Our 25th Year

DOT Today

Moving America Together

July 1992
Volume 1, No. 10
U.S. Department of Transportation

Alaska Highway Celebrates 50 years

By Keith Mulrooney

Sam Johnson, a packer, on a trip between White Road and the Alaskan border (1943).

America was at war with Japan. President Roosevelt and his top aides felt an Alaskan highway was necessary to help protect the mainland from Japanese attack and to connect a string of airfields across western Canada and Alaska — airfields used to ferry American aircraft to the Soviet Union for use on the eastern front against Hitler.

In 1942, with the Public Roads Administration (now the Federal Highway Administration) playing a major role, construction began on the nearly 1,500-mile project. In June, Japanese planes attacked the U.S. naval base at Dutch Harbor, Alaska, and a month later seized the Aleutian Islands of Attu and Kiska, giving an even greater sense of urgency to completion of the highway.

Moving equipment on Teslin Lake.

Over two years, at a cost of $138,312,166, the Army Corps of Engineers, Public Roads Administration and 81 U.S. and Canadian contractors constructed a pioneer road and a 1,442-mile final road across virgin lands from Dawson Creek, British Columbia to Delta Junction near Fairbanks, Alaska, crossing five mountain ranges and 100 rivers in the process.

"The Alaska Highway was considered so important to the nation's defense effort in 1942 and 1943 that approximately half of the Public Roads Administration's employees were assigned to the project," says former FHWA administrator Frank Turner.

For Turner, a six-week temporary detail grew into a four-year assignment on the highway. Initially tasked with rounding up equipment from Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps camps, Turner's next job was to ship the equipment to the vicinity of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. There he ran a warehouse for equipment and parts and built housing for the highway work crews.

Donjek Road with Army Bridge, 1943.

Under an agreement with the Corps of Engineers, Public Roads was responsible for the engineering, design and supervision of the highway under the overall plan. Turner was placed in charge of the 900-mile segment from Dawson Creek, British Columbia to Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.

After the highway was completed in 1943, Turner stayed on to help turn the road over to Canada. He was the last American to leave the project once he

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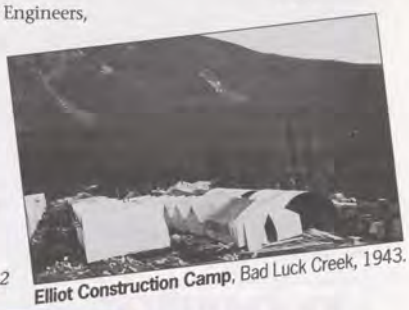

Elliot Construction Camp, Bad Luck Creek, 1943.

Card Urges Action to Save America's Merchant Marine Fleet

On June 17, before the Senate's Subcommittee on the Merchant Marine, Secretary Card unveiled the administration's new comprehensive maritime policy, which emphasizes deregulation and increasing the efficiency of the U.S. industry. Without action, Card said, the U.S.-flag, foreign-trade merchant fleet could be virtually extinct by the year 2000. The policy features a new system of contingency retainer payments to U.S.-flag ship operators, to ensure that vessels will be available to meet national security requirements while maintaining an American presence in international commercial shipping.

Ship operators who receive the payments will be required to keep ships sailing under the American flag and make them available during wartime or a national emergency. Other highlights of the maritime program include:

- Help for U.S.-flag operators in obtaining modern ships, by broadening the use of an existing tax-deferral program which helps in funding ship construction, and by supporting the use of the federal ship financing fund to help build ships in American yards.
- Reducing, then eliminating, the 50 percent duty operators must pay when they use foreign shipyards for repairs.
- Efforts to eliminate foreign shipbuilding subsidies, and establishing new shipbuilding R&D and export promotion programs.
- Encouraging investment in U.S.-flag ships.

The new maritime policy received favorable review from maritime labor. "On initial review, we believe we can fully support the thrust of the initiative," said the presidents of eight shipboard and two longshore unions. "It will have beneficial effects on the economy, the nation's defense capability and the employment situation," the joint statement said.

The heads of the two largest U.S.-flag shipping companies also released a joint statement saying, "We are impressed by the scope and vision of the new maritime policy announced by Secretary Card." ▮

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(left to right) Jim Cheatham; J.C. Turner (later Public Roads Administrator); "Car" Curtis, deputy commissioner of Public Roads; George Williams, chief of construction, Ft. St. John; Dan Cadmers, inspecting engineer, and D. Braman. (1942)

had signed the documents giving British Columbia and the Yukon Territory portions to Canada on behalf of the U.S. government.

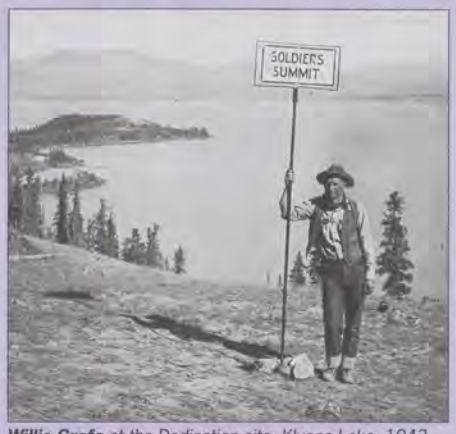
50th Birthday Events

Festivities for the highway's golden anniversary began at Mile 0 in Dawson Creek early this year and will continue through November 20. A wide range of events will be held along the highway, including Airmada '42 (July 4-12) and Rally Alaska Highway '92, a race from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks (September 17-27). The U.S. Postal Service has also issued a special stamp to commemorate the anniversary. For more information, contact the Great Alaska Highway Society, P.O. Box 74250, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99707 or call (907) 452-8000. ■

Retiree Writes Book About His Experiences

Public Roads surveyor Willis Grafe was 22 years old when he sailed north from Seattle to Skagway, Alaska, in the hold of an old wooden cannery boat. It was April 1942 and Grafe was on his way to help build the Alaska Highway. After unloading in Skagway he learned that the Army had been carrying bombs a level below him on the boat. Undeterred, he stayed through the highway's final construction and "wind-down" in November 1943.

