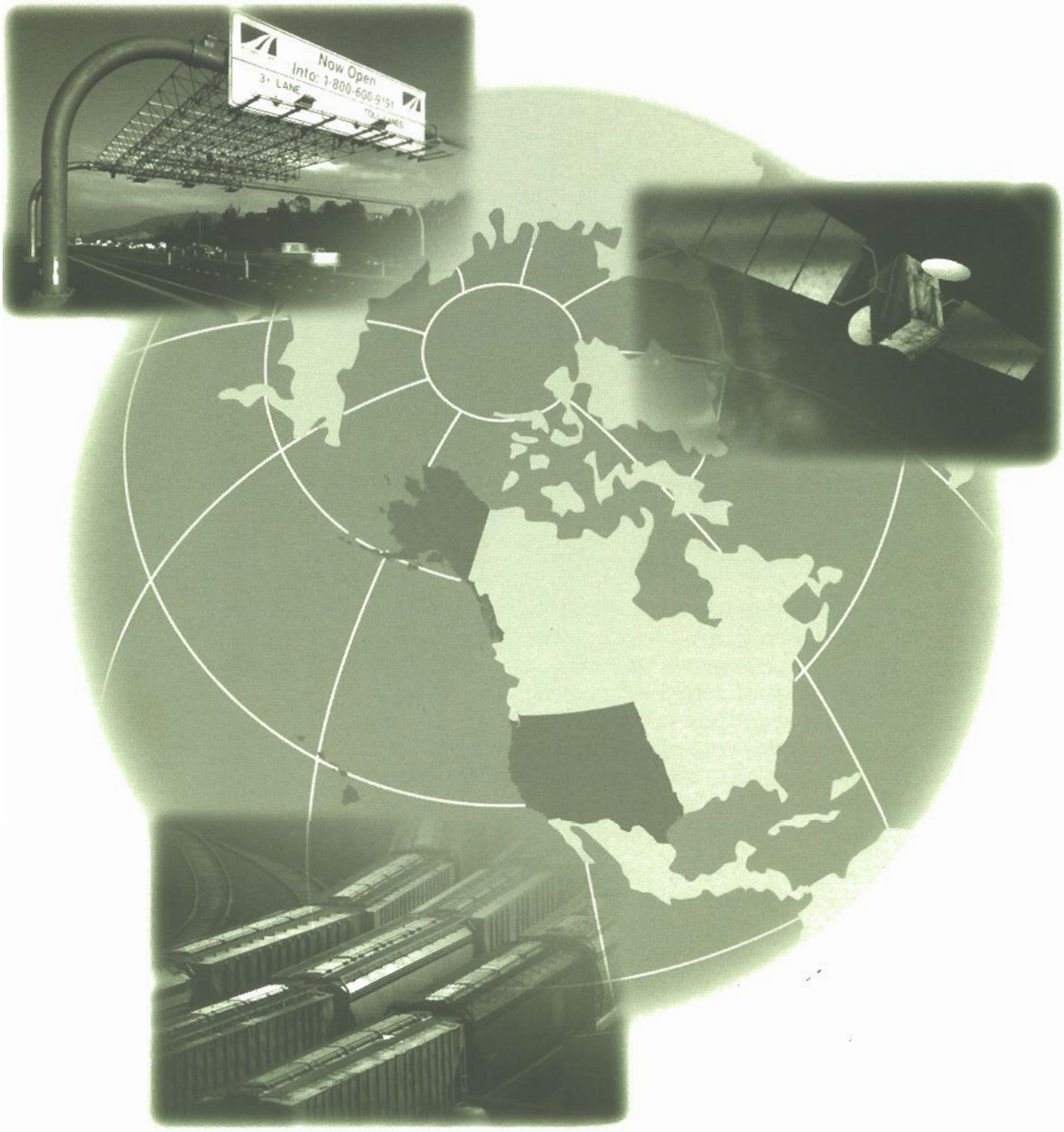
TRANSPORTATION FUTURES

THE WEST'S ECONOMY ON THE MOVE



A Report to the Western Governors

By the Western Governors' Association Task Force on Transportation Futures

June 1996

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SALT LAKE CITY
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MEXICO
HONOLULU
Capitol
City over 50,000
Western state
Mexico and Canada

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June 1996

Dear Friend and Colleague:

The vast distances across the western states highlight the critical importance of transportation. The West's location demands a seamless and efficient transportation network connecting the region's trade corridors, economic gateways, hubs, population centers, and attractions – and linking them with the world. The Transportation Futures Project was born of that need, in keeping with the Western Governors' 1995-96 theme, "The West: Forging Opportunity Through Change."

