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SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
DOT AWARDS CEREMONY
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I'll never forget my first welcome to the Department of Transportation; back on a cold winter day in 1983, when you welcomed me into the DOT family and together we embarked on campaigns to make life easier, economic prospects brighter, and transportation generally safer for millions who make up our American family. We've made a lot of headlines since then. We've made a lot of history, too. Most of all, together we've made a positive difference in the lives of our countrymen. In the process, we've also set a new standard of performance. We've been responsive to congressmen and consumers alike. We've advanced the frontiers of technological change and through it all, we've remained faithful to the unchanging values as well -- to the ideals of service, creativity, and imagination which have always defined government at its best.

A century ago, a speaker at the American Railway Conference celebrated the glories of transportation. "We blow the whistle that's heard round the world," he declared, "and all peoples stop to heed and welcome it... its boilers and reservoirs are the true forces of civilization."

Today, more than ever, the whistle we blow carries a very special sound. For the work we do has helped to change both our landscape and our lifestyles. It contributes to the free flow of information and culture. It influences our Gross National Product, and the small, personal habits which dictate where we go and what we buy. It connects our cities, defines our

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markets, broadens our outlook and expands our horizons. But just as American transportation is far more than bypasses and off-ramps, so transportation policy requires more than a few people in big offices -- or even a few hundred people on Capitol Hill!

Government has been likened to a pump. You get out whatever you pump in. Nothing more, nothing less. A Government agency is more than the enabling legislation which creates it -- more than the committees which oversee it or the cabinet officer temporarily entrusted with managing it. A government sworn to serve people cannot exist apart from people, and so it takes its energy from those who may never get into the headlines, but whose tireless commitment to excellence is the biggest story in the age-old tale of popular government.

This is an administration which regards America like a tree, strongest at its roots. And that's how I feel about DOT. Today, we honor more than a hundred of our colleagues who demonstrate every day of the week the superiority of a government organized from the ground up -- rather than dictated from the top down. The range of service we acknowledge is as diverse as the 100,000 men and women who are DOT... We express our gratitude to a Saginaw, Michigan air traffic controller who rescued half dozen victims from a local auto accident, then went home, took a shower, reported for duty -- and never mentioned a word about his exploits until they were reported in the next day's newspaper. We rejoice in the dedication of a sixteen year veteran of the department, now employed as a Secretary in the Office of Installations and Logistics, whose willingness to put in long hours is as pronounced as her courtesy and helpfulness on the phone. We pay tribute to program analysts and program managers, to flight trainers and stenographers, to a blind switchboard operator at the Coast Guard Air Station in Miami and a supervisory economist in the licensing division who has helped hundreds of women and minority employees open their eyes to their own professional potential.

Such examples of selflessness spell the difference -- the vital difference -- between lip service and life service. They refute the cynical notion that government in America is some kind of island, cut off from the people who pay its bills and supply its mandate. You and I know better. And when I go to the White House for a cabinet meeting, or to a conference of automotive engineers, or to a press conference to announce the privatization of earthly transportation or the commercialization of space travel...I go secure in the knowledge that I work with the finest minds and the most generous of spirits -- backed up by tens of thousands of people whose common agenda is to be on the cutting edge of change.

I spoke at the outset of the DOT family. And, if you have any doubt about what I mean, I invite you to drop by our Daycare Center or talk to our tutors at Hine Junior High School in Washington's Inner City. But of course, the DOT family is made up of thousands of other families. And you must be every bit as proud of your husbands and wives, your sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, as we are of our co-workers. This is your

day as much as their's. And on behalf of the President, and all those who depend for so much on so many, I am delighted once again to welcome relatives and friends of Department of Transportation employees to this Department, and to extend my own warmest congratulations.

A while back, none other than Henry Ford said that "you can't build a reputation on what you are going to do." Certainly, DOT has built its reputation on past acts of courage and creativity, thoughtfulness and ingenuity. And for all that, I am very grateful. But what we have done in the past, impressive as it is, only hints at what we are going to do in the future...As we continue to press forward to improve our highways and transit services and to strengthen the U.S. maritime industry, to deregulate transportation while stepping up our campaigns to promote safety...to banish drunk drivers from our roads, and illegal drugs from the classrooms as well as the highways of America...to get Uncle Sam out of the airport business, and strike the best possible deal that we can so that Conrail can once again be operated as a private company and not a public charge...to reach for the stars, as we cut through red tape and preside over the birth of an entire new industry --the commercial exploration of space.

So I guess you could say that we have the best of Henry Ford's two worlds. We have a reputation -- and it's a darned good one, thanks to you -- and we are going to earn still greater reknown by aiming for still greater heights in the future. Our mission is clear; so is our mandate. We couldn't possibly live up to either if it weren't for you men and women for whom excellence is an everyday thing, and innovation no more than standard operating procedure. I believe that such accomplishments as we've achieved come from loving, caring hearts. Awards such as these may convey, but they can never fully communicate the pride I feel in you -- who are the DOT, and the joy I experience in working with you.

God bless you all. Thank you.