

**HIGHWAY CHAIRMAN TELLS STATE'S  
BOARDS PROBLEMS OF ROADBUILDING**

Address by Merrill Evans to Boards of Commissioners of State,  
Assembled in Asheville on Monday, August 19th.

One of the major contributions of this Administration to road building in the past two years is that Highway fund diversion to other agencies of State Government has, for all practical purposes, been eliminated. There are yet small amounts being diverted, but they are small, indeed, by comparison with sums that have been diverted annually over the past thirty years. It may now be said that taxes collected from Highway sources and for Highway purposes are now being spent on the North Carolina Highway System. This is a fact of major significance. Highway taxes are now being channeled into Highway activity.

But for this termination of Highway fund diversion, there would have been little Secondary Roads construction in the past two years. Since this has been done, however, the Secondary Roads Program has been consumable.

Two years ago, there were approximately thirty thousand miles of unpaved roads on the State Highway System. In this thirty thousand miles, there were eleven thousand miles carrying sufficient traffic and rendering service to the point the Highway Commission believed it was economically feasible to pave them.

During the two-year period ending June 30, twenty-four hundred miles of Secondary Roads were hard-surfaced in North Carolina. This is an accomplishment I believe the Highway Commission has a right to point to with considerable pride.

In every one of the one hundred counties of this state, there has been a sizeable Secondary Roads Program in progress. You, as County Commissioners, are familiar with the formula for allocating Secondary Roads construction and improvement funds. It is on the basis of un-



CHAIRMAN EVANS

paved miles within each county. This means that a county with more unpaved miles receives more Secondary Roads funds, and when once this money is allocated to a county, it cannot be taken down or spent elsewhere, or for other purposes.

The Highway Commission, under appropriations made by the 1963 General Assembly, has available for the next two years approximately the same amount of money for Secondary Roads construction and improvement that was available in the past two years.

On a thirty-thousand mile system of unpaved roads, with eleven thousand miles in need of immediate paving, and twelve hundred miles being paved each year, it might appear to some who are not aware of the basic situation that we are speedily closing the gap and reaching the point where additional paving will not be necessary nor demanded by those living on unpaved roads. I doubt, however, if those of you who sit in your meetings month after month and listen to Secondary Roads paying demands and complaints, have reached any such conclusion. The fact is that if we are catching up at all, it is at a snail's pace.

The over-riding factor in this whole situation is that North Carolina is a progressive, growing State. Our economy is expanding. We have more people and they are buying more cars and driving more miles. Once it was a car for each family. Then we advanced to the two-car per family stage. Now in many families there is a car for each member.

Traffic on North Carolina highways is increasing sharply year by year. As twelve hundred miles are paved annually, hundreds of other miles are increasing in traffic to the point they must be considered for paving also.

Do you, as County Commissioners, see any sign that would indicate the pressure for paving Secondary Roads is leveling off? If there is any one section of the State, or even one single county where the demand for improvement and hard-surfacing of rural roads is tapering off, it has not come to the attention of the Highway Commission.

The fact is, the demand for more and more Secondary Roads paving is coming from more and more people month by month.

With a considerable road construction program in progress in the Secondary Roads field, we are doing no better than holding our own and, when all factors are taken into consideration, it is extremely doubtful if we are even maintaining that position.

There is another problem in our Highway Commission operation where the interest of the County Boards of Commissioners is only slightly less than in Secondary Roads. That is the twelve thousand miles of US and NC numbered Primary Roads.

North Carolina's original approach to Highway building beginning in the early 1920's, was

toward a Primary System connecting county seat with county seat and principal town with principal town. This Primary System was from the beginning one of the very best in the Nation. It was from this original plan that our State became known as "The Good Roads State".

This Primary System was built many years ago and is now getting old. It has not been modernized to meet present day needs.

Primary Roads were built in North Carolina from 1920 to 1940, and at the latter date, the System was fairly adequate to meet Primary Road needs.

Because of World War II, few roads were built from 1940 to 1945. Soon after the War's end, there arose a tremendous demand to build secondary, farm to market, rural roads. This demand brought on the two-hundred million dollar Secondary Roads Program. Even when the two-hundred million dollars had been spent, there still remained many thousands of miles of roads unsurfaced and the demand for building secondary roads continued to build up rather than diminish.

From 1945 until the present date, the main thrust of road building in North Carolina has been on secondary roads. This simply means that for more than twenty years we have not had a major Primary Road building program. In this lengthy period, only a small part of our twelve hundred miles of Primary Roads have been rebuilt or modernized.

Primary Highways that were adequate in 1940 are not adequate today. There are three thousand miles of Primary US and NC numbered highways in North Carolina still in the sixteen and eighteen-foot class.

Many additional thousands of miles are twenty to twenty-two feet. No surfaced highway less than twenty-four feet is safe and adequate for today's traffic. The death toll on the highways of this State is high. More than one thousand people lose their lives every year. The total continues to creep up and up. This is a tragically complicated problem, but one of the contributing factors is the inadequacy and outmoded condition of our Primary System.

