



THE ROAD TO RICHES

**BUILDING THE
NORTH AMERICAN
SUPERHIGHWAY
SYSTEM**

By Carol Stabler

During the fourteenth century, an enterprising young Venetian set out to explore an eastern empire rich in silk, spices and other rare goods so much in demand by those in a luxury-hungry Europe. In doing so, Marco Polo became the first to encourage trade between Europe and the Far East.

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It was a trade relationship that would reshape the economies of two continents over the next century. One wonders if the travels and stories of Marco Polo inspired the early proponents of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Surely, the founders of North America's Superhighway Coalition, Inc. (NASCO) shared Marco Polo's vision of creating a trade route that would carry the wealth of its trade partners across a continent.

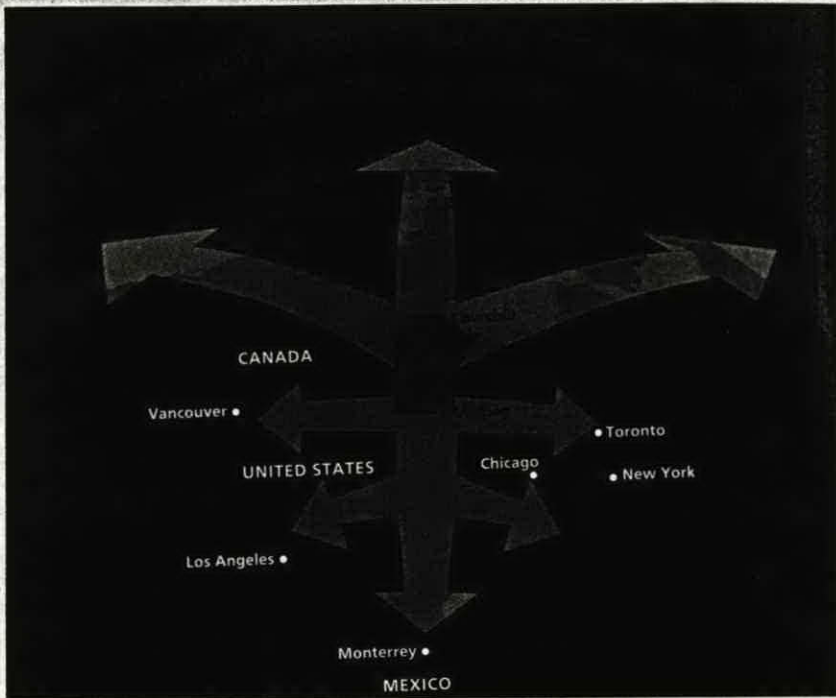
A Good Idea Takes Shape

What began as a traffic congestion problem in a North Texas county has emerged to become one of the most ambitious and propitious transportation stories in recent years. The story of the North American Superhighway System is the epic tale of how a local problem became an international opportunity for a nation eager to embrace the benefits of free trade.

With the ratification of the NAFTA in 1994, trucks laden with the products of three nations began rolling down the highways of NAFTA territory. Denton County Texas contains more lane miles of Interstate Highway 35 than any other county in the United States. The small bedroom communities and college towns within Denton County were soon burdened with traffic and heavy truck noise from the nearby Interstate. Something had to be done. Denton County Judge Jeff Moseley ordered a thorough study of the traffic flows and congestion along Interstate Highway 35 (I-35) through his county.

It soon became apparent that the North Texas County was not alone in its plight. Truck traffic was increasing all along the trade route. Construction slowdowns in one county caused traffic backups upstream on what was quickly becoming a river of trade through NAFTA territory.

Judge Moseley convened a meeting of County Judges from all Texas communities traversed by the trade route. The first



meeting was held in Salado, Texas in the late spring of 1994. During that meeting and others that followed, a plan was drawn up to visit with State Legislators and officials from the Texas Department of Transportation to seek their advice and assistance in mitigating the growing congestion along the trade route.

The Growth Of NASCO

North America's Superhighway Coalition (NASCO) was born, and with it, a monumental effort to change the way government officials look at the Interstate Highway system.

Soon Oklahoma was approached and a forward thinking Majority Whip seized the opportunities for economic growth that membership in the Coalition would bring to his state. Oklahoma Senator and Vice Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee Keith Leftwich drafted the legislation that authorized his state to join the coalition. The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce and the Wichita Area Chamber of Commerce, State of Iowa, the Province Manitoba and City of Winnipeg soon followed, as did

other communities along the route.

