



John Robert Smith

President and CEO, Reconnecting America

John Robert Smith is the former Mayor of Meridian, Mississippi, and a long-time activist on behalf of passenger rail. He is co-chairman of the National Forum on the Future of Passenger Rail, is a member of Amtrak's board, and a member of the transportation committees of the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. He is a veteran of the station-centered community development movement, and led the drive to renovate the City of Meridian's Union Station, a \$7 million historic restoration project that created a new multimodal transportation center, dramatically increased use of the station, raised property values and city tax receipts, and lowered crime in the station's neighborhood. He served on Reconnecting America's board for five years, and was a founding partner and board member of Reconnecting America's predecessor organization, the Great American Station Foundation, voting to expand its mission and change its name in 2004.