

A SAFER ROAD TO TOMORROW

September 2006 Newsletter

Interstate System Turns 50

Where were you in 1956? In New Hampshire as elsewhere in the country, the first wave of boomers was well into grade school, America's love affair with the automobile was in full bloom, and the country's economy was rapidly replacing railroads with long-haul trucking.

In June of that year, President Eisenhower signed an historic bill authorizing the Federal Aid Highway Act. Arguably the biggest public works bill in history, the bill marked the beginning of construction that, half a century later, includes some 47,000 miles of roads, 82 tunnels, approximately 15,000 interchanges, and more than 55,000 bridges. New Hampshire's portion of the Interstate system, built in stages over four decades, stands at roughly 225 miles. I-93 runs 131 miles from the Massachusetts border in Salem to the Vermont border, near Littleton. Sixty-one miles, from Bow to the Vermont border in Lebanon, are included in I-89. And along New Hampshire's seacoast, I-95 covers 16 miles, from the Maine border to the Massachusetts state line.

This past summer, 50 years after the landmark bill was signed, an anniversary celebration was held, sponsored jointly by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, the New Hampshire Good Roads Association, and the

Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire (AGCNH).

The event included a press conference held in Concord at the New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Facility. Remarks were offered by Executive Councilor Raymond Burton, NHDOT Commissioner Carol Murray, and AGCNH Executive Vice President Gary Abbott. Also in attendance were representatives of the Federal Highway Administration and other highway safety organizations.

At the ceremony, Murray observed that New Hampshire's Interstate network is essential for transporting literally everything one finds in a home. But, she continued, the system is approaching middle age and needs work.

"It was a marvelous accomplishment, but it's getting tired," Murray

said. "We can't say 'What a good job we did' and forget about it."

Holding up a copy of the report on the Long Range Transportation Business plan, Murray stated, "This is 'the next 50 years,' and we need to focus on that, and think about where we're going, what we're doing, and how we're going to move around, and how that freight is going to move around." She added that the report was the first in the nation to be completed by a citizens' group. "Now that they've delivered it (the report) to me, I have to go to work," she said.

Following the press conference, a motorcade of vintage cars headed north on I-93. In the lead was Executive Councilor Raymond Burton, driving his 1959 Cadillac Fleetwood. The caravan made several stops, including Canterbury, Tilton, Plymouth, Campton/Waterbury Valley, Lincoln/Woodstock, Franconia Notch, and Littleton.



NH DOT Commissioner Carol Murray holds up a copy of the Long Range Business Plan, as Gary Abbott, AGC of NH Executive Vice President, looks on.



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Safety · Quality of Life · Economic Development

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Safer Road Partners

Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire

The Associated General Contractors is a non-profit trade organization of general contractors, subcontractors, and industry professionals dedicated to improving the professional standards of the construction industry.

Business & Industry Association

The Association is New Hampshire's leading business trade association. It advocates for business interests with state and federal legislators and regulators.

Safety and Health Council of Northern New England

The Council's mission is to educate and promote safety & health policies, practices and procedures that prevent and mitigate human economic losses arising from unintended causes.

New Hampshire Association of Chiefs of Police

The Association secures a closer official and personal relationship among commanding officers of all New Hampshire, to encourage a cordial and cooperative relationship among all police officials.

New Hampshire Lodging and Restaurant Association

The Association is a statewide, non-partisan trade organization. Our mission is to promote, protect and educate the food service and lodging industries of the state and to ensure positive business growth for our members.

Community Advisory Committee Issues Final Report on Transportation

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC), appointed by New Hampshire Department of Transportation Commissioner Carol Murray, has issued its final report, entitled the "New Hampshire Long Range Transportation Plan." The 24-member committee comprises state and local officials, business leaders, housing advocates, environmental groups, and community organizations.

"Transportation is too important to leave to transportation planners," said Lewis Feldstein, chairman of the CAC and president of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. "In appointing this group of citizens to help plan its future needs, Commissioner Murray has underscored that the NHDOT can't meet the state's needs by itself."

The committee's long-range plan marks a shift in New Hampshire transportation planning policy. Its recommendations include:

- Tightly linking land use and transportation planning,
- Strengthening New Hampshire partnerships across agencies, across jurisdictions,

and by working with private and non-profit organizations,

- Focusing on people and communities rather than roads and cars, thereby recognizing that a growing number of New Hampshire residents do not drive, due to cost, age, or disability.

"New Hampshire needs a transportation system that is mobile, accessible, and safe, and gets people to jobs, education, and health-care efficiently," said Chris McMahon, CAC member and COO of Easter Seals.