The Coalition gained international stature when The Ambassador Bridge at the Detroit, Michigan/Windsor, Ontario international border was the first private-sector member to join NASCO. The bridge stands as the busiest international border crossing in North America, and connects the world's two largest trade partners.

The Ambassador Bridge serves as an economic lifeline joining two nations. More than ten million vehicles cross the bridge each year. It carried fully 27 percent of the \$319 billion merchandise traded between the U.S. and Canada in 1997. Recent improvements have been made to the border crossing to support the growth of trade and the increase in traffic at this international point of entry. They include a multimillion dollar Plaza Customs Inspection and Administration Building (1993) and construction of 20 state-of-the-art Customs booths (1994).

Realizing that improvements to the highway would result in less wear and tear on equipment and greater expediency in delivery of their cargo, major trucking companies and transportation-related industries joined NASCO. Among the new



The Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad Intermodal Facility at Alliance expedites the movement of products into and out of this 8,300 acre, master-planned international business & transportation center located 15 miles north of Ft. Worth, Texas on I-35

members were Frozen Foods Express Industries, Inc., Trinity Industries, Inc. and Love's Country Stores. In addition, several corporations with an interest in the technological and financial aspects of the trade corridor joined. They include Ensearch Corporation, Lone Star Gas Co., Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc., Hillwood Development Co., Maverick County Development Co., The International Bank of Commerce in Laredo and the Laredo National Bank. The international scope of the Coalition was further enhanced when the Consul General of Mexico in Dallas joined NASCO.

The highway system was no longer to be viewed as a domestic road system designed for interstate commerce and recreational travel. The passage of NAFTA had changed forever the way we view surface transportation. The Interstate Highway system had literally become an international river of trade on which the products of three nations traveled. Moreover, NASCO was determined to seek structural and technological enhancements to the trade corridor. What began as an means to coordinate efforts to gain Congressional approval of an International Trade Corridor System (ITC) designation

within the framework of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) had evolved. By the fall of 1995, NASCO had become an international coalition of free traders bent on capitalizing on the many advantages of their strategic location along the trade route that connects the three NAFTA trade partners.

The Coalition worked tirelessly to educate government officials at the local, state and federal levels. Town Hall meetings and legislative briefings took place in every community along the two thousand mile route from Mexico City to Winnipeg. The mission of NASCO was to create an integrated, intermodal, intelligent and international surface transportation system connecting the three NAFTA trade partners through the heartland of the Americas.

The need was apparent. The surface transportation backbone of this enormous trade market is a highway network which includes U.S. Interstate Highway 35 as the central spine, along with its connecting corridors of international significance. These important connecting trade routes include Interstates 30, 40, 29, 80 and 94, the Pan American Highway in Mexico and the Trans Canada Highway. The roads join the United States with its two biggest trade

partners in the largest free market in the world. Since the passage of NAFTA, total U.S. exports to Canada have increased from \$100.1 billion to \$150.1 billion. Total U.S. exports to Mexico have increased from \$41.6 billion to \$71.3 billion. Moreover, it is estimated that close to 50 percent of all surface trade moving by truck among the three NAFTA partners travels the corridor route. Structural improvements and technological advancements to the highway system remain vital to keeping the flow of trade along the route moving efficiently.

Major freight carriers understand the need for infrastructure and technological improvements to the trade route and support the efforts of the Coalition. Contract Freighters, Inc. (CFI) began service to and within Mexico over a decade ago, and has enjoyed double-digit growth in this segment of its business during the past several years. We at CFI believe that NASCO is right on target with respect to their initiative to improve the trade I-35/IH29/IH94 corridor, noted Herbert J. Schmidt, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing for the international trucking firm. "The explosive growth of trade between the U.S., Mexico and Canada makes it imperative that we focus on the transportation infrastructure today or face critical problems in the future. We must also improve and streamline our border crossing facilities and processes. These two projects must go hand in hand," he added.

The Passage Of TEA-21

Nineteen ninety-eight was a watershed year for the Coalition and the free traders in NAFTA territory. Senator Leftwich was elected to serve as President of the Coalition. Under his leadership, the Coalition offices relocated from Dallas to Kansas City, a central point along the I-35 trade corridor. Membership expanded and lobbying continued in earnest. "Change is coming," noted Leftwich. "It is our job to see that it is good for us. North America's Superhigh-



Harley-Davidson Motor Company recently began producing Sportster model bikes from its new \$82 million KC plant.

way can be the Mississippi River of the next century in the principal north-south trade corridor of North America," he added.

