



CANAMEX Smart Tourist Corridor Project Summary

The CANAMEX Smart Tourist Corridor Project represents an opportunity to establish an integrated platform of transportation safety and incident management information to stimulate tourism activity in the region, particularly in rural areas. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are used to improve Corridor safety, security and efficiency. The adoption of a Corridor Operations Plan to maintain and integrate the systems, serves as a platform to provide traveler services and other information to the motoring public.

Background

In 2002, the CANAMEX Corridor Coalition engaged the Western Transportation Institute, Montana State University - Bozeman, to define Smart Tourist Corridor elements, develop the Corridor Operations Plan and evaluate the technologies available to implement the initiative. It was recognized that many of the elements required to support the Smart Tourist Corridor – robust rural telecommunications infrastructure, integrated intelligent transportation systems – are also required to develop other bold initiatives identified in the Corridor Plan. Their report will be available in December 2003.

The Importance of Tourism

Tourism plays a vital role in each of the CANAMEX states' economies. These tourists support local employment, and often mean the difference between the coffee shop staying open or closing. They are also an important source of sales and bed tax revenues.

While urban areas along the Corridor rely on weather and amenities (casinos, culture, golf courses, skiing) to attract the out-of-state visitor, rural areas rely on visitors seeking a more intimate experience. An integrated system that provides information on the weather, national park or forest hours and parking, the location of other experiential activities, such as rafting, museums, birding or ghost tours has the potential for increasing visitor stays and spending.

Key Considerations

- Traveler safety and security is the highest priority among all other travel considerations.
- Tourists and travelers need more information on major venues and available travel services. They need this information real time, available through multiple devices and formats. This should not change as the traveler moves from state to state.
- The Smart Tourist Corridor can provide information support for organizations responsible for promoting and supporting tourism such as visitors and convention bureaus and economic development agencies.
- The Smart Tourist Corridor provides a common platform to develop appropriate information. It does not take the place of private sector providers of this information.