

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW H. CARD, JR.
NORTH TEXAS COMMISSION
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IRVING, TEXAS

Thank you, Mayor Steve Bartlett (Dallas). And thanks to Fort Worth Mayor Kay Granger for co-chairing this event. Congratulations to Commission Chairman Robert B. Lane, all past chairmen of the North Texas Commission as well as the companies that have been members for 20 years. It is my pleasure to join in honoring you today.

When this unique collection of business, government and civic leaders got together in 1971 to support the yet to be built Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, you were a couple of decades ahead of your time. You linked transportation to economic growth. The result has been phenomenal. This airport has been a tremendous magnet for economic growth. The year D/FW International opened its doors the airport had 6.8 million passenger enplanements. In less than two decades that figure quadrupled. Today you have the second busiest airport in the world, and by the year 2010, you can look forward to 52 million enplanements.

To me, jobs are always the best measure of success. The 2.32 million jobs this nine-county Metroplex region had in 1990 are expected to grow at better than 22 percent each decade to the year 2020.

Because you had the vision to link transportation to economic growth, the Metroplex is at the center of a vibrant world marketplace.

I want to discuss today the link between transportation and economic growth, or how to keep Dallas/Fort Worth and our nation at the center of the world marketplace. If we use our transportation resources wisely we can assure that the economic map never shifts from Dallas/Forth Worth and our nation. But you must continue to provide the leadership.

In three and a half years, the Bush Administration has provided many tools to strengthen the link between transportation and the economy. I want to mention three and the change of attitude they bring.

First, the President's National Transportation Policy gave us an Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. I call it ISTEA. It stresses two important new words in the government's lexicon -- "intermodal" and "efficiency."

Not only did ISTEA authorize \$155 billion for rebuilding and expanding our nation's surface transportation infrastructure, it also did something very different.

For the first time it requires states to plan and to bring local governments into the planning process. It gives unprecedented flexibility to state governments in solving surface transportation problems. "Highway" money can be spent on mass transit and vice versa. -- whichever way that makes sense to meet an area's surface transportation needs efficiently. That's intermodalism.

You are already thinking intermodally whether you realize it or not. The D/FW Metroplex is home to the world's largest airline -- American -- to a gigantic hub of the world's third largest airline -- Delta -- and to one of the finest regional airlines in the world -- Southwest. One of the nation's outstanding railroads -- Burlington Northern -- makes its home here, and that makes you intermodal.

Every time you put another highway ramp on your planning map, you are thinking intermodally. Every time you talk about running passenger rail to the airport, or begin digging a tunnel for mass transit, you are thinking intermodally. When you wonder if the planned Texas high speed rail project could linkup the airports, you are thinking intermodally.

Obviously, a number of hurdles must be surmounted in connection with the Texas high-speed rail project -- financing, environmental mitigation, terminal locations, federal and state regulatory requirements and so on.

However, if Texas is able to put into place these elements and move this project forward, the result will be viewed as a model of state leadership in transportation innovation.

Rail passenger service notwithstanding, an efficient and widespread network of railroad freight connections has given the Texas economy tremendous support over the years.

The heliports on your planning map and the systemwide airport concept make your Metroplex area unique. They are moving people and packages in the most efficient way.

Intermodalism means transportation -- like our economy itself -- is only as strong as its weakest link. The Bush Administration wants to link up America to assure our economy's competitiveness in the world marketplace.

The second tool President Bush has provided is the 1990 Aviation Safety and Capacity Expansion Act.

It gave us a national noise policy which will serve as a framework to solutions to environmental concerns. The Act also provides a passenger facility charge authority for local airports to exercise at their discretion to finance future development.

And the third tool for strengthening the link between transportation and the economy is one that's been around a while -- the Airport Improvement Program. We are getting the money out there when it's needed for growth. We've pumped more AIP funds into the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport this year than at any time in history. Thirty and a half million dollars has been distributed to D/FW in this fiscal year.

These national transportation initiatives -- and the way you use them -- put North Texas in a unique position to thrive in the years ahead. To begin with, Texas will be a major beneficiary of the North American Free Trade Agreement because of its long border with Mexico. In fact, one of the biggest NAFTA negotiating sessions was held in Dallas this past February.

Texas already does \$16 billion a year in trade with Mexico. As cross-border restrictions fall away, you can look for gains in virtually every product and service area in existence. But D/FW will be a special winner because of transportation.

For example, D/FW International is already the anchor of a very large the travel and tourism industry. The D/FW area hosted an estimated 12 million visitors last year. NAFTA provides liberalized access for charter and tour buses from Mexico to U.S. destinations. This will tap an entirely new tourism market.

I like the Texas size attitude of the international vice president of **I Can't Believe It's Yogurt**, a Dallas-based company which is already marketing in Mexico and expanding even as we speak. He looks on Mexico as the "gateway to South America. "

The NAFTA will liberalize land transportation in Mexico in a way that will increase D/FW's vital role as a distribution center. The phase-out of reciprocal cross-border barriers to motor carriers will allow trucks to transport cargoes directly to their destinations in both countries.

This will improve the environment and decrease congestion at the border. Trucking efficiencies will translate into significantly lower transportation costs which means savings to U. S. consumers.

The first phase, three years after the agreement is signed, will create new opportunities for Northern Texas in particular.

At that time the U.S. and Mexico will allow each other's motor carriers to operate in their border states. Thus, Texas towns outside of the immediate border will draw the initial benefits from increased trade with Mexico.

Continuing on the intermodal theme, NAFTA locks in the market-oriented policy reforms undertaken by the Mexican National Railroad -- allowing substantial U.S. rail investment and operation. And with Mexico's commitment to open up investment and operation of seaport facilities, more intermodal cargo will be carried by water. Already the Burlington Northern Railroad is beginning a unique rail/water bridge to Mexico through Galveston.

What I've sketched is a very bright future for the D/FW Metroplex area.

Let's remember that the world peace we enjoy today allows us to think big thoughts, dream big dreams and plan for the future. World peace, the end of the cold war, the demise of communism -- call it what you will. It has unleashed our individual spirit.

In the words of a great Texan, who just happens to be my boss -- the President of the United States "when freedom grows, America grows. Just as a strong America means a safer world, a safer world means a stronger America."

President Bush has given us a safer world. We must protect it by allowing our creativity, aggressiveness and ingenuity to flourish and build a stronger America. That effort starts right here in Irving, Texas.

It requires the same formula that brought you in the North Texas Commission this far -- planning and cooperation, teamwork between public and private sector, faith in the future. For all our efforts, the future of the United States as a leader in the world marketplace has never been brighter.

After all, as the President likes to say, "America is the land where the sun is always peeking over the horizon." May I add, that's especially true of the Texas sun.

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