To survey many sections of the proposed highway, Grafe says it was necessary to use dog sleds. Usually a couple of engineers, their guides and dog teams would set off for weeks at a time and cover hundreds of miles. Survey work was sometimes performed at temperatures as low as 20 degrees below zero.



***Willis Grafe** at the Dedication site, Kluane Lake, 1943.*

This year, Grafe and his wife are traveling the highway — as tourists this time — and he has recently published a book about his experiences back in the '40s.

Willis Grafe's book, "An Oregon Boy in the Yukon: An Alaska Highway Story," is 170 pages long and contains 50 photos. For a copy, send $11.95 plus $1 postage and handling to: Chisnumum Press, 3400 Takoma S.W., Albany, Oregon, 97321.

Watch Your Step on the Beach

Beachgoers this summer will have more to look at than shells and sand on the water's edge, says a recent report by the Center for Marine Conservation. Tons of trash are piling up, and the majority of it is — that familiar word — plastic. The Coast Guard has strong regulations and enforcement methods near beaches and on the high seas, and the problem is improving, but still, the dumping goes on. The main danger is to marine life. Many plastics, which constitute 59 percent of all beach debris, look like food to sea turtles and other creatures, but will prove fatal to them. Birds and animals often get caught in plastic six-pack rings; if they swallow pull tabs or other small objects, they can choke or severely injure themselves.

The most common single item found by clean-up crews on beaches is cigarette butts — 940,430 of them were collected during the 1991 study. Clean-up crews continually urge people not to use the beach as an ashtray.

The good news is that significant **decreases** were found in the number of bottles, cans and ships' galley waste during the last year.

DOT Today

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Secretary of Transportation	Andrew H. Card Jr.
Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs	Marion Blakey
Director, Media Relations and Special Projects	Lon Walls
Editor	Sue Challis
Associate Editor	Ros Kaiser

This is your publication, and we value your input. Let us know how we're doing!

If you would like to submit letters, comments or suggestions for articles, please address correspondence to: Editor, DOT Today, OST, Office of Public Affairs, A-20, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. (202)366-5578; FAX (202)366-3703.

Please Recycle

Aircraft De-icing Conference Attracts 800 Worldwide

(from FAA Headquarters' Intercom)

A two-day international conference on how to fight ice buildup on planes attracted approximately 800 aviation experts, including 65 international representatives. Represented at the conference were aircraft manufacturers, de-icing equipment manufacturers, airport operators, universities and research institutions, government agencies, and airline maintenance, operations and dispatch employees.

Held in suburban Washington, D.C. on May 28-29, the turnout at the FAA-sponsored event showed a global "common concern" about aircraft icing hazards, FAA Deputy Administrator Barry Harris told the group. Over the years, he said, international aviation experts have collaborated to reduce the hazards of windshear, midair collision, aging aircraft and terrorism. "We've pooled information and technology to meet each new challenge," Harris said. "And through our collective efforts, we've made air travel the safest form of transportation in the world."

FAA officials said the agency is working on preliminary decisions regarding a new de-icing policy and expect to have a new safety program on the books before the winter. The new policy will replace FAA's existing rule, which Harris characterized as "frustratingly simple." The rule states that no person shall take off in an aircraft with ice, snow, or frost adhering to the wings.

Many airline pilots have made many "go" or "no-go" decisions in adverse weather conditions. "Luckily, they were almost never wrong," said Harris. "The problem is, luck should have nothing to do with this decision. The pilot must have the best information possible..."

The conference followed the crash of USAir Flight 405 in March, after takeoff in a snow storm at New York's LaGuardia Airport. Ice buildup on the wings is being investigated as a probable cause of the crash in which 27 of the 51 on board died.

The conference concentrated on numerous areas including aircraft and wing designs; de-icing fluids and how they work under various weather conditions; hazards of de-icing fluids on people and the environment; air carrier and airport operator recommendations on placement of de-icing stations; ground crew advice on procedures for de-icing; pilot and crew training in ice detection and recognition; special maintenance training for various types of de-icing fluids, and aircraft dispatching and sequencing.

"I find it sad, even ironic," Harris concluded, "that with all our great technology, ordinary winter weather, like snow, ice and frost, is still capable of bringing down the most sophisticated aircraft and the most experienced pilot...we must move swiftly and decisively in seeking to reduce the hazards of aircraft icing." ■

By now, each employee should have received a copy of "The Future Starts Here," the booklet commemorating DOT's 25th anniversary.

If you did not receive a copy and would like one, send a request including your complete DOT address to:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Attention: M-443.2
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

NHTSA, FHWA and the Olympic Connection

Just about the time the Olympic bicycling competition takes place in Barcelona, Americans will be seeing youthful cyclists from the U.S. Team in public service announcements (PSAs) on bicycle safety.

In addition to the PSAs, the athletes will also be featured in a brochure, a poster, and a 10-minute video on bicycle safety. Sponsored jointly by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Federal Highway Administration, the materials are part of DOT's intermodal campaign to promote bicycle safety.

***Jessica Grieco**, an Olympic bicycling team hopeful, and her father, Alan, who was an Olympian in the 1964 games.*

Filming took place at the team's camp in Hunt, Texas, where some 30 cyclists have been training, hoping to represent the U.S. at the Olympic games.

The cyclists featured in the video are Nathan Sheafor, Dede Demet, Bob Mionske, Jessica Grieco, and their coach, Chris Carmichael. So far, Sheafor and Mionske have made the U.S. Olympic Team.

Cyclist Nathan Sheafor talks about the importance of being seen on a bicycle (conspicuity is the technical term), which can be achieved by using reflectors and flashing lights at night, and wearing dayglo-colored clothing during the day.

Mionske, who lost a bronze medal in the '88 Olympic road race in a photo finish, stresses adherence to rules of the road—such as observing lane changing and signals.

Demet, who was also on the Women's Junior National Speed Skating team, discusses courtesy on the road, and how to ride defensively.

Grieco focuses on the need to wear helmets. Her father was an Olympian in 1964, when, unlike the protective helmets used today, the headgear was of relatively thin leather, more decorative than practical. He crashed and fractured his skull, and is fortunate to be alive.