The countless hours of planning, trips to Capitol Hill and visits with local officials and legislative leaders paid off in June of last year when President Clinton signed the Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-first Century (TEA-21) into law. The legislation ensures that the Americas will remain globally competitive by:

Providing balanced, accessible, integrated and efficient transportation to advance America's economic growth and competitiveness, by giving National Highway System (NHS) designated routes connectivity with Interstate System maintenance programs;

Establishing a border crossing program that improves the safe movement of people and products across international borders within NAFTA territory;

Building a program to plan, design and construct corridors of national significance for international and interregional trade (Among them, are roads supported by NASCO members);

Improving highway safety through

strong incentive programs to encourage seat belt use, increase drunk driving penalties, enforce motor carrier safety programs and expand the Hazard Elimination Program.

TEA-21 also provides \$217 billion in surface transportation improvements over the next six years and guarantees \$198 billion in highway and transit funding. The law allocates \$28.6 billion to the National Highway System, \$23.8 billion to maintenance of our Interstate Highways, \$33.3 Billion to the Surface Transportation Program and \$20.4 billion to Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation. In addition, \$8.12 billion is earmarked for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program and \$42 billion is allocated to transit programs.

Shortly before TEA-21 went to Congress for a vote, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater commented on the importance of the bill during a speech at the National Press Club in Washington DC. "This is some of the most significant domestic legislation that lawmakers will consider this year," he noted. "It is about the next sixty years. It is about the economy, the environment, equal opportunity and so much more. This bill is

truly about our future," Slater remarked.

Indeed, transportation as a percentage of the United States' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has risen from about 11 percent to over 13 percent in recent years. The passage of TEA-21 ensures the development of a fully integrated and interconnected transportation system that links air, water, rail and highways in a powerful way that will take America into the 21st Century. It will be international in reach because nations and businesses can no longer ignore the global economy. Through TEA-21, our highway system, our international inland cargo ports and our coastal seaports will be connected. In doing so, our businesses will be given the competitive edge they need to compete in global commerce.

It is a global commerce that was greatly fueled by the passage of NAFTA in 1994. The legislation created the largest free trade partnership in the world and built a trilateral job market that has boosted the economies of three nations. Now, five years after NAFTA became law, its success has been proven. A report issued in the summer of 1998 by the U.S. International Trade Commission stated that two-way trade between the United States and its NAFTA partners increased 43.2 percent between 1993 and 1996, from \$293.2 billion to \$419.9 billion. It is estimated that total trilateral trade among the NAFTA nations for 1998 was over \$500 billion. In addition, Mexico has eclipsed Japan as the United States' second largest trade partner, behind Canada.

The members of NASCO will derive considerable benefit from the passage of TEA-21. The Coalition worked hard to secure the passage of this landmark transportation legislation. Within the provisions of TEA-21 are a border crossing program to improve the safe movement of people and products across the Canadian/US and Mexican/US borders, and a program to plan, design and construct Corridors of National Significance for international and interregional trade. I-35, I-29, I-94 and their connecting

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Interstate Highways are among these identified high priority corridors.

The Intelligent Highway System

Additional provisions in the TEA-21 law call for the implementation of 'smart highway' technology along the trade corridor highways. Truck transponder cards will be encoded to relay information about the truck, its driver, cargo and destination via roadside readers to a central vehicle tracking station. Harry Caldwell, chief of highway needs and investments for the U.S. Federal Highway Administration, believes that 'smart card' technology will expedite travel along the route in several ways, including giving drivers the ability to bypass weigh stations and border checks. "After a truck has been weighed and it approaches another weigh station, the smart card system knows that it has already been processed. It gives the truck the green light to bypass the weigh station without stopping," Caldwell pointed out. The system will allow clear passage through several interstate checkpoints and the international borders. Assuming a minimum amount of fuel and cargo stops, a shipment of goods leaving Winnipeg Canada could enter Mexico in 38-40 hours, a considerable difference from the current time of 72 hours.

Other technology applications include systems for monitoring real-time traffic flow along the route and conveying information about congestion points and alternate routes on overhead message boards. In addition, technology will be used to identify congestion at key exchange points along the trade corridor where intermodal connectors to water ports, air cargo ports and rail yards can be built or expanded to expedite the flow of goods.

