

HIGHWAY BEAUTIFICATION AND MRS. LYNDON JOHNSON
(Read only)

- * **A Longtime Commitment.** As First Lady from 1963 to 1969, Mrs. Johnson was an early supporter of environmental protection and highway beautification, expanding nationwide a Texas tradition of support for roadside parks and plantings dating to 1929.
- * **The Highway Beautification Act of 1965:** Mrs. Johnson lobbied key congressmen to pass this landmark bill, saying "we are obligated to leave the country looking as good if not better than we found it." The bill enabled improved landscaping, the removal of billboards, and screening of roadside junkyards. Its passage is considered one of her most important achievements.
- * **The National Wildflower Research Center:** After President Johnson left office in 1969, Mrs. Johnson continued her sponsorship of environmental initiatives, especially those to enhance the nation's highways. On her 70th birthday in 1982, Mrs. Johnson founded this center to support research on native wildflowers and to promote their planting nationwide.
- * **Wildflower summit:** In 1987 Mrs. Johnson sponsored a summit on wildflower programs, bringing together programs from five states (including Texas) and asking them what they needed. Her efforts, supported by Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas during that year's federal surface transportation program reauthorization, helped to create a requirement that ¼ of one percent of the landscape budget of federally-funded highway construction projects be devoted to planting native wildflowers. The federal commitment also includes more funding for related research, public-private partnerships, and support for the restoration and preservation of wildflowers and other native plants.
- * **Continued involvement:** Mrs. Johnson has continued her involvement in beautification issues, meeting in 1993 with Secretary Peña and FHWA Deputy Administrator Garvey to discuss the status of wildflower programs and publishing her book *Wildflowers Across America* that same year. She also has promoted research on the biological and aesthetic importance of wildflowers native to the places in which they are planted: "Vermont should look like Vermont, California like California, and Texas like Texas."
- * **Mrs. Johnson on beautification:** "When I found myself in the White House, it was natural -- and inevitable -- for me to turn to the movement we called beautification. (We never could think of a better word!)... Though the word 'beautification' makes the concept sound merely cosmetic, it involves much more: clean water, clean air, clean roadsides... To me, in sum, beautification means our total concern for the physical and human quality we pass on to our children and the future."

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August 25, 1997

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Infrastructure Dollars Pay Big Dividends

8/12 State, City Projects Build Jobs and Competitiveness

By FRED R. BLEAKLEY

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"Field of Dreams" may have been a movie about a mythical baseball field in the Midwest. But the nation's cities and states have their own real-life versions of "build it and they will come."

In Grand Rapids, Mich., a new convention center is under consideration; in Charleston, S.C., there's a new super-highway opening a nearby peninsula for corporate sites. And dozens of cities are expanding or building airports.

"We starved infrastructure for years," says Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating. "Now, we're making up for it." His state has just committed to spending an extra \$1.3 billion on new roads over the next five years, and has put up a million square feet of shell buildings in 14 areas — making it easier for offices and plants to relocate.

