



**EBTC Members are the Transportation Agencies of the U.S. States of Michigan, New York, Vermont and Maine and the Canadian Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland & Labrador**

**(Honorary members are the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, the Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council and the Regional Municipality of Niagara)**

## **2008 ANNUAL REPORT**

The members of the Eastern Border Transportation Coalition continued to cooperate, consult and coordinate through the Coalition in 2008 in support of the objective of efficient north/south transportation movements, including efficient and effective borders. These efficient transportation links are vital to the economies of the member States and Provinces as well as to the two national governments. Considering that we now live in an elevated state of border security, it is imperative that EBTC continue to actively promote these objectives with federal government agencies on both sides of the border.

Early in 2008, EBTC completed the “Consultation and Approval Guide for Infrastructure Projects at or near the Border”. This document, which was a recommendation coming out of the 2007 fall workshop, outlines the responsibilities of all agencies which could be either involved or from which approval would be required for these border projects. It also provides an internet link where more information can be obtained on each agency. It is meant to be a checklist for anyone planning or managing a border project and benefits from recent experiences of EBTC members on current projects. This document has been widely acclaimed and is now available on the EBTC website.

The Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG) is a bi-national forum, chaired by representatives of Transport Canada and U.S. Federal Highway Administration, for consultation on border matters. EBTC members participate actively in TBWG and in its subcommittees. Since EBTC is seen as the organization representing the transportation agencies of the eastern States and Provinces, it is accorded the right to appoint one member to the six-member TBWG steering committee. This member currently is the EBTC manager, who is one of the two non-federal steering committee members. EBTC also agreed to provide its Glossary of border terms and acronyms, which was compiled a couple of years ago, to TBWG. This was then used as the basis for a similar TBWG document.

In addition to TBWG, the coalition also attended and participated in events sponsored by the Can/Am Border Trade Alliance, which is an industry based alliance with similar objectives to those of EBTC. The EBTC manager made a presentation on EBTC activities at their Borders and Gateways conference in Buffalo in October.

In 2008, EBTC actively pursued an attempt to obtain valuable cross border data which was gathered in a recent Canadian national roadside commercial vehicle survey and which is held by Transport Canada. Currently, this data is not available to U.S. transportation departments even though some of them, including most EBTC states, agreed to contribute financially for access to the data. Unfortunately, the legal restrictions imposed by Transport Canada were an impediment which EBTC was not able to overcome. However, the Coalition will continue to monitor this file and look for a mechanism to obtain the data.

During 2008, EBTC also continued to work with a private company, Turnpike Global Technologies (TGT), to expand on the Ontario model to measure vehicle transit time at border crossings. System expansion into Quebec using TGT's second generation technological solution experienced problems which resulted in slow progress but in November, TGT indicated that they are now ready to install readers on both sides of two border crossings, one New York/Quebec and one Vermont/Quebec, which will use GPS transponders to measure delay at the borders. This program could be expanded to measure delay at other crossings as well as transit time on other transportation corridors leading to and from the border. This data is important for transportation and border infrastructure planning. Accordingly, EBTC has committed funds from its budget to pursue this initiative.

Considering that the EBTC website had not been redesigned since it was created, EBTC entered into a contract with a New York State based web designer to revamp the website. This project was very successful and the new site, including a number of photos provided by members, has replaced the old site at [www.ebtc.info](http://www.ebtc.info). The number of people accessing the EBTC website has continued to grow in 2008. As a consequence of the web design, EBTC also adopted a new logo.

Due to significant travel budget restrictions and elevated work responsibilities of member jurisdictions, EBTC was not able to host a border related workshop in 2008. It is planned to hold one in 2009 if conditions are more favorable.

Regular "Information Bulletins" are distributed to members by the Manager to assist in keeping current with border related transportation issues. This mechanism is used to follow such major policy initiatives as the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, adoption of enhanced drivers' licenses, and the Canadian Gateway initiatives.

The annual meeting of the coalition was held in Toronto on November 20<sup>th</sup>, with five jurisdictions in attendance and the remaining four members participating through a conference call arrangement. Most of the meeting time was spent discussing EBTC work plan and priority activities for 2009. Rob Tardif of Ontario and Kevin Rousseau of Maine were reelected as EBTC co-chairs for 2009. Susi Derrah of New Brunswick will be the Secretary and John Reed of New York will be the treasurer. Accordingly, Mr. Reed presented an updated financial report and a draft budget for 2009, both of

which were approved. Membership allocations will remain unchanged. A decision was also taken to extend the contract of Walter Steeves as EBTC managing consultant for another year.