

Toll Enforcement and All-Electronic Tolling

From the Media's Perspective

IBTTA Annual
Meeting

Ron Davis, P.E.

October 16, 2018

The CDM Smith logo is displayed in white text on a blue background. The logo consists of the letters "CDM" stacked above "Smith", with a registered trademark symbol (®) to the right of "Smith".

**CDM
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A decorative horizontal bar composed of four rectangular segments in shades of blue and green, spanning the width of the slide.

WATER + ENVIRONMENT + **TRANSPORTATION** + ENERGY + FACILITIES



Important Questions

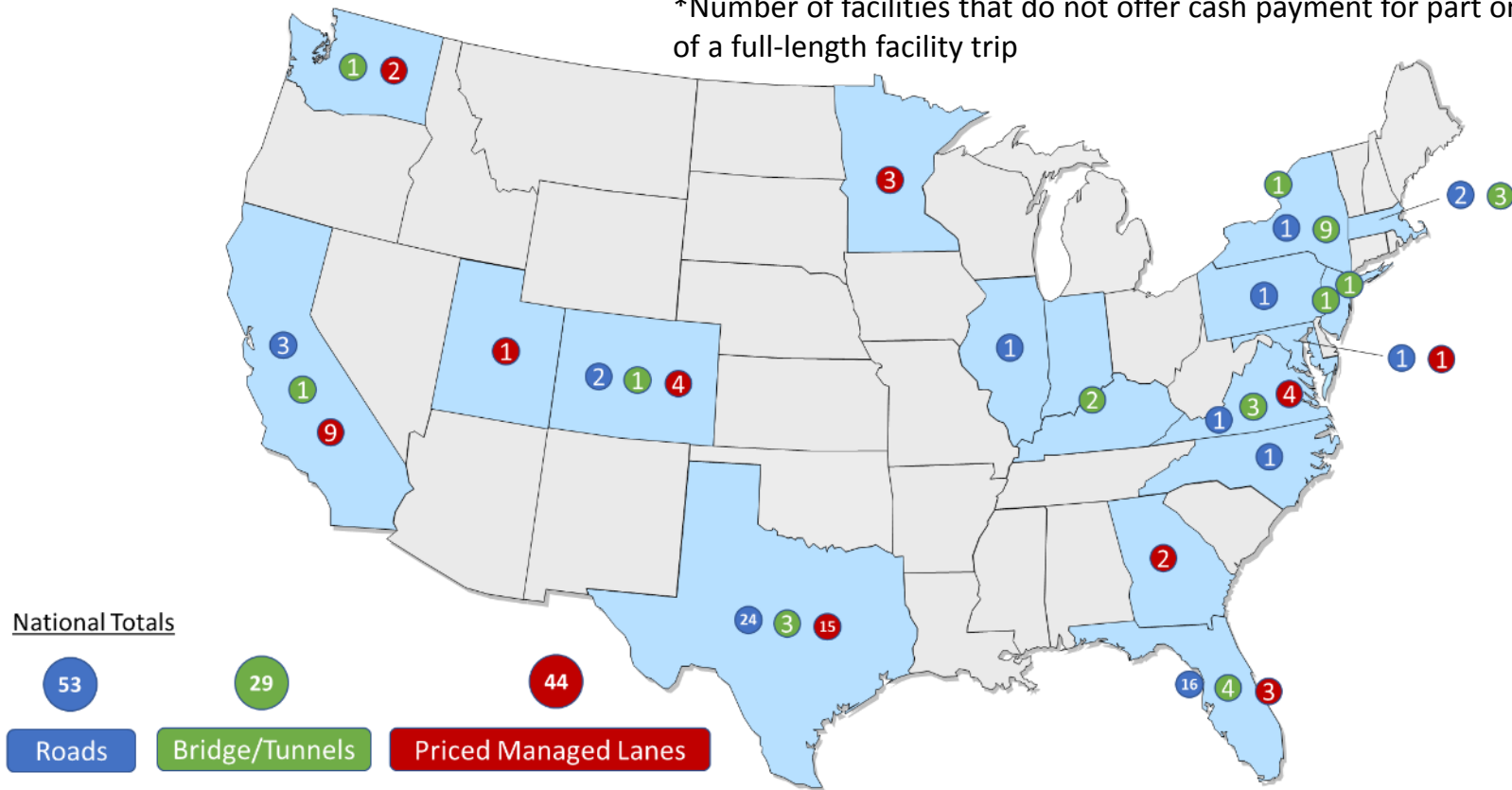
1. Is there a local willingness by the agency and community to pursue collections? Does that willingness change based on bad press? (From IBTTA session description)
2. What are best practices to avoid bad press and promote neutral or positive press?
3. Are challenges with video collection negatively impacting the growth of tolling?

