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INTERVIEW WITH

DAVE AND JAN BLAIR

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Place of Interview: The Blair Home

Interviewer: Dara Jones

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DJ: Hello, this is Dara Jones and I'm here again with Dave and Jan Blair. And it is May the 17<sup>th</sup> and we're doing a follow-up interview about him being head of the North Texas Tollway Authority. And Jan brought that up in our last session and it sounded too fascinating to let it go. So, here we are again. So, welcome.

DB: Well it's a pleasure to be here. What I'd like to do if it's all right is to give you a little history of tollways in Texas. They're not – they were not a very popular thing back in the early '60s. So, we're going to have a little lesson on tollways in Texas. And the first tollway in Texas was the Dallas/Fort Worth tollway. It was, uh – the Texas Department of Transportation was in charge of all road systems in Texas up to that point. And this was the first departure from a TexDot road system. The legislature in Austin wrote a separate legislative edict for tollways in Texas and that that tollway in – that went from Dallas to Fort Worth was the first tollway to be constructed. And it had a Board. The Board was of people in the Austin area primarily that were involved with the government. And what they did was, they said that the – in order to have a tollway and it – and of course, tollways were financed by bonds – that they – the edict was that they had to pay the bonds off in 20 years. So, that tollway from Dallas to Fort Worth would be paid off in 20 years. And at that end, it would become a free road.

DJ: Hm.

DB: That was – it was quite a success and the amount of money that they got from that tollway was more than enough to pay the bonds off. They had extra money left over. And the Dallas – City of Dallas had been talking about a tollway in Dallas because the north end of Dallas was growing very rapidly and there was no transportation north that could hold all the traffic. So, they took that extra money from that tollway that – in Fort Worth and they started a new tollway board. And the first project was the Dallas North Tollway that went from downtown Dallas basically to LBJ Freeway. At that time that they built that tollway, LBJ freeway was not in operation. It had not been constructed. But the tollway went to Harvest Hill Road. And they've used the funds and they've formed a new Board now of mostly people here in Dallas. Now the emphasis for expanding that tollway system was Highway 190. Highway 190 was a TexDot project. They owned all of the right-of-way basically from I-35 all the way over to I-30. But they haven't had anything built on it. It was just dirt. And the powers to be in Dallas went to the legislator and said, "We've got to expand this tollway system. We already have this short segment that we have constructed. And it would be wise if we just connected that to this new system, and have a Dallas tollway that went north, and connected with 190. And it – 190 would go from 35-30." The people who were in – I'm not saying in charge, but the people who really got behind this effort was Jerry Thompson. Jerry Thompson and the Thompson family were 7-11 folks. Lee Jackson who was a Dallas County judge and Ron Harris who was Collin county judge at the time – those three were the emphasis for getting this just done because they had to go through the legislature. And they were successful and the

– they were going – the legislation said, "You shall start this tollway system on September of 1997." September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1997 was the date for that.

DJ: So, for the – both the North Texas – the Dallas north tollway as well as the George Bush?

DB: Yes.

DJ: So, they were kind of jointly –

DB: They were jointly –

DJ: – planned?

DB: – planned out.

DJ: Wow. That's good to know.

DB: And they needed to put together a new board of directors for that tollway. And so, Jerry Thompson, Ron Harris, and Lee Jackson were the original Board members and they – and the requirement was that this be a four-county tollway system which would include Dallas County, Collin County, Denton County and Tarrant County. So, you could build tollways in any of those four cities. And the other thing was that the Board of Directors had to have representatives from each one of those counties and they decided that anyone who had a tollway in their county could have two representatives on the Board. Anybody that did not have a tollway in their system could have one. So, the way it started out was Dallas County had two representatives – myself and Alan Sims who was the City Manager of Cedar Hill. Uh, Collin County had two. Don Dillard was a businessman in Collin County and Carl Leachman [phonetic 00:08:30] was an attorney in Collin County. They were the two representatives because those – Dallas County and Collin County – at that time were the only ones that had tollways in their system. The rest of the Board was made up of a representative of Fort Worth – Donna Parker – a representative from Johnson County had one because there was a slight risk that there would be the tollway that would extend from Tarrant County south and it would go through Johnson County.

DJ: Okay.

DB: So, they had a Johnson County rep that was Kay [phonetic 00:09:20] Walls and Jack Miller, who was the Mayor of the city of Denton at the time, represented Denton County. And so, that made up the Board. And we had our first meeting in late September. As I said, Jerry Thompson, Lee Jackson and Ron Harris were on the Board at that time. Jerry Thompson was the Chairman. He was on the Board for a very short period of time – maybe three months – and resigned from the

Board. And that was all prearranged. Lee Jackson became the Chair at that time. And he and Ron Harris were limited to one year on the Board.

DJ: Now was there a reason for limiting?

DB: Yes, because they had it – all the rest of the people set up for the Board and that did not include Lee Jackson or Ron Harris. But they were very instrumental in getting this whole thing started. So, they expanded the Board and then contracted the Board. After they left – after a year – Don Dillard – who was from Collin County – was elected Chairman. Jerry Hebert [phonetic 00:10:55] who was from the City of Richardson was hired as the General Manager. One short story about that was that Jerry Hebert worked at – in the City of Richardson as a planner and at a very meager salary of about \$75,000 a year. And when they hired him to be the General Manager of the tollway system, they felt that he should be equal to all of the managers of the different organizations and like the DART, the airport, the Regional Transportation Council, and all those people who were in the 200,000 range. So, he went from about –

DJ: Wow.

