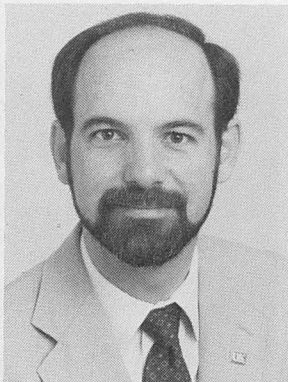


Dr. Thomas W. Lester has been dean of the University of Kentucky Engineering College since July 1990. He came to UK from Louisiana State University where he was professor and chairman of the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Dr. Lester also was professor of nuclear engineering at Kansas State University.

He was a mechanical engineer at the Environmental Protection Agency in North Carolina and has held engineering positions at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft (Florida) and National Cash Register (Ohio).



OPENING GENERAL SESSION Monday, July 25, 1994

Thomas W. Lester, Dean
UK College of Engineering

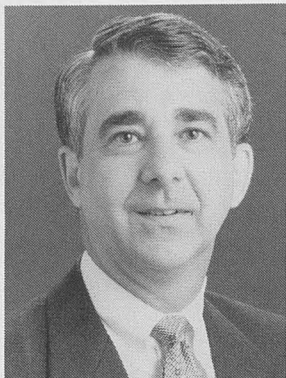
WELCOME AND REMARKS

On behalf of the college and the University of Kentucky, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 31st Transportation Forum. We are very proud of the job that all of you do in keeping our transportation system open. Those who would doubt the need for a good transportation system need only think back to the storm of '94.

Over the weekend I was watching a TV program sponsored by General Electric. As you know, GE's slogan is "We Bring Good Things to Life." I couldn't help but think that there can't be a more appropriate slogan for you. We at UK, especially those of us at the Transportation Center and the Department of Civil Engineering, support the ongoing activities of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.

We think that this transportation forum is a very important aspect in our winning recognition in the state of Kentucky. I wish you good luck and extend a gracious invitation for you to visit the new building that houses the Transportation Center and Department of Civil Engineering. It is long overdue. We think it is one of the best facilities of its kind in the United States and the world, and we think it is symbolmatic of the partnership that has been developing for many, many years between Civil Engineering and the Transportation Center and the Transportation Cabinet.

So, I again welcome all of you to the University of Kentucky and hope you have a productive Forum and I look forward to seeing you back here any time soon.



Transportation Secretary Don C. Kelly was appointed to that post in December 1991 by Gov. Brereton Jones. Prior to that, He was Programs Manager at UK's Transportation Center. Before that, he was Vice President of Schimpeler-Corradino Associates in Los Angeles, Ca., from 1988 to 1991.

Secretary Kelly also served the Commonwealth as Deputy Secretary of Commerce from 1986-1988 and from 1967-1980 in the Department of Highways. He was employed at Murray State University 1980-1986 in various professional positions, the latest being Executive Director of the M.S.U. Foundation and Associate Professor of Engineering.

OPENING GENERAL SESSION Monday, July 25, 1994

Don C. Kelly
Secretary of Transportation

WELCOME AND REMARKS

It is a pleasure to be here. I have been looking forward to this 31st Transportation Forum ever since the topic was selected earlier this spring. We discussed the fact that we usually hold the Forum in the fall and about the need to have a snow conference before the next snowfall occurred, so we thought it better to hold the Forum before fall. That would give participants time to implement what they learn here.

One thing that often came up when we discussed the events of the last winter is Murphy's Law. I'm sure all of you have heard of Murphy's Law--it states that if anything can go wrong, it will, and it will occur at the most inopportune time. We added another law called "O'Brien's Law" of which you may not have heard. O'Brien said, "Murphy was an optimist."

Those of us who work daily with the public (and that would include virtually everyone in this room) went through a period last winter which we would probably like to forget--or at least not discuss. However, I have been told that it is therapeutic to talk about it, and that time has a tendency to heal wounds--so, here we are talking about the big snow storm of '94. I was talking to my wife last night about this and she reminded me that last winter we said that snow was a four-letter word. And, then in the office, we were talking about the "S" word and everybody knows what that means. There is humor in almost any situation and, since I am an optimist by nature, I will tell you some of the funny things that happened.

We received many, many phone calls. I remember a few in particular. One was from a woman whose husband was a truck driver stranded

at the Florence Mall in Northern Kentucky. She accused us of holding her husband hostage and not letting him come home. After talking to her on the phone, I have a feeling I know why he was stranded at the mall--he wasn't too anxious to get home.

This next one is also a true story. One day Mac Yowell was in my office while the phone was ringing off the hook. He took one of the calls and it was from a man heading south on I-75. He said he had just crossed from Grant County into Scott County and wanted to report the condition of the road (as if we didn't know). Mac said, "By the way, where are you going?" The driver said, "I am going to Florida." Mac asked, "Can I go with you? I'll meet you in Lexington."