Joel Spring, who commutes 18 miles each way to work in San Antonio, is also part of the video. He promotes cycling as an energy-saving, healthful means of transportation.

The PSAs feature Grieco on helmet use and Mionske on rules of the road. Sheafor is pictured on the safety poster.

The joint national bicycle campaign is the first of its kind for NHTSA and FHWA. NHTSA's mission is to enhance bicycle safety and to reduce bicycle/motor vehicle-related fatalities and injuries. FHWA emphasizes bicycling as a true mode of transportation and offers technical guidance on the design of bicycle lanes, paths, and other facilities.

To obtain bicycle safety campaign materials, contact NHTSA's bicycle and pedestrian program office, headed by Leslie Heffner, at (202) 366-2761. ▮

DOT Leads the Way

Once again, in 1992, the Department of Transportation led all other participating organizations in the Washington, D.C. Race for the cure, an annual run and walk to support the fight against breast cancer.

DOT had nearly 2,600 contributors who raised almost $24,000 for this most worthy cause. The event, held June 20, was led by Vice President and Mrs. Quayle and included dignitaries from the federal and D.C. governments and the entertainment community.

DOT's large turnout was due largely to the personal interest of Secretary Card and his senior staff, and the support and hard work of the various OST and modal race coordinators.

Thanks to the DOT family for once again demonstrating your mettle! ▮

DOT Promotes Pedaling or, How Your Energy Can Help Save the Environment

Recent surveys tell us that a health-and fitness-conscious America **wants** to bicycle and walk more, and would do so—if it were safer and there were more facilities available to make it easier to get where they want to go.

People generally are fed up with gridlock on our roads and pollution in our air and would like to make a personal contribution to improve the quality of life. They know that fewer cars on the road means reduced pollution and more fuel savings.

This has led to strong state and local support for programs that expand opportunities for cycling and walking. In many places this has resulted in more bicycle lanes and paths, and more bike lockers and racks—equipment that makes transit systems (trains and buses) user-friendly for cyclists.

Intermodalism is a winner all around, and with recognition of bicycling and walking as forms of transportation, DOT has strengthened its efforts to increase cycling and walking among Americans.

The department promoted biking during the fuel shortage in the 70s, but interest waned when the crisis was over. Then in 1990, the National Transportation Policy gave strong support to bicycling and pedestrian programs and encouraged planners and engineers "to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian needs in designing transportation facilities for urban and suburban areas."

***Nancy MacRae**, deputy director, Office of International Transportation and Trade, has been bicycling to work since 1972 (on this same bike), following the same route from her home on Capitol Hill to DOT Headquarters. She follows the bike lane on East Capitol Street, then the back streets, crossing where pedestrians do. The trip takes 10 minutes to work, 15 minutes (uphill) to home. Nancy says "It's faster, more direct, healthful, and cheaper!"*

***John Fegan**, FHWA bicycle program manager, cycles part of the way to work from his home in northwest Washington, leaving his wheels in a Metro station locker. Fegan says he likes the flexibility the bike offers.*

In February 1991, John Fegan became the Federal Highway Administration's bicycle-pedestrian program manager. Then, last July, Josh Lehman was named the overall department bicycle coordinator, a position created in the 1991 DOT appropriations legislation. His job is to guide DOT's intermodal bicycle-pedestrian policy. During the late 70s and early 80s, Lehman was instrumental in planning the city of Seattle's comprehensive bicycle transportation program, considered one of the best in the country.

Last year, Congress also appropriated $1 million for DOT to conduct a National Bicycling and Walking Study and develop a plan for increasing usage. FHWA was given responsibility for the study. The final report is expected by the end of the year.

When the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was passed last fall, it offered at least half a dozen significant funding opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian programs, most of which must be generated through local and state government planning agencies. ISTEA also requires the appointment of bicycle/pedestrian program coordinators in each state's transportation department.

Federal Transit Administration funds will continue to be available, as they have been in the past, for improvements that serve those who bike to the bus or train. Franz Gimmler, who coordinates FTA's bicycle efforts, hopes that "Bike 'n' Ride" facilities will become as familiar as "Kiss 'n' Ride" and "Park 'n' Ride" in the multimodal surface transportation systems of the future.

"It will take a long while for us to connect points A and B for bicycles," says Lehman, "but we're on our way. Seattle, Portland and many other cities around America prove every day that non-motorized transportation can work effectively and safely. We look to citizens and their communities to initiate the ideas for what's needed, and to work with local and state agencies to instill intermodalism."

A brief description of the ISTEA provisions for bicycle and pedestrian programs is available from the FHWA bicycle program office, (202) 366-5007. ▮

AroundDOT

Items for Around DOT are compiled from news releases, wire stories, trade journal articles and information provided by the various operating administrations.

Headquarters

Summer Interns Arrive

The Department of Transportation's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) hosted an informal reception on Monday, June 15 to welcome 38 undergraduate and graduate students chosen to participate in its 1992 Summer Internship Program.

***The interns** in this year's OSDBU program posed for a group shot outside headquarters.*

The Program will be administered by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and the National Transportation Consortium of Minority Colleges and Universities. The interns were selected from colleges throughout the country.

The nine-week internship is designed to provide the college students with quality experience and employment opportunities.

Another group of 15 college seniors and graduate students from all over the country are part of the DOT Summer Intern Program for Diverse Groups. The program is being managed by FHWA staff with the advice of a panel of human resources, diversity and civil rights specialists. Each student is assigned to a mentor in the department. The mentors are responsible for guiding and helping interns conduct research on transportation policy and technical issues. During the course of the 10-week program, the students will also visit city and state transportation agencies in Baltimore, Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle.

"The Department of Transportation is committed to encouraging increased diversity in the transportation workforce," Secretary Card said. "We hope these programs will encourage many bright, competent college students to pursue transportation-related careers."

