



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)

2011 Annual Report

Introduction

This report highlights the activities of the Eastern Border Transportation Coalition (EBTC) and its member provinces and states in working to improve the safe and efficient movement of people and goods between Canada and the United States.

EBTC's Mission Statement

EBTC defines its purpose in the following mission statement.

“The Eastern Border Transportation Coalition, through its member activities, will assist in the development of a seamless, multi-modal transportation network which is secure, safe, efficient and environmentally sustainable. EBTC will provide a proactive forum within which each state, provincial and metropolitan transportation and border service agencies, and likeminded public and private organizations, can work together to overcome barriers and impediments to our shared vision.”

EBTC Strategic Plan

EBTC has developed a strategic plan to implement its mission statement. The five key elements of that plan are:

1. Provide organizational, communications and administrative support to EBTC members.
2. Develop a common understanding of cross-border issues among Coalition members and as they relate to other transportation organizations.
3. Influence the development and implications of federal and international policies that support the Coalition's missions and goals.

4. Work closely with U.S. and Canadian transportation and border agencies to assure the secure, safe, and efficient flow of people and goods across our borders.
5. Support and participate in the development of US/Canada cross-border planning and coordination initiatives.

2011 Accomplishments

During 2011, the EBTC Board and staff worked closely together to carry out a broad range of activities aligned with the strategic plan. These included:

- Maintaining an awareness of current border issues and provide ongoing updates to members through:
 - a. Regular board conference calls;
 - b. Frequent information bulletins on relevant border-related issues;
 - c. Reports on staff and board involvement in border-related conferences, workshops, and meetings sponsored by federal and private sector organizations.
 - d. Revision of the EBTC website to share information with EBTC partners and interested groups (www.ebtc.info);
 - e. Participation in border-related conferences and workshops;
 - f. An annual workshop focusing on current border issues impacting member provinces and states;
 - g. Organize workshops, conferences, meetings and other events on border-related issues affecting EBTC member states and provinces.
- An important function of the EBTC board and staff is to maintain and broaden the organization's relations with U.S. and Canadian government and agency officials, with border operators, and with other organizations committed to improving border flows.
 - a. To ensure that member provincial and state issues and concerns were considered at the federal level, EBTC board and staff participated in the work and activities of the Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG). EBTC regards the TBWG as a vital bi-national forum for identifying and addressing land border policies, programs, and issues that affect the safe, secure, efficient and environmentally responsible movement of people across US/Canada border. EBTC's involvement in the TBWG included:
 - i. Participation on the TBWG Steering Committee;
 - ii. Participation in TBWG subcommittees dealing with infrastructure, data, technology, and policy;
 - iii. Participation in the TBWG April and November Plenaries in Minneapolis MN, and Niagara Falls, ON.

- iv. Planning and participation in the May Cross-Border Rail Peer Exchange in Burlington, VT.
- b. EBTC seeks to work closely with other public and private sector organizations committed to improving the movement of people and goods across the borders.
 - i. In 2011, EBTC continued its cooperation with the Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance (CAN/AM BTA). EBTC Board members and the Executive Director actively participated in CAN/AM BTA's May Ottawa and November Washington, D.C. conferences.
 - ii. EBTC participated in a number of border and bi-national trade conferences including:
 - 1. The Trade Corridor, Border Gateway, and Bi-National Regional Economies Conference in Thorold, ON, sponsored by the CAN/AM BTA;
 - 2. The Master Planning Peer Exchange sponsored by the Transportation Border Working Group; and
 - 3. The Great Lakes International Trade and Transportation Hub Summit, sponsored by a number of Michigan and Nova Scotia organizations.
 - iii. EBTC believes that border programs, initiatives, issues, and policies on the southern border with Mexico have a profound effect on the U.S./Canadian border. EBTC maintains a relationship with the Border Trade Alliance, a public/private sector organization that focuses on improving the safe and efficient movement of people and goods on the U.S./Mexico border.
 - iv. EBTC worked with border state departments of transportation to evaluate the potential impacts of transportation reauthorization proposals on future border infrastructure funding.