DB: – 70,000-200,000 immediately when he was hired. But I'm very good friends with Jerry. Have been ever since he came on board and he's –

DJ: Now I can hear –

DB: – one of the best managers –

DJ: I can hear this. Sorry.

DB: – one of the best managers that I ever met. And he deserved that pay. He worked – really worked hard. But from there on, we – I've got to not move.

DJ: Would you like me to unhook you? Unhook you?

DB: No.

DJ: Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah. I know it's –

DB: Anyway, we were off and running in October of 1997. That was our – we had our first meeting at the end of September and that was our second meeting. And we were – we had all the people in place. And I am missing two people – one from Denton County. I can't remember who he was. It was a very instrumental gentleman in Denton County. And I'm missing one from – let me see. Which one am I missing here? That's the only one I'm missing is the one from Denton County. And the girl – the lady that represented Johnson County was named Kay Walls. So, that gives you a little background of the organization and how the

people were selected. Now the job came of building tollways – getting something on the dirt – something you could drive on. And they would – it was a very mixed deal in Dallas. If you went to take a vote on – should the tollway be there, the vote was about 50/50. It was a lot of people that were anti-toll.

DJ: Do you run into intimate – eminent domain type issues?

DB: Yes, we did. And in any event, it wasn't a great sendoff. Nobody came out, and cheered us, and everything like that. It was, "You guys better do the job and do it right because if you don't you're not going to have a job." By the way, all these people that I've named, none of them got paid.

DJ: So, it was a volunteer type thing?

DB: It was a volunteer.

DJ: Wow, okay.

DB: So – and it's still volunteer today. In any event, the tollway – the 190-tollway got approved. We started with the engineering. We had some problem going through Carrollton because there was an anti-toll effort in the city of Carrollton. And they blocked the highway from any construction or anything. So, we had to deal with that. We got that resolved. And then, there was a – at the end of 35 there was a new tollway that was going to be built over in Las Colinas.

DJ: Oh, is that the 1 –

DB: 161 [In unison] Tollway. And that tollway was really put together by the people in Las Colinas. Las Colinas had a very vibrant group of folks that wanted a tollway and they insisted. And we managed to deal with TexDot and buy the right-of-way that was already there. And that 161 became a tollway except one little one mile stretch that's in the middle that was already built by TexDot and they didn't want to give it up. So, there's one little section mile long that is not part of the tollway system. Although it is – I mean, you drive off the – drive onto the tollway off the – this one-mile stretch and drive back onto the tollway. So, that was kind of deal w-. But anyway, we started to build the 190 tollway and we were building it from the Dallas North tollway. But this time LBJ freeway got built and we were involved in a interchange at the LBJ freeway and the Dallas north tollway going north. We – later on in that year – in '97 – we purchased some more land that was part of the Katy Railway right-of-way.

DJ: Now where was that?

DB: When was that? That was –

DJ: Or where? So, part of the Katy Railroad?

DB: The Katy Railway – the original Dallas Tollway from downtown to Harvest Hill was the old Katy Railway.

DJ: Really? Okay.

DB: Yeah. And –

DJ: I wondered where that was.

DB: Yeah, right.

DJ: It's under the – underneath concrete.

DB: Yeah. And then, the railroad right-of-way extended north. But it was owned by the railway. So, we as a tollway system had to buy the right-of-way from the Katy Railway which we did. And we purchased the land from LBJ Freeway North to Beltline first. And then, from Beltline we went from there to Trinity Mills in Carrollton and beyond up to 360 or 380.

DJ: Well, you can talk, Jan.

DB: You can talk.

JB: Up to 380.

DJ: We'd love to hear from you too.

DB: Up to 380.

DJ: So, let me get this right. So, 380 – okay. That's the road that goes through Denton. That's University –

JB: ` Yes.

DB: The road that goes through Denton.

DJ: So, is there – I haven't driven on it in a while. So, is there now a tollway that goes all the way up to 380?

DB: There is a tollway that goes all the way up to 380 and there is a – we had purchased right-of-way from 380 north to Highway 82 which is in Sherman/Denison area and that's going to connect into the 77 – the Route that goes to Houston – I-45. And when it goes north of Dallas, it's the – whatever the highway designation is. It's either Highway 75 or that's what it is – Highway 75.

DJ: Now is this going to – now I've heard there's another road that's going to be a little further east at 78. Is that just going to be a freeway or a – I've heard it was going to be a tollway.

DB: Where would that be? In Garland?

DJ: Yeah, Garland, Sachse, Wylie, Farmersville.

DB: That would be Highway 78. And that's in the plans, but it's far off in the plans.

DJ: So, far off?

DB: Yeah.

DJ: All right.

DB: There's not enough – believe it or not there's not enough traffic on that to justify putting a freeway –

DJ: Oh, all right.

DB: – or a tollway. So, it's in the planning process, but it's yet to be built. So, the – right now where Dallas North Tollway system consists of the Dallas North Tollway which goes from Downtown Dallas to 380 – it consists of I-90 – I-190 which now goes from Interstate 20 which is south on 161.

DJ: Oh okay, that direction.

