standpoint as well, in terms of what the what's going to happen with tolls, how will the benefits of those resources be attributed in an equitable way?

What's going to be the effort to ensure that there's a diverse business enterprise that's involved, and not just the construction, but the ONM of that project? So the fact that we have created this impetus around the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to really move the needle on these issues, I don't think it's going to necessarily change tomorrow to undo that, I think we're going to start to see those dollars start to impact, and you're going to look at projects and distinguish a really great project from a good project.

And those great projects are going to be those that are going to provide those equitable benefits for folks. That's going to make safety a priority. There's going to deal with technology because it's going to cause us to be more efficient with what little resources we have to operate and maintain that infrastructure, to listen to the data that's available in cars to help us do a better job and not necessarily, you know, do a very slow process to manage traffic and understand data in crashes and impacts.

We can we now have so much data at our fingertips that we are going to we're going to just be covered in it because every step of the way you're going to use this and you're going to need to have a staff that's prepared from a workforce to process that, both in the private sector as well as in the public sector, the folks that we're going to need to recruit in government.

**Greg Nadeau:**

No question. And as I said, a lot of credit to a lot of organizations. IHEEP being one of them, that's an annual, that thing has been going on for decades. So we've got these, I call it the frontlines of digital project delivery. A whole hundreds of people across the state, across the state DOTs who are laboring and often in obscurity and usually have 4 or 5. Areas of responsibility. And this is part of it. So you're seeing state DOTs beginning to really harness

resources and really bring a lot of focus to bear on accelerating the deployment of these technologies. It's it's happening before our eyes. And it is a direct result of, of these of what you call, you know, the partnering to deliver has broad meaning and certainly partnering to deliver with a broader array of organizations for a lot of purposes.

But that includes, project delivery and (Inaudible).

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

It's global. It's happening...(inaudible)

**Greg Nadeau:**

(Inaudible) ... Europe in many respects...

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Many respects in terms of digital stuff, but, you know, think, think about what ITS America and ITS World Congress is doing to help educate and transition. Think about all of the innovations that are coming out of Israel in terms of startup companies.

Think about how United States, through the National Center of Operation, Center of Excellence here, how we're using this material and this data to make better decisions and be more efficient. And so I think it's only going to speed up when you look at drones, when you look at technology and you look at data, when you look at how we're integrating AI and making decisions in the transportation space to keep people safe, it's going to go so much faster, so much further, and so much more affordably because we're using it and we're thinking smart and intelligently about our future.

**Greg Nadeau:**

And, you know, I want to bring this home. you know, now that we've discussed, your storied career, in the public sector. Yeah, you've now made this transition an experience I can relate to. And, I chose the path. I set up a business that was really going to focus on what became my passion, The Federal Highway.

And that was innovation and innovation, deployment and a whole range of things. and it's been a wonderful experience. And I've, and I've really enjoyed working in speaking with some real, some with some partners who are really leaders in these targeted industries we work on. But I'm just envying you because of the transition you've made to WSP.

And, I'm trying to, national agency coordination leader for transportation and infrastructure.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Yeah. and that's a mouthful, isn't it? That's a mouthful.

**Greg Nadeau:**

But it's, I mean, I'm looking at your opportunity here and thinking about think about, you know, think about what we do is, you know, is really looking for, you know, a sandbox to play in. You know, these policy people love to play in the policy sandbox. You have, at your disposal and you're among your colleagues, extraordinary resource and projects and, assignments that really probably span the entire scope of what we call transportation from infrastructure to policy. So I probably, you know, I'm probably gave away the lead, but, I'm thinking that was a big motivator for you.

But just tell us a couple things. One, your hopes and dreams in this new chapter in your life. And also, you know, my thesis has been the role of these large consulting organizations have have become extraordinarily important to state DOT, whether it's because it's hard to recruit and retain talent. And, you know, you compete with the private sector, public agencies do.