Cross Border Rail Peer Exchange

Last May, EBTC in partnership with the Transportation Border Working Group and Whatcom Council of Governments, hosted a Cross Border Rail Peer Exchange in Burlington, Vermont. The Peer Exchange sought to capture the expert opinion and present analyses of current bi-national rail operations (passenger & freight).

Participants identified current trans-border clearance levels, security practices/requirements, and discussed strategies on how to promote current and future rail initiatives that would increase the efficiency of rail service across the border. Major issues discussed included reducing transit times while maintaining security, and supporting current and new passenger and freight rail services that will enhance/expand the economic trading relationship shared by these two countries.

The expected outcomes for the peer exchange were:

1. Identify policy and infrastructure development needed to facilitate efficient trans-border rail operations while maintaining security
2. Develop a framework for addressing existing obstacles; create a guidance document for rail projects/programs/operations related to trans-border movements to facilitate service delivery
3. Conceptualize plans to enhance/expand the usage of bi-national rail and have buy in from all participants.

Participants included:

1. U.S.-Canada Border Inspection Agencies
2. Transport Canada/USDOT
3. U.S.-Canada Border States and Provinces
4. Canadian National Railway (CN)
5. AMTRAK and VIA Rail
6. Private Sector Rail & Canada-U.S. Trade Associations, and
7. Other Public/Private Sector Stakeholders

Major topics covered included:

1. Current State of Cross Border Initiatives
2. Future of Canada-U.S. Passenger Rail
3. Future of Canada-U.S. Rail Freight
4. Cross Border Operations and Security
5. Current Rail Freight Rail Movement Data

After extensive discussions, the participants recommended that a working group be established to recommend strategies that would facilitate the cross-border movement of passenger rail service in an efficient, safe and secure manner. This group should include key stakeholders, including border agencies, AMTRAK, federal, state, provincial and local transportation agencies, and other key stakeholders.

Since that meeting, the TBWG has moved to establish a Cross-Border Passenger Rail Discussion Group, which will be led by Transport Canada and the Federal Rail Administration.

International Border Crossing Commercial Vehicle Origin-Destination Survey

In 2011, EBTC presented a proposal to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to fund a commercial vehicle, border data collection effort encompassing the states of Michigan, New York, Vermont, and Maine.

Prioritization of bi-national border and trade corridor infrastructure investments is a complex process involving decision makers from numerous federal and state/provincial transportation agencies and beyond. The planning process requires a high degree of confidence in specialized transportation data and analysis. Unfortunately, no dedicated or programmed border facility data collection program exists to obtain vehicular travel pattern data serving bi-national multi-jurisdictional interests. While various federal data

collection programs exist to address their specific agency data requirements, these sources are not considered to be adequate to serve all of EBTC state/provincial transportation program and planning needs.

This major gap in trade and travel information makes infrastructure and economic development planning risky. As EBTC states and provinces work to reshape their economies, taking advantage of border infrastructure assets will be key to their economic recovery. EBTC states and provinces are engaged in planning activities that will help to strategically identify investments in the freight system that will both grow existing industries and attract new ones.

Data that would be derived from this effort will allow us to make better informed decisions. Local, state, provincial, and federal agencies seeking to expand cross border trade, retain, and create new jobs need accurate and timely information on the movement of goods and people. This information will help government and private sector organizations to develop and prioritize programs, policies, and projects that provide the greatest benefits for the limited resources available.

Data collected through these surveys will assist federal policy makers in developing new programs and policies to promote trade and create jobs. This survey will provide important information to assist the U.S. government's goal to expand exports to Canada and other countries around the world.