Media's Message Can be Negative... but what can we learn?



All Electronic Tolling in U.S. (as of Jan 2018)

*Number of facilities that do not offer cash payment for part or all of a full-length facility trip





Analysis of News Articles

Methodology

- Started as data collection for a white paper a few years ago to support a client with AET implementation
- Now includes 340 news articles from June 2014 to September 2018
 - Not comprehensive but a good sample from across the country
- Articles related to video billing or toll enforcement billing
 - Mostly AET systems
 - Some relevant articles also from toll enforcement billing on non-AET ETC systems, especially those with ORT
- The majority of articles are negative, but many are still positive or neutral

Examples of Articles

TRANSPORTATION JUN 29

Should exploding tollway fees be legal? Courts say 'yes'



Julie Fancher, Staff Writer

FOX25 Investigates: More problems for drivers with state's new electronic tolling

by: Erin Smith, Eric Rasmussen Updated: Mar 6, 2017 - 7:29 PM



4 RESPONDS

WORKING 4 YOU

WORKING 4 YOU: RESPONDING TO EVERY CONSUMER COMPLAINT

Man Says Toll That Went to Collections Should Have Been Covered By His E-ZPass

By Susan Hogan, Meredith Royster and Ashlea Sigman

Some toll busters will get partial relief in 2016

Revision to policy reduces fines for common blunders

By Gabrielle Banks Updated 8:05 pm, Tuesday, December 1, 2015



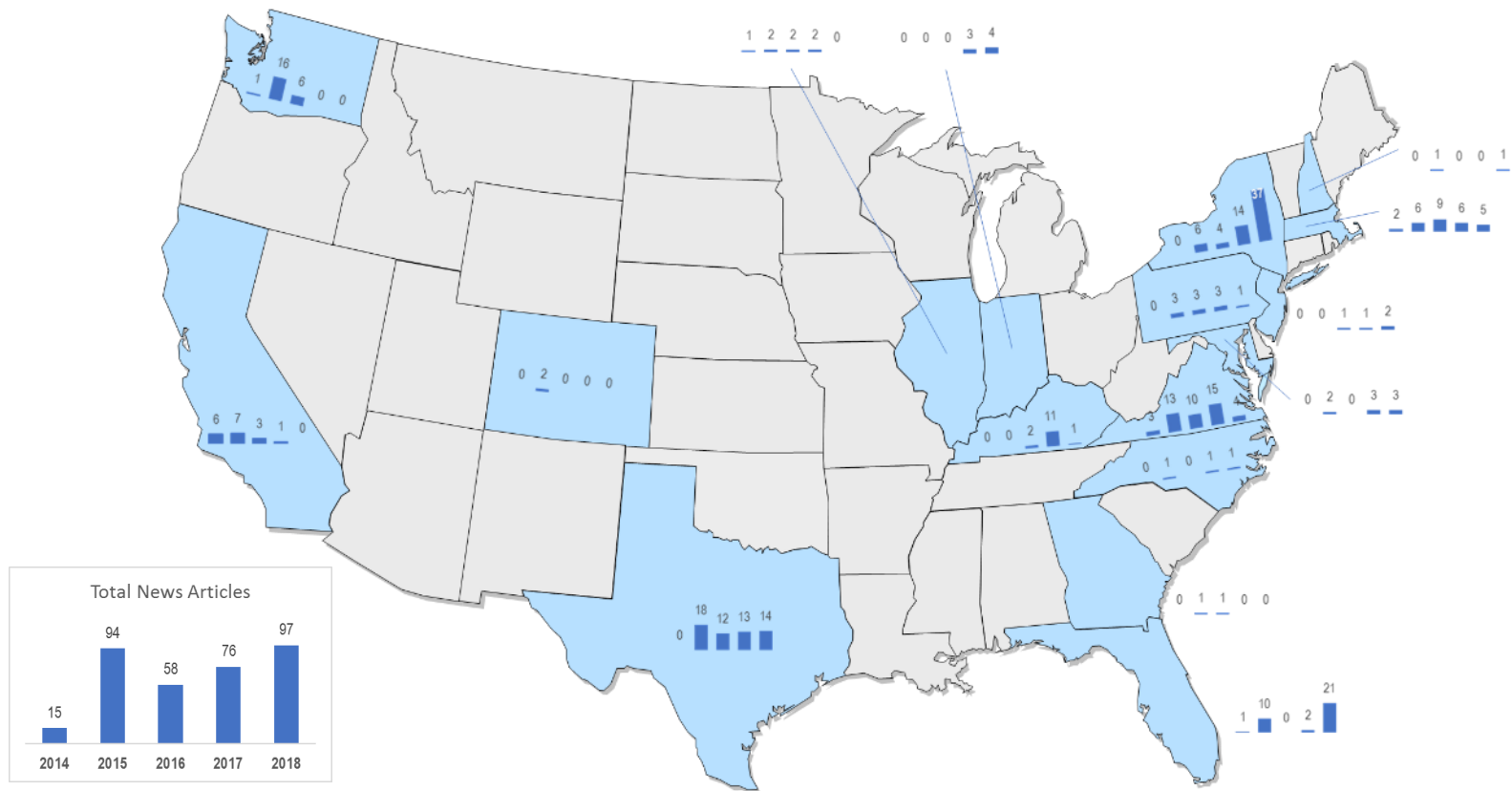
Searched for 23 Topics in Articles

Amnesty Program	Temporary program offering elimination, reduction, and/or reimbursement of tolls and/or fees or leniency in enforcement
Business Rule Change	Permanent change in some type of video tolling or enforcement procedures or fine levels
General Non-payment	Cite the high levels of outstanding tolls and fees owed to the agency or other similar descriptions of general non-payment
ETC Low Balance Issues	Receiving fines through violation enforcement due to ETC low balance issues, usually due to expired credit cards
High Cost to Collect	Specific mention of the high costs to the agency or vendors to collect video or violation tolls
