



## **Eastern Border Transportation Coalition**

**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**

### ***-----2005 ANNUAL REPORT-----***

The Eastern Border Transportation Coalition (EBTC) enjoyed another busy and productive year in 2005.

During 2005, a primary emphasis was placed on achieving a consensus policy position relating to the proposed Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. The WHTI has been proposed by the U.S. Congress and, if enacted, will require a passport or other acceptable secure document for crossing the Canada/U.S. land borders beginning in 2008. Since this proposal would, EBTC believes, be disruptive to efficient flows at the border, the Board of Directors decided to make comments to the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. Therefore, EBTC worked on achieving unanimous agreement on the specifics of an EBTC position paper which was subsequently agreed upon and submitted. The submission addressed both the effects on efficiency of cross border travel as well as the deterrent to travel. The EBTC document was also provided to other agencies to assist them in providing their own comments.

Another top priority identified by EBTC is the need for an improved ongoing relationship with the border agencies, especially with respect to coordinating, planning and implementing border infrastructure improvement projects. Accordingly, EBTC held a

second annual one day meeting with border agency representatives which proved to be very valuable to all attendees. It is anticipated that similar meetings will be arranged in future years.

EBTC jurisdictions continued to participate actively in the Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG), which deals with bi-national transportation issues and is chaired by Transport Canada and the U.S. Federal Highway Administration. EBTC is represented on each of the TBWG subcommittees. Following a review of TBWG format and activities, a new Steering Committee was formed to guide the organization. This new committee has representation from both of the co-chair agencies, the two border customs agencies as well as one representative of western states and provinces and one for the eastern states and provinces. EBTC was requested to appoint someone to be an eastern representative, and EBTC decided to have its Managing Consultant sit on the steering committee.

EBTC also continues to cooperate with the CanAm Border Trade Alliance, sending representatives to their two annual conferences, one in Ottawa and one in Washington, D.C. Additionally, CanAm BTA has formed a new Borders, Corridors and Gateways Council, and EBTC has also been active in this forum. The EBTC is one of the “gateway” organizations and has been represented by its Managing Consultant. Individual EBTC member jurisdictions also participate.

One of the benefits of EBTC membership continues to be the ability to share information and experiences with other member jurisdictions. For the past couple of years, EBTC has been sharing information through the creation of EBTC “Information Bulletins”. These bulletins are originated by the Managing Consultant from information provided by members or from newspaper articles and press releases relating to cross border transportation, infrastructure

and border processes. On a regular basis, these bulletins are added to the EBTC website.

As the end of 2005 neared, EBTC was working on a web-based resources guide which will provide an efficient way for trucking companies and other transportation users to access border information, processes as well as direct contact to specific border locations. It is anticipated that this guide will be ready early in 2006, and following testing by operating companies, will be placed on the EBTC website. EBTC is also investigating the possibility of sponsoring a real-time border transit time measurement project.

The Board of Directors began 2005 by reviewing the 2004 work plan to determine the past successes and accomplishments in preparation for establishing the 2005 work plan. This review included a priority setting exercise for issues to be addressed in 2005, and resulted in a new approved work plan with responsibilities for each item clearly identified.

The Board of Directors conducted EBTC business via regular conference calls at approximately six week intervals throughout the year, with special calls as required. Additionally, there were two face to face Board meetings; one in Dearborn, Michigan in May and one in Quebec City in October. The day to day EBTC responsibilities and coordination were once again, for the third consecutive year, contracted to a managing consultant, Walter Steeves.

Unfortunately, EBTC received notification, that due to significant budget restrictions, the Province of Prince Edward Island would not be able to continue EBTC membership in 2005.

P.E.I. had been an active and valuable member for several years. Accordingly, the EBTC co-chairs sent a letter to the P.E.I. Minister of Transportation expressing appreciation for their past contribution and also indicating that, hopefully, P.E.I. will be able

to rejoin in the future when budget problems ease. Additionally, there were two other changes in the EBTC Board composition. Sara Moore replaced Kris Wisniewski as the member from Michigan, and late in the year, Lynn Bryant replaced Wanda Lundrigan as the member from Newfoundland & Labrador.

The October annual meeting resulted in the re-election of the officers for 2005. Karen Songhurst and Benoit Cayouette will remain as EBTC co-chairs for the coming year, and Margaret Grant-McGivney and Jerry Cioffi will continue as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. It was also decided to enter into another one year contract with the Managing Consultant.