

'Transportation Has Transformed the World'-Batteau

by Christine Snyder
Staff Reporter
Tech Center News

The historical significance of discussing how to transform transportation in the birthplace of the automotive industry was not lost on Allen Batteau, associate professor at Wayne State University's Department of Anthropology, Institute for Information Technology and Culture.

"Transportation is not just about moving people," said Batteau at the Summit on Transforming Transportation in Detroit April 7. "It can be transformative. Henry Ford saw it could be transformative. It could transform slaves into middle class . . . transform a luxury good into a prized possession.

"It transformed not just our region, but the world. It united our nation and inspired the world."

Ford NASCAR Driver Enjoys Return to Victory Lane

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
AP Sports Writer

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Matt Kenseth finally has that contending feeling again courtesy of a long-awaited return to Victory Lane.

"You keep working as hard as you can at it. And you try to get the cars going the best you can, and hopefully have some more chances to win," the former Sprint Cup champion said after breaking a two-year, 76-race winless streak with a dominating run at Texas. "It gives you a lot of confidence, and it's a big relief."

For the first time since opening the 2009 season with consecutive victories at Daytona and California, Kenseth was a NASCAR Sprint Cup winner again Saturday night, when he led 169 of 334 laps in his No. 17 Ford. He fronted an impressive showing by Roush Fenway Racing, which had its four drivers in the top seven.

Still, it was special for Kenseth to be the one holding the unique trophy and firing off the six-shooters that are part of the postrace celebration at Texas Motor Speedway.

"I can't say how proud I am to be here with Matt, realizing that he's not gotten the success that his effort has deserved in the recent past," car

Batteau set the tone for the opening topic discussion, "The Mission Before Us," by encouraging participants to "think large," despite the economic and other challenges we face as a nation.

"The challenge before us is to think large about what transportation can be," said Batteau. "Let's really think large. At times of crisis there are opportunities."

Janet Kavinoky, director of transformation infrastructure for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said the nation's infrastructure is heading into decline, which research has shown adversely affects the economy.

The U.S. Chamber has developed a tool, called the Transportation Performance Index (TPI), to measure how well transportation works.

"For each one point improvement in the TPI, our GDP increases 0.3 percent,"

said Kavinoky. "It's time for us to make some decisions. If we keep going with the status quo . . . we are going to drag a lot of money out of the economy."

Kavinoky said it should be a priority to have the infrastructure in good repair and to fix other related problems such as traffic congestion.

And then there are the issues of fossil fuel consumption and pollution that need addressing.

"Population has reached a crucial point and most people are in our cities," said Sheila Watson, environment director for the FIA Foundation. "Where there are more people, there are more cars. Where there are more cars, there are more accidents and more air pollution and more fuel use.

"How do we enable people to get around without destroying the planet?"

FIA has presented four scenarios of future megacities, all different in their use (or non-use) of fossil fuels, cohesiveness and global agreement status. She said all four have advantages and disadvantages.

"They (the scenarios) give us some sense of what to think out and the challenges," said Watson.

One solution to slowing the use of fossil fuels is to make neighborhoods more self-reliant and livable.

Llewellyn Wells, is well-known in the entertainment industry as an emmy-award winning producer for the "West Wing" TV series.

He is now making a name for himself in another area, as founder and president of Living City Block, Inc.

Living City Block started in Denver where it took the existing infrastructure of a neighborhood and made it

stronger economically and, ultimately, environmentally.

"What does retro-fitting neighborhoods have to do with transforming transportation?" asked Wells. "Communities and their needs will drive what kind of transportation we will need. If people have communities they love and are happy in and are self-reliant, they have less need to get into vehicles and go elsewhere."

Living City Blocks now has pilot programs in Washington, D.C., and Brooklyn.

They are the kind of neighborhoods that may be the answer to the changing attitudes of young people, said James Corless, director of Transportation of America.

