



Milo D. Bryant was appointed Secretary of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet in January, 1988. 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, October 20, 1989

Milo D. Bryant, Secretary
Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

KENTUCKY'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Thank you for inviting me to be here today, it is an honor for me to be associated with so many transportation professionals.

America is number one today in the world. America is number one in transportation because of our vast, beautiful, and safe transportation network. And you all are, and have been, a great part of that.

The first two years of the Wilkinson Administration have been exciting and we've had some exciting programs. We've had the largest two years of resurfacing program in the history of Kentucky. And, I predict we'll have the largest two years, or even larger, in the next biennium, because it's only right that we bring the cycle time of resurfacing these roads from 35 years to 33 years down to 13 or 14 years. It is our hope that some day soon, we will not have gravel roads in Kentucky, that there will be hard surface asphalt roads, and/or concrete. That is a goal of ours.

We're doing a lot of things today in transportation. We have a thousand fewer employees today than the Administration did two years ago, and we're still accomplishing an awful lot. With a thousand fewer employees, we're maintaining 27,000 miles of state roads. We have approximately 8,596 bridges to maintain and a total of 69,000 miles of road in Kentucky, and many other things that we're doing. So, that means the employees we have are doing more. I think they're excited about what they're doing and they're excited about the support they're getting from the Governor and myself and this Administration.

At the last legislative session, we told the legislators that if they would pass the weight-distance tax (and we must have it passed in order to build and maintain our roads) that we would have all of our new state-of-the-art

weigh stations operational by 1990. We also said that at least 70 percent of the revenues from that tax would come from out-of-state truckers and we projected \$44 million of revenue the first year. They fought us and they fought us, and said we've tried it before and it wouldn't work and it won't work now. Well, let me tell you, we're going to have those weigh stations open January 1, 1990. Eighty percent of the revenues that we've collected so far have been from out-of-state truckers. And, we are running 23 to 27 percent ahead of our projections of revenues of \$44 million the first year. So, I think we know a little bit of what we're doing in transportation and I think it's going to help us even more over the next two years.

I'm proud of the Bus Safety Task Force, and I'm proud to be its chairman. A lot has been accomplished by this task force; we made 17 recommendations on bus safety to Gov. Wilkinson and he accepted those recommendations. What could be more important than the safety of our children and our grandchildren.

Gov. Wilkinson, at the Governors' Conference in Chicago, presented what the task force had presented to him and what he had accepted. Most states left with those recommendations and stated they were going home and try to implement as many of them as they could, because they thought that was leadership. They felt the foresight in Kentucky and of this Governor was tremendous in trying to protect our children, and they were going to try to do the same, and yes, we're very proud of that.

I want to tell you about our county bridge program. We speak of safety for our children, but we have 1,031 bridges in Kentucky that a school bus loaded with children couldn't cross. When the bus pulls up to the bridge, it has to unload the children, go across the bridge, and then reload. That's the way it has to be done in all kinds of weather. Even the farmers couldn't take their products or heavy equipment across these bridges and that has gone on for 30 to 40 years. No administration ever had the time or money to say they were going to do something about rural Kentucky or something about fixing our county bridges.

Well, as you know, we are doing something about these bridges. Within the next five years, we're going to replace bridges that are 50-feet in length and have only a 13-ton capacity. And yes, those school buses will then be able to go over those bridges and the safety of our children will be assured. Thank you, Calvin, and everyone who is involved in helping with this program.

I want to talk to you today about the \$600 million bond issue that Gov. Wilkinson and I are proposing. It will generate \$700 million and this bond issue is in our six-year program. Our six-year program is \$2.5 billion and, for the first time in the history of Kentucky, we are matching projects with revenues from one through six years. It is a six-year program that has integrity in it, has fairness in it, and has projects in it that are badly needed in Kentucky. And, in this \$2.5 billion six-year program is a \$700 million bond issue stating which roads we want built with this money. We're also saying we want to dedicate that bond money to those roads so future administrations cannot move that money to other projects. If you pull out that \$700 million and the General Assembly says we don't think you need it, we're going to redo the six-year program and all the projects are going to have to slide back. I'm sure there won't be a legislator who will be happy when we have to move back projects in his area, and I don't blame him. This six-year