DB: 161.

DJ: All right.

DB: It goes north from I-20. It comes north. It passes the LBJ Freeway or at 635. And then, it does a curve through the swamps over in – by the river next to LBJ Freeway. And that was a real interesting project because that was going to connect 161 with 190.

DJ: Correct, yes.

DB: And that would make the whole loop. So, we looked into the purchasing of right-of-way because all that was all raw land. It was swamp. It was an old gun range. It had a lot of problems, but we purchased the land. And then, built that section between 635 and 35. So, now the freeway went from I-20 South up 161, across 635, went around that little loop through the swamp, across 35, up north here, went east now across from – went across the Preston Road and those areas east and ended up hooking into I-30.

DJ: So, a big –

DB: Big –

DJ: – loop?

DB: – loop around. I-30 is in – it's actually in – part of it's in Garland and part of it's in – I don't remember the other town, but then in any event –

DJ: Sachse.

DB: – it's – that's right. It's – it is –

DJ: That's where I live.

DB: It is a part of Sachse.

DJ: Part of Sachse and maybe Richardson.

DB: Yeah, part of Richardson. So, it's become a major road.

DJ: Rowlett.

DB: Uh-huh. So, all of those cities are involved in the fact that they had to more or less give their approval on using the right-of-way through their town and they could put – any of those cities could put restrictions on the tollway – for example, on the landscaping. Each city could have different landscaping, monument signs. Some cities wanted monument signs. Some cities didn't. So, each city had the ability to come to the Board and give their pitch. And we could decide on how to proceed. So, if you look at that first segment which was about nine miles from downtown Dallas to Harvest Hill – that was the first segment built. It went from nine miles to about 200 miles now the way that the system works. I don't know how many million cars – how many million cars – we handle a day. It's a tremendous amount. When we first opened the freeways, we connect – we collected all the tolls in cash.

DJ: I remember those days.

DB: Yes.

DJ: Go through and throw the quarters.

DB: Yep, throw the quarters in. And we had a facility out in Richardson next to the 190 Tollway that was actually a sorting facility and when the trucks went around and picked up the quarters from all the toll stations, they went out there and they

dumped them into this big hopper. And it sorted the quarters. It counted them. It wrapped them to go to the bank and that was the revenue that was in the initial tollway system. It was the quarters and what – and I served on the Tollway Board for nine years. And in that nine-year period, we went from collecting quarters to tollway passes. No more quarters. So, the design of the tollways changed dramatically because we didn't need those stations where you paid the quarters anymore.

DJ: Well, it sure speeds things up.

DB: Right, absolutely. So, if you go around the tollway, you'll see big tollway stations with side deals where you could go through and pay in cash. And those are all closed now. And the freeway – the – what we call the free lanes – the ones that you can drive straight through – are all just open highway now. So, on the open highway system we've changed the design of the facilities that now count the cars by filming the cars – filming the license plates. And one of the questions we had – the very first question we had is, "How fast could a car go through without the camera catching the – the image of the license plate?" And people who designed that system said 120 miles an hour.

DJ: Oh my gosh!

DB: And we said, "You're crazy." So, they had a test one day, and they had a special car, and closed the roads. And they drove the special car through that toll facility at different speeds – 60 miles an hour, 70 miles an hour. And they camera'ed each deal and it – at the 120 mile mark they still could see the image of the license plate.

DJ: That's pretty amazing.

DB: And they stopped, and they said, "Well, we probably could go further, but we don't think anybody's going to be driving 120 miles an hour."

DJ: Well, every so often I see the, you know, the "tag cars" where there's two of them. But I bet they're not going 120.

DB: No, it's –

DJ: We hope not.

DB: So, the toll system which was developed here in Dallas was one of the best toll systems in the country and it's been copied in a lot of different toll areas. Chicago's one, Indiana has copied our system. We've licensed it with other toll facilities in the United States.

DJ: Now when you say "licensed", what do you mean?

DB: What we mean is that they can use our system. They can build it. They can install it. They can do everything, and they have to pay a license fee to the NTTA for using that system. That system was designed here in Dallas and it was patented –

DJ: Oh nice.

DB: – so that Dallas owned it. And Dallas could then license it to other facilities. We've licensed the one in Houston – the tollway in Houston. One of the other things is that the – we decided to join in a national tollway society – whatever you want to call it – a group of tollway systems that grew – got together and formed this organization that would get people together and discuss how to make tollways better, make them safer, how they could do different construction methods whether they had to go through a swamp or just dry land. A lot of different ideas that if I took you on a ride through our tollway system, I could show you some of those ideas.

DJ: That would be interesting.

DB: Right.

DJ: Well, maybe we can do that one of these days.

DB: Right. It's – it would be a very interesting thing to do – drive around. We're doing some modifications. The tollway at – the 121 tollway is the last tollway we – that we didn't build it all. TexDot built most of it, but we took it over and finished it out. And there's an intersection at Dallas North Tollway and 121 at Legacy. You know where Legacy is?

DJ: Oh yeah.

DB: Yeah. Well, there was a tremendous development going on at Legacy – has been for probably 20 years. And the traffic up there is horrendous, and we've had to widen the road. Since we built it first, we've had to widen it to handle all the traffic. We've had to put in a very extensive interchange system. You've seen these elevated – interchange – the interchange system out there is amazing and how we've squeezed it in all the land there is – the amazing thing is that we've – we were able to get it in, make it work, and not disturb a lot of the businesses out there.