Legal Issue	Lawsuits filed by drivers against agencies, lawsuits against rental car companies
Privacy Concerns	Concerns with government tracking related to transponder accounts or license plate numbers
Security Concerns	Issues with credit card numbers and and other personal information related to potential data breaches or identity theft; Also includes scams related to video billing; License plate thefts
Fairness Concerns	Specific mention of some drivers getting away with not paying tolls and/or fees for driving on toll roads
Rental Car Issues	Issues related with drivers using rental cars on toll roads, most commonly due to high administrative fees charged by rental car companies
Legislative Intervention	Inquiries, statements, or laws proposed by elected officials

Searched for 23 Topics in Articles

Poor Customer Service	Coverage of issues with customer service such as drivers who did not feel their questions or problems were adequately responded to
Increase in Customer Service Staff	More customer service staff were hired in response to issues
Long Customer Service Call Wait Times	Drivers calling into customer service were on hold for long periods of time
High Fees	Reference to high fees
Delayed Billing	Bills coming many months or years after the original trip on the facility
Erroneous Billing	Person not receiving bills (for example because of a bad DMV address) or receiving bills for someone else's car
License Plate Read Issues	License plate read software incorrectly reading license plates
Out-of-State/Country Collection Issues	Challenges with collections in other states or countries
Technology/Vendor Issues	Technology issues with online interfaces, billing, and/or websites most commonly due to vendor issues
Toll Infrastructure Issues	Misc. issues with vehicle classification problems, for example being charged for more axles than your vehicle has
Driver Confusion	Some type of driver confusion related to video tolling or violation enforcement
Poor Signage	Specific mention of driver confusion or challenges related to insufficient signage