OIG Staff Runs for Special Olympics

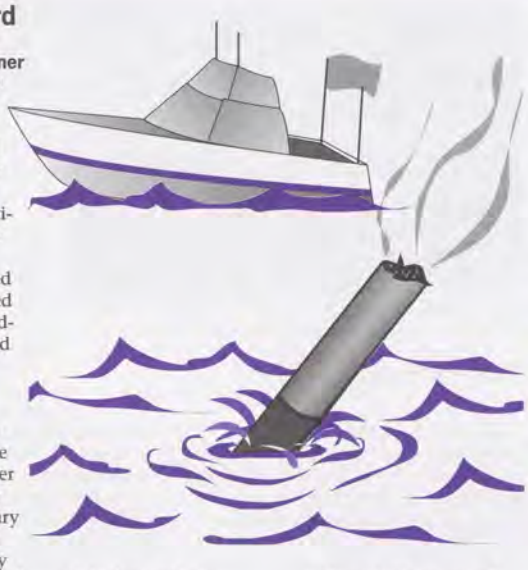
On May 15, much of the staff in the Office of the Inspector General participated in the Law Enforcement Torch Run to benefit D.C. Special Olympics. Although it was an overcast day with the threat of rain, brave auditors, investigators and OIG administrative staff turned out. In addition, the staff sold 40 specially designed t-shirts with proceeds going to Special Olympics. More than $80,000 was raised overall.

U.S. Coast Guard

Smoking Ban is a Winner

There has been a 30 percent decline in cigarette use among active-duty personnel since July 1990, when the Coast Guard set forth the toughest anti-smoking policy in the armed forces.

Smoking was banned in virtually all enclosed spaces, including buildings, ships, aircraft and government vehicles. The smoking rate dropped from 28.5 percent in 1990 to 20 percent this year. "The 20 percent rate is better than any of the other branches of the military and considerably less than the rate of use by the general population," said Capt. Al Steinman, who heads the Coast Guard's Wellness Program.



He said a combination of the ban and the Wellness Program has resulted in 40 percent of the former smokers in the Coast Guard giving up cigarettes since July 1990. Although 25 percent of the enlisted personnel still smoke, only two percent of officers and 12 percent of warrant officers still do.

Research and Special Programs Administration

Larger Trucks OK in New York

RSPA has denied New York City's application to limit the capacity of gasoline and fuel oil delivery trucks. No evidence was found that the larger trucks, which are permitted to operate nationwide, had more frequent or more serious accidents than the smaller trucks requested by the city. The agency found that the city's regulations exceeded federal safety standards and created an unreasonable burden on commerce. RSPA did grant the city's request to retain regulations for unloading of gasoline and for local response procedures in accidents or other emergencies involving these delivery trucks. New York City has filed for a state District Court review of the decision.

Technology Workshop

From June 22-24, RSPA's Volpe National Transportation Systems Center and the National Defense Transportation Association's Technology Committee co-sponsored a workshop entitled, "Integrating Commercial/Defense Transportation: A Vision of the Future." The workshop focused on strengthening the defense and commercial partnership in making effective and efficient use of transportation and information technologies available now and in the future.

Federal Aviation Administration

Safety Grants Awarded to Universities

FAA has awarded research grants valued at $2.2 million to six universities to study aviation safety. The grants are the first under a new program authorized by the Aviation Safety and Capacity Expansion Act. Subsequent awards are expected to bring the value of grants issued under the program to $15 million. Twenty-seven additional research programs are currently being reviewed. The first grants were awarded to: Massachusetts Institute of Technology; University of Utah; Purdue Research Foundation; University of Washington; Lehigh University and Rutgers University. Research areas range from improving cabin safety to increasing the level of aviation security to corrosion fatigue of materials used in aircraft.

Federal Transit Administration

Grants Announced for New York Mass Transit

On June 1, Secretary Card announced two FTA grants totaling $217.8 million to replace and rehabilitate metropolitan area rail facilities in New York and to construct a new operations and administration facility in College Point, Queens. "These grants will greatly enhance mass transit in New York, while supporting nearly 12,000 new and existing jobs," Secretary Card said. The larger of the two grants involves $209.8 million in rail modernization funding for 14 projects. The second award is a discretionary grant of $8 million to the New York City DOT to replace an aging operations and maintenance facility built in 1946. The new operations center will support a fleet of up to 275 buses, 100 more than the current center can accommodate.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Secretary Card announced on June 22 that alcohol-related traffic fatalities dropped nearly 10 percent between 1990 and 1991, marking the lowest alcohol related fatality toll since 1982.

Card said that the 9.9 percent decline, from 22,083 alcohol-related deaths in 1990 to 19,900 in 1991, was the largest one-year drop ever recorded. "The Department of Transportation has been on a decade-long crusade to focus national attention on this tragic problem," Card said. "Today's figures show steady progress by an alliance that includes state and local governments and industry and citizen groups. Far too many lives are still lost each year because of drunk drivers."

Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation

Foreign-flagged vessels entering the St. Lawrence Seaway are now being screened under a new, abbreviated inspection program for compliance with U.S. safety and environmental protection laws. The new program means reduced disruption to vessel traffic. The inspections are the result of a cooperative agreement signed recently by the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation and the Coast Guard.

The agreement was established to promote maritime safety and protect the environment, while fostering maritime commerce, said Stanford E. Parris, administrator of the Seaway Corporation.

Under the agreement, Seaway Corporation and Coast Guard inspectors are boarding foreign-flagged vessels at the U.S. Snell Lock in Massena, N.Y., and conducting their condensed inspections as the vessels travel westbound to the U.S. Eisenhower Lock, three miles upriver. Screenings serve as the initial phase of the Coast Guard's full safety inspection of a vessel at its first U.S. port of call.

***Lt. Commander Frank Shelly**, supervisor of the Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment in Massena, N.Y. looks at a navigational map with Ted Brue of the Seaway.*

Office of Commercial Space Transportation

Launches Added to OCST Manifest

Thirteen launches have been added to the U.S. Commercial Space Transportation manifest, bringing to 51 the number of missions planned over the next few years. Those added since February are: Orbital Sciences Corp. (ORB COM, TRW Brilliant Pebbles); AMROC (HyFlyer 1 and HyFlyer 2); EER Systems Corp. (Consort 8, 9, 10 and 11); McDonnell Douglas (Dominion DVS-1), and General Dynamics (AMSC MSAT and INMARSAT 3—Flights 1, 2 and 7).

