

# KEY FACTS ABOUT RHODE ISLAND'S INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

The Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, which has been called the most ambitious public works project built since the Roman Empire, is the most critical link in Rhode Island's transportation system.

- Rhode Island has 71 miles of Interstate routes running the length of the state and connecting the state's major urban areas.
- Rhode Island's Interstate system, which includes three percent of all roadway lane miles in the state, carries 28 percent of all vehicle travel in the state.
- Since funding of the Interstate system was approved in 1956, vehicle miles of travel in Rhode Island have increased by 186 percent, the state's population has increased by 30 percent from approximately 830,000 to 1.1 million and the number of vehicles in Rhode Island has increased by 155 percent.

The state's Interstate Highway System saves the average Rhode Island resident \$2,191 per year -- \$2.4 billion statewide -- in reduced accident costs such as medical expenses and lost productivity, the value of saved time and fuel, and reduced apparel, food, housing and transportation costs.

- By reducing travel times, the Interstate system saves each Rhode Island resident 52 hours of travel time annually – 56 million hours statewide.
- Rhode Island's Interstate system annually reduces statewide motor fuel consumption by 27 million gallons.
- Consumer costs have been significantly lowered by the Interstate Highway System. The cost of transporting goods has been reduced because the time it takes to make trips has been decreased.
- The following chart indicates the total annual savings per person and statewide of the Interstate system.

	Per Person	Statewide (millions)
<b>Safety</b>	<b>\$82</b>	<b>\$89</b>
<b>Time and Fuel</b>	<b>\$830</b>	<b>\$897</b>
<b>Reduced Consumer Costs</b>	<b>\$1,279</b>	<b>\$1,383</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,191</b>	<b>\$2,368</b>

**Traffic levels on Rhode Island's Interstate highways are increasing as travel growth outpaces the addition of new lanes.**

- Between 1990 and 2004, vehicle travel on Rhode Island's Interstates increased by 49 percent, while lane miles on the system increased by 1 percent.
- Between 1990 and 2004, the average annual amount of travel per Interstate-lane-mile in Rhode Island increased by 47 percent.

**Travel on Rhode Island's Interstate highways is safer than travel on all other roadways in the state. Rhode Island's Interstates provide travelers with a network of highways with a variety of safety designs that greatly reduce the likelihood of serious accidents.**

- Rhode Island's Interstate highways have saved approximately 700 lives in Rhode Island since 1956. This estimate is based on assuming that, if there were no Interstates, traffic would be carried by other major roads in the state, which have higher traffic fatality rates.
- The features that make Interstates safer than non-Interstate routes include: a separation from other roads and rail lines, a minimum of four-lanes, gentler curves and often paved shoulders, median barriers and rumble strips to warn drivers when they are leaving the roadway.

**The Interstate system is the backbone of the Rhode Island economy and has played a critical role in improving business productivity in the state.**

- Every year, \$21 billion in goods are shipped from sites in Rhode Island and another \$18 billion in goods are shipped to sites in Rhode Island, mostly by truck.
- Sixty-nine percent of the goods shipped annually from sites in Rhode Island are carried by trucks and another 24 percent are carried by courier services, which use trucks for part of the deliveries. Similarly, 77 percent of the goods shipped to sites in Rhode Island are carried by trucks and another 13 percent are carried by courier services, which use trucks for part of their deliveries.

*Data from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the U.S. Census Bureau was compiled and analyzed by TRIP, a nonprofit transportation research group based in Washington, D.C. Information is the latest available.*