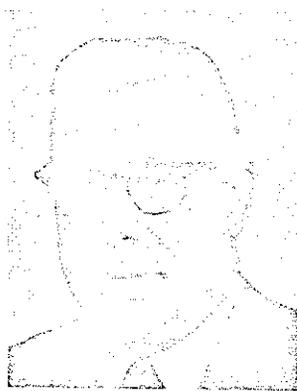


HIGHWAYS: CHANGES COMING



J. Phillip Richley



Frank C. Turner



Ralph Heffner

What's ahead for highways? Change, agree 3 highway planners — but each has his own interpretation.

J. Phillip Richley, Ohio highway dir., says that Ohio must develop a total transportation program. Frank C. Turner, federal highway admin., proves that building highways and saving the environment don't conflict. Ralph Heffner, immediate past pres., American Road Builders' Assn., argues that revenue sharing will destroy the existing highway program.

Excerpts of their talks at the recent 52nd Ohio Highway Engineering Conference in Columbus follow.

We are truly and ultimately an automobile society. In Ohio, 92% of our passenger miles are by auto, 6% by bus and 2% by rail. There are more drivers going more miles with fewer passengers. A human being is born every 9 seconds—a new car every 5 seconds. In 1969, the average car had 2.7 passengers, while in 1970 there were less than 2.

Congestion and our inability to deal with it is beginning to show. We're seeing indicators of the future . . . bottle-

I have been in the federal-state highway program over 40 years, and I have witnessed many changes. So I underscore the fact—which is often overlooked—that the highway program has always been receptive to change. It has always been concerned about beauty, environment and the human factor while trying to provide U.S. citizens with the best highways that human ingenuity and technology could provide.

I have no hesitation in going on record as to where highway officials

Any discussion of the future of the federal-aid highway program inevitably includes the President's proposed transportation revenue sharing plan.

It is a radical proposal. It amounts to a complete abandonment of the ABC highway program and the federal-aid airport program, and the substitution of a plan to distribute Highway Trust Fund revenues to state and local governments with no strings attached.

I quote the President: "This program means returning federal dollars

to states and local communities for investment in transportation—without the usual federal controls and restraints. It signals a return to the days when the man who best understood the local terrain was the man who blazed the trail."

These tax dollars would be derived from 3 sources: the Highway Trust Fund, the Airways and Airports Trust Fund and the U.S. Treasury general fund. The latter includes \$525 million of urban mass transportation grants

necks . . . pollution . . . cities like Rome banning vehicles during certain hours or days. These instances are forerunners of what will happen in Ohio's cities unless we take a broad look at mass transportation.

Public transportation is beginning to fail. In some cities there are 6 times more school buses than public buses. This is only one area where we must take a good, hard look.

The love affair with highways is over. The public mood has changed, stand today.

We are for preserving our natural environment and protecting the ecology. We care about beauty, and we construct and maintain the nation's highways to reflect that care. We care about the rights of people and human dignity. We care about providing the public with the maximum value from its highway system. We care about highway safety. And we care about the problems of rush hour traffic congestion in our urban areas, and want to

to states and local communities for investment in transportation—without the usual federal controls and restraints. It signals a return to the days when the man who best understood the local terrain was the man who blazed the trail."

RICHLEY: "We must take off our rose-colored glasses. We have transportation problems."

and it's reflected in Congress.

We in Ohio are committed to highways. We have 167 mi. of interstate yet to be constructed at a cost of \$721 million. We want to encourage Ohio

TURNER: "There is no room for extremists on either side of the highway/environment question."

eliminate the congestion for motorists.

But we do not just "care" about these things—we are acting. For example, about 12% of the total cost of federal-aid highway projects annually is being spent directly on identifiable environmental aspects. In fiscal 1970, this expense amounted to more than \$500 million. In addition, an equal amount is applied indirectly to these same objectives.

We are eager to work closely with conservationists, archaeologists and all

HEFFNER: "The Nixon Administration has worked a miracle with urban mass transit money."

and this inclusion would probably result in some changes in the transportation program.

First, the revenue sharing legislation proposes a different way of apportioning urban mass transit funds, which would inhibit the program's concentration in very large metropolitan areas interested in subway construction. The money would be spread thinner.

Second, this thinner spreading would not necessarily retard big-city subway projects because highway and airport funds would be available.

Third, since the highway and airport funds could be used for *any* transportation need, a city might use these funds

communities to take advantage of Topics 1 monies. We will continue to build highways not only on a national level, but also on a state level at top speed as well as we can with the funds available.

But we must take off our rose-colored glasses and admit we have transportation problems. We must begin to develop a transportation system so we can offer the public a viable, conve-

concerned citizen groups. We want our vitally needed new interstate freeways to blend harmoniously into their natural environments and without damage to the ecology. As a result, our files are replete with case histories of going to a lot of time, expense and effort to spare old trees, historic edifices or wild game and bird preserves.