"I am very pleased by the continuing success and growth of the U.S. commercial space transportation industry," said Secretary Card. "Since 1989, when the first DOT-licensed launch occurred, 26 commercial launches have taken place, and the manifest has nearly doubled."

Federal Railroad Administration

An FRA award of $500,000 will cover half the cost of a study of high speed rail between Milwaukee and Chicago. The states of Wisconsin and Illinois will fund the balance. The 18-month Rail Corridor Study will consider a wide range of rail alternatives designed to reduce automobile travel/congestion and improve air quality in the area. The study is expected to lead to a 10-year improvement plan for moving from conventional to cost-effective, high speed steel-wheel rail service on an incremental basis. After a preliminary analysis and screening of the technologies and route options, there will be a detailed analysis of the most promising options. A final report is scheduled for early 1994.

Federal Highway Administration

Update on Radar Detector Ban Proposal

FHWA recently requested public comment on whether radar detectors should be banned from commercial vehicles. The response was overwhelming — more than 14,000 cards and letters and 1,500 documents. The FHWA has proposed that the ban would cover trucks over 10,000 pounds, any placarded hazardous materials carriers and vehicles designed to carry 16 or more passengers.

Opinion on the ban seems to be split. In general, trucking companies, law enforcement agencies, medical authorities and insurance companies strongly support the ban, while the majority of truck drivers are opposed. The comment period on the ban has ended, and FHWA will now tabulate and analyze the responses before a final decision is announced.

Roadside Drug Tests Set

FHWA has selected four states to carry out a one-year pilot program of random roadside testing for alcohol and drug use by commercial drivers. Nebraska, New Jersey, Minnesota and Utah were chosen to take part in the program to determine the extent of drug and alcohol use among truck drivers, and test the feasibility of maintaining a roadside testing program nationwide.

The states were selected from a number of volunteers because of their ability to perform and evaluate different methods of testing. FHWA must report to Congress on the program by 1994.

Avoid the Summertime Blues

Buckle Up!

Have a Safe 4th of July!

Confirmations

Arthur J. Rothkopf was sworn in June 19 as the new deputy secretary of transportation. Rothkopf has been general counsel for DOT since 1991. Previously, he was a partner in Hogan & Hartson, and was with the Washington law firm for 24 years. Rothkopf succeeds Admiral James B. Busey IV, who left the department to become CEO of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association. During his Senate testimony, Rothkopf said he would "work closely with the senior officials of the department and Congress in fulfilling the President's and the secretary's goals." Some of the goals he identified were safety, intermodalism and greater freedom for transportation service providers in entering transportation markets.

Walter B. McCormick, Jr., of Missiouri, was sworn in June 22 as general counsel of the Department of Transportation, succeeding Arthur J. Rothkopf.

A graduate of the University of Missouri school of journalism and the University of Missouri school of law, McCormick formerly served as Republican Chief Counsel and staff director of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. Prior to that position, he served as legislative assistant to Sen. John C. Danforth (R-Mo.).

Michael James Toohey was sworn in June 15 as assistant secretary for governmental affairs. Since 1989, he has served as senior Washington representative for Ashland Oil, Inc. He has an extensive background in working with Congress and has held several key positions with the Republican staff of various committees. He served from 1983 to 1989 as staff director, Republican staff, of the House Public Works Committee, the main body dealing with aviation issues. Toohey succeeds Galen Reser, who left the department last year.

General Thomas Richards will head the Federal Aviation Administration, permanently filling the administrator position left vacant when Adm. Busey became deputy secretary of transportation late last year. Gen. Richards, who is an experienced pilot, began his Air Force career in 1956. His last position was as deputy commander of the European Command in Germany. Following his retirement from the Air Force in 1990, he began working as an aviation consultant. He was a member of the presidential commission formed to investigate the December 1988 terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103.

Reprinted here is the essay by our second winner in the DOT 25th Anniversary Essay Contest, Elizabeth Brill, from Cold Spring Harbor High School, Cold Spring Harbor, New York.

Superconductivity: A Revolution in Transportation

By Elizabeth Brill, Cold Spring Harbor High School, Cold Spring Harbor, NY.

Although there are countless possibilities for future developments in the transportation industry, the application of superconductivity to various modes of transportation appears especially auspicious. Superconductivity, the state of matter in which a substance conducts electricity with little or no resistance, has the unique potential to have a far-reaching effect in many areas of the transportation industry. Through the implementation of systems of magnetically levitated trains, rail travel will become an increasingly attractive form of travel. The manufacture and use of automobiles powered by superconducting engines will not only decrease the United States' dependence on scarce oil supplies, but also significantly decrease poisonous exhaust emissions. Finally, superconductivity also has the potential to revolutionize shipboard travel, primarily by reducing energy consumption.

Levitating trains are one salient application of superconductivity in the field of transportation. Magnetically levitated trains, known as maglev trains, were invented by scientists at the Brookhaven Laboratory, and further developed by the Grumman Corporation, both on Long Island. Although several countries, including the United States, are currently researching the feasibility of maglev trains, only Germany and Japan have constructed actual systems. Japan's EDS system employs the forces of repulsion between superconducting magnets, while Germany's system uses the forces of attraction between conventional electromagnets.

Although the German system is being researched for implementation in the United States, the Japanese system would probably be more beneficial. According to prominent Japanese engineers, a prototype using superconducting magnets is far superior to one using conventional magnets. Since superconducting magnets have the capacity to produce more intense magnetic fields, they will generate greater lift and thrust. In the EDS system, the train is lifted by the forces produced between the electromagnets on the train's undercarriage and those in the track bed. Alternating currents are then sent to the magnets in the track, which are used both for levitation and propulsion, to control velocity.

Albeit trains are extremely expensive, with track alone costing $2-3 million per mile, they are nonetheless quite advantageous. The high speeds of such trains would allow them to compete effectively with air and automobile travel. Japan's EDS train can travel at speeds up to 321 mph, as opposed to the 200 mph maximum of conventional trains. Additionally, because of its increased passenger capacity, the maglev train would be able to pay for itself in ten years. On the whole, the train would be a feasible and advantageous addition to our transportation system.