Traffic accidents are at least four times as high on our sixteen to twenty-four foot Primary Roads as they are on four-lane controlled access roads. Stated another way: Our Interstate System with four lanes and complete control of access, and our own roads built to Interstate standards, produce less than twenty-five per cent the traffic accidents that the same number of miles would produce on our sixteen to twenty-four foot Primary System.

At least for the present, we will have to accept the existing width and alignment on most of our Primary System. The question then arises, "Are we even maintaining and protecting the present riding surface base of the Primary System roads in which the people of our State have invested billions of dollars?" The answer to this question would have to be a resounding, "No, we are not protecting and maintaining it".

Our engineering staff has become so alarmed at the constant destruction of the surface of our Primary Roads that we are now making a survey into the depth of the damage which has already been done and the funds which would be required now to protect the investment in the Primary Roads. That survey will be completed in September.

We do not know the amount of funds needed, but we know now they will add up to tens of millions of dollars and the funds are not available for the needed strengthening, maintaining and rebuilding.

From the year North Carolina entered into its massive Secondary Roads Program until this year, sufficient funds have not been available to protect and maintain our Primary Road System. We have been forced to place only one inch of asphalt where two were needed, and two where three were needed. Moreover, we have been forced to place a lower type of resurfacing because of the lack of funds.

We have delayed resurfacing one, two, and even three years or longer where the need was very great. A close observer can see this all over the State. It is not sound Highway practice, but what can the Highway Commission do when funds are not available?

This is our most critical and demanding road problem today. One of these days the General Assembly, the State Highway Commission, and the people of North Carolina are going to have to face up to the Primary Road problem and that "facing-up" day cannot, must not, be too far in the future.

I shall mention only briefly at this time the problem of city streets on the State Highway System. These are points of our greatest traffic congestion. Widening and rebuilding highway streets within the hundreds of municipalities of the State is

**SECOND SECTION**

**THE COASTLAND TIMES**

"The Weekly Journal of the Walter Raleigh Coastland"  
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one our costliest areas of improvement. The responsibility of the Highway Commission for city streets is an enormous program in itself, and will have to be considered as a separate program if our cities, and in particular, the downtown areas of our cities, are to prosper and grow. If I should be called on this morning to give a figure that would make a reasonable beginning on the alleviation of this Highway Commission city street problem, the figure would have to be - on a minimum basis - at least fifty million dollars.

I hope that I may have an opportunity sometime within the next several weeks to discuss this particular phase of Highway Commission responsibility with a group similar to this Association, but one concerned primarily with municipal government.

Now, in conclusion, and quickly, two other points:

One: All around the edges of almost every city in the State, there are residential communities generally known as subdivisions. These are thickly settled. For the most part, the streets or roads are unpaved and being outside the city limits, when added to the Highway System, are secondary roads. There are thousands of miles of these street-roads.

These subdivisions, or a major portion of them, are real estate developments which have come into being since World War II. The Highway Commission cannot get into the development of real estate, but neither can it continue to turn a deaf ear to tens of thousands of its tax-paying families who are demanding relief from dust and mud.

Just a few million dollars may we estimate fifteen to twenty would go a long way toward a fair and equitable solution to this subdivision controversy. The mileage, in comparison with the homes involved, is comparatively small. The subdivision streets, generally, have sufficient width. A great many families could be served by shorter mileage.

If, by any chance, there should be a Road Bond Issue in the next Administration, I would have to suggest that fifteen to twenty million dollars be earmarked for the judicious paving of thickly settled subdivision streets.

Hurriedly now, this final item:

Many of North Carolina's finest natural resources are undeveloped because there are no roads leading to them. It may be the highest water-fall east of the Rocky Mountains in one of our western most counties or the most beautiful undeveloped seashore between Atlantic City and Daytona Beach in our easternmost county, or it may be fifty other undeveloped natural resources in the counties in between. There is scarcely a county in the State where tax valuation could not be increased, employment raised, and needed income made available if the Highway Commission just had limited funds for these development projects.

May I give an illustration: Skiing is one of the fastest growing recreational sports in America today. Our North Carolina mountains are within a day's drive of our heaviest centers of population. International skiing interests are surveying our mountain peaks, the highest in Eastern America. In this county, where we are at this moment, plans are already on the drawing boards and in the blueprint stages for a five to fifteen million dollar ski lodge and related development. We know the development interests have capital to move ahead.

What is the problem? It is finding one-half to three quarters of a million dollars of Highway funds to build an access road.

You may be asking in your mind at this moment, "Is the Highway Commission so short of funds that it cannot find one-half to three quarters of a million dollars for such a worthwhile development?"

My answer to that question would be, "We might find one-half to three quarters of a million dollars for this one development project, but then what would we do for the two dozen other projects just as worthy and just as desirable?"

