

THE FEDERAL ROLE IN DELAWARE'S

Delaware's highway system, part of a vast complex interlacing the Nation, consists of an Interstate Freeway System, a Primary and a Secondary System with their urban extensions, and tertiary roads.

The Federal Government participates financially in the Nation's highway programs as provided by various Federal Legislative Acts dating back to 1916.

These Acts provide for national defense and general welfare, establishment of post roads and furtherance of interstate commerce. The intent of the Federal Government is to assist in building needed highways for the various states on a coordinated basis. In providing this financial assistance, the Federal Government supplements rather than replaces state and local government highway activities. The program encourages efficient state administration of road building with Federal participation and helps to raise highway standards of construction and maintenance.

It is important to bear in mind that all highways in Delaware and other states are state highways. There are no "Federal" highways as such — either built or operated by the government in Delaware. The state determines the general concept of the highway, how it shall be built and how it will be operated and maintained. Designation of a road or street as part of a Federal-Aid system does not change its status as a state road or street. These roads are administered at all times by the state, and the State Highway Department requests the highways eligibility for Federal-Aid.

As to the division of cost in the case of primary and secondary roads, it may be shared equally by the Federal Government and the states.

States may be reimbursed with Federal funds for the Federal share of costs of highway planning, preliminary engineering, acquisition of rights-of-way and construction. After the work has been performed in accordance with standards and other requirements of the U. S.

Bureau of Public Roads, Federal funds are obtained on a re-imbursable basis by the various states from the Federal Government within the limits of the state's yearly allocation.

INTERSTATE ROADS

The main objective of the Federal-Aid highway systems is the insurance of an integrated network of roads, a goal which defines the area of Federal participation. From this point of view, one of the most important single systems of roads and streets originating from the initial program is the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways.

Although the authorized mileage of 41,000 miles amounts to only slightly over one percent of the total of all roads and streets, this system is expected to carry approximately twenty percent of all traffic by 1972. It will connect ninety percent of all cities of 50,000 or more population with multi-lane, divided, access controlled highways. The expected traffic load and the completed total cost of just over \$41 million dollars will make this network an impressive highway complex.

Federal participation in construction of the Interstate System is set by the 1956 Act at ninety per cent Federal and ten per cent state funds.

While Delaware's part in the Interstate Highway project is a modest one (40.5 miles), it is highly important because of the State's strategic location in the center of the east coast. At present seventeen miles of this system have been completed, with approximately twenty-five miles to be finished. In our State, the Interstate System is represented by Route I-95, part of the north-south highways between Maine and Florida; Route I-295 to New Jersey; Route I-495 connects with the Christiana Interchange, by-passing Wilmington to the east and connecting with Route I-95 near the Pennsylvania line.

Route I-95 is scheduled for com-

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pletion in late 1967 and the entire system in 1972.

What we now designate as the Delaware Turnpike, a part of Interstate I-95, which runs from the Maryland line to Christiana Interchange, was completed last year. The roadway through the Christiana River Interchange which joins the Delaware Turnpike at Basin Road to the Farnhurst Interchange was also completed last year.

The Christiana River Interchange is the largest single construction contract ever undertaken by the Delaware State Highway Department.

PRIMARY ROADS

The 495 miles of Primary System highways connecting the larger cities and towns and leading to similar roads in nearby cities represent the backbone of Delaware's highway transportation system. A total of seventy-five per cent of all traffic in Delaware is carried by these roads and their urban extensions.

The Federal-Aid Primary System, authorized by the Federal Highway Act of 1921, derives its title from the fact that the mileage system was originally limited to seven per cent of the road mileage in a state. Today it consists nationally of 194,393 miles of highways and streets (exclusive of the Interstate System) with one-third of all traffic traveling these roads.

SECONDARY ROADS

The largest mileage of all Federally supported systems is the secondary road system. It includes routes not on the primary system but which best serve the transportation needs of the rural population. The secondary system consists of 523,337 miles of rural roads in the Nation under state and local control and carries a quarter of all rural traffic. In Delaware this system of roads, carrying twenty per cent of the State traffic, consists of 1,417 miles serving rural areas and small communities and connecting with the primary system.



Interstate System. Aerial view of Farnhurst and Basin Road interchanges



Secondary road

TERTIARY ROADS

Aiding local areas and connecting these areas to other highways is the State's tertiary system of 2,224 miles. It includes suburban community streets, certain streets within municipalities, and all state-maintained roads not on other systems. These roads and streets carry five per cent of all traffic. With the exception of the tertiary system, the State highways systems coincide with their counterparts on the Federal Highway System.

Delaware's tertiary roads are not eligible to receive Federal-Aid funds.