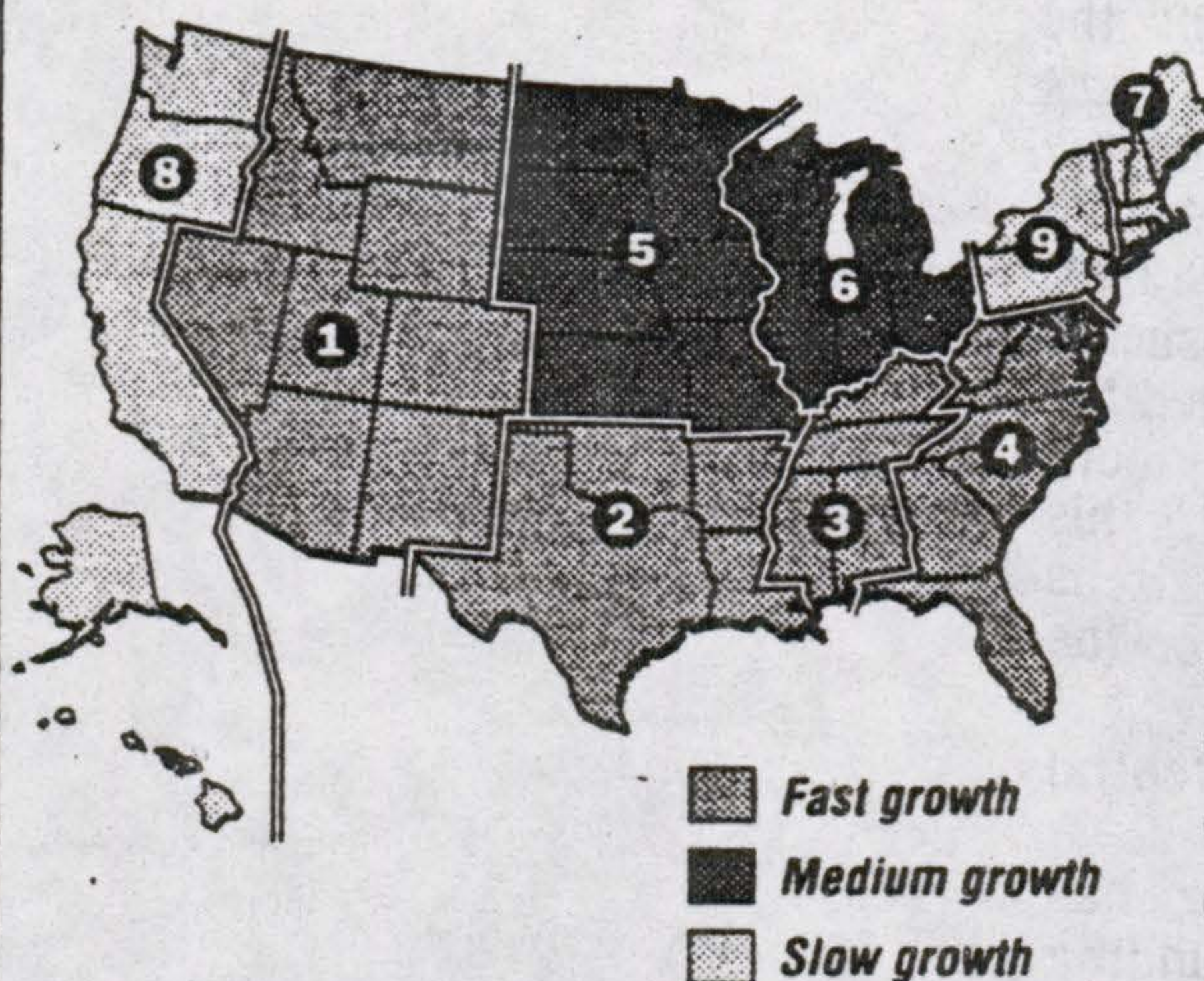
Spending on infrastructure — a word that was associated with crumbling bridges, roads and other public projects in the tax-spending debates of a few years ago — is hot. Because of heated competition between states for corporate plant and office relocations, more and more regions have better roads, sewers and transportation systems.

Correlation With Job Growth

Indeed, the value of state and local government structures jumped from \$2.4 trillion at the end of the 1980s to \$3.1 trillion in 1995, according to the latest government data available. The figure advanced to nearly \$3.3 trillion last year, estimates Regional Financial Associates, a West Chester, Pa., economic consulting firm. RFA also calculates the nation's spending on roads and other infrastructure as a percentage of total nonresidential construction stepped up to an average of more than 24% in the 1990s, from an average 19% throughout the 1980s.

The regions that spent the most reaped the biggest rewards in new job growth, according to RFA's analysis. Regions where infrastructure investment was higher than the national average, including the Mountain, Midwest and Southern states, had better than average job growth. By contrast, infrastructure spending as a percentage of personal income in the Pacific, New England and Middle Atlantic states was less than the national

Infrastructure Spending: The Road to More Jobs



	1991-96 SPENDING*	JOB GROWTH
1 Mountain	1.28%	4.51%
2 West South Central	0.96	2.71
3 East South Central	0.93	2.69
4 South Atlantic	1.31	2.53
5 West North Central	0.98	2.39
6 East North Central	0.90	2.04
7 New England	0.79	1.28
8 Pacific	0.74	1.05
9 Middle Atlantic	0.63	0.49
United States	0.89	2.00

*As a share of personal income

Sources: National Association of State Budget Officers; Bureau of Economic Analysis; Regional Financial Associates, Inc.

average—and so was job growth.

