

ARTBA's Aggressive Approach Helps Secure Three Record Transportation Funding Laws, Prepares Industry for 21st Century

By Tom Kuennen

In December 1901, Horatio S. Earle wrote to policy leaders across the nation inviting them to join him February 13, 1902, in New York City to endorse bylaws creating the American Road Makers (A.R.M.).

A.R.M.'s mission would be to aggressively pursue federal support for creation of what he called "The Capital Connecting Government Highway." This road network, Earle wrote, would connect "every state capital with every other state capital, and every state capital with the United States' capital—Washington."

A.R.M. was the first name of what we now know as the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA). And "The Capital Connecting Government Highway" Earle organized a national association to push is today's Interstate Highway System, signed into law in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

By the early 1990s, construction of America's interstate highway network was nearly completed and the focal point of federal investment would shift to a newly designated "National Highway System."

In the 1990s, ARTBA's mission remained the same as it had for the previous 90 years: to expand

and protect the transportation construction market to meet the public demand for safe travel and efficient movement of people and goods. During the decade, however, the association utilized a variety of new tools to help support that core mission. They included advocacy advertising, broad-based coalitions, market defense litigation, new technology, economic analysis and research reports and grassroots lobbying.

As a result, ARTBA helped secure record-setting highway, mass transit and airport construction funding laws that would ensure a robust start for the transportation construction industry as it entered the 21st century. The association's leadership also initiated a number of new programs designed to position ARTBA for the new century. Along the way, ARTBA's government relations and communications programs were recognized with nearly 20 national awards.

Framing the Debate on Reauthorization

ARTBA's push to frame the debate on the scheduled 1990 federal highway program reauthorization began in early 1989. Under the leadership of new ARTBA President and CEO Pete Ruane and 1989 Chairman M.O. Brenden, ARTBA launched the "Building a Better America Through Transportation" (BABATT) campaign. Its centerpiece was a call for a 15-cents-per gallon increase in the federal gasoline tax to meet the nation's highway capital needs as outlined by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"We are embarking on an effort that is unprecedented for our industry and association," Brenden said. "If we reach our legislative goal, every member of our association will benefit directly. But more importantly, the entire nation will benefit."

The BABATT campaign included first-

ever coalition efforts with national labor unions and use of new communications technology—the fax machine—to expand, educate and mobilize the transportation construction industry.

ARTBA also pioneered the use of Capitol Hill publications in the lobbying effort by running weekly advocacy advertising in *Roll Call* newspaper with key messages about reauthorization. The ARTBA government relations team conducted meetings with all 535 congressional offices outlining the association's plan.

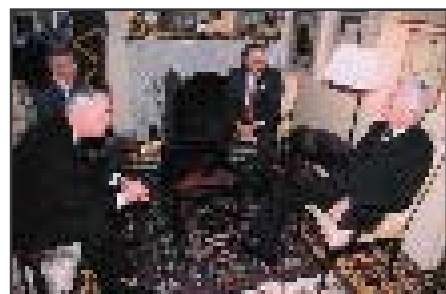
The BABATT campaign was pivotal to winning congressional passage of the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), signed into law by President George Bush.

In two-and-a-half years, ARTBA members and state contractor chapters contributed an unprecedented \$1.5 million to support BABATT activities.

ISTEA contained most of the goals laid out by ARTBA's Board when it had authorized the launch of BABATT. It contained a record \$155 billion for federal transportation investment over



ARTBA President & CEO Pete Ruane (left) and 1991 ARTBA Chairman Jack Lanford testify on reauthorization.



Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.), right, who championed the transfer of the 1993 4.3-cent gas tax to the Highway Trust Fund and higher funding levels in the Senate bill, meets with ARTBA leaders, including 1998 ARTBA Chairman David Kraemer (center).

"ARTBA is a bargain. At my firm, we believe it provides more bang for the buck than any other association ... Anyone who doubts the return on investment should look at the growth in federal support for highways and bridges over the past five years."

-- ARTBA Chairman Jim Madara, P.E., Gannett Fleming, Inc., March 1993

ARTBA TIMELINE

1990

Public-Private Ventures in Transportation Division established.

Charles Machemehl, Jr., Vulcan Materials Inc., is elected ARTBA chairman at Maui, Hawaii, convention.

1991

Jack Lanford, Adams Construction Co., is elected ARTBA chairman.

After 23 years of service, ARTBA President Daniel J. Hanson, Sr., retires.