Corless said that teens are waiting to get their driver's licenses in greater numbers. "Some of that has to do with graduated licenses in some states, yes, but it also represents a profound shift in attitude on the types of communities teens and adults want to live and work in."

The other demographic trend is, of course, the aging population. "The number of people turning 65 is increasing and they are aging in places without public transportation."

"Exhibit A," said Randal Charlton, executive director of TechTown, WSU's business incubator, referring to himself in another panel at the summit. "I'm 71-and-a-half years old, I've a wonky hip that may need replacing . . . I've night vision problems and I'm not facile with computers. I'm your customer.

"Your customer is not going to be the cut 16-year-old as much as the doddering 70-something."

Charlton said studies show that the last seven and ten years of life for men and women respectively, are with-



Wayne State University associate professor of Anthropology Allen Batteau, was one of the organizers and speakers at the Transforming Transportation Summit.

out personal transportation. "They need public transportation. It's a huge market and one that entrepreneurs need to think about when they design smart systems."

As a European, Charlton said public transit was his usual mode of moving about, but now as a Detroiter, he has never used it.

"I come in by car and leave by car," said Charlton. "I'm still driving, but I hope when I stop, there is good public transit for me."

What's interesting from a Detroit perspective is that while the city itself had effective public transportation in the form of streetcar lines that criss-crossed the city for the first half of the 20th century, Detroit is again embracing rapid transit. Plans are underway for Detroit to begin work on a proposed light rail transit line that will run from Woodward Avenue at its southern starting point at Jefferson, north, to Grand Boulevard. Eventually, a second spur will be built from Grand Boulevard to 8 Mile Road.

Cities Are Now Imposing Despised 'Car Crash Tax'

By TIM MARTIN
Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Out-of-towners would be wise to drive carefully when passing through Fraser, a suburb about 15 miles northeast of Detroit.

The city this year began charging non-residents who cause wrecks for the public safety and emergency response time involved in the accident. The fee is one of many revenue-raising ideas being considered by cities nationwide dealing with budget problems.

Reluctant to raise taxes on their own residents, local governments are looking increasingly at out-of-towners. But critics complain that the fees amount to taxation without representation, or double taxation, since those people already pay for roads and public safety services in their own communities. And unsuspecting out-of-town motorists who've have faced the bills say they send a hostile message.

"You're not welcome here — outsiders not welcome," said Jay Middleton, a Mount Laurel, N.J., resident who fought a "crash tax" charged in a Philadelphia suburb. "That's what it says to me."

Middleton got caught up in the "crash tax" issue after a fender-bender while moving his daughter home from college a few years ago. Radnor Township, Pa., billed him \$276.08 for the police time. The concept of governments hitting up visitors for cash isn't new. States often charge nonresidents more than locals for hunting and fishing licenses on the theory visitors don't pay the regular taxes used to support parks and recreation systems. A number of cities impose income taxes on suburbanites who come into a city to work. Omaha, Neb., planned a commuter fee that critics called a "wheel tax" before state lawmakers moved to block it this year.

Across Michigan, cities are struggling to fund their emergency services. The state has lost more than 4,500 police officers and firefighters in the past decade, mostly because of lower tax revenues during the recession and the state's economic decline. Fraser, a

town of about 15,000 in southeast Michigan, has lost 13 public safety officer positions since 2006 — a drop of 25 percent.

"I think we are now at the point where it's push versus shove," Fraser city manager Richard Haberman said. "The intent here isn't to gouge somebody. We're not out here trying to make additional revenue. We're just trying to cover costs."

For an accident caused by an out-of-towner, the driver or the driver's insurance company is billed \$57.15 an hour for a police officer's time, \$43.75 an hour for a paramedic's services and \$41.96 an hour for time spent by a public works employee. Many of the fees charged so far have been \$100 or less. Fewer than 25 motorists have been charged since the fees began in February, city officials said.

New York City's fire department plans to impose a response fee in July, with charges ranging from \$365 to \$490 depending on whether a vehicle fire or injury is involved. The fee would apply to residents and non-residents alike.