Although we face many challenges, the outlook is bright. The West's economy is growing at a record pace, global market opportunities are expanding, and cooperation with our NAFTA neighbors continues to break new ground. While transportation needs will continue to exceed anticipated revenues, the western states, like private companies, are thinking "smarter" as they shoulder their transportation systems and infrastructure responsibilities.

The recommendations in this Report aim at furthering this pro-active and creative attitude through government-to-government and public-private partnerships. Enhancing the movement of goods, services and information in an increasingly competitive environment will require innovative approaches and commitment to the task. We hope the Report, with its framework of cooperative strategies, will serve as a catalyst for discussions of solutions among the Governors, industry leaders, state and federal officials, and other entities.

As co-chairs, we cannot say enough about the participation of our fellow task force members. Any uncertainty we may have had about the extent of their cooperation, commitment and breadth of vision was quickly dispelled. Indeed, the quality of their input was unprecedented and contributed more than anything else to the substance of the challenge statements and recommendations contained in this Report. We take this opportunity to express our thanks to the Task Force and to the many others who contributed their time, ideas and expertise to this effort.

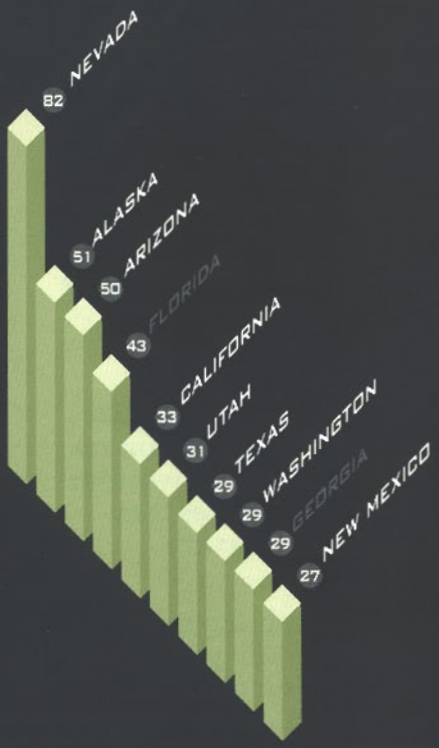
We commend this Report and its recommendations to the Western Governors for their thoughtful consideration. Furthermore, we encourage adoption of an implementation action plan through a Western Governors' Association policy resolution, and we pledge our assistance to that end.

Sincerely,

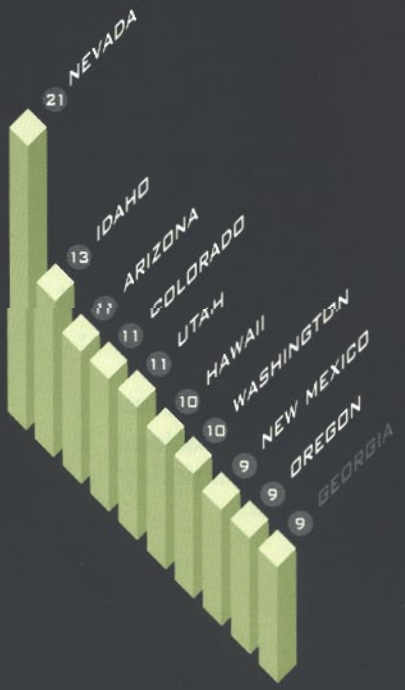
E. Benjamin Nelson
Governor of Nebraska
Task Force Co-Chair
Chairman of WGA

Neil Goldschmidt
Task Force Co-Chair

MOST RAPIDLY GROWING STATES
POPULATION GROWTH 1980-1994
(IN PERCENTAGE)



POPULATION GROWTH 1991-1994
(IN PERCENTAGE)



WESTERN STATE OTHER

INTRODUCTION

On May 10, 1869, Grenville Dodge, the Union Pacific Railroad's Chief Engineer, drove the final "golden spike" linking the U.P.'s rail tracks that began in Omaha with the Central Pacific's line that commenced in Sacramento. An observer remarked that the western states were now part of "the great highway" which tied the West with her "sister states of the Atlantic," but Grenville Dodge dared to look even farther. Gazing down at the line, which disappeared into the frontier, he remarked, "Gentlemen, this is the way to India."

Worldwide destinations and regional connections, envisioned by Dodge 127 years ago, are an integral part of western life today.

Washington State apples travel across western highways to reach their international market in Mexico.

Nebraska corn produces ethanol for the alternative fuels that help clean the air in California cities.

"Cascadia" neighbors in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia are creating a joint high-speed passenger rail corridor.

A Texas stockbroker serves his clients across telecommunications corridors as quickly and effectively from his Amarillo ranch house as from a Wall Street skyscraper.

Leading international markets for New Mexico's electronic/electric products are Korea and Japan.