

## **CHAPTER IX AMERICA'S TRANSPORTATION NETWORK OF THE FUTURE**

### ***ARE WE THERE YET? -- ARTBA'S 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY HISTORY***

At the mid point of the last century, Albert Einstein was asked for his perspective about what the remainder of the century might offer. He said that many really exciting concepts had been developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – electricity, radio, television, the automobile, air travel, rocket science and atomic energy. – and that the rest of the century and beyond would focus on doing those things better than they had been done – perfecting them. I would say that the wonder shifted from being able to do these things at all to doing them well; and seeing what we mean by “doing them well” evolve.

One thing we have learned is the power of “networked systems.” This was a concept not well appreciated until recently. In 1997 the federal government considered the concept of networked systems in its classifications of industries – including power transmission, communications, water and sanitary systems and transportation. Recent analysis of the power of public investment in transportation has shown that it is the network that generates great benefits. The tragic events of this past year have reestablished in our minds the fundamental needs for reliability and redundancy in our networks.

Doing things well today means doing them with economic efficiency, doing them with recognition of their economic, environmental and social implications. We expect so much more of our transportation systems today and we will demand so much more of them in the future.

The demands of the society for a responsive transportation network are greater than ever. But our skills are greater, our resources are greater, our understanding of human needs and purposes are greater as well. We cannot fail.

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