DJ: Now has that alleviated some of the congestion? I know sometimes –

DB: Yes, it –

DJ: – getting on that part of the tollway is like just packed.

DB: It has in the respect to the number of cars it'll handle per hour. It probably has increased the capacity by 30%.

DJ: Oh, awesome.

DB: But that's filled up almost immediately, you know. So, it's crowded again.

DJ: So, are there plans to deal with the overcrowding?

DB: No, there's not. I mean, there's a limit that you can build lanes. So, you know, it's a financial limit. It's a land – getting the land is a big part of the problem. So, probably like LBJ freeway right now is 10 lanes. It's five lanes on each side. That's about the maximum that you can put in in any right away and the right-of-way is extensive. If you look at the right-of-way at LBJ, it's massive. And putting a tollway in is just the same as you have a limit as to how big you can make it, you know. People have got to find some other way. You've got to find some other tollways to get the traffic, but we're limited in the size. But we can do little things like improve access on and off the free – the tollway – access in the interchange systems. That seems to be a big – if you go north and see some of the traffic that comes in the evening hours that's coming from the south to the north on those interchange deals, they just – they look like a parking lot, you know. They're just a line of cars waiting to get on the tollway. No, it's one thing that we're moving a lot of vehicles. But it's difficult in the rush hour time.

DJ: Right. Our city's just exploding –

DB: Right.

DJ: – as far as – it seems like new people are coming in daily.

DB: When I was on Board, we had an organization that looks into how – what the population was going to be in the Dallas/Fort Worth area in five-year increments. What was it going to be in 2000? What was it going to be in 2005 or '10, so forth? And when I was on – got off the Board in 2006, the – I'm trying to think of the word right now. The population of Dallas Fort Worth had grown from about three million to about six million. It had doubled. They estimated that by the year 2020 we'd add another five million.

DJ: Really?

DB: Yeah.

DJ: Wow. So, doing the planning is difficult when you're looking at those kind of numbers and I ended my term when the planning was still good that it wasn't growing as fast as it is in today's market.

DB: So, kind of like "Seinfeld" –

DJ: That's right.

DB: – go out on top.

DJ: That's right.

DB: And – but it was a real joy for me to be on the Board because I'm an engineer and I love engineering. And that was my part in being on the Board. I was the only engineer and when we had an engineering problem, I generally sat in on it and was part of the discussion. Most of the people on the Board were financial people, that involved in the financial part. "How are we going to pay for all this stuff that we're doing?"

DJ: So, is it – you mentioned it kind of started with the extra revenue that came from the I-30 –

DB: Right.

DJ: – tollway. Has that continued? Each project kind of bankrolls the next one? Is that –

DB: Absolutely. Absolutely. And the system now is self-paying.

DJ: So, you don't even need the bond anymore?

DB: Oh no, you have to have the bond.

DJ: Okay.

DB: But it's –

DJ: Maybe I'm dumb, but can you talk to me about like what a bond is? So, you know, I know there's something that cities get when –

DB: Yeah. Well –

DJ: – they want to do a project.

DB: – what we do is that we decide on a stretch of tollway, design it and then have some experts price it out. "How much is it going to cost to build this?" And then, we go to the bond market. We have – we farm that out to the big firms that do that kind of thing and they go to the bond market. Our bonds are snapped up like you wouldn't believe.

DJ: So, investors will buy-in on the bond?

DB: Oh yes.

DJ: And they'll get a return on your investment?

DB: When they see our bond, they'll buy it right away. And so, it's easy for us to borrow money. But the reason it's easy is we pay it back. The revenue that we get on the tollway, we pay it back. The other thing that we've done is that most tollways in the United States, the biggest problem that they have is they're part of the government system. And in order for them to raise prices on their tollways they've got to go to the government and ask the government can they raise the money. And just soon as they do that, the citizens get aware of it. And then, they holler, and scream, and it's very difficult for those organizations to – not to go to the bond market, but very difficult for them to even consider going to the bond market because they have such backlash. And a lot of tollways never get built that should get built.

DJ: So, you're – Jan, I hear you agreeing. Do you have some thoughts on some of what Dave is talking about here?

JB: Somewhat related, I know oftentimes the human cry from the general public is ignored. But in cases such as this, the voice of the people must have heavy impact as far as raising the fees is concerned. And remember Dave telling me that the fee increases in the tollway system – in the Dallas multi-county tollway system – those fee increases are built into the future schedule of the use of the toll roads, so that it, you know there is no hearing, or discussion, or opportunity for public argument and refusal of those fee increases. They're built-in, and they happen, and life goes on. I did have a comment about – or a question about the speed of the cars that are photographed as they go through the toll lanes. Is there any involvement in security or investigation of where vehicles that are being looked for are tracked through those photographs of license plates?

DB: That was a good question when we were going to the camera system is that, you know, people now are – they're – they don't like people snooping at them and they don't like cameras. If you – we have a camera down here at one of our intersections and people go crazy when it, you know, because they think that they're – that camera is looking at the people in the car instead of just looking at the license plate because people can't get on their mind how you can take a picture of just the license plate. How does it figure out what to take a picture of that this little, small license plate on the car – how does it work? And it works with very fast cameras. They have search mechanisms on them that will only search out the license plate.

