

Non-Stop Safety For Trucks

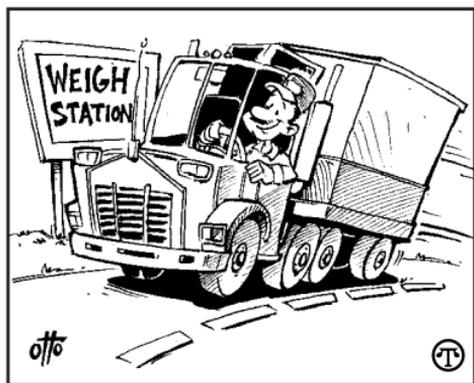
(NAPSA)—The U.S. Department of Transportation reports that a nationwide survey of truck and motorcoach drivers found both groups held favorable opinions of commercial vehicle electronic clearance systems designed to keep safe vehicles moving. Truckers strongly favored this service 2:1 and motorcoach drivers favored it 3:1.

Meantime, demand is building for weigh-in-motion systems, which allow qualified commercial vehicles to bypass weigh stations. HELP Inc. (Heavy Vehicle Electronic License Plate Inc.), a public-private partnership, offers a weigh-in-motion program called PrePass that is operational at 151 weigh stations in about 20 states with more than 170,000 trucks enrolled.

PrePass works like this: An in-cab transponder identifies the vehicle to the inspection facility computer, which verifies state-required operating, safety and registration credentials. A sensor embedded in the highway calculates the vehicle's total gross and axle weight. If the truck meets the legal criteria, a green light and audible signal from the in-cab transponder gives the driver the go-ahead to bypass the weigh station. If the vehicle's weight exceeds the legal limit or its credentials cannot be verified, the driver is signaled to pull into the station.

This electronic screening helps roadside officials investigate a larger portion of potentially unsafe vehicles, while reducing fuel consumption and emissions, according to the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America).

The cost of PrePass is paid primarily by motor carriers who voluntarily subscribe to the service and are charged a maximum fee of 99 cents each time they bypass a weigh station. Lockheed Martin IMS, which designed, developed and operates PrePass for HELP Inc., provides the venture capital to install PrePass at



each weigh station.

“By using private capital and innovation, the public sector can take advantage of state-of-the-art technology, which improves government efficiency without expending tax dollars,” says Jeffrey Crowe, chairman and CEO of Landstar System and a member of ITS America's board of directors. “This aspect of the HELP partnership is especially attractive in a political climate where public officials are increasingly expected to enhance public safety despite limited resources.”

With PrePass, a truck equipped with a single transponder can bypass weigh stations from California to Florida. Other states participating in PrePass include: Arizona, Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Montana, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

HELP Inc.'s PrePass program won ITS America's “Best of Intelligent Transportation Systems Award for 2000” in the category of applications that save money.

ITS America is an educational and scientific public-private partnership of 600 member organizations promoting the use of advanced technologies in surface transportation. For additional information on intelligent transportation systems, contact: ITS America, Suite 800, 400 Virginia Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20024-2730, call (202) 484-4138, or visit the ITS America Web site at <http://www.itsa.org>.