

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW H.CARD, JR.
MICHIGAN INTERSTATE SIGNING CEREMONY
LANSING, MICHIGAN
OCTOBER 15, 1992

Event: I-69 opening ceremony. 3 minute remarks.

Thank you ... and let me acknowledge Governor John Engler, Congressman Fred Upton (who couldn't be here today), Congressman Bob Carr, and Barton LaBelle (State Transportation Chairman).

This whole week is actually one of celebrating the completion of various parts of the federal interstate system and other federal highways. Yesterday, we finished the last 12 miles of I-70 in Glenwood Canyon, Colorado: now I-70 runs some 2,100 miles, from Baltimore to Cove Fort, Utah. And tomorrow, we are reopening the first 23 miles of Spirit Lake Memorial Highway in Washington State: which was earlier destroyed by the Mt. St. Helen's eruption.

But today, we are celebrating the completion of Michigan's 1,241 mile interstate freeway system. The opening of these last four miles of I-69 west of Lansing, culminates a \$4 billion, 36-year construction effort. One that far surpasses any other public works program in the state.

Tourists, truckers and others will now be able to link up with the Indiana border, and with the Blue Water Bridge leading to Canada.

Although today marks the end of the Eisenhower era of the interstate highway system for Michigan, a new era of national road building and management is beginning here and elsewhere.

It actually began last December when President Bush signed into law the new surface transportation legislation call ISTEA. A whole new federal highway system was designated called the National Highway System -- which will incorporate parts of the interstate and other local and regional road networks.

And although the Congress recently slashed funding by over one billion dollars for the Federal-Aid Highway Program, the President remains committed to rebuilding our nation's highway infrastructure.

As a result of ISTEA, more attention is now being placed on environmental issues -- especially wetlands mitigation. And I congratulate you on the creation of Michigan's newest water wonderland -- and the "Mother" of all Michigan created wetlands -- the 44 acre Lake Interstate.

This is a "win-win " solution for everyone -- conservationists, fisherman, boaters, birdwatchers and others.

Let me conclude by thanking the thousands of men and women who devoted much of their lives over the past 36 years to the construction of the state's highway system. You've all done a fine job in keeping this nation's transportation system moving in the right direction.

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