DJ: Kind of like facial recognition.

DB: That's right.

DJ: Okay.

DJ: That's right. And it doesn't take pictures of anybody in the car, the type of car. It only takes a picture of the license plate –

DJ: Huh.

DB: – and only the license plate in the rear. So, it's been very successful. We've had very, very little input from the general public as to whether they agree with it or don't agree with it. They don't even recognize what's happening because there's no instance where we take pictures of people. We take pictures of license plates.

DJ: Now Jan, were you talking about – let's say somebody was “on the lam”: they were running from the cops and there was a high-speed chase. Is that what you were talking about trying to maybe track them through the tollway system?

JB: That might be included or, you know, an Amber Alert search for a typical vehicle – license number –

DJ: Is that –

JB: – color of car?

DJ: Is that possible, Dave to actually –

DB: It's not possible. We could search for the license plate, but we couldn't go any further than that.

DJ: So, you couldn't do that in real time in other words?

DB: No, you couldn't do it in real time. So, an Amber Alert or, you know, a description of the car – the color, and the model, make and everything – you couldn't do it with our system. You couldn't switch off just a license plate to a whole car and you'd have to do it in the whole system. You couldn't do it in one place. It'd be very difficult to do. You could do it if you want to do it – if you want to pay for it.

DJ: Oh, of course. (to Jan) Now did you have something else to say?

JB: Going back in time, Dave was stating that the first tollway in – or toll road in all of this history was the road built on I-30 between Dallas and Fort Worth. And at that time, I was out of – just out of college and working for IBM. The bid was out I guess for the company that would manage the scanning of the cards. It was a punch card system period in time. IBM had punch cards with narrow rectangular

holes in the cards – pardon me. And Remington Rand had cards that were punched with a circular punch. And IBM and Remington Rand were competitors for the account to collect the tolls – manage the toll collection – on that 30 miles or so – 30-40 miles. Well, I was with IBM and Remington Rand – pardon me – gained that contract. And of course, printed on the cards – the Remington Rand cards – were "Do not punch, staple – " something or other " – or otherwise mutilate the cards that you – ", that, you know, " – you're using to pay your toll." Well, some of us IBM'ers did occasionally mutilate the card in rebellion against Remington Rand getting that contract. Foolish things you do when you're young. But it was a time when Remington Rand was going strong and how long their contract lasted I don't know. Dave, was it until the end of that stretch of highway being paid for or paid off?

DJ: The Dallas/Fort Worth tollway?

JB: Uh-huh. [Yes]

DB: I don't know. I really don't know what the – I know that when it ended, it ended. It really ended –collection, everything – it really ended.

JB: Well –

DB: They turned the road over to TexDot.

JB: Right.

DB: And it became a free road.

DJ: Now is that going to happen to the tollways that are currently going or –

DB: No.

DJ: So, what changed between that road which the toll stopped and then these that are perpetual? What –

DB: The attitude.

DJ: The attitude? Okay.

DB: I would guess that at some point you're going to run out of land or whatever and you can't expand anymore. I don't know whether that's 100 years from now or 10 years from now. But if you get to that point where you can't build anything anymore, the system would stabilize. You'd have to maintain it, which we do very well. We have a great maintenance group that maintains the highway.

DJ: The roads are impeccable –

DB: Right.

DJ: – whenever I drive on them.

DB: They have the street sweepers and all that that get all the stuff off the side of the road. We have a group that does the landscaping if you haven't noticed the landscaping.

DJ: Oh yeah. The –

DB: Right.

DJ: All those little, what – Texas natives –

DB: Right.

DJ: – coming down the side of the hill.

JB: Xeriscape – xeriscape gardens are beautiful.

DB: We painted some of the overpasses, tested the paint. Paint doesn't last long. The sun just eats paint up and you have to – if you paint it once you have to paint it again. We developed a concrete system now that is colored that we use in the concrete columns that's been very successful. And – but eventually, those will blend out over the years. We don't know what we'll do then – whether we'll paint them or leave them like they are. Those – those – there are people who are looking at tollways 20 and 50 years from now. What are they going to look like? What are you going to have – what is the maintenance that you're going to have to do? How long will a highway last? When you build highways today, you can build them to last 20 years, or 30 years, or 50 years. It depends on how much concrete you put on, the construction methods that you use, the cost in doing that system. One of the biggest problems in tollways today is trucks.

DJ: Well, what does a truck do to the tollway?

DB: The truck is – the highways are load limited. When you build a highway, the highway is load limited. So, when you have moving cars, you had a moving load over the concrete and that moving load penetrates the concrete. And if the concrete's not thick enough or dense enough, it'll crack. Concrete will also crack in the weather. You know, if the – if it gets cold enough here, the expansion in the overpasses and everything aren't designed to take that kind of expansion and they'll crack. So, there's methods to building a tollway, a roadway. It doesn't make a difference whether it's TexDot or whether it's the tollway system. You can build a road that will last. It depends on how much it costs. Can you afford it? So, if

you ever got to a point where you build out the system, you'd still have the maintenance. You'd still have the maintenance.

DJ: Sure.

DB: You'd still have the maintenance of the landscaping. And so, you'd have to collect something to pay for that. Now that would probably mean the tolls would be reduced or maybe they'd stay where they were. They wouldn't go any further, you know. As the, you know, I don't – I'm not a financial guy, so. But as the cost rises, you – she mentioned that there's a built-in system to take care of rises in cost.