A second important application of superconductivity in the transportation industry is a superconducting motor for automobiles. High temperature superconductors increase the efficiency of motors from 75 percent to 95 percent and reduce costs by up to 25 percent. In 1988, a small motor was built utilizing superconducting ceramics. Although too small for practical use, it proved that a superconducting motor is indeed feasible.

Automobiles utilizing superconducting motors would be quiet, nonpolluting, and simple to start. Unlike conventional automobiles, superconducting cars would not use gasoline to run and therefore would not emit poisonous gases, such as carbon monoxide, which are currently destroying the environment as well as creating many health problems. Superconducting automobiles would instead be powered by efficient, lightweight batteries, thus decreasing the nation's dangerous dependency on foreign oil.

A superconducting ship is also a viable alternative to current technology. Superconducting ships, magships, have been developed by the U.S. Navy and by Yoshiro Sajt of Japan. Saji's ship probably has the most potential for use in the U.S. It works much like the levitating trains, placing one set of magnets on the ship and sending a current into the water to generate the second magnetic field.

Since such a ship would have no moving parts, maintenance and construction would be simple. It would also be able to move with little noise or vibration, a characteristic especially useful in submarines. Furthermore, magships would be 50 percent more efficient than conventional ships and would thus further decrease our dependence on scant energy supplies.

Superconductivity certainly has the potential to alleviate the mammoth transportation problems currently facing Long Island. Local businessmen and Congressmen are presently trying to secure funding to construct an experimental maglev train system on Long Island. Such a system would be highly beneficial, as it would help lessen air traffic congestion in the area. The airports are currently so congested that plans have been proposed to enlarge the MacArthur Airport on Eastern Long Island, much to the dismay of many residents. Furthermore, plans are being considered to use the Navy's Calverton Airport as a cargo airport to lighten congestion at Kennedy and LaGuardia airports. The implementation of a maglev system would also decrease congestion on the area's highways, particularly the infamous Long Island Expressway, by providing a viable alternative for medium length trips. The use of superconducting automobiles would significantly decrease the amount of air pollution, a current catastrophe in highly congested New York City and a growing problem in the increasingly populated suburbs. An additional ferry service between Shoreham, Long Island and New Haven, Conn. is presently being studied because of the overwhelming demand on the two existing ferries. Additionally, such a service would reduce traffic on the Long Island Expressway and other highways by diverting traffic across the water. The use of a superconducting ferry would reduce costs, as magships are far more efficient than conventional ships. A magship would also be quieter and more reliable than a conventional ship.

Superconductivity is an important key to the future of transportation, both on the local and national level. Levitating trains will reduce air and highway congestion by improving the efficacy and practicality of train travel. Superconducting automobiles will aid the transportation industry by reducing pollution and energy demands. Shipboard travel could be popularized and modernized through the implementation of magships. Superconductivity may not represent the only answer to the problems of transportation. However, it may well prove to be a key factor in the transportation world of tomorrow.

DOT Achievements Lauded at the National Quality Conference

"From Here to Quality: A National Priority for the Decade," was this year's theme for the fifth annual Conference on Federal Quality Improvement held May 27-29 in Washington, D.C. This event, hosted by the Federal Quality Institute and the President's Council on Management Improvement, underscored the challenge facing today's federal leaders to make our government world class by the year 2000. Conference speakers emphasized management's role to promote innovative management practices for improving products, services, and productivity.

In the Spotlight - Quality leaders in the forefront of transforming the way managers conduct business were showcased. This short list included several DOT organizations such as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Coast Guard.

FHWA's customer-oriented measurement systems and benchmarking techniques for improving tunnel ventilation and pavement smoothness were shown during a videotaped broadcast by four leading agencies. This videotape was used to kick off the conference's awards ceremony.

Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office (MSO) Portland, Maine also distinguished itself as one of nine winners of the President's Council for Management Improvement awards. Nominees must demonstrate measurable improvements in the quality, timeliness, cost, and responsiveness of internal operations, program administration, and overall service to the public. Winners are regarded as models of management excellence in the federal sector.

Singled out for improving oil spill prevention and response capabilities, MSO Portland chaired a highly successful Maine and New Hampshire Port Safety Forum with participation by petroleum industry representatives, environmental groups, oil spill response contractors, local volunteers, university and maritime educators, and officials from federal, state, and local governments. The opportunity to recommend measures to avert oil spill threats was welcomed by regional participants whose economies rely on a clean marine environment. As the second largest crude oil importer on the east coast, the port of Portland is particularly vulnerable to environmental disasters.

MSO Portland representatives *Captain Jack McGowan and Lt. Susan Woodruff (center) traveled to Washington, DC to receive their President's Council for Management Improvement award at the National Quality Conference. They are flanked by former Deputy Secretary James Busey and Vice Commandant Martin Daniell.*

The forum identified 50 areas where environmental risks could be reduced and pollution response enhanced. Most notable include improving oil tanker screening measures, implementing harbor transit visibility restrictions, forming or upgrading spill cooperatives, strengthening federal, state, and local spill contingency plans, and enacting joint risk abatement standards that now serve as a Coast Guard model. These initiatives have increased the operational and environmental safety of Maine and New Hampshire port areas without the need for federal rulemaking.

Exhibits—Agency exhibits played a key role in educating conference participants on the various quality initiatives underway throughout government.

This year, two DOT exhibits were featured. The department's exhibit, "Quality on the Move," focused on results-oriented quality achievements. OST, FAA, and USCG representatives were on hand to discuss these accomplishments with conference participants and to distribute publications and material. Next to the department exhibit, FHWA's Federal Lands Highway Office displayed their achievements as DOT's first recipient of the Secretary's Annual Quality Award. ■

On June 16, Secretary Card *(left) welcomed Russian President Boris Yeltsin (second from left) to the National Air and Space Museum in Washington. Secretary Card urged cooperation: "As the Russian-United States political and economic relationship evolves," he said, "so does our transportation relationship. To make that relationship work, our two countries are cooperating more closely than ever." During their visit, Secretary Card and the Russian minister signed an agreement on air space use and air traffic control.*

Employee Profile

A UNIQUE COMBINATION

Putting a Hobby to Work for Safety's Sake

You could say Richard Merritt is crazy about cars — fast cars — specifically, the Ferrari. But he doesn't just admire them from afar. He owns three vintage models and still shows and races them. Over the years, he's even written and published three books detailing how to buy them, fix them and show them.

