

TOLLWAYS

JANUARY 1994

Parisian Suburbs Enjoy New Highway



Last October, more than 60 km. of a new highway from Paris to the eastern part of France opened. The Societe des Autoroutes Paris-Rhin-Rhone (SAPRR) built and will operate and manage this section of the A5 highway, linking Paris to its very highly populated southeast suburbs and contributing to the suburbs' economic development.

The unique point of interest of the A5 highway is its coupling with the highspeed TGV railroad line. The building of the highway has not disturbed the TGV line in its active operation.

With the new A5 motorway, the SAPRR now operates more than 1,400 kilometers of turnpikes. By 2000, the SAPRR network is expected to cover about 2,000 kilometers. Its main axis is the A6 between Paris and Lyon. In 1992, more than 85 million vehicles traveled over 10 billion km. on its network. ▼

1994 President's Message

by Russell I. Wilcox

This past year was another great one for IBTTA. I have had the pleasure of working with the Association's leaders and staff in preparing to focus on a few important goals during my term as President; and I look forward to an exciting and successful year ahead.

Last year's ETTM Symposium in New York was an unqualified success, and we will continue to maintain an active program to assist in furthering the development of this technology. We will also continue to represent our industry in a number of efforts to set ETTM standards.

Additionally, we will maintain a high profile in Washington, D.C., representing the industry before Congress and the Administration on a variety of issues. We will pursue full funding of ISTEA and effective use of the U.S. federal-aid toll program, monitor developments on the North American Free Trade Agreement as they impact on land border crossings, push for improved Canada-United States border inspection manpower and resource levels, and continue our efforts to obtain adequate radio frequencies for effective toll agency communications and ETTM operations.

IBTTA and its member agencies throughout the world — with their efficiency in moving people and products — have and will continue to play a role of growing importance in the resurgence of the world economy. Therefore, the international program is central to our future success, and I plan to work very closely with our Board members and Past Presidents from outside the U.S. to continue the momentum of these programs and their benefits.

Over the last several months, I have thought a great deal about the honor and privilege of serving as 1994 IBTTA President; most often my thoughts turn to performing the job with dedication and commitment. The Association's path of roadways, bridges, and tunnels has many guideposts to help me along the way, including the Past Presidents — be they present or only in our memory — the Board of Directors, Committee Chairpersons, IBTTA staff, and each of you. With your guidance and support, the future success of the Association is assured. I look forward to serving you in 1994. ▼



Russell I. Wilcox
IBTTA President

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HCTRA Gets OK for East Belt Project

Last September, Harris County Commissioners Court granted approval for the Harris County Toll Road Authority to begin contract negotiations with engineering firms for the design and construction of the East Belt. On September 28, the Texas Department of Transportation issued a Minute Order releasing control and jurisdiction of a 7.78 mile section of right of way of the East Belt, which will allow the Toll Road Authority to construct, maintain, and operate a toll facility in that area.

Noting the "ahead of schedule and under budget" construction of the Authority's Hardy Toll Road and Sam Houston Tollway, Wesley E. Freise, P.E., HCTRA Executive Director, expects to begin construction of the East Belt as early as the second quarter of '94, projecting a 1996 opening.

"During the design phase [of] the project, our agency will be considering the redesign of lane configurations at all five of the existing plazas," Freise stated. "System-wide, our facilities are handling approximately two million transactions per week. With continued growth projections, our plans are to expand and reconfigure our

dedicated EZ TAG lanes, which are expected [to handle] approximately 70% of our traffic volumes in the next three years."

The Toll Road Authority also anticipates an agreement with the Texas Department of Transportation to release the South Belt right of way, which would tie into the East Belt toll project. The entire East Belt and South Belt construction projects, approximately 30 miles, will complete the Harris County Beltway system. The design phase for the South Belt project will be approximately 12 months, with 1997 and 1998 projected opening dates.

Cost for design and construction of the joint project, combined with the estimated acquisition price of the Jessie Jones Toll Bridge, is expected to be approximately \$600 million. ▼

San Antonio Hosts IBTTA Maintenance Committee

Some 131 delegates and guests from 50 organizations gathered in San Antonio, Tex., in late October, to discuss current maintenance theory and practices at IBTTA's Maintenance Committee Fall Conference.

Henry R. Munoz III, Commissioner of the Texas Turnpike Authority, the conference host, welcomed IBTTA to San Antonio. He discussed the Texas Department of Transportation's plans to seek new financing arrangements and partnerships, and to explore multi-modal transportation efforts and bi-national toll projects with Mexico.

James Griffin, Deputy Director of the Texas Turnpike Authority, reviewed progress on the eight-mile extension of the Dallas North Tollway. The extension, which will bring the Tollway to 21 miles in length, will be completed in July 1994, ahead of schedule and under budget. He also discussed a number of innovative public-private projects the Authority is studying, following 1991 and 1993 state legislation that broadened the Authority's scope.

The Maintenance Conference featured more than 30 presentations on a range of topics, including transportation in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew; incident management systems; motorist information systems; automated bridge inspections; clean air and water quality issues; a legislative update; ETTM policy developments; the impact of electronic toll collection system design on maintenance operations; and new products and procedures to improve toll facility maintenance.

The 1994 Maintenance Committee meetings are: Spring Conference, March 19 - 23, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Fall Conference, October 1 - 5, Boston, Mass. Registration materials for the March meeting are now available. ▼

"ERA OF THE CALIFORNIA FREEWAY" COMES TO A CLOSE

"CALIFORNIA'S last freeway is built," an editorial in the October 17 *San Francisco Examiner* proclaimed. The newspaper, noting the recent opening of Los Angeles' \$2.2 billion, 17-mile Century Freeway, lamented the end of the state's "days of building more/higher/bigger" and ushered in a future of "new directions" in "innovation" and "imagination."

In an example of those new directions — and in contrast to the government-funded Century Freeway — the *Examiner* noted the opening of another road that same day, "the initial stretch of the state's first private tollway, paralleling I-5 in Orange County."

"This pay-as-you-go scheme is one new direction for California transportation," remarked the *Examiner*. "...The last freeway is finished, but the information superhighway and other paths to the future aren't far away." ▼