DJ: Right.

DB: And you'd still have that. If the thing was complete you'd have the maintenance and the cost of the maintenance. And you'd – so, you'd have to still toll something to pay for that because all the rest of the money would go to build the highway.

JB: Dave, when you obtained the right-of-way to build a toll – a highway or a tollway in this instance on the ground. Does that also give you the right-of-way or the right to create an elevated highway over that?

DB: Yes.

JB: It does?

DB: Yes.

JB: Okay.

DB: And a good example of that is I-35 and LBJ Freeway. There's an accessory tollway that's not part of the NTTA.

DJ: It's not?

DB: It's not.

DJ: I thought that was part of it.

DB: No, it's owned by a Spanish outfit.

DJ: Really?

DB: Yeah.

DB: They built it and they built it on top of the existing –

JB: The name is Cintra --

DB: – tollway.

JB: --C-I-N-T-R-A.

DB: Yeah.

JB: Cintra. And that's --

DB: So, they collect tolls and they pay for their own construction.

DJ: But that –

DB: See?

DJ: That goes through your toll tag though.

DB: Yeah, but the toll tags are all the same.

DJ: Okay. So, it's like –

DB: We collect for everybody.

DJ: – it's an interrelated system?

DB: That's right. And I was mentioning the fact that we were part of an organization that was nationwide that included tollway systems across the United States and some around the world.

DJ: And international, didn't you say?

DB: Yeah, it's an international and it's a very interesting organization. It does very well. It's non-political and I don't know how the devil they got by with making it non-political. But they have information that comes into their organ – their group and from information that we give them, information that Houston gives them on what you can do to improve the tollway system – what you can do to improve the collection, what you can do to improve the construction, what you can do to face the public when the public gets a little mad at you charging them to use the road. And they're – it's quite an organization. I was very impressed. We went to the conventions every year in different places and I learned a tremendous amount. But going to see the different tollway systems around the United States and New York has the – probably the biggest tollway system and the best tollway system in the country. And if you go to New York, you're going to pay a toll wherever you go.

DJ: Oh, I bet.

JB: But that sounds to me to be – to offer to the world much more efficient business approach to building highways and toll roads because you have an example that's been done. It's the initial guideline. And you can tweak it and do whatever is necessary for your terrain, or your geology, or your, you know, your volume needs, etc. Is that how it's used?

DB: Yeah. I went to Spain here – oh gosh – 30 years ago I guess and drove on a Spanish tollway system and I thought I was on the LBJ. It was –

DJ: Nice.

DB: Yeah, it was. It was quite effective. But their system's a little different. Their construction is different. Their land is different. They have to go through mountains and things of that nature. We don't have any mountains around here. We don't have any big rivers or anything like that that we have to worry about. The Houston system is a very good system. Theirs is a circular system. Have you ever been to Houston?

DJ: Oh yeah.

DB: But it's a circular system. Ours is kind of a straight circular, you know. We have straight roads that feed a circular part, but it's not basically circular. And then, you – if you want to go someplace, you go to the nearest circular, and get on it, and go around because we don't – we have not been able to buy enough land to do that. The good example of a circular one is the 161 from 20 that comes up and goes across 190 over the 30. But that's about a half circle.

DJ: Half circle?

DB: Yeah.

DJ: Yeah. Now, you know, when I was looking through your photo album I noticed that there was like a sister city or something and there was a visiting mayor or something from Europe or something.

JB: Yes.

DB: One from Germany.

DJ: Germany, okay.

DB: Right.

DJ: So, I wondered if that was how you met the – like the International Toll Organization. Is that how you came familiar with the [inaudible 01:00:25]?

DB: No, because one of the things that – we had a sister city program which was developed by President Eisenhower –

DJ: Oh, all right.

DB: – several years back. 01:00:37

DJ: So, that's a – I've got us totally off on another topic. Sorry.

DB: But we go back and forth between Farmer's Branch and German – the city of Garbsen and Garbsen does not have a tollway. They use trains. That's their – Germans, French and the Italians use trains.

DJ: All right.

DB: They don't use highways. They use highways to supplement the train service, but if they want to carry people around and go some distance they use trains. That's different. We don't have any trains here other than the little, small DART system. So, there are other ways of transportation and they're looking today to have a train system that goes from here, to Austin, to San Antonio, to Houston.

DJ: That would be nice.

DB: Yeah. It's a bullet train, goes 150 miles an hour.

DJ: That would be very nice –

DB: Right.

DJ: – because they're quick.

DB: Yeah. I'm sorry.

DJ: That's all right. Now Jan, when you first mentioned the tollway, you mentioned there was like part of the Chisolm Trail that Dave, you could tell us about and some other maybe landmarks that –

JB: What landmarks?

DJ: I remember the Chisolm Trail –

JB: Yes.

DJ: – was mentioned.

JB: Correct. And that is the section of the North Texas Tollway Authority System that goes through – leaves Tarrant County and travels into Johnson County. And the southern end of that toll road is approximately Cleburne I believe. And it was named the Chisholm Trail Tollway.

DJ: Oh, awesome.

JB: I don't know that it follows the trail. Dave, you would answer that. But I'm –

DB: It probably has some relation to it.