We encourage constructing landscaped rest areas along interstate routes. We support construction of "mini-parks" on highway right-of-way in cities, thus providing neighborhoods with park facilities never enjoyed.

Moving on to the area of people and their properties, tremendous strides have been made here too.

No one likes to lose his home or

to underwrite the losses of mass transportation and free other money for mass transit capital investment.

Thinner spreading of urban mass transit money *appears* to be one of the devices by which the administration has worked a miracle—like the multitude of 5000 that was fed by 5 barley loaves and 2 fishes. This miracle consists of pooling transportation funds, taking 10% "off the top" for a fund to be used at the U.S. Secretary of Transportation's discretion, dividing the remaining 90% among the states and local communities so that some states would receive more money than at the present time—and yet no state would receive *less* money. Apportioning these previously unapportioned funds is one way of pulling off the miracle.

The President says: "Each state would be held harmless against any reduction in the overall level of support

nient and economical choice that will relieve congested urban areas.

The Federal Highway Act of 1962 required comprehensive planning as a prerequisite for funds — an early indication of the times. The day will come when we will appreciate the benefits of this total planning approach.

The Federal Highway Act of 1962 required double hearings — one for the corridor and another for design

business to make way for a new highway. When it is necessary, as a result of the provisions of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968 and the Federal Relocation Assistance Act of 1970, we can provide compensation for comparable replacement housing.

In order that the public realize the greatest return from its highway investment, we have favored the multiple use and joint development concepts — or simply, that the right-of-way obtained for freeway development is used for other desirable projects. We have been utilizing the air space above and below freeways for high-rise apartment buildings, offices, bus depots, playgrounds, public basketball and tennis courts and parking facilities. We also

it receives from programs which become a part of this special revenue sharing fund."

The "hold harmless" feature is a part of all the special revenue sharing plans, but in all other plans, the administration has had to "up the ante" — or add new authorizations — in order to promise that nobody would suffer a reduction in federal funds.

Only in the case of transportation revenue sharing was the administration able to work the miracle of the loaves and fishes — making everybody at least as well off as before, but without putting any new money in the pot.

Under the revenue sharing plan, 35% of the money apportioned to a state would "pass through" the state and be allocated to local governments — which would have great freedom in applying the funds — the philosophy that the man who blazes the trail

so people can participate in the overall planning of their highway system.

The 1970 Federal Highway Act is what I consider a real landmark in legislation. It gives us social awareness. It's now possible to develop — in conjunction with highway facilities — bus lanes, parking, highway air space, replacement housing, fringe parking and rail facilities in freeway right-of-way. We have the legal and administrative

use space along the right-of-ways for needed development such as schools, recreational facilities and parks. This is still a relatively new area—one with almost unlimited potential. We intend to realize it.

Freeways are vital to community life. Cities cannot remain viable without them. At the same time, we are aware of the growing rush hour traffic congestion problem. This problem cannot be solved solely by building more freeways.

So we have turned to a new philosophy—again change comes into the picture—moving more people in fewer vehicles on the upgraded existing street network. To accomplish this, we have to persuade a sizable number of com-

muters is the one who best understands the local terrain. Suppose the local trail blazer has no understanding of engineering. Will any state or federal engineer review his plans? Apparently not.

Originally, the federal-aid primary system was limited to 7% of a state's road mileage. The philosophy was that federal interest should extend far enough to cover in certain well defined areas. The President's revenue sharing follows the *opposite* philosophy. Federal funds could be used for anything from patching potholes to paying the highway patrol.

We are confronted with a total disintegration of the federal-aid highway program, except for the interstate program, and it will be phased out in the next few years. The implications for the highway industry are grave.

Consider the recent conflict between

tools, and to some great degree, the money to develop an imaginary transportation program.

There is no viable agency responsible for the administering, planning and financing of various transportation modes. What we need in Ohio is a total transportation program wrapped around the highway department where we can work to provide a balanced, inter-connected transportation system.

muters to leave their cars at home and take the transit bus. To persuade them, we have to give buses preferential treatment, such as exclusive bus lanes, or busways so they can provide truly rapid transit. These ideas are not merely theory. We have on-going demonstration programs in Washington, D.C., Seattle and between the New Jersey Turnpike and the Lincoln Tunnel. Each is proving highly successful.

Similar programs are being actively contemplated in many other cities. I believe they represent the wave of the 70s in solving our city traffic dilemma. Best of all, they are applicable almost anywhere.

We are making encouraging strides in safety, too. We have learned to make

the federal and state governments over prevailing wage laws. On Feb. 23 President Nixon suspended the Davis-Bacon Act in the national interest. Twenty states responded by suspending their prevailing wage clauses, but on March 29, the President put Davis-Bacon back into effect. At the same time, he placed wage and price "constraints" on the construction industry. Under his new plan, a Construction Industry Stabilization Committee is responsible for holding the lid on wages.

