



DrumBeat: June 29, 2006

Posted by [threadbot](#) on June 29, 2006 - 9:25am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

Update [2006-6-29 9:28:54 by Leanan]: Happy Birthday, Interstate System!

[U.S. interstate system marks 50 years today](#)

The USA a half-century ago was a place where people seldom ventured far from home. When they did, they drove on narrow, two-lane roads that moved people and goods slowly.

With the stroke of a pen 50 years ago today, President Eisenhower began to change all that. He launched the interstate highway system, a giant public works project that would speed travel and the distribution of goods, make driving safer, fuel the growth of suburbs and link far-flung regions of the nation.

But it looks like we're facing "declining marginal returns" on it:

The interstate network is getting crowded much faster than it's being expanded, and spending to expand and modernize it must increase dramatically to reduce congestion, according to a report being released today.

Travel on the 46,572-mile system increased by 51% from 1990 to 2004 while capacity grew 6%, says the report by TRIP (The Road Information Project), a Washington non-profit group that promotes transportation policies that relieve congestion and aid economic productivity. TRIP predicted interstate travel will increase an additional 60% by 2026.

The high cost of oil is part of the problem:

[As Asphalt Prices Rise, Roads Crumble](#)

For those who were wondering what happened to Tom Whipple...he's back. [The Peak Oil Crisis: Our Government Forecasts the Future](#)

[Decline in Venezuelan oil production a 'concern' for U.S.:](#)

The U.S. government is concerned about falling crude oil supplies from OPEC member Venezuela, a senior U.S. government official said Wednesday.

Declining oil output from Venezuela since 2001 “is a concern to world oil markets and has not been helpful to world oil consumers, particularly developing countries in our own hemisphere,” the official told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

This is sure going to help the oil industry's tattered public image: [BP unit charged with price manipulation](#).

[Fission Impossible](#): Nuclear power a no-go due to skyrocketing uranium costs?

[Japan fights global warming by making all cars use ethanol by 2030](#). But the real problem is the U.S.: [Half of global car exhaust produced by US vehicles](#).

[America the Dangerous?](#) George Soros on peak oil:

We are facing a global energy crisis which is very complex because it has many ingredients, starting with global warming and the peaking of oil discoveries. And there's the dependence of many of the major industrial countries on sources of energy from politically unstable areas of the world and the behavior of some of the energy rich countries like Iran and Venezuela and Russia exploiting the high price of oil and their control of the supply. So we are in fact in a global energy crisis. That instability has certainly added \$20-\$30 to the price of oil.



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