Number of Articles Analyzed by Year, by State



Topics of Articles

- About 2 topics per article, on average, identified

Topic	Count of Occurrences	% of 340 Total Articles
High Fees	90	26%
Erroneous Billing	67	20%
Legislative Intervention	62	18%
Technology/Vendor Issues	59	17%
General Non-payment	55	16%
Business Rule Change	52	15%
Amnesty Program	44	13%
Driver Confusion	33	10%
Legal Issue	27	8%
Poor Customer Service	27	8%
Long Customer Service Call Wait Times	23	7%
Delayed Billing	21	6%

Topic	Count of Occurrences	% of 340 Total Articles
License Plate Read Issues	20	6%
ETC Low Balance Issues	18	5%
Out-of-State/Country Collection Issues	16	5%
Increase in Customer Service Staff	10	3%
Privacy Concerns	10	3%
Security Concerns	9	3%
Poor Signage	7	2%
Rental Car Issues	7	2%
Toll Infrastructure Issues	7	2%
High Cost to Collect	5	1%
Fairness Concerns	4	1%
Grand Total	673	



Discussion

Questions

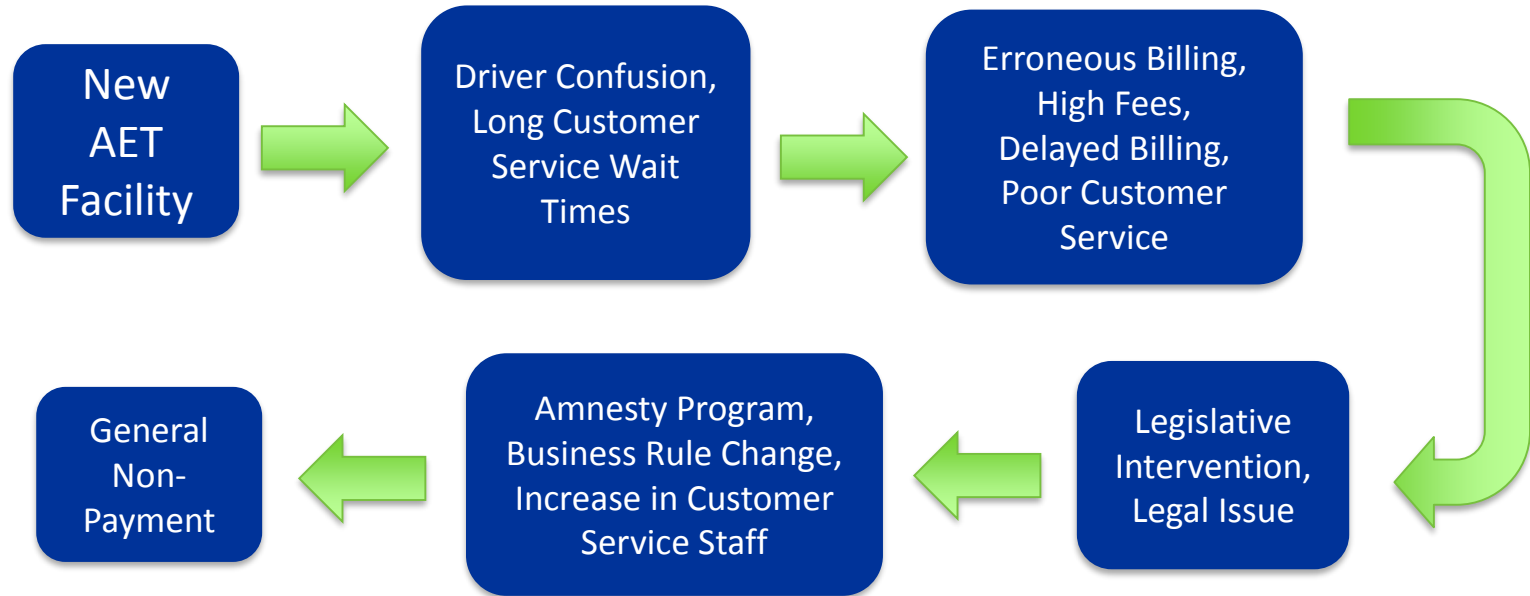
1. Is there a local willingness by the agency and community to pursue collections? Does that willingness change based on bad press?