The plan outlines five specific projects for immediate action:

- The Conway village project
- Extend passenger rail to Nashua
- Implement a statewide planning and service delivery program for non-drivers
- Reduce downtown congestion in Concord
- The I-93 community technical assistance program.

New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation citizen's transportation plan has drawn attention from transportation planners and activists across the

country.

"New Hampshire is providing national leadership on how to build communities as well as roads and highways," said Tom Warne, a nationally known transportation consultant and former executive director of the Utah Department of Transportation. "As transportation leaders look for new ways to get close to their customers, they are watching New Hampshire as a model to follow."

"'Business as usual' will not meet New Hampshire's future transportation needs," said Feldstein. "As Commissioner Murray said to us at our first meeting, if you don't link land use and transportation, both will fail."

The committee conducted 14 meetings over an 18-month period, in addition to 19 community meetings held across the state. The report was presented to New Hampshire Department of Transportation Commissioner Carol Murray, Governor John Lynch, the Executive Council, and the state legislature. A copy of the report, as well as the Committee's full list of members, is available on their Website at www.nhtranplan.com.

Foreign Firms Lease U.S. Toll Roads: Are States Selling Cash Cows for Quick Cash?



Could Aussies and Spaniards some day manage I-95? We've not heard anything to that effect, but then

again, it's not without precedent. In the Midwest, at least two government entities have signed mega-deals that lease out the operation of parts of their Interstate structure to foreign investors. In Indiana, Gov. Mitch Daniels, with the narrowly won approval of the Indiana House of Representatives, leased a long stretch of Interstate turnpike to a joint venture between the Australian firm of Macquarie Infrastructure GroupBank and the Spanish investment firm of Cintra Concesiones De Infraestructuras. Both companies are publicly traded, international firms with international expertise in toll-road management.

In return for a cool \$3.8 billion, In-

diana signed a 75-year lease on the 157-mile-long Indiana Toll Road, which spans the northern tier of the state. A 400-page contract spells out in detail standards that the new managers must meet, in terms of maintenance and safety. Additionally, the contract contains language designed to keep a lid on toll rates.

Earlier, in 2004, the same foreign investment firm clinched a deal in 2004 with the City of Chicago under which it is now maintaining the Chicago Skyway, an eight-mile stretch of elevated road across the city's South Side. For this deal, the Macquarie-Cintra consortium plunked down \$1.8 billion.

Last year, Macquarie completed a lease-management deal for the Dulles Greenway, outside Washington, DC. Meanwhile, Cintra has become a partner with the State of Texas in developing the planned Trans-Texas Corridor. And observers say that more deals with foreign firms are likely to materialize in the months and years ahead. Why do foreign companies want these contracts so badly? The answer lies in the fact that the toll

roads are super-reliable revenue pumps that yield steady profits year after year. Plus, with continued population growth, these macadam cash cows are expected to become ever more lucrative in the years ahead as volumes increase and tolls rise.

Up front, governments reap the benefits of a major windfall. Less clear is how the scenario will play out several years down the road, when the full effects of dried-up revenue streams are felt. And beneath it all is the question of what happens when a government, which is based on the best interests of the citizens and accountability thereto, cedes control of infrastructure to a corporation, which is answerable not to the public but to its stockholders.



Animal-Vehicle Anti-crash System

Up to 1.5 million crashes between vehicles and large animals occur every year in the United States, resulting in approximately 200 human fatalities. Further, there are approximately 29,000 human injuries and over one billion dollars in property damage caused by these crashes. New Hampshire, and other states plagued by animal-vehicle collisions, may be one step closer to being able to use high-tech equipment to address this problem.

New research findings show that electronic animal detection systems can reduce collisions with large animals by 82 percent. In New Hampshire, the "large animals" category includes moose, deer, and bear, while several western states also have elk populations. The researchers calculated the average total costs associated with animal-vehicle collisions at \$28,100 for moose and \$7,800 for deer. The research also concluded that animal detection systems could be cost-effective, paying for themselves at locations that have an average of at least five deer or two moose collisions per mile per year.

A six-year, joint research project recently conducted by 15 states, including New Hampshire, included an experiment that reviewed, developed, and tested animal detection systems that alert drivers to the presence of wildlife on or near the road ahead. Once a large critter is detected, warning signs and/or lights are activated urging drivers to reduce the speed of their vehicles, to be more alert, or both. After a pre-determined amount of time has elapsed, the system turns off the alerts. The primary test for the research project was conducted on U.S. Highway 191 in Yellowstone National Park in Montana. The project resulted in an animal detection system technology, developed by an Arizona company, Sensor Technologies & Systems Inc. (STS, Scottsdale, AZ; www.sensor-tech.com). Called RADS (Roadway Animal Detection System), the system will be further evaluated over the next two years.

