

THE INFRASTRUCTURE INFORMER

The Electronic Newsletter of the Institute for Civil Infrastructure Systems (ICIS) at New York University's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service. (<http://www.nyu.edu/icis>)

JULY 15, 2001

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The shortest distance between two points is under construction."
--Noelie Altito

(Source: <http://rabi.phys.columbia.edu/~matmat/html/quotes.html>)

INFRASTRUCTURE NEWS

National

- *The Conference of Mayors Announces New Report on the Importance of Urban America. A new report, entitled "U.S Metro Economies: A Decade of Prosperity" emphasizes the importance of the American urban environment. Report statistics such as "if treated as nations, U.S. Metro economies would comprise 47% of the world's largest economies" illustrate the importance of maintaining economic, social, and cultural vitality in our cities through the

funding of urban infrastructure. For the full report see
<http://www.usmayors.org/citiesdrivetheeconomy/index3.html>

*Houston, Texas Voted “Best City” by Black Enterprise Magazine.

Based on 21 quality of life factors, Black Enterprise magazine recently ranked Houston, TX as the best city for African Americans to “live, work and play”. For a summary of the findings see
<http://www.blackenterprise.com/S2/PageOpen.asp?Source=Articles/06072001377.htm>

*New Bill Could Decrease Costs for Residential Wind Turbines

The American Wind Energy Association recently reported that U.S. Representative J. C. Watts (R-Okla.) introduced a proposal for a 30% investment tax credit for household wind systems. Dubbed the Home and Farm Wind Energy Systems Act, the bill is meant to encourage small farmers, businesses, and home owners to buy wind turbines in order to generate their own energy, on their own land. U.S. Representative J.C. Watts hopes the Home and farm wind Energy Systems Act will be approved by Congress this fall. For more information, please see
<http://www.awea.org/news/news010705tcr.html>

*Wildlife Friendly Roads

With an increasing number of animals, including those that are already endangered, being killed by vehicles in America, innovative techniques and policies are being implemented to stop roadside animal fatalities. Various local public, non-profit and private companies are joining forces to create culverts and walls that decrease roadkill, while the Federal Highway’s Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21), and other policies like it, designate funds for safe highway design. For more information on wildlife friendly road designs, such as salamander underpasses and the world-renowned “ecopassage”, see
<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/wildlifecrossings/main.htm> or www.ems.org

For a brief summary of the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century see
<http://www.house.gov/transportation/bestea/tea21sum.htm>

*ADAPTIR Traffic Control and Information System Adopted by State of Ohio

The State of Ohio Recently adopted the Scientex Corporation’s ADAPTIR system for traffic control and information. According to Scientex, the ADAPTIR system (or Automated Data Acquisition and Processing of Traffic Information in Real-time) is an “automated, portable, real-time, condition-responsive traffic control and motorist information system.” The system has various uses and goals, including alerting construction workers of major traffic problems, informing motorists of construction, delays, and detour routes, and increasing general work-zone safety. The solar-powered ADAPTIR system has already been utilized in Maryland, Kentucky, Illinois, Arkansas, and Nebraska. For more information on ADAPTIR, Scientex, or to view the Toledo area ADAPTIR, please go to
www.I75Toledo.org

*Bay Crossing Will Be Significantly More Expensive Than Expected

Plans by the California Department of Transportation to replace the East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge may end up costing about \$2.87 billion. This figure is significantly higher than the initial 1997 estimate of \$1.5 billion. As with most other infrastructure megaprojects around the country the initial figure was underestimated. The \$708-million first phase of the project calls for constructing twin 1.5-mile concrete viaducts in muddy

shallows with 300-ft-long piles. The second phase of the project will cost an estimated \$1.4-billion. This will include the world's longest suspension bridge hung from a single tower. Founded on bedrock near an island in San Francisco Bay, the 0.35-mile suspension span would link the twin viaducts to the island's existing double-decked tunnel. Approximately 280,000 vehicles per day now pass between the east and west spans. The full story can be read at: http://www.enr.com/news/enrtran_70901.asp