plan is a good plan, the bond program will work, and I'll tell you why it will work. As of July 1, 1990, our percent of road fund dollars going to bonds will be approximately 16 percent, very low. Traditionally, our percent of road fund dollars going to the bond debts is around 25-26 percent and has run that way for 15 to 20 years. Well, I want to tell you that ours is not going to run 25-26 percent. It is our projections (and we think we have some very capable people in transportation to figure out and know these numbers) that in the next biennium, in 1991, it will run about 18.5 percent and in 1992, probably 19 percent. That is well under what it has been running consistently for the last 20-25 years. So, I say that we have a good six-year road program and I believe the bond program makes a lot of sense.

We're talking about building roads, it's been promised for years, and roads are needed for economic development in tourism and safety to move Kentucky forward. We have to finish the AA highway; it starts somewhere and goes nowhere until we get it finished. Route 23 must be finished for people to come in from Ohio. If we're ever going to have economic development in Eastern Kentucky, we have to have a route that will go through Kentucky and into Virginia. The Mt. Sterling to Camargo road is one of the most dangerous roads that we have in Kentucky, and the only way we can do something about that road in the future is with bond money. US-68 from Bowling Green and US-80 to Cadence will open up an entire section of Kentucky for economic development, and it's badly needed. That will be done with bond money, federal money, and state money.

There are other roads in this program, but they are all roads that need to be done based on economic development, safety, and other factors. I don't see how anyone could question the need for these roads.

So, it has been said at this Transportation Forum that if you believe in the Tooth Fairy and the Easter Bunny, you might believe in the six-year program. Well, I believed in tooth fairies at one time, and I still believe in Easter bunnies. There are people who have been in Frankfort for 20 years and say they had a road in the four-year plan one time that took 24 years to build. What happened? Why didn't those roads get built? All of a sudden we don't understand tooth fairies and Easter bunnies. Well, there are good representatives and good senators; I'll tell you the problem, they're thinking back, they're not thinking forward. They're letting politics affect the future. And, we're talking about good government. Good government, once they sit down with me, and let me explain what I'm telling you today about how we in transportation can afford to debt surface that bond issue and about the integrity of the six-year program and how it is designed, and is going to work like the six-year plan has never worked in the history of Kentucky—I'm going to predict they're going to change their mind and they're going to be looking under a pillow for the Tooth Fairy and they might even have some Easter bunnies. I really think that those folks who are saying that just don't understand what this is all about, and we're going to try to change their thinking.

Our anti-litter program called Adopt-a-Highway is very, very popular. All of the roads in Montgomery County are being maintained by the citizens of that county through the Adopt-a-Highway program. That is just marvelous! It sets an example for all counties and shows what can be done with civic organization and counties, and how we can clean up Kentucky so that each of you will have clean, well-mowed highways to attract industry and tourism,

and so we can have highways of which we can be proud. This is a program you deserve and one that we're going to continue doing. As I have told our engineers time and time again, it is a priority to me and Gov. Wilkinson to maintain these beautiful roads as we have this past year and I'm very proud of the help and support that we've gotten from virtually everyone.

During this Forum you have looked at funding and you have looked at laws and standards affecting all of us. You're dedicated to a cause to move the world as quickly and as safely as possible, and I commend you for the work that you've done here these two days.

We are talking about highway safety at this Forum. Each week in the United States, 1,000 people are killed on our highways. It is so sad when we read in the newspaper that a large jet has gone down with 250 people aboard. The investigation is reported on television and in the newspapers for weeks. But, stop and think, every week in the United States, we have the equivalent of three 747 jets going down—that's how many people die on our highways. That shows the importance of what you are doing at this Forum for the last two days, and what you've done for years, to help us build safer highways. It's so unfortunate that we still have to have 1000 people a week die on our highways. It's even worse that 25 percent of those deaths are caused by DUI offenders. Gov. Wilkinson has done a great job, and we're going to do more, in trying to bring that DUI percentage way, way, down.

In closing, I would like to applaud the roads scholars for their dedication. We all benefit when these officials become more skilled.

It's been very enjoyable to be here. It's an honor for me to come and speak to this group, and I thank you so much for inviting me. I wish you all the best and hope you all have fruitful transportation careers, and I know you will.