



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar today announced that a California firm and Army engineers will participate in a program designed to prevent truck cargo theft through the use of an electronic vehicle identification system.

"President Nixon has made it clear that cargo theft is a transportation problem that must be resolved and he has directed me to lead the way," Secretary Brinegar stated. "This is one of several projects to meet that objective."

Hoffman Electronics Corporation of El Monte, California, has been awarded a \$35,000 contract for its portion of the work. The Army Electronics Command at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, will also participate in the project.

"What we are looking for is a simple but effective method for electronically identifying vehicles from a helicopter. We also want the capability to quickly find missing vehicles," Secretary Brinegar explained. "The devices must be small, inexpensive, and work day or night in any kind of weather."

Primary use will be to prevent truck hijackings and the theft of loaded trucks and tractor-trailers. The underlying objective is that the devices be able to contribute to the routine day-to-day operations of the motor carrier industry.

Demonstrations are expected to begin in about five months. Results will be analyzed to determine whether to proceed with live field testing in the New York City-Northern New Jersey area where truck hijacking is a serious problem.

Secretary Brinegar noted that in New York City last year there were 171 major hijackings and 101 stolen trucks or tractor-trailers, adding up to a cargo loss in excess of \$8.5 million. The Garment District there alone had 2,400 additional truck thefts of small quantities, swelling the New York City loss total to more than \$24 million, he added.

"Cargo thefts contribute not only to organized crime, but also to increasing costs," the Secretary said. "And those costs are passed on to the consumer."

The program is being managed by the Transportation Systems Center of DOT with the Department's Office of Transportation Security.

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