

WHY WE'RE BLESSED TO BE LIVING IN THE USA--AN ENGINEER'S PERSPECTIVE-PART 2

Every day I drive about 16 miles from my home to my office to work. Frequently, I drive several miles after I get to work to go to meetings, etc. Almost everyday, I also drive 4 or 5 miles to go to lunch.

When you add it all up, I usually put somewhere between 25,000 and 30,000 miles per year on my car. If I average 50 miles per hour for that driving length, that means I spend about 500 to 600 hours per year behind the wheel of my car driving on USA roads.

We have all complained about them, haven't we? Potholes, congestion, construction delays, and accident delays. It frequently feels like everyone is out to get you, doesn't it? Well, this newsletter is designed for all of us that get frustrated with our roads and transportation system (airports, trains, buses, etc.) You might be surprised what everyone else in the world is dealing with compared to us.....

Note: Oddly enough, the CIA maintains a database of all kinds of statistics for 255 countries in the world that can be accessed online by anyone. That is

the source for most of the statistics you will find in this newsletter. Some of the facts presented here might blow your mind--and make you glad you live in the USA.

ROADS IN THE USA

The United States has a little less than 2% of all the land area in the World, but is the proud owner of almost 10% of all the roads claimed by all countries. We have only about 4.5% of the World's population.

When you compare first-world developed countries, the United States comes out first in almost every way you can calculate road transportation.

We have almost twice as many miles of roadways as the next nearest country (India), and we have over 10 times as many miles of road per person as they do.

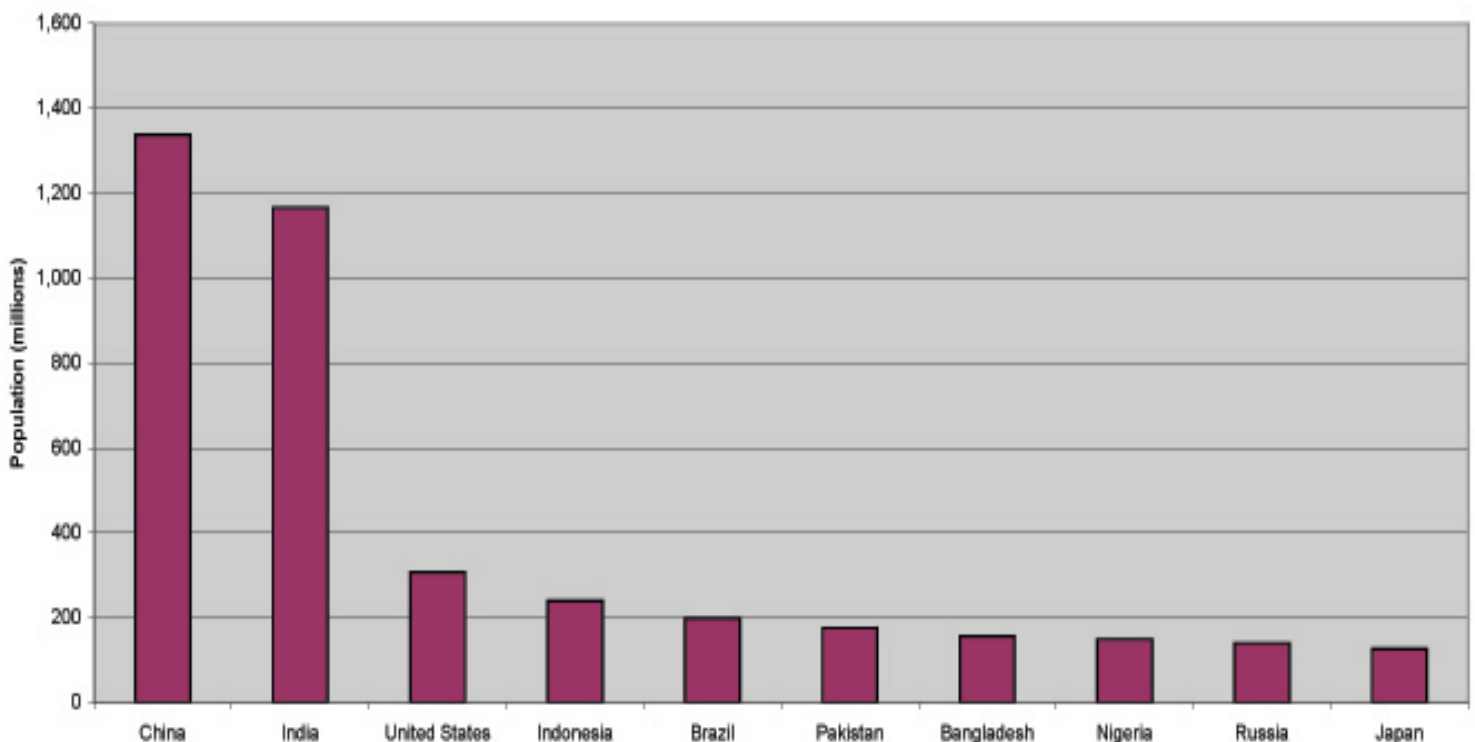
The next nearest competitor for gross road mileage is China. We have almost 3.5 times as many miles of road as they do, and almost 15 times as many miles per person as they do.

