



TOLLWAYS

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Harris County Opens Last Segment Of Sam Houston Tollway



U. S. Department of Transportation Secretary Samuel K. Skinner joined the Harris County Toll Road Authority in celebrating the completion of the Sam Houston Tollway. Pictured above, Secretary Skinner addresses an audience of nearly 800 at a formal banquet held the evening prior to the opening. Seated to his left is Harris County Judge Jon Lindsay.

As the eyes of the world focused on Houston, Texas and the world's Economic Summit, thousands of Houstonians celebrated the completion of the \$436 million, 28-mile Sam Houston Tollway on July 6 and 7.

The last section of roadway to be opened runs from U.S. 290 through S.H. 249 to I-45 North. Upon its completion, the traffic count on all of Harris County Toll Road Authority's (HCTRA) facilities, which also includes the Hardy Toll Road, increased 67 percent the first week, with additional improvement measured each week.

In order to commemorate the event, the Authority sponsored two days of celebrations. On July 6, nearly 800 people attended a "Houston Rally" banquet to celebrate Houston's success in overcoming its mobility challenges. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Samuel K. Skinner attended as the guest of honor.

Skinner praised the Harris County Authority for its advance planning. He stated, "With vision and determination, Houstonians turned one of the most congested cities in the nation, into a model of mobility and efficiency in less than seven years."

In his speech, Skinner also stressed the importance of greater spending on infrastructure. He noted, "There's no question that America's economic future hinges on the state of our transportation infrastructure.

"Our main challenge is to elevate the importance of infrastructure investment to the level it deserves," Skinner continued.

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Advance Registrations Indicate Successful Annual Meeting

Advance registrations for the 58th Annual Meeting, scheduled for October 6—10 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, point to a successful and well-attended meeting this fall. The conference, which will be held at the Vista International Hotel, will coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, the host agency.

Delegates are encouraged to register and make hotel reservations early in order to avoid unnecessary problems.

"In the past year, much national and international attention has focused on the toll industry, especially in the areas of future funding and ETTM. The business program showcases these and other important issues," IBTTA Executive Director Neil D. Schuster said.

The program features a variety of business discussions, guest speakers and social events. U. S. Secretary of Transportation Samuel K. Skinner has been invited to give the keynote address. Speakers and panels are listed on page three of August's issue and page seven of this issue.

The annual banquet will bring the meeting to a close on Wednesday night. During the banquet, two special presentations will be made. Marriott Corporation and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission have been working to raise funds for the "Make A Wish Foundation." The two will donate proceeds from anniversary edition squeeze bottle sales to the foundation during the banquet. In addition, the American Society of Civil Engineers will make a special presentation honoring the Turnpike on its 50th anniversary for its many achievements in design and designating the Turnpike as a national civil engineering historic landmark.

House, Senate Committees Pass Hazmat Legislation

Legislation to reauthorize the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act has passed the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee and the House Commerce and Transportation Committee. In addition, the Surface Transportation panel of the House Public Works and Transportation Committee also passed a hazardous materials (hazmat) bill just prior to the Congressional summer recess. The legislation would mark the first major change in hazmat law since 1975.

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Warner Named Director of Government Affairs, Will Steer IBTTA's U. S. Legislative Campaign



Ann D. Warner was named Director of Government Affairs at IBTTA, President Henri Cyna recently announced. She will be responsible for all aspects of IBTTA's legislative program, including tracking legislation and monitoring government agencies' activities.

The position was created at the recommendation of IBTTA's Public Awareness Task Force, which saw the need for an organized legislative effort in the U.S. promoting the toll industry and toll financing.

In making the appointment, Cyna stated, "Ann brings to the Association a vast understanding of the legislative process. Her ability to track and lobby numerous, diverse issues will be a definite asset to IBTTA. She will help advocate Association positions on federal funding, technology, bond finance and hazardous materials transportation."

Allan V. Johnson, Chairman of the Public Awareness Task Force, noted that "tolls are one solution for a growing national transportation problem. We want to make sure Congress recognizes and supports this alternative when highway legislation is under consideration."

Warner received her Bachelor of Arts degree in History/Political Economy from Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan. Upon graduation, she served as a legislative assistant to former Congressman Ken Kramer (R-CO).

Warner also served as Director of Government Relations for two trade associations — the National Association of Water Companies and the Air Conditioning Contractors of America. Most recently, she worked as a Government Relations consultant for a variety of clients.

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TRCV still has a few more hurdles to clear before the project will be up and running. First, it must obtain right-of-way for about five miles of the route from landowners and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. Most landowners have already agreed to provide right-of-way in exchange for interchange rights and/or anticipated property value increases.

The airports authority, however, is holding off on granting any rights until it reaches an agreement with VDOT over the use of surplus revenues from the existing Dulles Toll Road. Airport officials are demanding that the surplus be used for mass transit access to the airport in return for their right-of-way on the airport property (Dulles International).

TRCV indicated to the SCC that it hopes to overcome these problems and complete the project's financing this fall.

Coalition Forms To Advance IVHS Research & Development

A group of business, government and academic leaders recently joined forces to support research, development and implementation of advanced technology to enhance highway transportation. The group, IVHS AMERICA, is organized as a non-profit corporation.

IVHS has the capability to alleviate traffic congestion, improve mobility, increase productivity, reduce fatalities and injuries and increase overall safety and efficiency of highway transportation.

IVHS AMERICA will focus on informing and advising officials in the public and private sector, as well as the general public, of these and other benefits of advanced technology on highway and transit systems.

The corporation will also coordinate research; create standards, specifications and protocols; provide technical and administrative support; and establish and maintain international cooperation in this endeavor.

IVHS AMERICA will be directed by an Executive Committee composed of 50 percent members from the private sector and the other 50 percent members from governmental agencies, universities, professional associations and other non-profit associations. Lester P. Lamm, President, Highway Users Federation, will initially serve as President of the corporation.

Harris County (from page one)

Skinner's policy supports increased flexibility to state and local authorities and greater private sector participation to meet local transportation needs.

On July 7, the celebration continued with a free concert by Huey Lewis and the News on the new road. Secretary Skinner, Executive Director Wesley E. Freise and other state and local dignitaries officiated at the ribbon cutting and celebration, which attracted nearly 85,000 people.

The Sam Houston Tollway, which opened to all traffic on July 8, provides Houston drivers with an alternative to sitting in traffic on I-10 or I-45. It also serves as a direct connector to the Intercontinental Airport and North Harris County.

The Tollway, as Skinner also noted, was completed ahead of schedule, approximately \$100 million under budget, and without dependence on federal funding. HRTCA issued 86 construction contracts in building both the Sam Houston Tollway and the 21-mile Hardy Toll Road. Forty percent of the contractors finished their work ahead of schedule, while 98 percent completed their work under estimated cost.

According to Harris County Judge Jon Lindsay, a member of HCTRA operating board, building the roads without federal funding gave Harris County greater flexibility and more direct control.

"We were able to work directly with dozens of private contractors, giving the project a synergy that allowed the county to complete the system ahead of schedule," Lindsay said.