

# They're Changing the Face of America



**A fantastic network  
of superhighways will  
build up towns, decentralize cities,  
and help the whole country  
get better acquainted.**

by Howard Earle

**A**CROSS ITS ENTIRE length and breadth, the face of America is being changed to the tune of more than \$51 billion! And it's happening in a way that will affect you, your family, and your community.

Whether you live in a large city or small town, chances are you will awaken one morning to find your whole mode of living altered.

To illustrate what's happening, one day recently I entered the Indiana Turnpike just outside Chicago, and 13 hours and no stoplights later I was in New York City. I had traveled across Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey without leaving a four-lane concrete highway with opposing traffic separated by a 10-foot parkway. Excellent restaurants and service stations were conveniently spaced along the way. From New York I sped along expressways of the same type, or improved, through the New England states to Maine.

Last Summer I sat on the porch of a friend's home in upper New York State and listened to the roar of heavy road machinery and dynamiting of rocks as workers cut the roadbed of a new thruway diagonally across my friend's property. When finished, this superhighway will connect the Canadian border with the New York State Thruway from New York City to Buffalo.

Throughout the country similar networks of superhighways are facing the landscape, making it easier and safer for motorists to reach distant destinations more quickly.

Chicago currently is building a mammoth network of eight-lane expressways. One will connect the Loop with a superhighway extending across Illinois to Iowa. Another will link the Loop to the Indiana Turnpike. A third will connect with a superhighway to Wisconsin.

In Cincinnati, the eight-lane Millcreek Expressway is slicing through the city. In Maryland, engineers plan a new Baltimore-Washington route. Farther west, in Denver, Salt Lake

City, and Los Angeles, as well as north and south of this line, new superhighways are under construction or plans have been approved.

**T**HIS NATION-WIDE road-building activity springs from a \$51-billion superhighway project authorized by Congress in 1956. The chief feature of the program is a 41,000-mile network of toll-free interstate highways which will link 42 of the 49 state capitals and 90 percent of the cities with more than 50,000 population. The Federal government is footing 90 percent of the cost of this project, and the states are furnishing the rest.

Another chunk of that \$51 billion will be spent on primary, secondary, and urban roads, financed by the Federal and state governments on a 50-50 basis. That same Federal kitty will finance new roads in our national forests and parks and on public lands.

The new interstate superhighways will make the ancient Roman roads look like ribbons of dust. The toll-free 41,000 miles of concrete will be free of stoplights and dangerous intersections, with grade separations replacing crossroads. The new routes will have four or more traffic lanes, each at least 12 feet wide, and in non-urban areas, median strips will separate opposing traffic lanes. The shoulders along the roads will be about 10 feet wide, and access to the highways will be by modern cloverleaves.

These highways will work vast changes in your life and that of your community. The overall effect will be revolutionary, thinks Gerald W. Collins, manager of the transportation and communications department of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

"There is hardly a city, village, or mile of highway that will not be involved," Collins says. "Present traffic patterns will be altered; new areas will be opened for business; motor-vehicle transportation in all forms will assume greater utility, convenience, and safety."

Communities may find new industries springing up in their midst.

Industrial and business expansion most likely will follow good highways for the transportation of their products. Those communities near the superhighways may find decentralization of industry bringing new life to them through the construction of new plants, offices, and factories.

Relocation of businesses to areas adjacent to the superhighways could mushroom communities where today there are only pastoral scenes. Suburban America could easily take on a new look, with adverse effects on some existing communities. But many more communities will enjoy a population and business increase through an influx of new residents.

The superhighways are destined to ease or eliminate many commuting problems. It will be less of a problem to jump into the family car and drive 50 or 60 miles to work on these superhighways than it is to drive 10 or 15 miles in congested city traffic today. The big-city dweller will find it easier to move to a small community along the new roads.

**T**HE SAVINGS to motorists driving on the superhighways as compared with city streets or conventional roads is estimated at between three and five cents a mile. Much of the saving comes from the elimination of stop-and-start driving which consumes considerably more gasoline per mile. Straight-away driving also saves wear and tear on mechanical parts of the car affected by sudden stopping and starting.

Many experts believe these ultra-modern highways reduce traffic fatalities because of the elimination of stoplights, crossroads, and other hazards found in city driving or on ordinary highways. Reduced accidents could mean a substantial savings on your automobile insurance if the reduction on a nation-wide basis is sufficient to lower policy premiums.

Time saved on the superhighways is of inestimable value. The new roads will allow for speeds up to 70 miles an hour in flat country and 50 miles an hour in mountainous and urban areas.

A survey in New England showed that on 150 miles of conventional highways, traveling through communities and cities, 305 stops were made. Traveling the same distance over much the same territory on a new superhighway, no stops were made. Time consumed in covering the distance on the conventional highway was slightly less than six hours as compared with three hours on the superhighway. Speed on the superhighway averaged 50 miles an hour and on the conventional road 20 mph.

Additional advantages of the superhighways are tension-free driving and picturesque scenery. Many nerves are frayed by conventional highway driving. Tensions rise and some motorists border on nervous collapse by the end of a tedious trip on crowded roads with bumper-to-bumper driving amid shrieking horns and policemen's whistles, screeching brakes, and the odor of burning rubber.

And now modern high-speed, low-slung cars, with their potential power that once was dangerous, will be especially adaptable to the superhighways. Forthcoming models may be developed to the degree that they will literally have all the comforts of home.

But travel about the country will be one of the greater advantages of the superhighways. Where you want to spend your vacation will be determined by the time you want to spend in traveling. The new superhighways will bring almost any spot in the country close enough for a family vacation, provided you don't mind a few days' driving to reach the playland most appealing to you.

Even the usual Saturday and Sunday week ends now can encompass the vacation spots you thought too distant before the advent of the superhighway. Visiting friends two or three states away will be almost as simple as going across town for dinner.

The new superhighways will change the face of the land in many, many ways. They also will change the living habits of the family. Stay-at-homes will become rare indeed in this age of travel across countries and continents.