A coincidence? Obviously, other factors played a role in why some regions attracted more jobs than others. And often the infrastructure spending stemmed from a promised incentive package to land a new plant once a company expressed interest in moving.

But, clearly, there is a link and more and more state and local economic-development agencies are recognizing that unless they are prepared to invest in more infrastructure spending they will be left behind in the jobs race.

Getting in the Race

"States have stepped up because business demands it," says Dennis Donovan of the Wadley-Donovan Group of Morristown, N.J. "If an area does not have infrastructure in place, including basic roads, sewers, telecommunications capability and transportation, they will not even be considered by the vast majority of companies."

Corning Inc. says Cabarrus County, N.C., would have been out of the running for a new fiber-optic-cable plant if the county hadn't decided a few years back to invest in a sewer system that could handle industrial waste. Corning broke ground on the site, 15 miles east of Charlotte, that will employ 600 workers early this year.

Determined to stop the drain of companies out of the state and to attract new

ones, the state of Ohio tied infrastructure expenditures to economic development about four years ago. Since then, says economic-development director Don Jake-way, at least half a dozen new large job relocations came to the state because of the building of new roads to rural areas, as well as local spending there on utilities.

One was a new steel fabrication plant in Delta, Ohio, 25 miles from Toledo, that Worthington Industries Inc. opened in June. Helping to swing the deal: fast coordination between state and local authorities for expenditures on road widening, water-line connections and even a stop sign at the local railroad crossing.

Investment in Key Facilities

Just last month, Ohio announced that Toledo had beaten out a Michigan site to hold on to its 4,900-job Jeep assembly plant. A "critical" factor, Jeep's parent Chrysler Corp. said in deciding to make a \$1.2 billion investment to refurbish the plant and build a new one nearby, is the promise of more than \$20 million in infrastructure grants and low-interest loans. A new interchange off the interstate is part of the package.

Sometimes the kickoff to an economic-development boom is a sports stadium that may not seem related at first to a corporate decision to relocate. Jacksonville, Fla., city fathers are convinced that the National Football League's selection of Jacksonville for an expansion team put the city on the map for corporate moves.

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Meeting Global Competition

"Suddenly, we were in a league with Atlanta and Charlotte as a place to be looked at," economic-development head Jerry Mallott says. The decision by the state to build the area's Mark Clark Expressway in the late 1980s opened the door, he says. But once companies are satisfied their business needs will be met, they often turn to the "livability issues," Mr. Mallott adds. Jacksonville landed the most "mega" projects — those with more than 1,000 employees — of any U.S. city this year, he says. The new corporate citizens include a national claims center for the

health-insurance division of **Prudential Insurance Co. of America**.

For many areas, the spending has meant making hard decisions on funding for social programs. But economists say the infrastructure spending has widespread benefits besides the direct impact on new jobs, less traffic congestion and regional economic growth. Construction-equipment maker **Caterpillar Inc.** just reported record quarterly profit, thanks in part to the infrastructure-spending splurge on airport expansion. Also, by helping corporate America increase productivity with more efficient plants and offices, local governments are helping to make the U.S. more competitive in the global market.

The federal government, too, is getting ready to do more. Late last month, the Senate passed a \$42 billion transportation bill that provides an extra \$4 billion — more than a 20% increase — in spending by the highway trust fund over the next fiscal year. And the Clinton administration said recently that 28 more states joined the existing 10 to become eligible to participate in a federal infrastructure bank that helps fund bridge and road projects.

Still, no one is saying the nation's aging, existing infrastructure doesn't remain a problem. Recently appointed Federal Reserve Board governor Edward Gramlich believes more innovative funding is needed. "Maybe there should be a pay-as-you-go system so that trucks with the most axle weight pay more to use federal highways and airplanes flying at rush hours pay higher fees," he says.

"There still may be an infrastructure deficit, but at least it is smaller," says Alicia Munnell, a former member of the Council of Economic Advisers. "The debate over whether spending on airports, roads and the like is unproductive has been settled. It's just silly to say it doesn't pay off."