Virginia based Booz-Allen & Hamilton has been working with the U.S. Department of Treasury in its efforts to modernize international trade processing systems at border crossings. The advanced technology engineering firm also is working with the Department of Transportation in its

development of the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) operational test program and with the International Border Crossing System. "Our involvement in these programs led us to NASCO. We felt we could contribute a significant amount of current experience to the development of I-35/I-29/I-94 as a 'world class' transportation and trade corridor," said Booz-Allen Senior Associate Michael Klassen.

The Competitive Edge

Don Norquay, Assistant Deputy Minister of Manitoba Highways and Transportation noted that "NASCO played a key role in Manitoba's Mid-Continent Corridor strategy. Corridor development achievements reflect the growing recognition that to be competitive in the new global economy, borders must not restrict a region's economic efficiency and growth." Norquay added that "Manitoba is committed to ensuring that we in Canada reciprocate

steps to facilitate trade and travel throughout America."

Indeed, Manitoba Province and the City of Winnipeg have taken a proactive role in capitalizing on the free trade agreement. Anchoring the north end of the IH29 branch of the trade route, Winnipeg has become a central intermodal hub of international trade moving to and from Canada. Three transcontinental railways intersect at Winnipeg. The Trans-Canada Highway meets Canada Highway 75 (the extension of U.S. Interstate 29). Winnipeg International Airport is busy twenty-four hours a day with both passenger and cargo flights. A new cargo airline based in Winnipeg is flying direct nonstop routes to China, and the northern Manitoba seaport of Churchill provides a vital sea link to the world.

The province and the city have a pro-business administration that intuitively understands the role of international trade in Winnipeg's future. "Winnipeg and Manitoba are taking advantage of their central location," said Greg Dandewich,



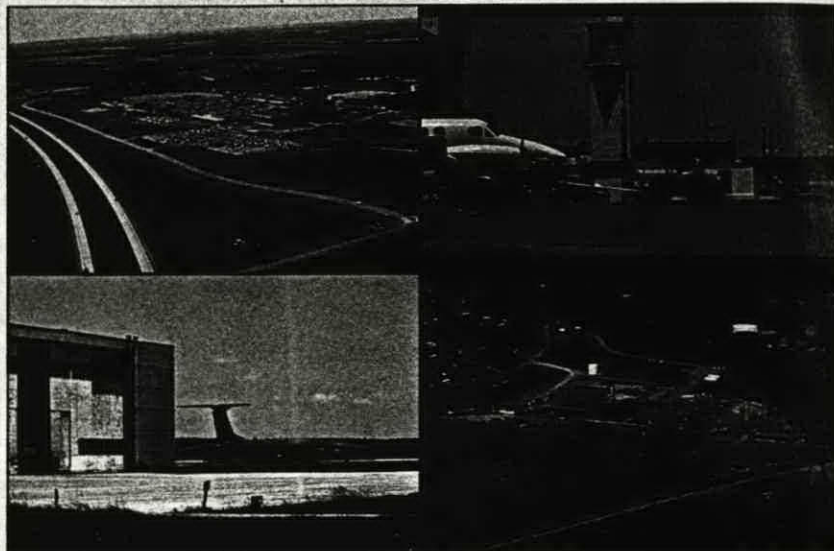
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU DATA DEVELOPED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH (MISER) AND COMPILED BY THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

manager of economic development for Economic Development Winnipeg, an ambitious effort to attract manufacturing and distribution to the area. The leaders of the effort clearly recognize the potential of the city's strategic location along these trade routes. They wish to "position Winnipeg both geographically and competitively as the gateway for this corridor to access other parts of Canada," added Dandewich. The development of Winnport just north of the city, is one such example. Winnport is a multimodal hub for the future, capitalizing on Winnipeg's strategic location as a northern air cargo gateway to the mid-continent trade corridor. Winnport development plans include a Business Park and Foreign Trade Zone near the existing international airport.

NASCO was busy during 1998 identifying trade and transportation groups with similar goals to create an effective support network for the international trade corridor. Recent alliances include one with the Border Trade Alliance (BTA) headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona. "NASCO and the BTA will focus on the trade corridor initiative while working to promote, monitor and influence public policy and private sector initiatives for the facilitation of international trade," noted BTA Vice President Sam Vale. "We will use research and analysis, strategic planning-issue development, education and advocacy to accomplish our mutual goals," Vale added.

