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Silver Anniversary Year of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

A quarter of a century ago, on June 29, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved legislation which launched one of the most significant and far-reaching domestic programs in the history of the United States—the 42,500-mile National System of Interstate and Defense Highways.

Now more than 94 percent completed, with over 40,000 miles in use, the Interstate System has profoundly affected the lifestyles of all Americans. Crisscrossing the Nation from ocean to ocean and from border to border, it links more than 90 percent of our cities that have populations of 50,000 or more, as well as many smaller cities and towns. The system comprises little more than one percent of the Nation's total road and street mileage, yet carries 20 percent of the traffic.

The Interstate System is modern America's paramount asset. By drastically cutting travel time it has drawn diverse sections of the country together. It expedites the movement of goods and produce, reducing costs and promoting competition. These and other economic benefits of the Interstate System have had a lasting impact on the standard of living of every American. At the same time, it provides us the means for the movement of military forces and supplies in the event of a national emergency.

The Interstate System is a magnificent undertaking in which all Americans can justifiably take great pride, and one which will return rich dividends to the American people for many decades to come.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim 1981 as The Silver Anniversary Year of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. I urge Federal, State and local government officials, as well as highway industry and other organizations, to hold appropriate observances during the remainder of this year, recognizing the benefits that the Interstate System has provided for our country during the past 25 years and reflecting upon how we can best continue to realize those benefits in the future.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 29th day of Oct. in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixth.

Ronald Reagan