ARTBA-pushed highway/transit program bill

provides \$155 billion in federal investment.

1992

John P. Rutter, G.A. & F.C. Wagman, is elected ARTBA chairman at New Orleans convention.

"Transportation Makes America Work!" campaign is launched.

six-years—an astonishing 64 percent increase. ARTBA's push for a gas tax increase framed the political debate and led to the law's increased authorization levels. Increases in the federal gas tax, while not part of ISTEA, eventually were used to fund the expanded program.

The new law provided states with flexibility in how they spent their federal transportation dollars and included creation of a newly-defined "National Highway System" to serve as a focal point for investment. Of concern for the industry, however, ISTEA linked transportation projects to provisions in the federal Clean Air Act—tools that professional environmental groups would later use to delay or even stop urgently need road improvements.



President George Bush signs the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 into law at state highway 360 near the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

ARTBA launched "Transportation Makes America Work!" One of the campaign's goals was to educate 200 newly-elected members of Congress about the nation's transportation capital needs and win support for redirecting the revenue stream from the 1990 2.5 cents-per-gallon gas tax used for "deficit reduction" to the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). In March 1993, the Clinton Administration endorsed the proposed transfer and later that year, Congress approved legislation to redirect the 2.5 cents-per-gallon to the HTF, effective in 1995. The

Administration and Congress also increased the gas tax by 4.3 cents-per-gallon for "deficit reduction" in 1993.



The Industry's Primary Environmental Legal Advocate

While ARTBA moved forward with the "Transportation Makes America Work!" campaign, the industry began facing challenges that had grown out of the complex 1991 ISTEA law. ARTBA responded by expanding its advocacy activities.

In 1993, ARTBA sued the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to stop proposed regulations to expand Clean Air Act transporta-

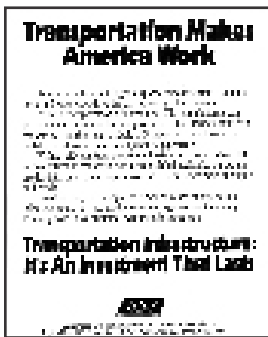
"One of the strongest industry voices—especially in environmental regulatory actions and litigation—is the American Road & Transportation Builders Association."

-- Better Roads

"Transportation Makes America Work!"

In December 1992, President-elect Bill Clinton held an economic summit in Little Rock, Ark. In another first for the construction industry,

ARTBA initiated an extensive radio and print advertising ad campaign in that city during the event, pointing out how transportation investments drive the economy. ARTBA's efforts resulted in national media coverage, including a piece in *The New York Times*.



An ad used for ARTBA's "Transportation Makes America Work!" campaign.

Also in December and applying the successful techniques of the BABATT campaign,

ARTBA: An Industry Safety Leader

Since 1902, ARTBA has promoted safe and efficient roadways for both roadway workers and motorists. No other association has such a broad-based, integrated approach to safety for the transportation construction industry. In the 1990s, ARTBA initiated the following programs:

- **ARTBA Safety Management Manual for Highway Contractors.** In 1993, a task force of ARTBA highway contractors worked with CNA Commercial Insurance Company to develop and publish the first-ever comprehensive manual on safety products tailored to fit the needs of highway construction firms. The product was officially endorsed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and became a best-selling ARTBA publication.
- **National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse.** Established by ARTBA in 1998 with "seed money" from the Federal Highway Administration, the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse—managed by ARTBA and housed at the Texas Transportation Institute at College Station—became the nation's first centralized information source on roadway work zones safety issues. By 2001, the Clearinghouse was handling 36,000 information requests each year.
- **"OSHA 10-Hour Training Course."** In 2001, ARTBA unveiled an innovative training program focused directly on the hazards and situations that roadway construction workers face every day.
- **1994 "National Conferences on Highway Work Zone Safety."** ARTBA followed its 1985 conference with a second National Conference on Highway Work Zone Safety. Over 200 industry leaders attended.
- **2001 "International Conference on Roadway Work Zone Safety."** In another first for the transportation construction industry, ARTBA brought more than 150 people to Saint Louis, Mo., to discuss roadway construction safety issues in the U.S. and around the globe.

ARTBA TIMELINE

1993

ARTBA purchases new headquarters building at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., in Washington, D.C.

ARTBA files first environmental lawsuit to protect industry market interests.

James R. Madara, senior vice president, Gannett Fleming, Inc., is elected ARTBA chairman.

