

Associated Taxpayers of Idaho

Lane Beattie Remarks

Good morning. I welcome the opportunity to join you today. Utah and Idaho are sister states. We share our universities, we travel to see each other's beautiful landscapes, and we share our economies together in the Intermountain West. Utah and Idaho share a bright future together.

I was asked to speak to you today because in Utah, over the past fifteen years, the greater Salt Lake City area has completely reinvented its transportation system. Those of you who have visited have noticed.

- We rebuilt I-15 in Salt Lake County, our major freeway running north and south through our capital city.
- We built a new parkway called Legacy Parkway in western Davis County. Where I reside. We paid for this entirely with state funds.
- We built six light rail lines, creating a "transit system" that serves our populace. These include a central truck line, a line to the University of Utah, a line to the Salt Lake International Airport, a line to West Valley City and lines serving Draper and the award winning Daybreak community.
- In addition to light rail we built commuter rail – something we call FrontRunner – running from Ogden in the north to Provo in the south.

- And we rebuilt Interstate 15 in Utah County, our second largest county where BYU and IM Flash are located.

Without question, the past 15 years have been historic in the level of investment in moving goods and people throughout our region.

And may I suggest that transportation investment is a major reason why the state of Utah right now has the second fastest growing economy in the nation right now.

Now let's just step back and ask why do we do this? Why do we go to all the trouble to spend literally billions of dollars on our transportation infrastructure?

Let me assure you, a picture of our light rail trains may make a nice cover for our Salt Lake Chamber magazine, but that's not our motivation.

Investment in roads may make my commute quicker, but that's not why we do it.

We invest in transportation because it's the lifeblood of our economy. When transportation systems get congested, it's just like your arteries becoming clogged. The economy comes to a standstill. Investing in transportation frees up these arteries and makes certain that the economy functions efficiently.

We invest in transportation because it actually reduces transportation costs.

If you want high transportation costs just stop investing. It's far more expensive to build new freeways than it is to maintain the ones you have.

It's far more expensive to pay for rights-of-ways in the future, than it is to invest now. And, it's far more expensive to bring your economy to a standstill than to invest now and keep your economy strong.

I realize that all of you are part of the Associated Taxpayers of Idaho because you want to keep taxes reasonable, competitive and low. But let me be clear:

When it comes to transportation...you can pay now or pay a lot more later.

In Utah, we invest in transportation because it's the right thing to do for our economy.

So how do you invest in transportation?

How does a community make the hard decisions, find the money and get it done?

I would like to suggest three building blocks:

First, make transportation investment an economic imperative for your community. Make certain that everybody understands that the Idaho economy requires constant investment. Ignore future investment at your peril. Economic growth won't happen by accident. It happens because community leaders invest in the future.

Second, unify as a community. And I mean this at all levels. You must unify state government with local government, the business community with government, and business and government with the community. Investing in transportation isn't for wimps. And government can't do it alone. And the business community can't do it alone. You must come together as a community and solve problems.

Third, and this is perhaps the most important, start with the need. Then communicate it well.

Don't start with "how will we pay for this?" That's not the motivation. Start with the need. Study the need, understand the need, reach consensus on the need and then communicate it over and over again.

When you make transportation investment an economic imperative, when you unify as a community, and when you start with the need and

communicate it well, EVERYTHING GETS EASIER. And your economy will get stronger.

I'd like to share with you an example of how to invest in transportation and do it right.

We recently rebuilt Interstate 15 in Utah County, our second largest county. It's 24 miles from Lehi to Spanish Fork, with two additional lanes added in each direction. It included 40-year concrete pavement design, 10 highway interchanges, 63 bridges and 385 lane miles -- enough to pave a 12-foot-wide road from Salt Lake City to Las Vegas.

I-15 Core, as we called it, included the movement of 7 million tons of dirt -- enough to fill the Cowboys football stadium. It included 2.6 million square yards of concrete pavement enough to pay for a sidewalk coast to coast. It even included 655 new permanent signs.

Now...to pay for this did we do anything really creative? NO. We did our research and communicated the need. We unified as a community behind this need. We made certain that everyone knew it was an economic imperative that we invest. And then we put our "shoulders to the wheel" as we like to say in Utah...and got the job done.

We used motor fuel taxes, we used sales taxes, we raised our motor vehicle registration fees, and we put our AAA credit rating to work and borrowed as an investment in our future. We made a sacrifice and got it done.

Don't think, however, that we failed the creativity and innovation test.

Investment in I-15 Core was an endeavor in innovation. Let me explain:

- We move what is called the Sam White Bridge into place over I-15 in one night -- the longest two-span bridge to be moved by self-propelled modular transporters in the Western Hemisphere. It is 240-feet long.
- We constructed a new Continuous Flow Intersection -- the first of its kind in Utah. Also constructed a new Diverging Diamond Interchange -- the first of its kind in Utah.
- The project was completed three years ahead of schedule and \$230 million under budget.

At a time when new freeways in this country are an endangered species, Utah got it done.

Now let me take a moment and talk about public transit, which has been a critical component of our success.

I tell people that asking whether you should invest in roads or transit is like asking whether you need a gas pedal or a brake. Get over it...they are both critically important.

We raised our sales tax in 2007, a year of budget surpluses and a booming economy. Why did we raise our taxes at a time of plenty? Well...it's easy. We had a plan, we had a need, and we had a spirited and committed population that saw the future and did it right.

We built 70 miles of rail in seven years because of that sales tax increase. The investment would never have happened without that sacrifice. And shortly after we committed to this project, the Great Recession hit. And I want to tell you that we would have waited another 15 years for the needed federal investment in our transit system.

With the investment we've become a more attractive metro area and it's great for business. Just talk to Goldman Sachs and why they've made Salt Lake City their second largest employment center in North America.

Talk to our venture capital community that has invested more in the past year than six other western states combined.

Talk to eBay and Proctor Gamble and Wells Fargo and Solomon and Edwards Life Sciences and dozens of other companies who have a major

presence in the Salt Lake market. Public transit helps make our economy work.

So, you have to lean forward. You have to commit to the future. And my advice to you is to start with the need, communicate it well, unify as a community and make sure people understand the economic imperative of transportation investment.

Thank you for your interest and best of luck as you do the right thing for the Idaho economy.