

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW H. CARD, Jr.  
"THE FUTURE STARTS HERE" CONFERENCE  
MAY 13, 1992  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Thank you and a special welcome to our honored guests and particularly to our keynote speaker this morning -- Fred Smith (Chairman/CEO Federal Express).

I'd like to welcome all of you from the Department of Transportation, other government agencies, and from the broader transportation community.

We are here today to think about the future.

But instead of gathering a group of tarot card readers, stargazers, and crystal ball seers, we have assembled an outstanding group of experts. They will discuss the dynamic forces that will shape the future of our nation and its transportation system. The same forces that will affect the way the Department of Transportation operates in the years and decades ahead.

### **RAPID PACE OF CHANGE**

Predicting the future is, of course, risky business.

Look at the 1939 New York World's Fair " FUTURAMA EXHIBIT." It was the first exhibition ever to feature a large-scale model representing the transportation

system of the not too distant future. Where pristine, uncongested, multi-lane highways crisscrossed each other and wrapped around quarter mile high skyscrapers -- complete with rooftop landing pads for heligeros and dirigibles.

They imagined cars traveling of 75 to 100 miles per hour ... radio beams at the front and rear of each vehicle to regulate the spacing between them ... and light strips embedded in the edge of the road to obviate the need for headlights.

Some of these predictions were accurate -- but many of them were way off the mark. What they couldn't conceive of were the tremendous changes -- in population patterns, in industrial production, in information technology and other innovations that would sweep post war America and change the face of our society today.

As we approach the end of the 20th century, the pace of change is only getting faster. And we are less likely to be able to predict where these changes -- these surprises -- will take us.

But while we may not be able to see the future precisely, we can certainly point to those forces out there that will drive the world of the 21st century.



*That's why we're here today -- to put a spotlight on the importance of understanding changes, assessing where we are and where we are headed, evaluating new ways of doing business.*

### **PANEL FOCUS: TRENDS, TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNMENT**

Our first roundtable panel of experts will examine forces driving the transportation system of the future -- the forces of community development, demographics, industrial dynamics and world competition. How, among other things, the advent of "edge cities" and the rapid rise of "two worker households" are changing the way we use our transportation network. Even the newspaper is telling us how local traffic congestion is greatest on Saturday, as working parents have no choice but to use this day to run errands.

Technology is another key issue we will discuss at this conference. Already, intelligent cars and highways along with magnetically levitated rail systems are being tested.

And if it's true that "necessity is the mother of invention," then the next several decades will result in technological innovations not yet dreamed of by most people: of aerodynamic flying boats ... space planes

and personal rockets ... teleporting schemes that beam people to where they want to go.

There's also an essential human element in everything we do in transportation -- after all, transportation is about serving people. The operation of our future transportation network will especially demand training and skills not even imagined today. Our speakers this afternoon will highlight these key concerns. In particular, they will discuss what it takes to have a technically and culturally literate people -- people able to see and adapt to challenge and change.

Our last panel roundtable discussion will focus on how government itself needs to follow suit in adapting to the demands facing us in the 1990s and beyond.

The Coast Guard is a perfect example of changing roles and approaches. We used to think of them as the keepers of lighthouses and savers of sailors. Today, their mission is far reaching as it involves responsibilities for the marine environment ... enforcing trade policy ... drug interdiction ... and immigration.

A central focus of this panel will be the whole notion of "reinventing government." Infusing the government with a new entrepreneurial spirit: one that relies on the market, community involvement, and private sector participation. That's exactly what we are trying to do in



transportation today with ISTEA .... aviation reauthorization ... regulatory review ... privatization initiatives.

### **A CALL TO ACTION**

As I said earlier, we can't see or predict the future any better than those back in the 1939 world's fair could. However, we can help shape it by the actions we take today.

Our skills, our learning, our wisdom, our creativity and experience will make the biggest difference for the world of the future. We must apply this talent to solving our problems today and use it to prepare for a better tomorrow.

Those of us in the federal government have a special role to play. We must contribute to and build on the actions and innovations of other people, firms and institutions. We must be part of the solution and not be perceived as part of the problem.

When I came to DOT in January, I told people that I have long thought of transportation as the best place to work in government. Why? Because the work we do today, the decisions we make -- all of us in the transportation business -- will directly affect the world for our descendants some 100 years from now. After all,

the highway bridges we built 30 years ago ... the subway system we constructed as much as 90 years ago ... and the railroad lines we laid down more than 150 years ago ... still influence the way we conduct our nation's business.

We will continue at the Department to investigate new technologies and ways of doing business. However, we will not rush into the construction of unproven systems. Instead, we will carefully investigate what needs to be built, making sure it fits the needs of the public -- as we are doing now with the National Maglev Initiative.

The effect we have on this nation will be the most constructive if we are sensitive to changes, aware of other people's needs, and receptive to new approaches.

In particular, we must be able to work as partners. That's why we have invited DOT employees and our colleagues in transportation -- from industry, environment and energy agencies, research and academic institutions, and state and local governments.

Let's all join together then to navigate around the next bend. The depth and contours may be changing as we proceed. But let's combine our knowledge and



talents to read the markers, and keep adjusting our course as we go.

### **FRED SMITH INTRODUCTION**

Our keynote speaker this morning is a man who adapted well to the eddies and flows of change. While in college, he saw a need for quick, package delivery service and had the imagination and drive to make it become a successful reality. No one thought it would work -- now the whole world is running to keep up with his purple and red striped fleet of planes and vans.

His focus on quality service, the use of information technology, and the efficient combination of the many modes of transportation, places his company squarely at the forefront of the transportation services industry.

If any company is aware that the "Future Starts Here," it's Federal Express.

Let me now introduce to you the Chairman and CEO of Federal Express -- Frederick Smith -- who will now talk to us about the challenges facing transportation in the future.

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