But this collaboration often fills a lot of gaps for DOTs and makes what they do possible. That's my thesis. Can you react to all of that as we bring this great conversation home?

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

So, you know, you are correct that I had landed at WSP and I'm very excited about the role. And again, for the third time in this interview, my future has really been shaped around my experiences and with WSP afforded me the opportunity to do was to join an organization, an entity that was extremely diverse.

We are global in nature. we're focused on the things that I think, matter to citizens and individuals, and it's really a quality of life issue when it comes to infrastructure in all things infrastructure, whether it's real estate, whether it's climate, earth and environment, you name it, we do a little bit of everything at WSP, and in this position that I am filling, I have the opportunity to work with the different critical agencies that really drive, our industry.

So whether that's AASHTO, ITS America, National Operation Centers of Excellence, the different regions, WTS, you know, COMTO, NFPA, all of these organizations that are all critical in delivering infrastructure, both from a physical standpoint, from a policy standpoint, of course,

from a technology and innovation standpoint. I get to coordinate that and work with them on behalf of WSP and integrate that into all of the different business lines.

And so while in the private sector, our goal is to be profitable, but it's also to make a difference and it's also to have a big impact. And so I get to bring to the table my experiences in the public sector, I get to bring my perspectives. Having worked as a leader in AASHTO and, and as a leader in this industry, to help ensure that we are delivering the type of projects and results that we're partnering with people all across the world to bring forth innovations and transportation impacts that will be reckoned with for generations to come.

So I'm excited to be here. I get to stay with all of the folks I developed relationships with. I get to travel and be a part of meetings, but more importantly, I get to bring that technology to the forefront in projects. I get to work in the world of, project delivery in a way that perhaps I could not have done as a secretary, that I was limited in my scope, I was limited in resources. I now have that opportunity to tap and leverage so much more in this process and in still learn. I mean, clearly, there's a lot to learn in this business because, you know, I tell people my idea is only one way of getting things done to really respect people and embrace them is to understand how and why they want to do things a certain way.

And if it works better, let's go for that. So, I'm excited about what this opportunity is going to afford me to do personally and to continue to contribute to our industry. It's kind of like being AASHTO president for life. There's no such thing. But I get to do that because I get to work and dynamic things can happen.

Great bills can happen. We can impact policy. I did a video yesterday on road usage charge, really a transformative thing that I think the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act really sets up an opportunity for us to change the way we do business in transportation for the better, for the better. And that's the multiple multiplier effect I think that's out there.

And so that's just one example of what I get to do. So I'm really excited about, staying in this industry and being a part of it and helping, agencies and states and local governments be successful at achieving their dreams and aspirations.

**Greg Nadeau:**

Well, your enthusiasm, as always, is palpable.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Thank you.

**Greg Nadeau:**



And, it's a very good thing for all of us, public and private, that your advocacy and voices are going to be is going to continue to be out there.

So thank you for all your service and, thank you for what you're, what you will continue to contribute.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Well, thank you, my friend. I appreciate the opportunity. Thank you for keeping the conversation about infrastructure personable and easy to understand for individuals. People take us for granted and the work we do. but we're such an integral part of what you do in life, whether it's learning, playing, working or just being. It's a big part of of why we do what we do. So, it's exciting to talk to you here on InfraTalk and, look forward to visiting with you soon.

**Greg Nadeau:**

Thanks very much, my friend.

**Dr. Shawn Wilson:**

Good luck. Greg. Take care.

**Greg Nadeau:**

Bye bye.

### **Outro**

Thank you for listening to this episode of the Info Talk podcast. We hope this discussion inspires you to ask your own questions and encourages you to have discussions with policymakers and your peers.

If you want to know more about Important America, visit us at [InfraTalkAmerica.com](http://InfraTalkAmerica.com), follow us on social media at InfraTalk USA, or subscribe to the InfraTalk podcast on your favorite listening platform to be notified of all new episodes and features. And remember, every innovation starts with a conversation. So let's start talking.