

State v. Interstate

By Hap Hansen

It's usually more fun to take a State highway to get to one's destination rather than the 4-lane Interstate highway. As Charles Kuralt once said, "Thanks to the Interstate highway system, it is now possible to travel across the country without seeing anything." There's not only more to see when driving on country or state highways, but signs show us that gasoline, food, motels and almost everything else is less expensive and the townsfolk are mostly friendly, acting as though they are glad to see you.

Occasionally, one can save time driving a shorter highway route. However, as the sign says, at 75 miles per hour it's faster to travel on the Interstate highway because there are often problems encountered when driving a two-lane road. For example, one can get caught behind an 18-wheeler on a winding two-lane and not be able to pass for several miles. Or sometimes, the 18-wheeler gets behind one's car and it can't pass. I always feel the truck drivers behind me are upset because I'm driving the speed limit and they want to go faster; so they crowd me until my rear-view mirror is filled with nothing but big truck! And the truck's grill filling my mirror looks the size of a barn door! So if you don't want to have big truck tire marks on your trunk and hood, ignore the speed signs and drive a little faster than the speed limit. Unfortunately, the heavier one's foot is on the accelerator pedal, the more likely a speeding ticket will be issued.

Sometimes, a ticket can be avoided. When drivers see oncoming cars flash their lights, they all slow down. Flashing lights are the national sign that a speed trap lies ahead. The practice of warning drivers that patrolmen are ahead is illegal in many states and does nothing to get speeding drivers fined, as they should be. Besides, I have it on good authority from the Mayor's cousin's sister-in-law's husband's brother that the State Patrol allows ten miles per hour over the speed limit sign before issuing a ticket. Or was it seven miles over? Maybe it was only five miles per hour over the limit. Maybe he said they didn't allow anything!

You may have seldom traveled some of our State highways. On the sign that says Highway 96, blink your eyes and you will miss the town of Sugar City. Highway 350 has a town called Delhi, not to be confused with New Delhi, India. And the best of all when you see the sign at the crossroads of Highways 71 and 94, you will find Punkin Center, whose residents are so few, its population is not listed on the towns and cities map. All of these towns are marked with highway signs in Southeastern Colorado, where it may be difficult to find a restaurant or gas station. But don't worry, you have a last chance. A sign will soon appear for you to stop, rest and go to the bathroom in Last Chance, Colorado.

There are three morals to this story. First, drive a State highway whenever you can. Second, don't flash your lights at oncoming speeders. Let them take their lumps. Third, remember that the shortest distance between two points on the highway almost always has a detour sign on it.