1994

ARTBA holds second *National Conference on Highway Work Zone Safety*.

Kenneth Rezendes, chairman, K.R. Rezendes, Inc., is elected ARTBA chairman.

ARTBA establishes an Industry Advancement Fund (ARTBA-IAF).

ARTBA launches "electronic bulletin board" service.

The ARTBA-Transportation Development Foundation



The ARTBA Transportation Development Foundation (TDF) was established in 1984 as a 501(c) 3 tax-exempt entity to promote education and research initiatives. In the 1990s, ARTBA introduced many new TDF-supported initiatives, including:

- The annual and first *Highway Worker Memorial Scholarship Program* that provides financial assistance to help the sons, daughters or legally adopted children of highway workers killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty pursue post-high school education.
- The annual *Young Executive Development Program* (YEDP), a competitive program that brings “rising stars” in the transportation construction industry to Washington, D.C., for an intensive, three-week leadership seminar on policy issues affecting transportation development.
- The *National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse*, the world’s largest “cyber-library” (<http://wzsafety.tamu.edu>) of information on roadway construction safety issues.
- The annual *Globe Awards Program*, which honors U.S. transportation construction industry excellence in environmental protection and mitigation.
- The annual *Roadway Work Zone Safety Awareness Awards Program*, sponsored by ARTBA and the National Safety Council, that honors outstanding efforts by public and private organizations or media to help reduce roadway work zone injuries and fatalities.
- Development of a *Transportation Construction Industry Hall of Fame* in Washington, D.C.
- The annual *PRIDE in Transportation Construction Awards Program*, which recognizes

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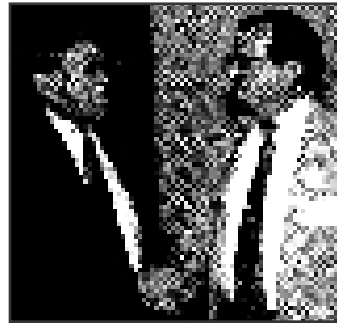
tion conformity regulations to areas with no air quality problems. After two years in court, the association won ARTBA vs. EPA and had the victory codified into law in the 1995 National Highway System Designation Act.

In 1994, under the leadership of ARTBA Chairman Ken Rezendes, a Massachusetts contractor, ARTBA established a permanent Industry Advancement Fund (IAF) based on the model used by some of its state chapters to support expanded government relations, advocacy communications and environmental litigation.

In 1999, ARTBA formed a strategic litigation alliance—the “Advocates for Safe & Efficient Transportation” (ASET). The coalition brought together nine national groups representing organized labor and the construction and homebuilding industries to challenge anti-road lawsuits filed by environmental extremist organizations in states including Georgia, California, Utah, Maryland and Texas. In its first three years of existence, ASET helped move more than \$2 billion in threatened highway projects forward.

Coalition Building to Support ISTEA Reauthorization

ARTBA began framing the ISTEA reauthorization debate on Capitol Hill in 1994. It became the first national association to formally begin reauthorization planning with the formation of a task force in June of that year. More than 100 industry leaders met at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., in early 1995 to develop the industry’s legislative recommendations for reauthorization. ARTBA issued a report later that year that served as a legislative blueprint and became a platform for the reauthorization discussions of many others.

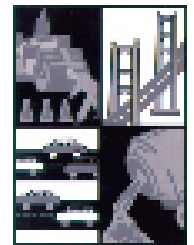


Rep. Norman Mineta (D-Calif.) and ARTBA member Jim Madara meet in 1991 to discuss ARTBA’s BABATT campaign.

ARTBA’s leaders also knew that coalition lobbying would be crucial to the industry’s reauthorization push.

In January 1995, in response to a request from the new chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Bud Shuster (R-Pa.), ARTBA organized the Alliance for Truth in Transportation Budgeting. Its mission: push legislation to take the four federal transportation trust funds off-budget to

eliminate revenue diversion and protect the highway program from future cuts. ARTBA chaired the alliance and recruited more than 100 national construction, general business, labor, tourism, energy, agriculture and modal groups to work with it through this unique coalition.



ARTBA also initiated and then co-chaired the Transportation Construction Coalition (TCC) to build support for the industry’s unique concerns in February 1996. The TCC includes 28 national associations and labor unions and provided an unprecedented vehicle to allow the transportation construction industry to pursue a unified, collective industry-specific agenda.