In short, a new federal control has been added which affects the entire industry. It could be applied with or without the revenue sharing plan.

The inflation problem in the construction industry will not be solved by revenue sharing. Whatever actions the federal government takes to control inflation will be taken even if revenue sharing is used as a pattern of distri-

We here in Ohio have set goals: to develop this total program, to be more responsive to the needs of the people, and to provide a safe, convenient, more fitting system for whatever community it is intended.

As highway planners, engineers and public officials, we have a special job to carry out so people can live and work most efficiently and conveniently. Ⓐ

our highways safer with modern engineering design techniques . . . spot improvement programs to eliminate dangerous conditions on older roadways . . . safer roadside signing.

There is no question as to our personal and collective need for a modern, functional system of highways. As a nation, we simply cannot do without it.

At the same time, we need to protect the ecology and preserve our environment. This is not an either/or situation. We need both, and in the highway program, we are doing both.

There is no room for extremists on either side of the highway/environment question. When men of goodwill get together, there is no limit to the good that can be accomplished. Ⓐ

bution.

Along with his revenue sharing proposals, the President has asked Congress to approve consolidation of the 7 cabinet-level departments into 4 new ones. Although we tend to regard this as large-scale housekeeping, this plan proposes to break up the Dept. of Transportation. Highways and urban mass transportation would go into the new Dept. of Community Development, centered around the present Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. The rest of the Dept. of Transportation would go into the new Dept. of Economic Affairs, which would also take over most of the present functions of the Commerce and Labor departments. This consolidation would fragment federal transportation functions.

The only way to get out from under would be to forget about federal aid
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HEFFNER: "Find a middle ground between interference and no strings."

...to let the states raise their own highway taxes. Do we really want to kill the Highway Trust Fund?

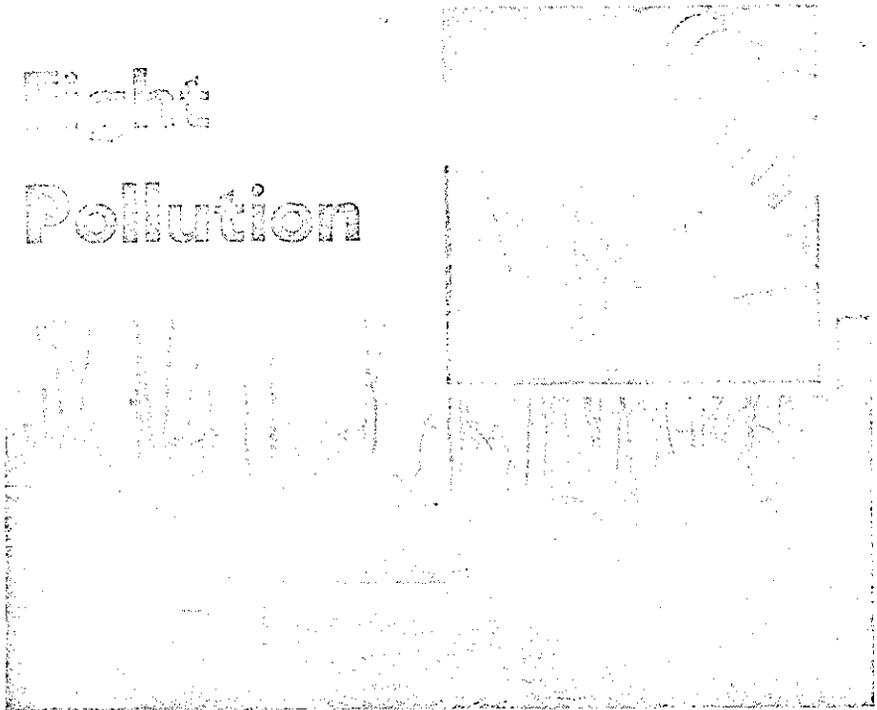
There must be a middle ground between the 2 extremes. On the one hand, the federal government increasingly burdens the federal-aid highway program with new restraints, new requirements, new entanglements of red tape. On the other hand, the administration holds out a "no strings" program, promising to end federal interference.

The federal-aid highway program was conceived as a revenue sharing plan. It was intended that the primary responsibility for road construction should rest with the states, with the federal role a limited one. The 1970 Highway Act expanded the revenue sharing characteristic by establishing a 70-30 matching ratio for non-interstate projects effective with fiscal year 1974 apportionment. Furthermore, the Secretary of Transportation is directed to study the apportionment formulas and to make recommendations next year on a more equitable formula.

The American Road Builders' Assn. and others have long advocated decentralizing the Federal Highway Admin. so that a greater proportion of federal highway decisions can be made in the field without reference to Washington.

I think the existing program can be reformed without the complete destruction suggested by the revenue sharing plan of the administration. I hope you agree. ☺

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