



Milo D. Bryant was appointed Secretary of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet in January 1988. During his tenure as Secretary, he has worked to improve school bus safety, has initiated legislation for numerous transportation-related bills, has launched an anti-litter campaign, and has headed an effort to replace over 1,000 deficient county-owned bridges throughout Kentucky.

A founder of Kentuckians for Better Transportation, Secretary Bryant has 31 years' experience in construction-related businesses and has founded six companies. Born in Indiana, he attended Purdue University.

LUNCHEON SESSION
Friday, November 2, 1990

Milo D. Bryant
Secretary
Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

Distinguished guests, local officials, FHWA officials, ladies, and gentlemen, this is one of the greatest moments in the life of a transportation secretary--to be here among the foremost authorities in transportation and to share with you our past accomplishments and future goals. As we assemble here today to brainstorm, to enjoy fellowship, we begin a new decade and prepare for the twenty-first century. In dealing with this challenge, this great Commonwealth, this great nation, must examine and renew its commitment to maintaining our transportation system as the finest in the world and to continue to build on this great transportation system.

This year's topic, "Transportation--Kentucky's Key to Economic Growth," relates specifically to the efforts of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet in providing a safe and effective transportation system for all Kentuckians and for all the traveling public who share in the wealth and beauty of our state.

As you all know, in the past 25 years many exciting changes have occurred in America and in our transportation system. Specifically, a newly-built interstate and defense highway system, the deregulation of the airline and trucking industries, the movements of goods to the marketplace, and the creation of Amtrak (which does not greatly affect Kentucky, but does affect our neighbors).

But, let's look back for a moment. In 1964, car radios were tuned to the Beatles and rock-and-roll, thousands of American troops were stationed in Vietnam, the creation of the U.S. Department of Transportation was only two years away, Martin Luther King won the Nobel Peace Prize, and drivers traveled 888 billion miles of public roads. Today, over 25

years later, car radios are tuned to rap music and heavy metal, troops are now stationed in Saudi Arabia, President Gorbachev won the Nobel Peace Prize, the cold war is history, and nations like Germany are reunited, and other Eastern-Bloc countries are establishing democracy and are free at last. Drivers will travel over two trillion miles of public roads this year. Two businessmen, one from Casey County and one from Jefferson County, who have committed major portions of their lives to the cause of transportation, and many of you in this room, are in the driver's seat watching over 79,000 miles of Kentucky roads.

We are now entering an era in which our Commonwealth's ability to compete both nationally and internationally is critical to our economic survival and our economic growth. We heard great presentations yesterday and today on economic growth progress, present and future. Yes, it is the "survival of the fittest" among states competing for new industry and expansion of existing industry. We can't afford to let the past be our goals for the future. We must strive to be the best. This commitment to compete cannot and will not be forgotten on the local and state level but will be embraced hand-in-hand with national goals and objectives as set forth in Secretary Skinner's transportation policy earlier this year.

As Secretary of Transportation of this Commonwealth, my greatest commitment and the Governor's greatest commitment is to ensure the highest quality of life for all of our residents. I am happy to say that we are meeting these challenges head-on, and I'd like to touch on these challenges briefly today.

First of all, the Governor and I are committed to maintaining and expanding the transportation system throughout Kentucky. Through the passage of the \$600-million road bond, we will (for the first time) pave the way for connecting all four corners of this state. We also are committed to providing the access of every Kentucky city, with a population of 5,000 or more, to a major corridor.

For the first time in the history of this Commonwealth, we are in the process of designing and building five major bridges over the great Ohio River. Those bridges will connect Owensboro to Rockport, Covington to Cincinnati, Newport to Cincinnati, Maysville to Ohio, and Louisville to Indiana.

We have projected these and many other important projects into our Commonwealth's first-ever 14-year plan. This 14-year plan identifies the transportation network that has the highest priority and these projects will move into our six-year transportation road plan. Again, this is the first time ever that any administration has looked into the future--six plus 14 years--for prioritizing transportation needs. This linkage is vital to Kentucky's economy and it is intended to serve the needs of all Kentuckians--the farmer who needs to take his goods to market and the city dweller who spends hours each day in gridlock traffic.