House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bud Shuster (R-Pa.), second from left, used an Alliance for Truth in Transportation Budgeting news conference in 1995 to announce his plans to take the trust funds off-budget bill to the House floor for a vote.

ARTBA TIMELINE

1995

ARTBA successfully pushes enactment of National Highway System Designation Act.

ARTBA initiates “Alliance for Truth in Transportation Budgeting.”

Bill Mulligan, Ingersoll-Rand Co., is elected

ARTBA chairman at San Antonio convention.

1996

Jay Taylor, Stimsonite Corporation, is elected ARTBA chairman at Las Vegas convention.

ARTBA-TDF “Young Executive Development Program” is established.

ARTBA initiates “Transportation Construction Coalition” (TCC) to fight for ISTEA reauthorization.

1997

Max R. Sproles, P.E., Frederic R. Harris, Inc., is elected ARTBA chairman.

"[ARTBA] is very adept at simply rolling up its sleeves and getting things done... they often work in a harsh political climate... we salute their efforts because what they do is crucial to contractors everywhere."

-- Editor Charlie Denn, *Construction Magazine*, November 2000

The association provided leadership and support for other groups involved in the ISTEA reauthorization debate, including the Keep America Moving coalition, the Rebuild America Coalition, the National Governors Association's Coalition for TRUST and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Use of Technology to Support Reauthorization Objectives

In the fall of 1996, ARTBA produced a TCC "call to action" video presentation that was used by the coalition's member organizations.



ARTBA's Internet website, "InfoStructure Online," was launched in 1997.

The video featured industry leaders and members of Congress discussing what was at stake in the upcoming reauthorization and the importance of grassroots activity in support of the industry's agenda. It was shown to more than 100,000 members of the transportation construction industry at conventions and other meetings around the country.

To further foster grassroots support, in 1997, ARTBA initiated its toll-free *Information Highway-Action Hotline* phone service that provided industry activists with a daily audio update, fax-on-demand issue papers and sample letters to Congress and media, and

a unique direct phone patch-through to the White House and all congressional offices. ARTBA was the first association group to use this innovative technology set to support its grassroots activities. The Hotline generated up to a thousand calls a day from ARTBA members and others who shared our goals during critical points in the reauthorization debate. The *Hotline* complemented ARTBA's advocacy services available through its Internet website, *InfoStructure Online* (www.artba.org), established in 1997.

ARTBA provided the latest information on reauthorization issues to its members, Congress and industry trade publications through its daily *Washington FAX Updates*, weekly *Washington Newlines* and Legislative Action Alerts. These publications were distributed electronically though broadcast fax and e-mail to up to 4,000 grassroots activists.

Hard-Hitting Economic Data

ARTBA also used empirical research and analysis to support its reauthorization legislative positions. Supported by development of the association's first-ever economics/research team, ARTBA developed briefing papers, fact sheets and groundbreaking analyses. Among the topics covered: the safety and economic benefits of highway investment; the dependence of state economies on a national highway system and an annual assessment of congressional and Administration budget proposals. The ARTBA reports were sent to all members of Congress, the White House, governors, media and policy influencers.

The Final Push

In the first few months of 1998, ARTBA and its allies in the industry made the final push on the road



Surrounded by members of Congress, President Bill Clinton signs the TEA-21 legislation into law on June 9, 1998.

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- extraordinary efforts to improve the image of the transportation construction industry or highlight the many contributions the industry makes to the American quality of life.
- Development of the *Smithsonian's "America on the Move"* exhibition at the National Museum of American History, which celebrates 125 years of transportation development.
- The annual *ARTBA Student Paper Competition*, which awards a cash prize to an undergraduate and a graduate student for insightful analysis of a transportation issue or problem.
- Special industry economic studies.

to reauthorization. The multi-faceted campaign included radio and print advocacy advertising, grassroots activism, coalition leadership, and most importantly, an around-the-clock presence on Capitol Hill. All along the way, ARTBA worked closely with transportation champions in Congress to coordinate activities as the legislation was being debated on the floor of the House and Senate.

In June 1998, President Clinton signed the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) into law, which provided a record \$218 billion federal investment in highway and mass transit programs over six years. The new law meant the transportation construction market would be the most stable sector of the industry well into the next century.

The TCC was recognized as being the key player in helping secure the increased federal investment levels made possible by redirection of the 4.3 cent "deficit reduction" gas tax revenue to the Highway Trust Fund—accomplished in August 1997.

ARTBA TIMELINE

ARTBA telephone hotline established for grassroots lobbying.

