



# Elevating the Role of Tolling in Transportation Funding

BY KATE SHIRLEY

On the opening day of its winter Board of Directors meeting in Miami, Florida, the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA) – the worldwide association representing toll facility owners and operators and the businesses that serve them – announced the launch of an aggressive 2013 public awareness campaign to highlight the benefits of tolling. The campaign will also focus on advocating publicly in the media for policymakers’ support of tolling to help solve what U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) recently referred to as transportation’s “own version of a fiscal cliff.”

“We’re launching this campaign to ensure that tolling is a key part of the discussions in Congress and elsewhere around the country on how to fund America’s transportation system,” said Patrick D. Jones, IBTTA Executive Director and CEO. “IBTTA’s Moving America Forward public awareness campaign will make the case for the tolling industry’s permanent seat at the table when future transportation funding options are being considered.”

As a prelude to January’s campaign launch, Patrick also sent a letter to Chairman Shuster applauding his comments that tolling is among the tools in the toolbox to consider as Congress tackles the dwindling Highway Trust Fund.

IBTTA’s campaign will engage the public, policymakers, media and other stakeholders through a proactive communications effort focused on raising awareness of tolling as a reliable and sustainable source of revenue for

transportation infrastructure. In addition to the release of transportation-related policy documents, this campaign will feature major events held throughout the year when transportation leaders will come together in cities worldwide to raise a greater awareness of the benefits of tolling. Additionally, this effort will focus on aggressively responding to inaccurate and misleading information about tolling.

“In the last two decades we have embraced cutting-edge technologies and business practices that have transformed the tolling industry into one of the most effective and efficient providers of mobility in the world,” said 2013 IBTTA President, Rob Horr. “Based on decades’ worth of real world operations, the tolling industry is a leader in enhancing public safety, reducing congestion and furthering productivity.”

Generating more than \$10 billion in annual revenues from 5,431 miles of tolled highways, bridges and tunnels, tolling is already a big part of the solution to the challenge of creating new, dedicated revenue streams to support our country’s transportation infrastructure needs. Rob recently penned a blog post on IBTTA’s official blog touting the campaign’s launch (website).

In January, a new study issued by the Reason Foundation that was authored by Robert Poole, the Director of Transportation Policy at the Foundation, calls on states to “make much greater use of tolling and pricing, as both a source



of highway revenue and as a powerful means of reducing traffic congestion.” Additionally the study calls on Congress to “relax the current ban on tolling Interstates by no longer counting toll-financed reconstructed lanes as ‘tolling existing capacity.’”

“It’s about time policymakers at all levels of government took a serious look at tolling as an effective alternative to traditional funding options,” said Robert. “As our November study highlights, toll collection in a mature AET system costs no more than collecting the fuel tax. And with weak public and political support for raising any tax in this struggling economy, tolling continues to stand out as the way to go.”

This newly launched campaign is supported by IBTTA, its members and the tolling industry worldwide through significant financial, staffing and educational resources. In addition to IBTTA’s full-time staff in Washington, DC, this initiative will be advanced by a team of seasoned professionals with years of experience in government affairs, media and public relations, social media and transportation policy.