

2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Keynote address delivered by UDOT Director John Nord

Tuesday, November 15

“I want you to know of my personal appreciation for each of you. Whether you are a government employee or work in the private sector, your work is critically important to the goals we are trying to accomplish at UDOT.

Speaking of goals, we have had our Final Four Goals for approximately eight years. They have served us well, helped remind us of our responsibilities, and helped us focus on the most important aspects of our stewardship.

While I feel very comfortable with our goals, it is important that we, as an agency, periodically reevaluate our strategic direction. In light of that, I want to take some time to introduce you to our newly refined Final Four Goals which includes the introduction of a new and important objective.

Our primary goal remains to Take Care of What We Have. The State’s multibillion dollar investment in roads, bridges, and other assets must be maintained for future generations. We have simplified our primary goal to Preserving Infrastructure.

You might wonder how we still have four goals and yet we are introducing a new goal. Simple, two of our goals have always been very similar and connected: Make the System Work Better and Increase Capacity have always been focused on providing mobility to our customers. Without diminishing either goal, we have combined them into one comprehensive goal we call Optimize Mobility.

After that we, of course, have kept our focus on Improving Safety. I submit that includes not only our roads, but on our work sites as well.

Then we get to our fourth and final goal. I am reminded again of the direction of each of the Governors I have worked under, including our current Governor Gary Herbert. Government does not in and of itself create economic prosperity. That is the role of the private sector. However, Government can facilitate, enable, unleash, in some cases stimulate, and in the case of our business, transportation, actually strengthen economic prosperity. The work we do is fundamental to a strong economy. Some years ago, while our current Governor was serving as Lt. Governor, we took the opportunity to take him, the Transportation Commissioners, several legislators, and others to visit transportation leaders and projects in two neighboring states. We believed we could learn from states with similar challenges and perhaps find solutions unique to our circumstances.

I have heard the Governor recount many times the discussion he had with the then Chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission, Rich Williamson. Commissioner Williamson told how devastated the city of Austin, Texas, was when Dell Computers announced they would not expand their existing facilities in Austin, but rather move them to Nashville, Tennessee. Dell Computers was created and prospered in Texas, but they chose not to expand in Austin chiefly because of traffic congestion. Fortunately, our Governor and others understand the critical connection between economic growth, individual prosperity, and quality of life. Each of these relies upon a foundation of a strong and capable transportation system. While in the past our Final Four Goals have not specifically mentioned the economic benefits of our work, I believe it was always implied.

I submit that implication is not sufficient. We all need to be focused on how our work can positively impact the economy. I want to make sure the great companies that have already chosen to locate in our state continue to be prosperous, and that new companies are given every chance to succeed.

I want us to be responsible for a transportation system that enables economic growth, empowers prosperity, and thus, a new goal for our Department: Strengthen the Economy.”

In summary our Final Four Goals:

Preserve Infrastructure

Optimize Mobility

Improve Safety

Strengthen the Economy

I hope each of you will reflect on these goals and determine how your individual and team responsibilities can help us achieve them.