- See a pattern in news articles with many facilities



Questions

1. Is there a local willingness by the agency and community to pursue collections? Does that willingness change based on bad press?



Questions

2. *What are best practices to avoid bad press and promote neutral or positive press?*

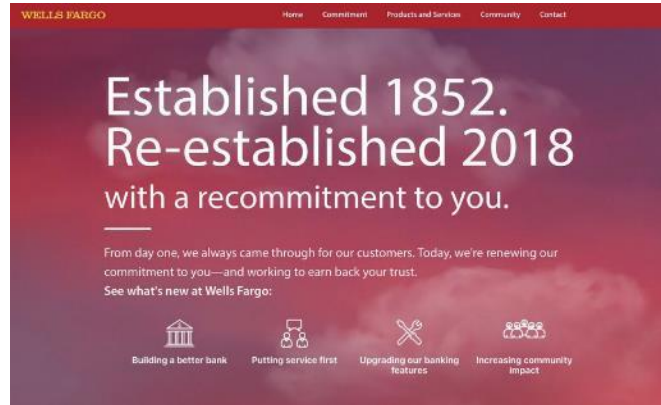
[Note for context – only objective of video tolling enforcement can not be avoiding bad press. Also need to consider cost recovery, fairness related to drivers who intend to violate, and deterring non payment as mentioned in some articles]

- Apply lower fees in general
- If higher fees are necessary, prevent escalating fees, especially over \$1,000 on an individual account for habitual violators.
- Apply customer-centric approaches to fees: apply fees per invoice or account instead of per transaction

Questions

2. What are best practices to avoid bad press and promote neutral or positive press?

- Be upfront and candid with the media about problems or challenges and quickly take action on focused strategies to improve.
 - Regarding being candid – see Wells Fargo, Facebook, and Uber for recent ads in other industries
- Use the media to your advantage



Questions

2. What are best practices to avoid bad press and promote neutral or positive press?

■ Customer service

- Have adequate customer service staff, especially during initial implementation and after significant business rule changes
- Forgive or significantly reducing fees if a violator signs up for an ETC account
- Common sense approach to customer issues, especially with unique circumstances



Questions

3. Are challenges with video collection negatively impacting the growth of tolling?

- Users without transponders, users who don't closely monitor their credit card numbers, and legislators are more likely to have a bad impression of tolling in general due to tolling enforcement, many times at technically no fault of the tolling agency.
 - People with positive or neutral experiences with tolling tend to be the quiet majority

Frustrated Users



Questions

3. Are challenges with video collection negatively impacting the growth of tolling?

- While significant capital costs savings are being realized with AET, costs to collect for video and violations have been higher than were anticipated several years ago.
- ETC adoption rates are lower than anticipated on some new AET projects, putting an increased importance on video tolling.

Other Thoughts

1. **Think long-term** on billing and enforcement systems. Agencies, vendors, and consultants must be ready to adapt to a growing and changing industry. Consider the importance of customer expectations.
2. **Better expertise:** We need more top-level coding, programming, and software experts who understand the tolling industry and vice versa
3. **Contacting customers:** Push for better DMV record management and more frequent DMV record checks. Look for ways to use email addresses as a contact
4. For **ETC users**, consider different ways to alert for account issues – several articles mentioned drivers missed the indicator light in the toll plaza after AET conversion. Should we be subjecting ETC users to high fees for not updating their credit card?
5. **Pay online:** Industry trend to have ways to pay online before invoices are mailed
6. **Education** of the public, elected officials, and the media is always important

Thank You

- My contact info for questions or more information:

Ron Davis

CDM Smith

davisrw@cdmsmith.com

517-318-3675