But it isn't always easy for the cities to collect. Insurance trade associations say most companies won't cover the fees, leading to lower-than-expected revenues for local governments.

Radnor Township in Pennsylvania eventually repealed its accident response fee ordinance, so Middleton didn't have to pay it. The west Michigan city of Wyoming scrapped its fees after a year of bad publicity in 2008 and earning lower returns than expected. A handful of California cities also have abandoned at least some of their emergency response fees or are considering doing so.

Officials in Petoskey, a northern Michigan tourist town, flirted with the fee idea last year but decided against it.

"In a hospitality, tourism-oriented community, it's just not something you do to people," said Carlin Smith, president of the Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce. "They've just had an unfortunate situation. You don't make it even more of a misfortune."

Transforming Transportation is an Economic Issue

by Christine Snyder
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Amidst all the calls for change, there were two unchanging truths that rose to the surface during an economic discussion at the Transforming Transportation Summit April 7 in Detroit.

One is that transportation is a business and businesses needs to make money. The other was most people like to drive.

Christopher Borroni-Bird, GM's director of advanced technology vehicle concepts, said in dense urban areas where driving is fraught with parking, traffic and other frustrations, people still drive.

"There are some advantages," said Borroni-Bird. "We can't forget that. It's a mode of movement that has expression about it."

Borroni-Bird presented the EN-V concept unveiled at Shanghai Auto Show last year, as one solution to driving in urban areas.

The EN-V, is super-compact so it's easily maneuverable, flexible and takes less space to park. It's electric so its emissions-free. It is also a "connected" vehicle, meaning it communicates with infrastructure and other vehicles, so accidents are decreased.

"It is about freedom, freedom from pollution, petroleum and accidents, yes, but also freedom of movement and expression," said Borroni-Bird. "We can reinvent without restricting the benefits (of vehicle ownership)."

Vehicle connectedness is moving beyond concept to reality, said Scott Belcher, president and CEO of ITS America.

The Department of Transportation has initiated a pilot project on connected deployment of vehicles.

"GM, Ford has said the

technology is viable, but there was no business case to go forward," said Belcher. "The DOT announcement changes that. They are now creating an industry."

Solutions like EN-V and other connected vehicles can help urban areas address issues like congestion and pollution, without building new infrastructure.

"In most urban areas, you can't build new," said Belcher. "You have to use technology to address issues."

"A lot of innovation is going on in cities," said Borroni-Bird, who added that vehicular regulations are increasing in light of concerns of pollution and will continue to escalate. "We can't solve green house gas challenges without solving urban challenges.

"What kind of car does cities need? We recognize for urban areas, the automobile is over-engineered."

Kal Gymiesi, associate partner at IBM Global Business Solutions, said when you look at the types of vehicles that are being introduced, two for every one is a compact, EV or hybrid.

"These are very new vehicles coming to the market and they have to figure out how to make money from them," said Gymiesi. "When we think about vehicles, the smaller, the less cost and less profits. Every company wants profits. So volume sales. But that adds to congestion."

Gymiesi said another way to look at making profits from new vehicles is change the business model instead of "just pushing vehicles into the market."

For example, Gymiesi said it might be worth looking at vehicles as a mobility service.

The service would make vehicles interchangeable, so a person could have, for example, a compact or EV for

everyday, city driving and perhaps a minivan for travel to soccer games.

The digital infrastructure is such that it will be possible that everything from navigation systems to music choices could be downloadable, which helps make this a viable option.

"If all of that can move with us, vehicle to vehicle," Gymiesi said, "we are not tied to a certain vehicle. It's a compelling way to enable consumers to use (an OEM's) full portfolio."

We'll see a big change in transportation due to the digital infrastructure, said Gordon Feller, director of urban innovations at Cisco Systems. "All the stuff in our lives will be internet-enabled," said



The GM concept EN-V pod car can transform transportation in urban areas, said GM's Chris Borroni-Bird.