The Highway Commission has no funds for purely development purposes, but such funds must be provided. It simply is not good business to fail to develop the natural resources which a kind and generous Creator has placed in our State and in our hands.

This demand for natural resource development funds is another area of responsibility that could very well be included should a Highway Bond Issue be considered in the years immediately ahead.

**ETHERIDGE FAMILY IS  
BACK FROM TRIP WEST**

Mrs. T. D. Etheridge and daughters, Misses Annie and Natalie Etheridge and Mrs. R. H. Atkinson have returned to Manteo from a visit in Mankato, Minnesota, with Annie's twin sister, Mrs. Richard Salet, and Mr. Salet. Taking the northern route to reach the Minnesota town, the party went through Canada, along the shores of Lake Superior and Lake Ontario. They also visited northern Michigan, which they found very beautiful.

After reaching Mankato, they visited many places of interest in Minnesota, including the State Fair, which is said to be one of the largest in the world, held in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. They also visited Cinema, where the current picture was "How The West Was Won", and they were delighted to be able to recognize in one of the characters an old friend, Charles Briggs, son of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Briggs of Kill Devil Hills, who is working in moving pictures, and who got his start in dramatics in The Lost Colony on Roanoke Island when he was still a youngster.

Miss Natalie Etheridge left this week for Norfolk, Va., to resume her duties as physical education teacher at Old Dominion College.

On Saturday night after the Etheridge family had returned to Manteo, they received word that Mrs. Salet's father-in-law, Louis Salet of Mankato, had been drowned while swimming in the Pacific at Honolulu.

**FOREIGN STUDENT VISITS  
ON ROANOKE ISLAND**

The Woman's Society of Mt. Olivet Methodist Church in Manteo was recently host to a visiting Chinese Student, William Mo Sun of Formosa. Mr. Sun, who has been corresponding with the Woman's Society, has for sometime wanted to visit Roanoke Island and our famous Outer Banks to compare Roanoke Island with his own island of Formosa.

While in Manteo, Mr. Sun was a house guest of Mr and Mrs. Raymond Wescott. A picnic at Coquina Beach was held in Mr. Sun's honor with approximately forty people attending. He also attended the Lost Colony which he deemed very interesting and informative of the founding of the first American settlement.

Mr. Sun received his Master's Degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of North Carolina at Raleigh and is now registered at the University of California where he is studying for his Ph.D. While in his native Formosa, Mr. Sun studied at the National University of Formosa. The Woman's Society, whose objective it is to make foreign students feel welcomed in the United States, felt they had greatly benefited from Mr. Sun's visit.

Hawaii. Mr. Salet, who was 70, was in Honolulu making the first stop on a trip around the world with a group of business men. He left Minnesota September 9 and his death came on September 14. Funeral services will be held in Mankato some time within a week.

A fisherman took an 11-inch rainbow trout from Genesee Lake in Wisconsin. Upon opening it, he found the intestine crammed with six cigarette filter tips. "Filter feedback," no doubt.—Sports Afield.

**OLDEST N. C. WOMAN  
DIES AT AGE OF 112**

Mrs. Matilda Duckett (Aunt Sis) Rogers, believed to have been North Carolina's oldest citizen, died in Waynesville Monday. She would have been 113 years old October 1.

A native of Madison County, she went to Haywood County as a bride of 20 and has lived in the Haywood County until her declining years when she moved to a Waynesville rest home.

Her husband, Robert Newton Rogers, died 53 years ago.

On her 111th birthday, she counted 284 descendants. Aunt Sis' and her husband had 12 children, nine of whom survive. Her later birthdays were always big occasions, even to congratulatory messages from presidents after she reached the century mark.

She was born at Spring Creek on October 1, 1850, a daughter of Hiram and Mrs. Lizzie Downs Duckett.

Sense shines with a double lustre when set in humility.—William Penn.

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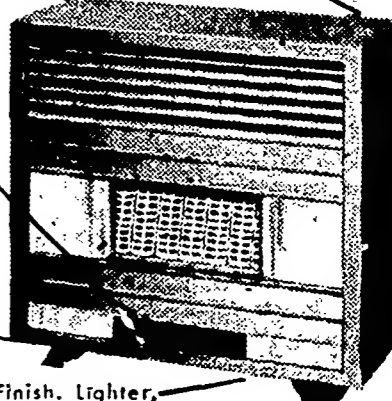
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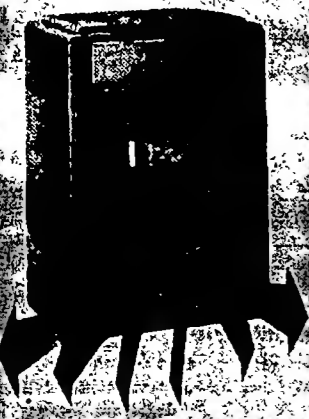


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