Probably what struck me as the most ironic was a letter we received a few days after the snow. If you will recall, we were opening roads as quickly as we could around the state and often we would tell the public that a road was open but it was not safe to drive on it at normal speed--drivers had to hold their speed down to 35 or 45, or whatever. When we opened I-24 near Hopkinsville, we advised people to go no faster than 45 miles per hour. Well, the letter I received was from an irate woman who tried to drive 45 miles an hour and slid off the road into a ditch. She suggested that we were not being very responsible for telling people to drive 45 miles per hour.

Those were the sorts of things that we were dealing with during the big snowfall. But, one thing we were able to do was to help the newspapers in the state sell a lot of papers. They tried to show what was really wrong, and what had really happened, and how we could have done it, and what was the best way to do it, and the fact that they didn't have the same problem in Ohio or Illinois. I pointed out that Ohio and Illinois had 4 inches of snow while we had as much as 23 inches in some places--and that was on top of four hours of freezing rain and sleet! We went back through the weather records and, in the 100 years since records have been kept, there has never been a storm quite like that one. We received the brunt of a lot of criticism but, if you look at the positive side, we had workers on the roads around the clock trying to help people get to work or to get to emergency medical services when needed. Many people didn't have electricity and, as a result, many of them did not even have food. We were providing services to relieve virtually life-threatening situations. For four days it was like that, but we didn't lose a single life due to an accident on a major highway or due to somebody getting stranded on the road and freezing to death. I think those are the things that are so important in a situation like we had--that human safety should be considered above all else.

I found it interesting during that time that people were willing to go without electricity for three or four or five days, but they were not willing to go for 24 hours without being able to get in their vehicle and drive somewhere.

I took every media call that came into the central office of the Transportation Cabinet for that week--every single one of them from newspapers, TV, and radio. We met twice a day with the Governor in his office. I met with reporters several times. I talked with the Kentucky Commissioner of State Police, Jerry Lovitt, all hours of the day and night. We had each other's private, home phone numbers. We literally called each other at two or three in the morning several times. I not only received all the letters that came to the Transportation Cabinet but I also received every letter that went to the Governor's Office. I got a good cross section of what the public was feeling, and a lot of it was that people just were not very sympathetic to the fact that the roads were not cleared within minutes after a snowstorm.

Many of you here in this room were out there on the highways doing your job above and beyond the call of duty (many times in life-threatening situations) and doing it in such a way that makes everybody very proud. I told the Governor many times during that winter, how hard our people were working and that is what made it possible to be responsive and to do the job we did. Our mission was to restore the state to some degree of normalcy as quickly as we could. I think we were able to do that, but maybe not as quickly as some people would like. Over the course of the next day and a half, I hope we are able to understand a little better what some of the expectations were and how we should perform.

Did we learn anything from last year's big snowstorm? I think we did. 1. We learned that we do not have the equipment or people to handle a "once in a hundred years" snowstorm. 2. We learned that we must communicate better between the central offices and the districts, and between the district offices and the field offices. 3. We learned that we had better have every piece of equipment ready and field tested before the first snowfall. 4. We learned that contractors, coal mine operators, truckers, and others have equipment that might not be in the right location at the time we need it. 5. We learned that we have to be able to coordinate the availability of equipment and materials wherever we need them--some areas of the state were particularly hard hit while others received relatively little snow or ice. The problem was that there was not sufficient salt in some areas to respond the way we would like.

We also learned that if we continue to do the same things in the same way, we will get the same results, so we have got to change the way we do some things. And, that is what this Forum is all about. We have spent several months developing and preparing plans, talking about what we are going to do, and this Forum gives us a chance not only to review that but to look at ways other people do things. I hope that we will come back with some good ideas.

Where do we go now? That is the purpose of this Forum--to gather together a lot of practical experience and expertise, to pool all this knowledge, and to hopefully leave here tomorrow with a much better

understanding of how we can do a better job with a lot more confidence than we did.

Several months ago, Coach Rick Pitino spoke at a motivational seminar I attended. He said he tells his players that basketball is a game of preparedness. He said that when they put on their shoes and tie the laces and walk across that line on the floor, they are expected to perform at 100 percent--not 80 percent, not half-speed--they are expected to do their very best. I think that is what is expected of us. When we get to work each morning, that is what the public expects us to do. Things like this winter snow and ice storm really highlighted the importance of being able to do superior work. What we are trying to do, as an administration and as a management team, is to put together the resources to give you the ability to do the very best you can, and to support you in doing that. It is still up to you to carry out those functions. All we are asking is that you do your very best every day.

Woody Allen once said, "We stand at a crossroad--one path leads to destruction, the other leads to despair. Let us hope we choose wisely."