The proposed study would be led by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation with the data collection taking place in Canada. In order to advance this proposal, the Ministry of Transportation Ontario, offered to match FHWA funding in the amount of \$300,000 to a ceiling of \$575,000. FHWA reviewed and approved \$300,000 for a scaled-down proposal to collect data at Ontario's borders with Minnesota, Michigan, and Ontario. Due to complications approving the transfer of federal funds to MTO, the data collection process was delayed to 2012. EBTC will continue to work with MTO and FHWA to implement the proposed study in 2012.

EBTC Annual Workshop and Meeting

Each year EBTC hosts an annual workshop that focuses on key issues affecting the northern border. The workshop provides an opportunity for EBTC members to interact with key public and private sector officials involved in cross border commerce, security, and transportation. This year's annual workshop, "Connectivity Beyond the Borders" was held in Saratoga Springs, NY on September 13.

The main themes of the workshop were:

- Potential impacts of the "Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness" on border communities, states, and provinces;
- U.S. transportation reauthorization;
- Bi-national corridor planning initiatives in the EBTC region;

- Border processing initiatives – What’s working; What isn’t; What we can expect in the future; and
- EBTC region updates

More than forty participants representing state, provincial, federal, and private sector organizations participated in the workshop. Jim Phillips, CanAm BTA President, presented a proposed strategy for coordinated clearance, developed by the Coordinated Clearance Coalition. Ann Marie Paul, Buffalo CBP office, provided the CBP perspective on the Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness. Anne Stubbs, Executive Director of the Coalition of Northeastern Governors, and Fred Eberhart, Senior Advisor, International Cooperation and Trade States, USDOT, provided their perspectives on reauthorization of federal transportation legislation.

Workshop participants learned about regional freight movement and facilitation initiatives including:

- Continental Rail Gateway
- Bi-National Logistics Hub
- Port Authority of New York-New Jersey Regional Freight Movement Initiatives
- Canada/US Freight Flows along the Vermont – Quebec border.

EBTC believes that bi-national planning is a critical component to the successful implementation of programs and projects to facilitate the movement of people and goods between Canada and the U.S. Workshop attendants learned about important planning initiatives currently underway in the region. These included:

- The Greater Buffalo-Niagara Regional Transportation Council’s “Bi-national Transportation Strategy for the Niagara Frontier”;
- The North Country Chamber of Commerce, Plattsburg, New York-Quebec Corridor initiatives; and
- The Quebec Ministry of Transportation’s Smart Corridors Project.

Hendrick Saaltink, Seaway International Bridge Corporation, discussed current and future infrastructure projects at the bridge. Dave Henry, EBTC Canadian co-chair provided an update on a recent border truck survey conducted by the Ministère des Transports du Québec.

Presentations from the workshop can be found at EBTC’s website, www.ebtc.info.

EBTC’s annual meeting was held on the day following the workshop where consideration of the annual budget, election of officers and preliminary work on the 2012 workplan were undertaken. Sara Moore, Michigan DOT and Dave Henry, Quebec Ministry of Transportation, were re-elected as the EBTC co-chairs for 2012. Maurice Rasheed, NYSDOT was elected Treasurer and Secretary.

The Board of Directors decided that EBTC would focus its efforts in 2012 on six priority issues. These are:

- Canada-U.S. Beyond the Border Action Plans
- Federal Land Border Policy
- Federal Funding of Transportation Border Infrastructure
- Cross Border Rail Passenger Service
- Information Needs in Support of Transportation Planning
- Master Planning at Land Border Crossings

For more information regarding these issues and EBTC's proposed strategies to address them, visit www.ebtc.info.

Finally, EBTC would like to thank Kevin Rousseau, Maine DOT for 16 years of service as an EBTC Board member and Officer, and Susi Derrah, New Brunswick DOT for her service over the past two years on the Board. Both have been strong and effective advocates for the safe, efficient, environmentally sustainable, and economical transportation of goods and people between the United States and Canada. We wish to congratulate them on their new careers. They will be missed by EBTC and our partners.