"I used to import old Ferraris," he reminisces. "but I got out of the business after 1968. The supply had really dried up, and then there were those complicated regulations from that new National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) over at Transportation. I didn't want to deal with that." Now, Richard Merritt enforces those regulations in the import group at NHTSA's Washington, D.C. headquarters.

Merritt became interested in Ferraris while he was a jeep mechanic in the military during the Korean War, and he picked up a copy of Road & Track magazine. Over the years, he has owned more than 30 Ferraris. His work experience has been varied: Ford Motor Company; the GM styling staff (where he worked on advanced vehicle design); selling imported cars, and extensive research and work on alternative fuel projects. He was one of the founding members of the Ferrari Club of America, and is still a senior show judge for the group.

He and his collaborator first published their book on the Ferrari in 1968, in Road & Track magazine installments. It went through four editions and updates, but is now out of print. A few years ago, while in Europe, Merritt was able to meet the head of the Ferrari empire and gave him a copy of his book.

"A few years back, I told a friend at DOT I'd like to learn how all these fearsome government regulations really work," he says. "It turned out the department was looking for someone who knew their way around 'exotic cars.' I figured I was their man." He began as a contractor and became a permanent employee the following year. His group is tasked with monitoring vehicle imports coming into the United States to assure that they conform to DOT safety standards. Emission controls are dictated by the Environmental Protection Agency, and the two offices work closely together.

The "gray market" as it is called, includes cars that are imported by car buyers who feel they're getting a deal. It used to be a healthy business. In 1985, for example, NHTSA examined 8,000 "gray market" vehicles in one month. "The dollar was strong," says Merritt, "and you could save say $5,000 to $10,000 on a Mercedes by buying it in Europe. There was a flood of cars that year, close to 70,000 trying to come in. We even provided flexible hours to help accommodate the volume and the West Coast calls. The market is different now, but people still think they can buy cars cheaper in Europe."

Richard Merritt with one of the books he co-authored.

One of his other duties is to research old records on these cars. Sometimes it's for people who have bought them and want to make sure they have a legal car. If it's not in his computer, he checks the archives. "NHTSA realized early on the need to computerize the operation," says Merritt. "It's all done by the vehicle's serial number because that's the one thing on a car that doesn't go away." Serial numbers can be altered, but through his hobby and his knowledge of the cars, Merritt is able to decipher them like few others can.

Cars are also cross-filed by importer's name. Requests for information must be in written form or faxed, to cut down on errors. Individuals, insurance companies, car dealers, law enforcement agencies and state departments of motor vehicles will receive a DOT approval letter on the car if everything checks out properly. Other agencies, such as the FBI, the IRS and Interpol, are interested in the information in NHTSA's files. "There were many cars stolen in Europe in 1985 that ended up in this country," says Merritt. "About four or five hundred of those may have been Ferraris."

One of the other interests Merritt has had for a long time is safety. "I was one of the first distributors of safety belts in Colorado during the 1950s," he explains. "I also sold hot rod equipment and parts, but I always said to people if you're gonna soup up your car, you'd better put seat belts in it. I always had seat belts in my cars. That sales job helped get me through college, and the profit on my first Ferrari paid for my MBA.

"I often give people a safety talk when they call in to ask about importing a car," he says. "I believe in what I'm saying — and have 40 years of experience. I seldom have anyone go away angry after I tell them what is required on the safety side in order to have a car certified, and they realize it's for their own protection.

"I want the agency to be perceived as the good guy," he says, "not the spoiler. People really are amazed at the personal knowledge I have on the subject of imports. But hey, wouldn't you rather have someone working in this position who loves cars and knows cars? That's the way the system ought to work." ▮

Health & Fitness

The Down Side of Summer

By Capt. Al Steinman, USCG, U.S. Public Health Service

Ah, summer. Picnics, barbecues, the beach, camping. . .

Ooh, poison ivy, sunburn, bee stings. . .

Here are some tips on how to protect yourself from some of the common side effects of all that summer fun:

Poison ivy, poison oak and sumac: These plants have a sticky, sap-like resin inside the leaves, stems, roots and berries, containing the chemical urushiol, a skin irritant. Once the resin touches your skin, it takes about four hours for it to penetrate and cause red blisters or a rash.

Wash the exposed area with cold water — no soap (research has found that soap actually helps spread the resin). Wash hands and under fingernails, so you won't scratch and spread the resin. Thoroughly wash clothing and anything else you may have touched.

Treat the rash and blisters with hydrocortisone cream (calamine lotion does not work as well). Aspirin and ibuprofen may also help. If your rash doesn't respond, then see your physician.

Sunburn

Ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun damage your skin. Whether you get a tan or a burn, it's all still damaging your skin. Sunburn is obviously worse. You pay the price in two ways: increased risk of skin cancer and premature aging and wrinkling of the skin. To protect yourself:

1. Try to stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when the rays are strongest.
2. Wear a hat.
3. Apply a sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB light and is a "PB" number 10 or 15. Apply 30 minutes before exposure to the sun; reapply often, especially after swimming or sweating heavily.
4. Use sunscreen even on cloudy days. UV rays have no trouble getting through clouds.
5. Sunlight is heavily reflected off sand, cement and water. A beach umbrella's effectiveness is limited because it doesn't block reflected sunlight.
6. Protect children from the sun. Skin cancer results from cumulative sun exposure starting in childhood. Sunburn in childhood dramatically raises the risk of cancer as an adult.

Sunburn takes from six to 24 hours to develop complete signs and symptoms. Treat it like any other kind of burn by applying a topical analgesic (containing lidocaine, benzocaine, etc.). Moisturizers such as cocoa butter can help relieve the dryness if skin begins to peel. If the skin is blistered, you may want to see a physician.