Moving south along the route from the Canadian border, the trade route joins I-29 running through North Dakota and South Dakota and I-35 in Minnesota. The Red River Trade Corridor (RRTC) is a coalition representing the trade and transportation interests of communities located along these routes. The RRTC formed a partnership with NASCO in 1998. The new alliance will promote the mutual interests of the two economic development organizations.

Much of the economic boom in industrial



Ardmore, Oklahoma Air park (former Air Force Base) located near I-35 allows for air, rail and truck freight.

development in Iowa can be attributed to its strategic location along the I-35 trade corridor. The corridor has enjoyed a burst of development in the last decade. Many corporations have undergone massive restructuring since the hard-learned real estate and banking lessons of the eighties. Industrial firms have learned the value of consolidating their business into large facilities in which they can receive component parts, manufacture, assemble, test and ship from a few central locations. Favorable land prices, pro-business economic incentives and a friendly tax structure have helped position heartland states to capitalize on this phenomenon.

Iowa's exports to its NAFTA partners grew substantially in 1997. Overall exports to Canada and Mexico grew 19.9 percent during the year. The state's exports to Canada and Mexico have increased a remarkable 81.3 percent since the passage of the trade agreement in 1994, and presently account for 38.0 percent of Iowa's total exports to the world.

The growth of Iowa's exports to foreign markets during recent years has fueled its interest in enhancing the international trade corridors that run through the state. Situated at the intersection of I-35 and I-80, with I-29 marking its western border, Iowa

has the opportunity to make the most of international commerce flowing through the state. Chambers of Commerce, economic development groups and organizations such as the International Traders of Iowa have made capitalizing on their state's strategic location a priority.

Pella Corporation, a leading manufacturer of wood windows and doors, recently built a new plant in Story City Iowa to accommodate its expanded manufacturing activities. The new facility adds an additional 250 people to the firm's payroll of nearly 4,000 people. "Story City was a strategic location for us to build our new plant for a number of reasons," noted Rob Leskun, plant manager. "The I-35, I-80 and I-29 corridors link Pella's five plants, giving us a competitive edge in today's



The Interstate Highway network that forms the backbone of the International Trade Corridor through the heartland of the U.S.

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North America's Superhighway Coalition



International Trade Corridor



global marketplace. With most of our inbound and outbound materials being delivered by truck, the connecting trade routes allow us to consolidate orders from plants across the state and ship to customers more efficiently," Leskun added.

Kansas continues to benefit from its strategic location at the convergence of I-35, I-29 and I-70 and its massive transportation infrastructure. Indeed, the states total exports to Canada and Mexico have risen 21.5 percent and 28.8 percent respectively in the past three years. In 1997, the state's total exports to its two NAFTA neighbors exceeded \$1.2 billion.

Kansas City is home to the nation's second largest rail hub and the largest cargo airport in a six-state region. The Interstate Highway network links these air and rail transportation systems with the most direct and efficient road network in NAFTA territory.

Recognizing the importance of their position, the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce was one of the first members to join NASCO in 1994. "The Chamber joined the Coalition to enable Kansas and Missouri to take full advantage of NAFTA and to begin changing the way the world looks at transportation," said Doug Luciani, the Chamber's Senior Vice President of Economic Growth and Development. "Ideally situated at the crossroads of North American freight and distribution flows, Kansas City is pursuing a vision as a non-traditional inland port and international trade processing center. Working with NASCO has helped advance this vision," Luciani concluded.

Further down the road in Kansas, the City of Wichita enjoys the economic growth that its location along the trade route brings and stays focused on the big picture. The area is best known for its concentration of

air carrier manufacturing facilities. The Boeing Company, Cessna Aircraft, Bombardier Aerospace Learjet and Raytheon all have major installations in Wichita. "We believe we have an opportunity to improve the value of the I-35 corridor to the Wichita area," said Bernie Koch, Vice President of Government Relations for the Wichita Area Chamber of Commerce. "I'm hopeful that building a showcase of intelligent transportation systems will ultimately attract new and different businesses to our already healthy economic mix," he added.