JB: Yes.

DB: It's probably near it truly.

JB: And like you were saying, the various counties have the privilege of, you now, personalizing in some ways the landscaping or the monument signs, or whatever. And it could be that Tarrant and Johnson counties decided to name this section of the tollway system the Chisholm Trail Tollway because that is so absolutely original Texas, you know. So, I think that was a – that may be how it happened, and it certainly is a source of pride with the Western thinking, and Western – the Western treasure of our history that that section would go either on or near where the cattle drives used to go through Texas. That's all I can tell you, but that's a good question that I'd like to research.

DB: The Chisholm Trail is an interesting one– if you looked at the four counties basically, three of the counties – Denton County, Collin County and Dallas County had freeways – had not freeways, but tollways. And they've always been very active. Well, Fort Worth has not been active in the tollway business. They've always had a representative on the Board, but they've never been active in promoting tollways. And I forget who the mayor was of the City of Fort Worth several years back. And he asked the question, "Why don't we have any tollways? We have a representative on the Board, but we don't have any tollways. Why is that?" And the question was, "You've never asked for one, so we don't give it to anybody that doesn't ask." So, they decided that they wanted to get a tollway in their system. And they said, "We're asking, and you find a place to put a tollway." Well, we looked, and looked, and looked. And they've covered Fort Worth with highways and have done a good job of it. But they didn't have any locations that we could put a tollway in that made sense. And this lady Kay Wells that was from Johnson County got together with some folks. And they searched out and found that this Chisholm Trail area had a lot of open land. And you could go from Cleburne and Johnson County to Fort Worth over open land until you get to the downtown perimeter. And that's where the problem came in because all the railroads come into Fort Worth. And if you ever drive across 30 – Interstate 30

and you go through Fort Worth, you'll pass the largest train intersection in the country.

DJ: In the country?

DB: In the country.

DJ: Now is that where the – I've been in that train station there – is that where you're talking about?

DB: Not the train station. This is the train yard.

DJ: Huh.

DB: This is where all the tracks come together, and it – it's massive. And it's called Station 55. That's the railroad's indication. They have a tower just like they have at the airport and they direct the trains coming through because if they didn't they'd crash into each other – so – but that's a monstrous project that – well, the Chisholm Trail – the only way we had to get the Chisholm Trail we had to cross that facility. But can you imagine –

DJ: [inaudible]

DB: – crossing overhead across 20 rows of train track? That's a massive facility and they didn't want us putting any supports down in the – to interfere with the train traffic. So, we went around, and around, and around, and finally figured out a way of getting a few supports in that train yard to support a bridge that would cross all those 20 tracks. And – but it – that was a massive undertaking.

DJ: Sounds like it.

DB: Yeah. Just that two miles of – it – of tollway was probably 10 times the cost of all the rest of the tollway from there to Johnson County. So, you run into those problems. Like I was saying, when we hooked 161 into 190, we made that little circle through the swamp over there at the Dallas Gun Club. No one wanted to tackle that job because, you know, the first thing we do – we did, we'd dig up the dirt and found a bunch of copper shells. The old gun club had operated for years.

DJ: So, is that like a historical site then when you found something like –

DB: No, it's a –

DJ: – that?

DB: It's a what do you call them – a hazard site.

DJ: So, there might be gun powder that's laying out there?

DB: No, the copper.

DJ: Really? What's up with copper?

DB: The copper shell casings are considered to be hazardous material. The government says that they're hazardous material. And if you have any in the ground you have to dig it out and get rid of them.

DJ: Really? So, is it made of the same thing that pennies are made out of –

DB: Yeah, could be.

DJ: – or is it a different kind?

DB: Yeah.

DJ: Okay. So, are those hazardous?

DB: Yeah. It's the same thing going across a landfill, you know. You have all the stuff in the landfill and that's all hazard. And how do you go across the landfill? You've got to dig the landfill out.

DJ: Oh really. Didn't know. I figured you could just go across it.

DB: Yeah. It sounds simple, but it's not.

DJ: Well, is it because the methane –

DB: All of the –

DJ: – might be building up underneath there?

DB: All of the above, yeah. So – and you try to avoid those places. But sometimes, you can't.

DJ: Huh.

DB: I know this is a little off the subject, but notice that the City of Dallas now has a new golf course they're playing there today: the Byron Nelson Tournament and it's built over a landfill. Now the – you can build a land – a golf course over a landfill because you don't have any buildings or anything. You have people walking across the lawn, but you don't have any buildings, or you haven't disturbed the landfill.

DJ: So, you don't worry about the weight.

DB: Right.

JB: Yeah, or water underneath –

DJ: Right.

JB: – either.

DB: Right. The City of Dallas gave them permission to build the golf course. And that's just one area that you can use a facility like that. You find a use for it, but I can't –

DJ: I think my house I later learned is built on a landfill.

DB: It could be, yeah. They, you know, they didn't have these laws back 40-50 years ago.

DJ: Well, this was built in '03.

DB: Oh, is that right?

DJ: But later somebody told me that that – "Oh yeah, that's the old garbage dump – "

DB: I would –

DJ: " – that used to be in Sachse."

DB: – wonder about that.

DJ: Really? So, it may not be true.

DB: Yeah. I'd wonder if it was in the 2000's. I don't know how they'd get by –

DJ: Well, that's –

DB: – with it.

