



# AASHTO: Interstate 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

<http://www.interstate50th.org>

Linking the Power of the Past to the Promise of the Future

## Interstate Highway System Fact Sheet

**Official Name:** Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways  
**Total Miles:** 46,773 (2003)

### Longest Interstate Routes:

I-90, Seattle, Washington, to Boston, Massachusetts, 3,020.54 miles  
I-80, San Francisco, California, to Teaneck, New Jersey, 2,899.54 miles  
I-40, Barstow, California, to Wilmington, North Carolina, 2,555.40 miles  
I-10, Los Angeles, California, to Jacksonville, Florida, 2,460.34 miles  
I-70, Cove Fort, Utah, to Baltimore, Maryland, 2,153.13 miles

### Shortest Two-Digit Interstate Routes:

I-73, Emery to Greensboro, North Carolina, 12.27 miles  
I-97, Annapolis to Baltimore, Maryland, 17.62 miles  
I-99, Bedford to Bald Eagle, Pennsylvania, 53.00  
I-19, Nogales, to Tucson, Arizona, 63.35 miles  
I-66, Strasburg, Virginia, to Washington, D.C., 74.80 miles

### North-South Transcontinental Routes:

I-5 San Diego, California, to Blaine, Washington, 1,381.29 miles  
I-15, San Diego, to Sweetgrass, Montana, 1,433.52 miles  
I-35 Laredo, Texas, to Duluth, Minnesota, 1,568.38 miles  
I-55, New Orleans, Louisiana, to Chicago, Illinois, 964.25 miles  
I-65, Mobile, Alabama, to Gary, Indiana, 887.30 miles  
I-75, Miami, Florida, to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, 1,786.47 miles  
I-95, Miami, Florida, to Houlton, Maine, 1,919.74 miles

### States with Most Interstate Miles:

Texas, 17 routes, totaling 3,233.45 miles  
California, 25 routes, totaling 2,455.74 miles  
Illinois, 23 routes, totaling 2,169.53 miles  
Pennsylvania, 22 routes, totaling 1,759.34 miles  
Ohio, 21 routes, totaling 1,572.35 miles

### States with Most Interstate Routes:

New York, 1,674.73 miles, 29 routes  
California, 2,455.74 miles, 25 routes  
Illinois, 2,169.53 miles, 23 routes  
Pennsylvania, 1,759.34 miles, 22 routes  
Ohio, 1,572.35 miles, 21 routes

### **Routes Traversing the Most States:**

I-95, 16 states; Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Washington D.C., Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine

I-90, 13 states; Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts

I-80, 11 states; California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey

I-70, 10 states, Utah, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland

I-10, eight states; California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida

All but five state capitals are directly served by the Interstate System. Those that aren't are: Juneau, Alaska; Dover, Delaware; Jefferson City, Missouri; Carson City, Nevada; and, Pierre, South Dakota

**Oldest Segments:** A portion of the Grand Central Parkway in Queens, New York, opened in 1936 and was later incorporated into the Interstate System as I-278; The Pennsylvania Turnpike between Irwin southwest of Pittsburgh and Carlisle west of Harrisburg opened in October, 1940, and is now I-76 and I-70.

**Interchanges:** 14,750 (approximate)

**Bridges:** 55,512 (as of October, 2005)

**Highest Elevation:** Eisenhower Memorial Tunnel, Clear Creek/Summit counties, Colorado  
11,012 feet (east) and 11,158 (west)

**Lowest Elevation:** Interstate 8, El Centro, California, 52 feet below sea level

### ***History***

**Origin:** The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1938 called on the Bureau of Public Roads to study the feasibility of a toll-financed system of three east-west and three north-south super highways.

Recommendation: *Toll Road and Free Roads* advocated a 26,700 mile interregional highway network.

**Taking Shape:** In 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed a National Highway Committee headed by Commissioner of Public Roads Thomas H. MacDonald.

Recommendation: *Interregional Highways*, 1944, supported a system of 33,900 miles and an additional 5,000 miles of auxiliary urban routes.

**Plans Forged:** Congress approved the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 and designated the National System of Interstate Highways to include up to 40,000 miles "to connect by routes, direct as practical, the principal metropolitan areas, cities and industrial centers to serve the National Defense" with connection to routes in Canada and Mexico.

**Ramping Up:** August 2, 1947, Commissioner MacDonald and Federal Works Administrator Philip B. Fleming announced selection of the first 37,700 miles on routes proposed by state highway agencies and approved by the Department of Defense. No federal funds authorized.

**Foundation Laid:** Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1952 authorized the first funding for system construction; \$25 million a year for fiscal years 1954 and 1955. Another \$175 million was authorized for fiscal years 1956 and 1957.

**Green Light:** June 29, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs for the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. Title I increased the system's proposed length to 41,000 miles; nationwide design standards developed through AASHTO [*A Policy on Design Standards: Interstate System*]; established new method for apportioning funds among states; set federal government's share of the project cost at 90 percent. Title II—the Highway Revenue Act of 1956—created the Highway Trust Fund as a dedicated source of funding for the Interstate Highway System, on a pay-as-you-go basis through the federal gas tax and other motor-vehicle user fees.

Subsequent acts by Congress extended the Interstate system mileage to its current length of 46,773 miles.

**Who's First?:** Missouri, Kansas and Pennsylvania claim to have laid the first portions of the Interstate Highway System. Here are their stories:

*Missouri:* On August 2, 1956, Missouri became the first state to award a contract with the new interstate construction funding. In two of the three contracts signed that day, the Missouri State Highway Commission first signed a contract for work on U.S. Route 66—now Interstate 44—in Laclede County. The other contract was for work on U.S. 40—now I-70, the Mark Twain Expressway—in St. Charles County. Work started on August 13.

*Kansas:* On August 31, the Kansas State Highway Commission awarded a contract for concrete paving of a two-lane section of U.S. 40, now I-70, west of Topeka. Construction on this road started before President Eisenhower signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act, but paving under the new contract started on September 26.

*Pennsylvania:* The Pennsylvania Turnpike between Irwin and Carlisle opened on October 1, 1940. It has since been incorporated into the Interstate system as I-76 and I-70.

	<b>1956</b>	<b>Current</b>
U.S. Population:	168,903,031	293,655,404 (2004)
Annual Vehicle Miles:	627,843,000	2,829,336,000 (2002)
Federal Gas Tax:	3 cents	18.4 cents
Registered Vehicles:	54,013,753	135,669,897 (2003)
Registered Trucks:	10,678,612	94,943,551 (2003)

*Source: Federal Highway Administration, Program Administration  
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U.S. Census Bureau*