Nicknamed 'America's Crossroads' by many of its proponents, Oklahoma is capitalizing on its strategic location at the center of the country. In addition, it has one of the lowest costs of living and corporate tax burdens in the country. All of these factors ideally position Oklahoma to attract transportation-sensitive industries. Interstate 35 cuts north and south through the state and intersects Interstate 40, one of the nation's major east/west trade routes, in Oklahoma City. Interstate 44 bisects the state diagonally and intersects both Interstate 35 and Interstate 40 in Oklahoma City, creating a direct Interstate link to the Great Lakes port regions in Illinois and Michigan.

The state has taken a leadership role in enacting laws to help Oklahoma capitalize on its location. In 1997, Oklahoma State Senate Majority Whip Keith Leftwich sponsored legislation authorizing and directing the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to enter into negotiations with other states in the U.S., Mexico and Canada to make available state-owned right of way along the 250 miles of Interstate 35 within the state. The right of way is being used to facilitate the laying of a fiber-optic spine along the route.

In 1998, the fiber route was completed. "The goals of NASCO are very dear to us in Oklahoma," noted Lance Johnson, Manager of International Business Development for the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce. Oklahoma is the only state to

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have a completed North/South fiber optic system already in place in preparation for "smart technology" to connect all participants along the corridor. This proactive technology decision along with a multi-billion dollar state highway infrastructure improvement plan, which is currently underway, all point to our commitment to support both regional and international economic development with as many advancements and improvements as possible," added Johnson.

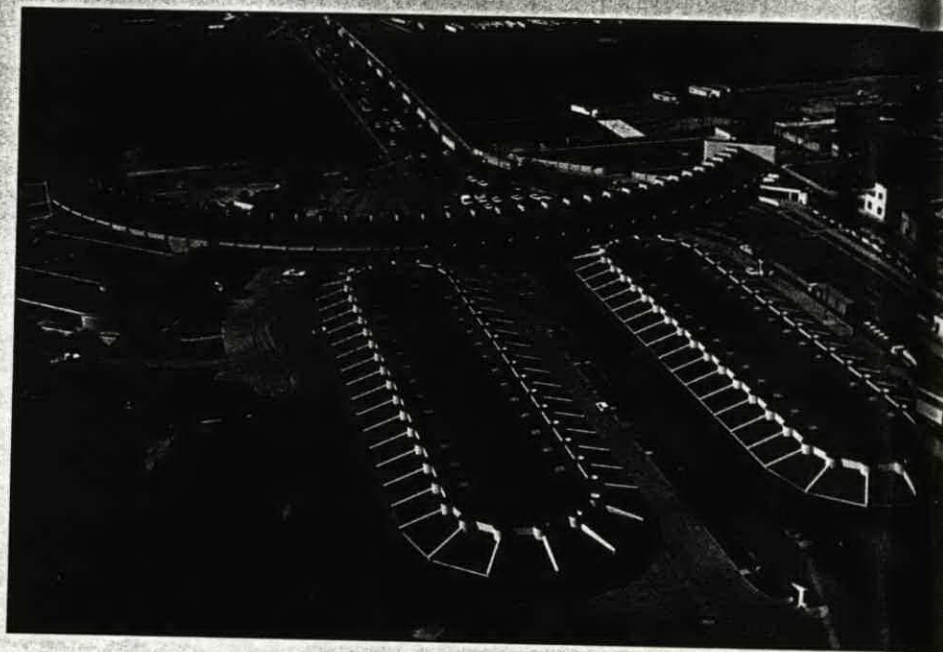
"The \$3 billion highway program now underway in Oklahoma, coupled with our existing interstate highway system access and intermodal access improvements, will provide many growth opportunities for Oklahoma firms taking advantage of the NAFTA corridor," said Sherry Vance, Marketing and Communications Director for the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.

In 1997, Mexico and Canada remained Oklahoma's largest international export markets. Total state exports to the two trade partners increased 36.1 percent and 99.1 percent respectively from 1995 to 1997. "As Canada and Mexico expand and their economies stabilize, the strategic location of our state will enhance future development and exports to these countries," Vance concluded.

Among the states that have benefited most from U.S. trade with Mexico is Texas, whose stretch of I-35 is estimated to carry over half of all surface trade going to and from Mexico by truck. The Lone Star State's exports to Mexico have increased nearly 50 percent since the passage of NAFTA, to a record level of \$18.8 billion. Total bilateral trade between Texas and Mexico is expected to exceed \$50 billion by the turn of the century, less than one year from now.