DJ: – hopeful news.

DB: Yeah, over a landfill. Oh well.

DJ: So, any other –

DB: Stranger things have happened.

DJ: So, any other thoughts on the tollway – any other that we haven't covered?

DB: No, I think, you know. I think that the tollway has done a really good job. They've moved more traffic than ever was conceived. We keep improving the system. Every day you see something new going up or new expansion, a new widening just to handle traffic. It's a – and I think they've done an excellent job of doing that at a reasonable price and by a reasonable price. If you get to a price where people won't use it, that means that you've charged too much, and you might charge too much because you paid too much to build it.

DJ: Mhm.

JB: When you were speaking earlier about painting the concrete – either the pillars, or the walls, or, you know, certain portions of an overpass, I appreciate the fact that it seems now the designs in the concrete sidewalls and so on seems to be taking over the art focus from paint to design in the stamped concrete walls – sidewalls, etc. It's artful because you have light and shadow that changes depending on the time of day on these walls or you might have a personalized city design if you're going over water there – maybe sailboats and other decorative impressions in the concrete rather than paint. And I think that makes driving on toll roads which may sometimes be uninteresting – makes them more interesting to drive by and also their measurement points, you know, when you get to the side walls where the ships are, or the ducks are, or whatever. You have a relationship to that area or that city. And I continue to see development in the designs of highways and toll roads especially. That's good.

DB: Yeah. One of the comments that we get from the public is that we do a good job of cleaning the roadways – keeping them clean –

DJ: Oh yeah.

DB: – and a good job of landscaping. Some of the landscaping is done to minimize the cost of keeping the landscape up. We use a lot of landscaping from Arizona desert. We don't need as much water to – and some people have commented that they're – they don't understand why we have a desert landscape in a city that doesn't have a desert. But –

DJ: Well –

DB: – it's hot weather.

DJ: Well, we could have a desert, but.

DB: That's right.

DJ: If it was hot long enough.

DB: But I think the situation is pretty positive. But like Jan says, the – what you can do with the bridge structures and everything of modeling those columns and everything, instead of just having a straight column, you modify a little flare on it or you have a little symbol on the side.

DJ: Well, now are you talking about – I've seen like Landry's Hat –

DB: Yes.

JB: Yes.

DJ: – or –

JB: Yes.

DJ: – I guess when you get out into Arlington it's got the rollercoaster.

DB: Yeah.

DJ: Yeah. That's a lot of fun to see that.

DB: Yeah, it is, you know. Drive by and have something to look at say, "Oh boy. I know where we are." So –

DJ: Well, any parting comments? It doesn't have to be about the toll roads.

DB: No, I want to thank you for taking the time to –

JB: Absolutely.

DB: It's been a lot of fun to.

DJ: Oh, it's been a lot of fun.

DB: It has.

DJ: Learned a lot.

DB: It's a lot of fun for me. I've tried to put it together a reasonable form, but – so people could understand it if I could keep from rubbing my (microphone)

DJ: I know. I need to change my microphone setup, but for now that's what I got.

DB: I know.

DJ: Sorry.

DB: It's – sometimes you've got to hold your hands together and not move them, so.

DJ: Yes, I know.

DB: But it's been an experience. It's made me think of what we did back then, and what they're doing today, and the – can I have any influence on what they're doing today? Probably not.

DJ: But you've had influence on what's happened.

DB: But I had influence before.

JB: Sure.

DB: But I like what they're doing and the basic comments that we get on the tollway are very positive.

JB: It's remarkable how rapidly the highways and toll roads have served this area. And it seems like such a short time. I, you know, my memories of working at IBM and Remington Rand gaining the contract for accounting, etc. of the original toll roads so short. It almost seems like yesterday and I can only credit the future thinking of decision makers who see the realities of the current moment, and project into the future what will be needed, and get busy planning for that.

DJ: That's amazing.

JB: It's because our, you know, with our technology increases, everything is moving faster. When I was working at IBM, one enormous – well, not an enormous room, but one particular room held a big 650 computer it was called. They were – it was a refrigerated room and they were – now what that 650 computer could do back then, you have a chip in your phone, you know.

DJ: Oh yeah.

JB: You can make the comparison about the speed of technology and I just think the forward thinkers are to be credited with the positives that we drive on, and look at every day, and don't think about the history of how it got to be like it is today, and what the future will be. So, it's – and it's fast, fast, fast. It changes rapidly. And it's good to think back to the origins of even this part of our lifestyles today and see how fast we're moving forward.

DB: I think back to 1954 when they decided to build that Dallas/Fort Worth Tollway. That's – from that period of time in '54 to today is only 68 years, something like that. It's a short period of time. It's not that we've come a long way.

DJ: Yeah. I remember the Dallas/Fort Worth Tollway as a little girl and now, you know, it's like, "Wow. It's just not even the same" –

DB: Right.

DJ: – that I remember growing up. Well, thank you very much for –

DB: Well, thank you for –

DJ: – reminiscing about the tollway and –

DB: [inaudible]

DJ: I mean, I've learned a lot. I'm sure people that listen to this and read the transcript are also going to be fascinated –

DB: I hope it's –

DJ: – because this has been great.

DB: I hope it's helpful.

DJ: Thank you very much. I'm going to sign us off.

DB: All right.