

BETTER ROADS MEAN A STRONGER ECONOMY



A 1995 Federal Highway Administration study, focusing on seven states in the Lower Mississippi Delta Region, revealed that counties and parishes where highway-related improvements were made outperformed the rest of the nation in relative job growth. A



follow-up to the study looked at how much of the increase in employment in seven rural counties and parishes with rapid job growth could be attributed to transportation improvements. Through a series of focused interviews, researchers concluded that as much as 40 to 65 percent of job growth was attributable to transportation improvements. It seems that economic growth thrives on easy access.

Improvements to the highway system can have a positive impact on luring prospective companies and keeping existing companies in Arkansas increasing job opportunities for Arkansans. Corporate executives rank highway accessibility as the number one factor for companies to consider when selecting new locations ahead of more than 25 other factors including, construction costs, proximity to major markets, and the availability of skilled labor in Area Development's 20th Annual Corporate Survey (2005). In addition to helping the growth of local and regional economies, roadway improvements are essential to the tourism industry in the Natural State. More than 21 million people visited Arkansas in 2005, spending more than \$4.6 billion in travel-related expenditures.