Bee Stings

For most people a bee sting is harmless. It produces a sharp pain and a little swelling at the site of the sting, but that's it. For about three percent of the population, however, a sting can be fatal. Prevention is your best protection:

1. Wear shoes and socks while outdoors.
2. Don't wear clothing that is flowered or bright in color.
3. Avoid sweet-scented perfumes, colognes or after-shaves.

If you're stung, the stinger might be left behind, and must be removed. Don't try pulling it out with your fingers or with tweezers — the stinger is attached to a venom sack, and squeezing it injects more venom into you. Instead, scrape the sack away cleanly with a knife blade, then pull the stinger out. Clean the wound and apply a paste made from meat tenderizer and water, or baking soda and water. ▮

EmployeeForum

Diners Club Card — It's Your Responsibility, Too

Since 1983, federal travelers have enjoyed the benefits and conveniences provided by the Diners Club Government Card program. In the department alone, there are over 45,000 card holders.

The popular card program has increased the efficiency of federal agency travel and cash management while providing the government with significant cost savings. With benefits like these, it is in our best interest to use these card services responsibly. This includes using the Diners Club Card only for authorized purposes, promptly filing travel vouchers, and paying off the card balance on time. Supervisors can help by ensuring that employee travel vouchers are promptly processed for reimbursement, assisting employees who encounter difficulties in getting reimbursed, and verifying that employees use cards only for authorized purchases.

As with any financial institution, errors may cause occasional delays or incorrect billings. In these instances, it is every employee's responsibility to resolve problems quickly by notifying Diners Club representatives when legitimate delays in repayment arise .

If all card users act responsibly, the department can be assured of continuing the benefits and cost savings of the Diners Club Card program. ▮

Take Charge of Your Career

All employees want to achieve their highest potential. What is sometimes missing are the tools and techniques to identify and reach these goals.

To bridge this gap, a departmental policy was recently issued calling for a career counseling program in each operating administration. This initiative will offer each employee a unique opportunity to work one-on-one with their supervisor, a career counselor, and a personnel advisor to develop an individual plan to meet both personal and organizational needs.

As a part of this effort, the department piloted a Career Counseling Techniques course where supervisors and human resource specialists learned how to counsel employees about career goals and critical paths for success. A two-day career planning course has also been developed to assist employees in establishing short- and long-term goals along with a methodology for outlining a plan of action. To accomplish this, participants will assess their interests, values, skills, and abilities. Individualized sessions of this course will be offered to meet the specific needs of operating administrations at Headquarters and regional locations.

A self-assessment of your strengths and weaknesses better prepares you to chart accurately career options and pursue appropriate developmental opportunities to meet career goals. The services and training provided by the new career counseling program will help you get started. To learn more about these employee development opportunities, please contact your training officer. ▮

Check It Out...

DOT personnel offices will be asking each permanent employee to verify his/her race and national origin identifier and disability code by August 31. The accuracy of this information is vital. These statistics and trends are provided in reports to management, OPM, and Congress to make federal policy decisions. Verification forms and additional information will be distributed by July 16. Your cooperation is appreciated!

DOT Calendar of Events

July

June 28-July 5 National Sobriety Checkpoint Week

9 National Technology Initiative seminar, Gaithersburg, Md.

15-17 Symposium: Highway/Roadside Safety Management, Albuquerque, N.M., Transportation Research Board, contact Frank R. McCullagh, (202) 334-2950

16-20 International Aerospace Convention, Huntsville, Ala., contact Debbie Roderick, 1-800-SPACE4U, (205)-551-2230

19-21 Conference on Transportation Planning, Programming and Finance, Seattle, (FHWA, FTA, state of Washington), conducted by Transportation Research Board, contact Jim Scott (202) 334-2965

TV-TEN: Transportation Employees Network

By now most employees in the Washington, D.C. offices have seen the new television monitors in the Nassif Building, over at FAA Headquarters, or at the Coast Guard building. TV-TEN, our new employee communications tool at headquarters, is in full swing. Continuous information is provided on upcoming events of interest to employees, and events in which DOT officials are participating as well as continuous CNN coverage. If you'd like to get an announcement on TV-TEN, fill out a special broadcast request form, have it signed by a supervisor and submit it to: DOT Office of Media Relations and Special Projects, A-20, x65564, or fax it to TV-TEN at (202) 366-7211. The forms are available in DOT, FAA and Coast Guard public affairs offices.

And Radio Too!

TRN is the new Department of Transportation Radio Network, offering radio stations around the country a way to access the latest developments in transportation news. TRN offers free radio "actualities" and current news and information from the department's operating administrations. News directors at stations across the country can dial a toll-free number and access important transportation news through TRN's menu-driven, computer-operated system.

Robert Barber, the system's director says that soon TRN will expand to include a weekly five-minute satellite program on interesting transportation consumer topics. For more information, call (202)366-5565. ▮

Sign Up for Thrift Savings by July 31

DOT employees have until Friday, July 31 to join the Thrift Savings Plan or make changes to their current contributions. Three investment funds are offered: G-Government Securities Investment Fund; C-Common Stock Index Investment Fund, and F-Fixed Income Index Investment Fund. CSRS employees may contribute five percent of their earnings with no government match. FERS employees may contribute up to 10 percent, with a five percent match, including DOT's one percent automatic contribution. All contributions are tax deferred.

Transit Benefit Program Update

Since the Department launched its transit benefit program this January, almost 3,280 headquarters employees have enrolled and are now receiving incentives such as tax free metrorail fare card passes worth $21 or $20 in bus tokens each month.

The first cabinet-level transit incentive program of its kind, this initiative is designed to promote greater use of mass transit, w hile reducing traffic congestion and air pollution. The program was recently expanded to include regional employees. DOT field offices may now participate in any state or local government program after obtaining headquarters level approval from their operating administrations. The DOT directive on Field Implementation of the Transit Benefit Program has been distributed to field offices. To date, 90 employees are enjoying these benefits at offices in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, and San Francisco. ▮