During 1997, Texas exports to Canada totaled \$8.1 billion. When combined with the state's exports to Mexico, the \$26.9 billion figure represents over 12 percent of all U.S. exports to the NAFTA trade partners.

The increases in trade have spurred the development of industrial parks, distribution centers and intermodal transportation



At the Laredo border crossing, which is the busiest inland port in the Western Hemisphere, the Juares-Lincoln Bridge connects the U.S. with Mexico in trade.

centers throughout the state. Alliance Airport and its surrounding commercial/industrial development continue to attract international corporate giants to the area just north of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex.

Many of the components produced by the Texas computer industry are manufactured on the 'silicon prairie' of Texas, shipped to Mexico for assembly and then back across the international border for final incorporation into competitively priced computer hardware that is distributed internationally. The burgeoning computer industry in Texas has generated thousands of jobs on both sides of the border.

One area poised to take full advantage of its position near I-35 is the former Kelly Air Force Base, a designated Enterprise Zone in San Antonio, Texas. The site is in the process of being commercialized into the Kelly Business/Industrial Complex. The business park offers more than four million square feet of warehouse space, a 12,000-foot-long runway, and direct air, rail and highway access. Of equal significance, Kelly stands ready with more than 6,000 skilled workers seeking to make the transition to private industry.

Ryder Logistics, Inc. has expanded

rapidly at Kelly since locating at the site last year. The company now operates out of more than 40,000 square feet of space, from which it continues to work closely with the U.S. Department of Treasury. The public private partnership is testing the North American Trade Automation Prototype (NATAP), a system designed to expedite border crossings with the use of electronic transponders.

Mario A. Hernandez, President of the San Antonio Economic Development Foundation, commented that "I-35 has been a lifeline for the San Antonio economy". Hernandez added that "more and more companies are locating in the San Antonio area and using this NAFTA highway to access the Mexican market. Over the past 15 months, five new companies that use I-35 to conduct business in Mexico have located in the area."

More than half of the United States' trade with Mexico traveling through Texas on Interstate 35 crosses the international border at the port of Laredo, Texas. According to Webb County (Laredo) Texas Judge and NASCO Vice President Mercurio Martinez, Jr., "The volume of activity that goes through Laredo by land is in excess of 33 percent of all the trade crossing between the U.S. and Mexico between

Brownsville, Texas and San Diego, California. NASCO's work to improve transportation infrastructure and technology across U.S. borders with Mexico and Canada has helped Laredo tremendously as we strive to move people and goods safely and efficiently through border crossings and along I-35, I-94 and I-29," Martinez concluded.

The Way Of The Future

In December 1998 NASCO facilitated the creation of a unique partnership that will help efforts to make the I-35, I-94 and I-29 corridor an efficient and safe trade route for years to come. States along the route and the Canadian Province of Manitoba have joined NASCO in a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to jointly seek federal funding for an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) study to be conducted along the trade route.

"This effort demonstrates that NASCO is a great catalyst for cooperation in the pursuit of funds to improve the I-35/I-94/I-29 Corridor," said Tiffany Newsom, NASCO's Executive Director. "We want transportation leaders in Washington to know that there is a strong and active group of international public and private sector representatives working to make the corridor the premier trade corridor in North America."

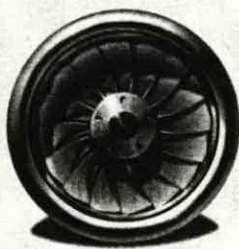
The initial emphasis of the effort includes an application for funding under the TEA-21 National Corridor Planning and Development Program to study and coordinate a plan to develop potential transportation technology improvements along these corridors. A steering committee that includes NASCO and state representatives is being established as are working groups of public and private stakeholders who will also focus on specific sections of the plan as it relates to transportation, trade and information services.

The goods, agricultural products and

building materials that travel through NAFTA territory today have replaced the silks and spices that moved along Marco Polo's trade route in the fourteenth century. Yet, the government leaders of the three NAFTA trade partners share the wisdom of King Edward of England, King Louis of France and Kubilai Kahn. By establishing a free trade market in the Americas, President Clinton, Prime Minister Chretien and President Zedillo have set in motion an unstoppable force. The improvements to the NAFTA trade route that have been assured by the passage of TEA-21 will only add impetus to that force. The United States, Canada and Mexico will continue to reap the benefits of free trade as long as Marco Polo's vision stays firmly etched in our minds.

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