ARTBA launches Internet site (www.artba.org).

1998

David R. Kraemer, Edward Kraemer & Sons, Inc., is elected ARTBA chairman.

ARTBA-led coalitions successfully push record \$218 billion federal highway/transit program bill.

ARTBA "PRIDE in Transportation Construction" campaign launched.

ARTBA and FHWA establish National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse.

1999

Stan Lanford, Jr., Lanford Brothers Co., Inc., is elected chairman at Las Vegas convention.

ARTBA "Highway Worker Memorial Scholarship Program" is launched.

The TCC was also instrumental in obtaining TEA-21 language designed to streamline the transportation project planning and environmental approval process. The Alliance for Truth in Transportation Budgeting coalition was credited by many congressional leaders for providing the direct lobbying and grassroots muscle that resulted in TEA-21's landmark "budgetary firewalls," which guaranteed that virtually all future gas taxes would be spent on transportation improvements.



Brothers and past ARTBA Chairmen Stan Lanford (left) and Jack Lanford present contribution to the ARTBA-TDF to launch the "Highway Worker Memorial Scholarship Program."

and 2000 waged an "inside the beltway" radio and print ad campaign and conducted grassroots lobbying to support increased investment for airport runway capacity. The result: the Aviation Investment & Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR-21), which provided a three-year, record level of federal investment for airport construction and guaranteed all user fees would actually be spent on aviation improvements.

leaders and extraordinary grassroots activism by its state contractor chapters, ARTBA has consistently demonstrated over the past century that it is the "Driving Force in Transportation Construction!" **TB**



ARTBA Launches "PRIDE in Transportation Construction" Campaign

With an eye on positioning the industry for the 21st century, ARTBA launched the "PRIDE in Transportation Construction" campaign in February 1998. This long-term effort was directed at educating the general public, media and elected leaders about the industry's many positive contributions to the American economy and quality of life.

Through proactive PRIDE campaign products, activities and programs, ARTBA began laying the foundation for the next federal highway bill, scheduled for 2003.

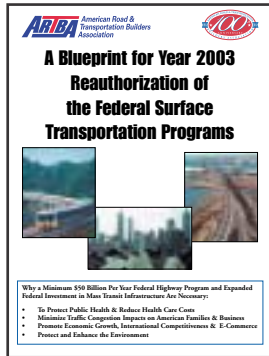
"Ready for Take-off"

Having achieved victory on the 1998 highway/mass transit bill, the Alliance for Truth in Transportation Budgeting in 1999

TEA-21 Reauthorization and the New Millennium

In 1999, building on a successful model, the association established the "TEA-21 Reauthorization Task Force." Led by contractor Jack Albert, president of Reece Albert, Inc., and Gene McCormick, senior vice president, Parsons Brinckerhoff, more than 100 members developed a legislative agenda for TEA-21 reauthorization.

In May 2001, the Task Force issued a 75-page report calling for a minimum \$50 billion per year highway and bridge program and additional \$2 billion annually for mass transit from 2004-09.



Cover of the ARTBA TEA-21 Reauthorization Task Force 75-page report.

Core Mission

Thus, ARTBA entered the 21st century and the association's next 100 years working as always to expand and protect the transportation construction market. From the vision first articulated by Horatio S. Earle in 1901 to today's outstanding volunteer

About the Author

Tom Kuennen is principal, The Expressways Publishing Project (EPP), located in Wheeling, Illinois. He has more than 20 years writing experience on transportation construction issues. You can learn more at EPP's website, www.expresswayonline.com.

100th Anniversary Trivia...

1. What year did ARTBA create an Industry Advancement Fund?

- A) 1986 B) 1990
- C) 1994 D) 1998

2. Where did President Bush sign ISTEA into law?

- A) Michigan B) Texas
- C) New York D) Washington, D.C.

3. What month did President Clinton sign TEA-21 into law in 1998?

- A) April B) May
- C) June D) July

Answers: C, B, C

ARTBA TIMELINE

2000

ARTBA-led coalition secures passage of AIR-21, increasing federal airport capital investment by more than 60%.

John W. Midgley, P.E., Jackson County, Mich., is elected ARTBA chairman at Washington, D.C., convention.

2001

John Wight, HNTB Corporation, is elected ARTBA chairman.

Association holds first-ever *International Conference on Roadway Work Zone Safety*.

2002

ARTBA celebrates 100th anniversary in Washington, D.C., and New York City.