

# **Safety** Rest Areas

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# **Safety** on the Interstate System

“The Interstate Highway System has certainly lived up to the goals that led to its development — providing a **safe** and efficient national system of highways.”

Mary Peters, “The Now and Future Interstate System”, *Better Roads* (May 2006)

# Safety and The Interstate



- What can we learn from signs?
  1. Driver distraction.
  2. Commercialization of the ROW.
  3. The real cost of doing business.

# What is “Driver Distraction”?

- If the driver is prompted to divert visual attention from the highway to something off the highway (even within the ROW), that is “driver distraction”.





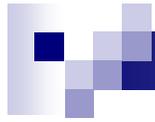
# Commercialization of the ROW

- “We own it—we should use it!”
- “It’s valuable—why not make money off of it!”
- “Other States do it—why don’t we!”
- “We need the money!”



# The Cost of Doing Business

- What do we get with further commercialization of the Interstate?
  - \$\$\$\$\$\$, but .....
  - Can we use them? (State law considerations)
- What do we give up?
  - Safety?
  - Non-competitive with the private sector?



# Interstate **Safety** – No Compromise

“Safety on our highways is FHWA’s top priority.”

Mary Peters, FHWA Administrator

“Who We Are & What We Do”



# **Safety** Rest Areas—The Law

23 U.S.C. 111 *Agreements relating to use of and access to rights-of-way—Interstate system*

(a) “...the State **will not permit automotive service stations or other commercial establishments** for serving motor vehicle users to be constructed or located on the rights-of-way of the Interstate System.”



# **Safety** Rest Areas—The Law

23 U.S.C. 111 *Agreements relating to use of and access to rights-of-way—Interstate system*

(b) “...any State may permit the placement of **vending machines** in rest and recreation areas, and in safety rest areas, constructed or located on rights-of-way of the Interstate System in such State.”



# **Safety** Rest Areas—The Law

23 U.S.C. 111 *Agreements relating to use of and access to rights-of-way—Interstate system*

(b) “...the State shall give priority to vending machines which are operated through the State licensing agency designated pursuant to section 2(a)(5) of ... the ‘**Randolph-Sheppard Act**’.”



# **Safety** Rest Areas—The Regs

- 23 CFR 752—Landscape and Roadside Development.
- *Safety rest area:*
  - “A roadside facility **safely** removed from the traveled way with parking and such facilities for the motorist deemed necessary for his rest, relaxation, comfort and information needs.”



## **Safety** Rest Areas—The Regs cont'd

- The State may permit vending machines and may operate or contract for. Must give priority to operation through State licensing agencies under the Randolph-Sheppard Act, U.S.C. 107(a)(5)
- May not charge for goods and services, except for telephones & vending machines.



## **Safety** Rest Areas—The Regs cont'd

- May establish and operate or contract for operation of information centers and systems.
- No advertising, including operator logo, may be visible from main traveled way.
- May provide “information of specific interest to the traveling public.”



# **Safety** Rest Areas—The Regs cont'd

- Privately operated information systems:
  1. Title vests in State.
  2. Advertising of interest to traveling public.
  3. Equal access to all advertisers.
  4. 40%+ free for public service info.
  5. No charge except telephone & vending.
  6. Advertisers subject to Civil Rights Act.
  7. Center must be maintained.
  8. State may establish rules and regulations.
  9. State may terminate agreement.



# Abandonment of a **safety** rest area

Some considerations in Non-Regulatory Supplement  
NS 23 CFR 752:

1. Parking may be maintained even if other facilities are lacking; a State decision.
2. Abandoned rest area need not conform to adjacent area, but maintained.
3. Cost of abandonment not eligible for Federal-aid funding.



# Truck Idling Reduction Facilities

- States may allow idling reduction facilities for commercial vehicles to be placed in rest or recreation areas, and in safety rest areas constructed or located on rights-of-way of the Interstate System. The idling reduction facilities **may not reduce the existing number of truck parking spaces** at a given rest or recreation area. **States may charge a fee**, or permit charging of a fee, for parking spaces actively providing idling reduction measures.
  - SAFETEA-LU Section: 1412 ; 23 USC 111



# Information Kiosks

- **Mississippi--BEST PRACTICE/POLICY**

- Travel's Information Kiosks in Rest Areas:

MDOT is having a contractor install and maintain public information kiosks at the interstate rest areas in Mississippi. The kiosks will provide the traveling public information on construction activities, motel/hotel accommodations, service stations, restaurants, etc. MDOT will be connected to the kiosks via the Internet and will have the ability to override the system to put emergency information (hurricane evacuation routes, for example) directly into the systems.



# Opportunities!

1. Vending services.
2. Information centers.
3. Truck idling facilities.



# Risks!

1. Maintaining safety and integrity of facility.
2. Security needs.
3. Competition with the private sector.