Local

*Harbor Dredging

To compete internationally, New York Harbor will have to be dredged of enough mud to fill 50 World Trade Center towers. Where will it be put? One proposed solution is to use the material to fill abandoned mines. Information about the New York/New Jersey Clean Ocean and Shore Trust's (COAST) Abandoned Mine Reclamation Demonstration Project is available at

http://www.nynjcoast.org/Home/Projects_and_Activities/AMR/bcdescr.html

For the recent Gotham Gazette article on harbor dredging, see

<http://www.gothamgazette.com/iotw/dredging/>

*Manhattan Bridge Bike and Pedestrian Path Now Open

The bike path and pedestrian path on the Manhattan Bridge Bike Path opened to the public on June 25th, creating a vital connection for pedestrians between Brooklyn Heights and Chinatown. The New York City Department of Transportation is offering a free, 2001 NYC Cycling Map, with updated bikepaths and greenways, to anyone who may be interested. For more information on this map or the Manhattan Bridge pedestrian and bike path, please see:

http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/dot/html/get_around/bike/manbrbike.html

* Straphanger's Campaign Publishes State-of-the-Subways Report Card 2001

NYPIRG's Straphanger's Campaign recently published their "State-of-the-Subways Report Card 2001". To find out how your line rates in cleanliness, breakdowns, regularity of service and various other factors (or to complain about your morning commute) see

<http://www.straphangers.org>

INFRASTRUCTURE EVENTS CALENDAR

The ICIS web site offers a calendar of major national and international events on civil infrastructure systems with links to more detailed event information.

<http://www.nyu.edu/icis/events/outsideconferences.html>

SAVE THE DATE! October 24-26, 2001 in Washington D.C. – ICIS will convene The First Annual Conference on National Infrastructure Priorities: A National Infrastructure Research Agenda (NIRA). More to follow in the next issues of the newsletter or contact us at icis@nyu.edu

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

*Environmental Media Services is a “nonprofit communications clearinghouse dedicated to expanding media coverage of critical environmental and public health issues”. The site has a wealth of environmental and infrastructure related information. To read EMS’s latest news stories or just browse through topics, see www.ems.org.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Vital Signs 2001: Trends That Are Shaping Our Future

by Janet N. Abramovitz, Lester R. Brown, Seth Dunn, Christopher Flavin, Hilary French, Gary Gardner, Brian Halweil, Ann Hwang, Janet Larsen, Nicholas Lenssen, Lisa Mastny, Ashley Mattoon, Anne Platt McGinn, Danielle Nierenberg, Michael Renner, David M. Roodman, Payal Sampat, Molly O. Sheehan, John E. Young, and Linda Starke (Editor).

Published by the Worldwatch Institute.

As Worldwatch states, “This book gives readers easy access to indicators that show social, economic, and environmental progress, or the lack of it. The carefully selected data have been distilled into "vital signs" from thousands of documents from government, industry, scientific bodies, and international organizations.” The report can be downloaded in PDF format from <http://secure.worldwatch.org/cgi-bin/wwinst/VS01P>

FUN FACTS

*In 1995, spending per household on all communications services, including cable and satellite TV was \$421. In 2001, this figure is projected to increase to \$1,015. (Source: Associated Press)

*Per capita, the US consumes nearly three times the amount of oil as does Europe and 26% of the world’s total. (Source: www.bp.com and www.worldwatch.org)

*54% of U.S households have at least one cell phone. (Source: Associated Press)

*China is the largest producer of bicycles, producing 43 million in 1999. (www.worldwatch.org)

*The Gross Product of New York alone (\$437.80 Billion) rivals the entire country of India (\$510.00 Billion) or Australia (\$428.00). (Source: www.usmayors.org)

You are receiving this electronic newsletter because you have come into contact with ICIS in some way-virtually, through signing our web site guest book, or physically, through meeting someone connected to ICIS at a workshop or conference.

ICIS was established in January 1998 with funding from the National Science Foundation. NYU is joined by three partnering institutions: Cornell University, Polytechnic University of New York, and the University of Southern California.

The INFRASTRUCTURE INFORMER highlights innovative projects, practices, research and initiatives in the planning, financing, operation, and management of civil infrastructure systems. By focusing on innovation and collaboration among stakeholders, ICIS intends for the newsletter to both inform and connect various individuals and organizations from a range of disciplines and perspectives. It is also used to promote related infrastructure events and activities taking place around the country.

This monthly e-newsletter offers a number of short summaries and links to current innovative research, best practice, and policy issues and emphasizes the work of various stakeholder groups, including users and communities, academics and research institutions, and infrastructure professionals/practitioners, both public and private.

PLEASE SEND US YOUR STORIES OF INNOVATION IN INFRASTRUCTURE FROM AROUND THE WORLD AND ANY UPCOMING INFRASTRUCTURE CONFERENCES OR EVENTS THAT WE CAN ADD TO OUR EVENTS CALENDAR.

We also welcome comments or suggestions for future issues and encourage you to forward this newsletter on to colleagues and others who might be interested. Send your correspondence via email to icis@nyu.edu.

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