

# U.S. Department of Transportation news:



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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION NEIL GOLDSCHMIDT, ANNOUNCING DOT PROPOSED POLICY INITIATIVES FOR SMALL COMMUNITY AND RURAL TRANSPORTATION, OCTOBER 1, 1980.

A story in yesterday's newspaper pointed out some significant population trends at work in America: formerly isolated and rural communities growing by 100 or 200 percent, small communities seeing substantial increases not only of resident population but of businesses and jobs.

These growth trends underline the importance of the policy which we are announcing today. For while America's rural and small communities have been growing, not enough has been done to make sure that transportation services keep pace.

The policy initiatives for small community and rural transportation which I am announcing today represent our commitment to an enhanced relationship between these growing communities and the Federal government.

Specifically, we recognize the fundamental fact that America's small communities and rural areas have needs, problems and local conditions far different from their urban cousins. The Department of Transportation, across the board in all transportation agencies, is committed to:

- \* The elimination of overly complex, detailed requirements which may apply to complicated urban projects but which stifle and inhibit the solution of local problems peculiar to small and rural communities. We will seek to assure each of these communities that they will have the greatest flexibility possible in using Federal funds to respond to local conditions in the way most appropriate for that community.
- \* We will work with state and local government, with private parties and small and rural communities to make sure that economic

regulation -- and its reform -- will not create transportation problems for those communities.

\* We will make sure that small and rural communities have access to the best technical advice, information and expertise available from the Federal government in transportation matters, so that choices to solve local problems reflect the best thinking in the transportation field.

The policy document spells out in greater detail how these commitments will be met in local personal transportation, intercity passenger service, roads and highways, truck and railroad freight service. Let me offer you several examples of the kinds of problems faced by small and rural communities and what this policy will mean.

Take the example of a small community which has grown to the point where it believes it needs some kind of public transportation -- because it has enough population to warrant it, or enough people who don't drive, or simply because they don't wish to be without transportation in the event of an energy emergency.

Clearly, the community would need help, they would need to know whether or not and how to:

- \* Start a conventional transit program;
- \* Start a paratransit program;
- \* Use taxis for ridesharing;
- \* Or begin an expanded public-private ridesharing program.

Or, take another example. That of a community and business facing a rail line abandonment. The rail service may be disappearing, but not the need for commercial transportation. They would need to know whether or not and how to:

- \* Subsidize the railroad to continue service;
- \* Take over the line and operate it as a short-line;
- \* Shift to truck transport;
- \* Form a shipper's association.

In both of these examples the first need is the same: sound, reliable information, good, solid technical assistance.

To make this basic help available, the Department of Transportation will create within the Federal Highway Administration a new capability



to deliver technical assistance regardless of the transportation agency involved. We will draw upon the Federal highway field staff as well as the expertise available in the other transportation agencies to create this reservoir of information.

To begin this program in Federal highways we have requested \$5 million in new funds for fiscal year 1982; in 1981 we will begin a nation-wide training program for the staff of the Federal Highway Administration and state transportation agencies.

And finally, we will work closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to use its extension with regard to the problems of shippers. As a first step toward greater coordination, the Department of Agriculture traffic management experts will be located in Federal highway field offices.

This policy will not solve all of the transportation problems of our small and rural communities.

It will, however, begin an important process of identifying those problems, offering constructive assistance in analyzing them, and tailoring Federal programs to respond. And that is an important effort to begin.

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