

COMTO Washington State honors students, industry achievers

The new local chapter of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials presented awards to transportation industry professionals and nearly \$15,000 in academic scholarships to students Oct. 30

Washington state's chapter of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO WS) recognized industry achievers and awarded its first round of academic scholarships Tuesday, Oct. 30, at the Bell Harbor International Conference Center. Sound Transit Chief Executive Officer Peter Rogoff, a founder of COMTO WS, served as emcee for the Second Annual Awards Banquet. The program featured a keynote speech from Verizon Product Marketing Manager Greta Knappenberger on Smart Cities, Smart Communities: Planes, Trains and Automobiles. Guests got to walk about in a smart city thanks to a virtual reality booth from event sponsor HNTB. The program included Washington State Department of Transportation Secretary Roger Millar; King County Metro General Manager Rob Gannon, who is also a founder of COMTO WS; HNTB CEO Rob Slimp; and COMTO National President Bradley Mims as speakers. Guests included State Rep. Javier Valdez.

"Thanks to our sponsors, this year we presented \$15,000 in scholarships to 12 students seeking post-secondary credentials in fields from aviation to urban planning," said COMTO WS President Linneth Riley-Hall, deputy project director for the Federal Way Link Extension. "And this is after growing our fledgling summer internship program from three interns at one agency to 15 at two agencies. It is all part of COMTO Washington State's efforts to increase diversity and inclusion at all levels of the transportation industry."

With internships, scholarships and education initiatives, the 32nd chapter of COMTO is working to develop talent and build a strong pipeline of transportation professionals of all ages in all services, including executive management, legal, accounting, planning, communications, engineering, maintenance and operations.

In addition to scholarships, COMTO WS presented awards recognizing the following outstanding individuals and businesses.

- Historically Underutilized Business Award – Triunity Engineering & Management
- Titan Award – HNTB
- Industry Leader Award – Roger Millar, WSDOT
- Founders Award – Terry White, KC Metro
- Outstanding Leadership Award – Ron Lewis, Sound Transit
- Game-Changer Award – Gretchen Adams, SCL

Rogoff, Gannon, Riley-Hall, Systems Consulting CEO Everette Adams (past president), Triunity Engineering & Management CEO Jonnie Thomas, Sound Transit Community Outreach Specialist Rhonda Dixon and a small group of public and private sector professionals founded COMTO WS in March 2017.

After achieving his goal to grow the CITY internship program and see equal representation by women (actually there was greater participation by women in last summer's internship program), Rogoff's reach goal is to be the COMTO chapter that in the shortest period went from fledgling status to national conference host. Expect it to happen.

In addition to agencies and individuals, membership in COMTO WS is open to students; academic institutions; nonprofit organizations; private sector firms; and Historically Underutilized Businesses, including Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), Airport Concession DBEs, Minority Business Enterprises, Women Business Enterprises and Veteran Business Enterprises and Disabled Veterans Enterprises.

[More information about COMTO WS is available here.](#)