New Hampshire Department of Transportation District One Engineer Greg Placy has been one of the participants in the research effort. "This is a very promising technology that can help make roadways safer," Placy

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Motorcycle Fatalities Up; Age, Horsepower, and Alcohol Cited



than 25 percent since 1997.

Among the factors identified as possible contributors to this trend is that the average age of riders is increasing. Additionally, the size of the bikes they tend to select is also going up. Over the past decade, deaths among motorcyclists ages 40 and older have increased by 230 percent. Further, the number of riders ages 50 and over dying in crashes involving motorcycles with 1,000-1,500 cc's went up by 540 percent over the same period, an NTSB official stated. Meanwhile, drinking and driving is also problematic: 41 percent of all motorcyclists killed in single-vehicle crashes had a blood-alcohol content above .08 percent, a common benchmark for determining drunken driving.

Finally, mandated use of helmets by motorcyclists is now in effect in only 20 states and the District of Columbia. Down from a near-universal mandate for such protection several years ago, mandatory helmet use laws in several states has been repealed.



Candidates Support Road Work

With the New Hampshire gubernatorial race heading for the finish line, the three candidates are defining their positions on a range of issues, including those that will affect funding of the state's highway and bridges. Recently, all three men—incumbent John Lynch (D), Jim Coburn (R), and Richard Kahn (Libertarian Party)—voiced support for highway- and bridge-related programs, while at the same time affirming their opposition to new or increased taxes, most especially income and sales taxes.



According to a recent article in the New Hampshire Union Leader, Coburn stated that highway spending needs to be more narrowly focused on fixing highways and bridges in critical need of repair, rather than spreading money over many projects.

2005 Highway Death Toll Second Highest On Record

Traffic deaths in the United States reached their highest levels since 1990. According to a recent report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the increase was fueled in part by an increase in motorcycle and pedestrian fatalities. Up 1.4 percent from 2004, the fatalities total was 43,443, representing the highest number of deaths since 1990, when 44,599 people were killed.

"We have no tolerance for any higher numbers than zero," said Acting Transportation Secretary Maria Cino. "Motorcyclists need to wear their helmets, drivers need to buckle up, and all motorists need to stay sober."

The annual report found that motorcycle fatalities rose for the eighth straight year, growing 13 percent over 2004. The government said 4,553 motorcyclists died in 2005, compared with 4,028 in 2004. Nearly half of the people who died were not wearing helmets. (See related article above.) Pedestrian deaths increased from 4,675 in 2004 to 4,881 in 2005.



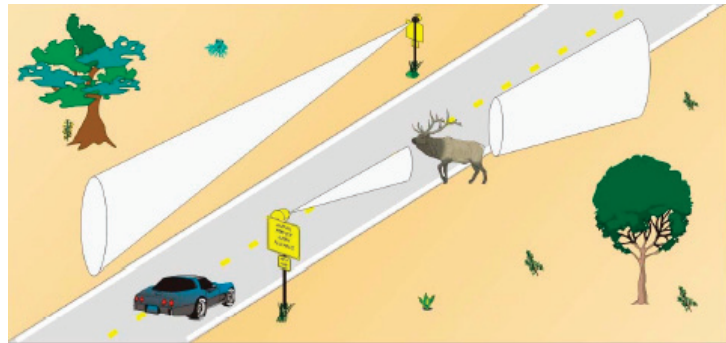
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said. "Certainly residents of northern NH have some real safety concerns regarding the potential for moose and deer collisions. I believe we are making real progress in (developing) possible solutions that could reduce the risk of these kinds of collisions."

Once set up, the typical RADS installation monitors both sides of the roadway for approaching animals. The system can cover from less than one quarter mile to several miles, and is said to be less expensive to install and maintain than fences and lighting. Powered by a solar panel/battery system, RADS can communicate between individual sensors and can time-/date-stamp crossings, the data from which is remotely accessible via cell modem Web page, etc.



ANTI-CRASH SYSTEM. Diagram shown above illustrates how "RADS" detects large animals just as they are about to cross a section of road, and how warning apparatus, e.g. flashing lights, are automatically triggered to warn motorists. (Yes, we know there are no wild elk in NH; pretend it's a moose or a deer.) System is said to be 82% effective.

Graphic courtesy of Sensor Technologies & Systems Inc.

Questions or Comments

If you have any questions or comments, or would like to join in raising public awareness of how transportation impacts New Hampshire's economy, public safety and quality of life, please feel free to contact Paul Quinn of the Associated General Contractors of NH at info@saferoadsnh.org or any A Safer Road to Tomorrow partner that can be found at www.saferoadsnh.com.

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