

From the President

In words and photographs, world renowned photographer Steve Uzell articulated the message that “chance favors the prepared mind” during a spellbinding presentation to a group of association executives recently gathered in Orlando.

Steve Uzell’s presentation is called “Open Roads Open Minds.” If ever there was a time when we needed both of these things, now is the time.

The idea of preparing your mind is absolutely critical during these times of rapid change in our industry. The tolling industry seems to be exploding right now, with new projects starting and new toll agencies forming all over the U.S. and the world. Minds are opening more and more to the possibilities presented by tolling and road charging. These possibilities include increased mobility, reduced congestion, improved safety and increased investment in highways that are suffering all over the world. But to get to these open roads, we need more open minds.

We need open minds, not just among politicians and those who control government purse strings. We also need more open minds within our own industry. The introduction of electronic toll collection has dramatically changed the face of tolling in the last 15 years. We will see even more dramatic changes in our industry during the next five years as more facilities move to open road tolling and governments look with increasing interest for ways to exploit the advantages of tolling.

To survive in these times – to take advantage of opportunities and to avoid potential threats – we need open minds. Right now, it is easy to see ourselves riding the crest of a wave in which tolling is on the ascendancy all over the world. However, without an open mind, we could just as easily find ourselves crushed beneath the wave’s pounding surge. Let’s remember that chance favors the prepared mind so we can continue to be players in the open roads of tomorrow.

Stephen F. Mayer, P.E., Ph.D.
IBTTA President

“Chance favors the prepared mind.”

— Louis Pasteur

From the Executive Director and Publisher

Life-long learning. This expression doesn't seem to carry the weight it once did, perhaps because it is over-used. But it is an integral part of the theme "leadership and learning" under which IBTTA President Steve Mayer is advancing our association this year. And "learning" is the theme of this issue of Tollways.

Marc Legrand provides a brilliant description of the design and construction of one of the most stunningly beautiful and technically sophisticated new toll facilities in the world, the Millau Viaduct. If you missed the newspaper articles and television images of the opening of this facility late last year, here is your chance to catch up.

In "The Case for Distance-Based Charging," Jack Opiola uses examples from all over the world to explain why more and more state and national governments are learning to embrace road user charging. Two objectives are fueling this expansion. The first is to supplement traditional funding sources to ensure that critical transportation investments are not delayed; the second is to leverage the signals that pricing can send as a way to manage driver demand.

In "Pennsylvania Turnpike Survives Seven-Day Strike," Carl DeFebo describes the toll collectors strike that began on Thanksgiving Day 2004, and some lessons learned from the experience.

Chris Warren and Butch Eley make the case for a more holistic and long-term approach to roadway maintenance in "An Ounce of Prevention: Performance -Based Maintenance Contracting." They suggest that performance-based contracting looks at maintenance from a "stewardship" perspective rather than a "necessary evil" point-of-view. In a related commentary, Dan Dornan

places this subject in the larger context of "performance-based total asset management contracting," whereby a public owner contracts for the development, delivery, operation, and preservation of highway facilities and/or networks on a life-cycle basis. This concept takes the performance-based contracting approach and applies it to the full life-cycle of the highway asset.

In "Public-Private Partnerships: A New Education for the U.S.," Pamela Bailey-Campbell and Katie Nees describe the expansive growth of PPPs and the many different forms they can take in America. While clearly not a panacea, the authors conclude, PPPs can provide transportation agencies with what they sorely need: money and time. PPPs hold the promise not only to finance needed highway projects but also to get them constructed sooner than possible with traditional approaches.

Finally, in a patiently researched and well-referenced article on congestion-based tolls, Patrick DeCorla-Souza explores how powerful congestion pricing can be in helping to alleviate gridlock in urban areas. He argues that after the benefits of variable toll pricing are successfully demonstrated on existing toll facilities, we should seriously consider the benefits that could be achieved from using variable pricing on existing toll-free facilities.

Now more than ever the toll industry is being called upon to provide enlightened leadership in the design, financing, operation and maintenance of vital road infrastructure. To provide the leadership this industry needs, we must also be great learners – life-long learners.

Patrick D. Jones
IBTTA Executive Director
Publisher, Tollways

Tollways



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