The Governor and I both were born in rural country and we have asked many times, "Why does Kentucky always have to be last?" Well, we won't stand for that anymore and we aren't last anymore! In the past three years, we have tackled and solved many problems, one of which is congestion, particularly in our larger cities where gridlock is occurring because of heavy truck traffic and high traffic volumes (i.e., "Spaghetti

Junction"). In order to correct this gridlock problem, we must escalate road building of interstate and parkway systems. Many interstates near our larger cities are being extended to six and eight lanes.

It's true that we are not far behind cities such as Atlanta, Indianapolis, and Cincinnati who seem to be living out a twenty-first century way of thinking. We are just as serious in Kentucky about progress, expansion, and the ability to compete. We will see the day when, in the space age, man will be able to go around the world in two hours--one hour for flying and the other to get to the airport. So, the need to reduce congestion in our highway system and airport system is extremely important and we are taking the necessary steps in Kentucky to do that.

One program developed to raise awareness of this issue is the "Let's get there" campaign. Each state department of transportation is working together with AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) to raise the visibility of transportation issues on the national agenda and to influence legislators to push for a release of trust fund monies already collected from the American taxpayer.

I don't have to tell you that Governor Wallace Wilkinson is serious about competing--just look what he's done for rural Kentucky with the passage of projects like the \$600-million road bond. He has broken records in the amount of money spent on the 211 program (\$114,098,088) and rural secondary (\$95,694). The Governor and I have made a promise to asphalt all state-maintained gravel roads. This is the first time any governor or secretary has made this commitment.

The Governor and I share many common goals for this Commonwealth, but I think the one we share the most is our philosophy on road building. Our philosophy is that it is crucial to the economic well-being of this Commonwealth to build roads and pay later. We simply can't wait until we need roads to plan on how we are going to pay for them; let me make this very clear to you today. We can never, never be a leader among states in economic development, tourism, education, etc. by building tomorrow's roads on today's cash basis. We must devise ways to pay for roads four to six years from now--be it bonds, toll roads, and roads financed by the private sector.

The bottom line here is while we're making Kentucky more economically lucrative, we also are making Kentucky a safer place to live. Even though the United States has the best highway safety record in the world, there are still more than 50,000 people who died on our roads in 1989. In Kentucky alone, more than 800 people were killed on our highways. We can improve the safety of our roadways through better driver and operator training, like the new commercial driver's licensing regulation. This federal mandate is intended to upgrade the knowledge and skill levels of truckers throughout the country and is currently being put in place in Kentucky. Certainly, improving safety standards of the trucking industry enhances our ability to be economically viable. As most of you are aware, the Governor is planning a special session in January to deal with the DUI issue. We will continue to provide safety. Safety is our mandate.

I would like to congratulate you, ladies and gentlemen, on the professional path you have chosen. You are the movers and shakers of this industry. Please, embrace this choice with much enthusiasm and respect. For the sake of our Commonwealth and our economic development future, you must take pride in planning, managing, and implementing that which is your responsibility. As we leave the '80s and enter the '90s, one thing is certain--new technology, new methods, and new challenges will change the future of transportation. These changes promise to be more dramatic and exciting than what has occurred in America in the past 25 years. And you, my friends, will witness these changes. You, and only you, can make a difference and accomplish these goals.

Transportation is an engine for economic growth and a vital, necessary link between the regions and the businesses and the people of this great Commonwealth and nation. In the past three years, under the Wilkinson Administration, our success in building and developing our transportation system has been a proud accomplishment. In fact, we have set a precedent. Through our combined talents and resources, imagination and innovation, transportation will be tomorrow (as it has always been in the past) integral not only to the way we live but also to building a better America for the future. We are winning in Kentucky, winning because of people like you in this room. Each of you is special--and important--to the future of this Commonwealth.

Some of you in this room are about to embark upon a new professional life. It is your responsibility to take all that you've learned, the mistakes you've made, your progress, and your potential and apply this experience to shaping tomorrow. The future is yours and your responsibilities are immeasurable. You've chosen a worthy career and on behalf of the Governor and myself, congratulations, good luck, and God bless. Thank you.