

SYMPOSIUM ON MILEAGE-BASED USER FEES: TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP

Session 2: Implementation Challenges

Speaker 4: Chris Isbell, Sanef (France)

“Implementation Challenges”

Slide 2 – Oregon Pilot Goals and Objectives

Several more studies like the Oregon pilot need to be done, to show the public that the technology can work. Future pilots should adopt Oregon’s multi-vendor approach.

Slide 3 – Pilot Overview

Sanef was one of the vendors to provide the back office solution. In Europe these kinds of implementation schemes can be done quite fast, so you can expect implementation in nine to twelve months depending on the scheme selected.

Slide 4 – Technology Choice

One of Oregon’s “advanced” plans tracked where participants drove, charging only for mileage accrued on public roads in a driver’s home state. The number of people who opted for this plan questions whether the privacy concern is as significant as it is portrayed. The media tend to highlight the privacy as an issue but the pilots demonstrate that technology becomes accepted once people begin participating in the program. With several European MBUF-related installations, there are no public concerns over privacy.

Slides 5-6 – The Challenges

Road user charging is feasible and technology is not the issue. In Europe the cost is going down. Still, with regard to devices, there are issues to address. With smartphone-based technologies, users could forget to use the app, the phone battery could go dead, and not everyone has a smartphone.

How does MBUF compare to pay at the pump fees? With pump collection, there is no risk, because money is collected up front, but with MBUF you don’t get funds up front. You have to figure out how to incentivize drivers to pay.

While MBUF installations are succeeding in Europe, there are culture differences between Europe and the U.S. and how each culture views driving. For example, Americans may generally believe that roads should be free to use. Greater efforts are needed to educate the public as well as policy makers on the need for MBUF.

In Europe, many governments have adopted public-private partnerships to accomplish financing. Privatizing certain system elements can reduce government involvement in data collection, potentially increasing public acceptance of the system.

Slide 7 – Moving Forward

To move forward, keep learning and doing pilots. Develop the system to be more effective and offer more types of services. Look at the standards in road user charging because every car is different. For large scale implementation, there will be many challenges to overcome with interoperability among states. (Europe doesn't have this problem.) Political discussion needs to be ongoing and more sessions like this are needed.

Slides 8-11 – European Cases

The U.S. is not alone; all across Europe we have had to roll out different road user fee projects and we have encountered similar struggles along the way. Examples include Ireland, Slovakia, Sweden and the U.K.