

LUNCHEON ADDRESS

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If Governor Nunn were here, I know that he would like to tell you how every important he considers highway programs. Some of the benefits he sees are immediate. Some of the advantages of a brand-new highway can be recognized the day it is opened to traffic.

At a time when more than a thousand Kentuckians die in highway accidents every year; when more than fifty thousand of our fellow Americans will lose their lives in traffic accidents this year, the worth of a modern highway can be demonstrated statistically.

It has been estimated that a modern highway, built to the standards of the Interstate System, will spare one life a year for every five miles in service. On this basis, when we have finished both the Interstate highways and Parkways now planned, we can expect that the reduced accident rate on the Commonwealth's highways will allow three hundred Kentuckians to live out useful lives, Kentuckians who would otherwise be three hundred more entries on the grim list of fatalities we now total every year.

Modern highways have another worth, another benefit, another value, not necessarily so immediate or so apparent, I mean the opportunity for business growth, the opportunity for more and better payrolls and for richer, more secure lives. When Congress and the Appalachian States recognized that the depressed condition of people in the eastern mountains of the United States demanded attention, a major ingredient in the remedy they chose was a two billion dollar highway construction program. Here in Kentucky, we have come to the same conclusion about other areas of the State which have continuing economic problems. The great system of parkways we have built and are building are Kentucky's own solution to their problems.

Governor Nunn has always believed that the thrust of his administration should be toward a sounder economy and a better life for all Kentuckians. I know he feels the four great parkways which have been authorized during his administration are a major element in his campaign to reach these goals.

The future for highway administrators would be a great deal simpler if we could say that we will finish these great highways now being built; 738 miles of Interstate highways, 629 miles of parkways, 418 miles of Appalachian highways, then settle down to a comfortable housekeeping operation, clearing snow, mowing roadsides and picking up beer cans. As Commissioner Goss told you this morning, unfortunately that cannot be. We have other needs that demand attention, that cannot wait.

Today I would like to take a few minutes of your time to attempt to stimulate your thinking, to give you some thoughts to ponder, not about the immediate future, but thinking ahead into the next century. Think with me for a moment and try to guess when the wheel will become obsolete as a transportation tool. Will it be superseded by the air cushion or perhaps some even more exotic device? How long will government and the people allow us to pollute the air? Our society is approaching the point where it may no longer tolerate the basic propulsion unit of automobiles which now pollutes the air. The electric motor is perhaps the most promising and imminent candidate to replace the internal combustion engine. We must think ahead to a method of remotely guiding and controlling moving vehicles. Modern technology has already proposed an electronic guidance system with a sensing unit mounted on the vehicle and a transmitting unit located in the roadway.

The concept of the Highway Department providing most surface transportation may change rapidly with the perfection of the laser beam. Ultrasonic vibrations, chemicals and heat are some of the methods now developed which can reduce the cost of tunneling by one-fourth of its present cost. Think of the possibilities! Think how much money could be saved during the winter with no need for snow removal and on repairs now being accomplished under adverse weather conditions. Think of the possibilities of freeing land now used for roadways to tax-producing purposes.

Another method of propulsion that has been discussed is the pneumatic tube concept, in which a vehicle is supported by an air cushion and propelled through a tube. Electromagnetism might do the same thing. Some types of vehicular transportation we may yet see are: turbotrain or gas-turbine train; hydrofoil ships, minibuses; hovercrafts; rail busses; moving sidewalks; pedes-trains; marketeer cars; monorail; rail pavement concept; auto-train and rollway, and exclusive bus roadway.

You're probably thinking as I mentioned these modernistic concepts in transportation, "This is too far out for us to bother thinking about." However, what we all need to do is to stimulate our thinking beyond the present day problems in moving people and vehicles. Let us set ourselves some distant goals!

As examples:

- By 1980, urban rapid transit and interurban transportation service to be at least as good as it was in 1908.
- By 1975, all employable and willing-to-be-employed citizens to be working or in school learning a trade.
- By 1979, air and water pollution to be fouling the land only ten percent as much as it is today.
- By 1979, lets have 60% less crime than there is today.
- By 1985, 25% of the nation's Gross National Product can be coming out of the oceans.
- By 1979, death on the highways to be 25% what it is today. The automobile must be twice as safe and 10% less expensive.
- By 1975, the nation's welfare rolls to be half the size they are now. No one will be dying for simple lack of food and medicine.
- Within 10 years, natural disasters will wipe out only a fourth as much of the nation's assets as they now destroy annually.
- By 1980, good 5¢ cigars will be plentiful.

Absurd goals? So was putting a man on the moon just 10 years ago. Even in 1961, the "concensus of experts" was that it couldn't be done before 1975 at the earliest.

Simply by pulling a project up out of the pack, leadership gives it visibility. Suddenly thousands of volunteers, with all kinds of capabilities, leap up to knock the hurdles over, creating in the process whole new banks of knowledge, new industries, new wealths of experience and capability. Among other things, it recalls to mind the comment of the great soldier-statesman George Marshall: "There's no limit to what a man can do if he doesn't care who gets the credit."

Without a goal established, we have a tendency to sit back and worry only about the present, plus 15 or 20 years. As rapidly as technology is advancing, this type of planning is not adequate. We have moved forward at a much faster pace with the development of transistors and miniaturized circuitry than we ever could during the era of the old vacuum tube. With the development of the laser beam it is impossible to predict the rate of development. I am sure it will be much more rapid than we are presently prepared to handle.

Is what we are building today adequate for the need of the future, or are we building obsolescence and obstacles to future accomplishment? When Governor Nunn chose as a slogan for his expression, "Every Kentuckian Counts," I am sure he did not mean to limit it to just those three million of us who serve this great Commonwealth today. Among the Kentuckians who count are millions yet unborn, the generations yet to come. As we plan and build highways for the future, we must not forget we build for them as well as for ourselves.