



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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REMARKS BY U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE AT DEDICATION OF PERSONAL RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM, MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA, OCTOBER 24, 1972

I have awaited with some impatience this day of dedication of the Morgantown Personal Rapid Transit system (the PRT) which we started two years ago.

But now that the day has arrived I look at these installations we see today with a bit of awe -- this station, these concrete guideways, the banks of computers which can control complicated machinery more precisely than the hand of man. I cannot escape a feeling that I am looking through an opening into the future -- seeing something which is not yet here but which is so marvelous in its design and purpose that we know it will be a part of our future lives.

Certainly the project we are dedicating here today can revolutionize transportation in our crowded cities. It can bring us one of the answers we have sought to urban congestion and the pollution of the atmosphere over our great metropolitan centers. It can have a tremendous impact on the lives of all of us, and particularly on the lives of the young people of this country, such as the young people attending this great university.

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When we leave here today, we will leave with the knowledge that Morgantown and West Virginia University have become the laboratory out of which can grow a transportation system which has a rightful place in the world of today -- the NEW world with its expanding population and its expanding problems -- a world in which new problems cannot be solved with old ideas and old systems.

The Personal Rapid Transit system we are dedicating is an entirely new concept. It is a hybrid of transportation technologies. It melds together into one new system the things that have been learned in our aerospace industry, the results of years of effort in our laboratories and our workshops and the miracle of the computer. It promises to give us what we so urgently need -- FAST, CLEAN, QUIET, CONVENIENT AND POLLUTION-FREE TRANSPORTATION. It demonstrates that brainpower, not horsepower, will find the solution to public transportation problems.

This project is a major result of President Nixon's initiative in sponsoring the Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act of 1970. Members of the Senate and House, such as those on this platform with me today, responded to that initiative and we now have an expanding program for the regeneration and modernization of public transportation throughout the land. A billion dollars a year in Federal funds are going into that program and we are beginning to see the results. One of the results we see here today.

This project is under the direct supervision and control of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration of the Department of Transportation. Carlos Villarreal, the head of that agency of my Department is here with us today. But I want to emphasize the point that this is not a one-agency or a one-department job. President Nixon has provided the leadership and has established the priorities which have made projects of this kind possible. But the planning, the work and the dedication are the contributions of many.

Governor Arch Moore whose dedication to the welfare of his State and the country must be given a large measure credit. Senator Randolph, Senator Byrd and Representative Staggers contributed their tremendous energy and their leadership to the job of making this project possible. And certainly, if it had not been for the cooperation of West Virginia University's Dr. Harlow and Dr. Elias, and the officials and people of Morgantown, this project would not be here now.

The great organizational and technical skills of the Boeing Company and its subcontractors represent the American ingenuity and determination that have brought this system into being. And the hundreds of technicians, craftsmen and workmen who have provided the skills and the muscle to make these installations rise from the ground have made contributions for which we all are very thankful.

To those who have done the work-a-day jobs on this project I want to say that you have done more than just pour the concrete for these guideways and install the steel for these stations. You have contributed to a new way of life in crowded cities far beyond the limits of Morgantown. We already have approved a grant of \$11 million for the beginning of a similar project in Denver. With this beginning, and with the studies and the refinements which are to follow, you have laid the foundations for systems which will bring relief to many of our crowded urban centers now suffering from congestion and air pollution. The cars which will glide along the PRT guideways of the Nation will make the rail-pounding streetcars of our recent past, which clattered and banged their way through our central cities, as antiquated and remote as the horsecar.

And now, as an appropriate start for this new age of automated transportation, I push the button to activate this system and bring the first car along the guideway.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for joining us in these ceremonies.

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