If you want to see how well Communism works in the Transportation Department, you would want to check out Russia,

who beats us by 1.5 times in the land area department, but is woefully short on roads. We have almost 7 times as many miles of road as they do--and that includes all their dirt roads that are impassible for parts of the year. Additionally, we have 3 times as many miles of road per person as they do.

You might be wondering why I keep referring to how many miles of road there are per person. Think about it this way: Imagine that you live on an island with only one road. People on the island have to travel from one end to the other on that road regularly. If there are 100 people on the island, there will be a certain amount of traffic and delays. If there are 200 people on the island, you could expect the delays to be at least twice as bad, right? The correlation for a country is about the same. As the population moves on the roads, they take up space. The more space there is on the road for each person, the smoother traffic will progress. The other major factor, of course, is how many people have cars. In the United States, we have about 765 cars for every 1,000 people, while China has about 40

Top Ten Countries-Population



BLESSED IN THE USA...CONT.

cars for every 1,000 people. Walking and biking are good for you, though....

AIRPORTS

34.4% of all the airports in the entire world are in the United States of America. We have one airport for every 40,000 people living here. China (which has about the same land area as the USA) has one airport for every 2,777,000 people, and India has one airport for every 3,341,000 people. Want to have the raw numbers? There are 15,095 airports in the USA, while China has 482 and India has 349. Chances are pretty good that we are burning more jet fuel than they are, but chances are also pretty good that they will continue to expand their use of air transport as their standard of living increases, also.

RAILWAYS

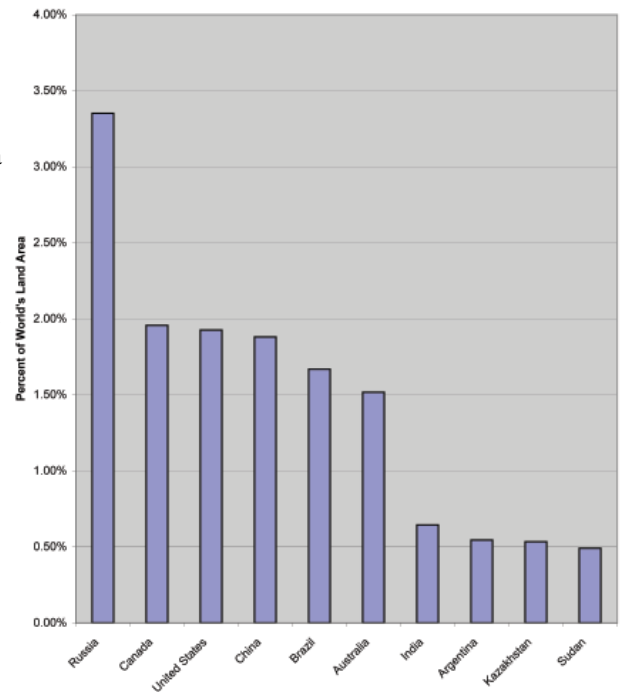
Approximately half of the countries in the world don't have any railroads, at all. That was a little surprising to me, but quite a few of those countries are very small, so railroads may not have much benefit to them. The United States of America is home to approximately 20% of all the railroad mileage in the entire world. The next closest competitor is Russia, with a little less than 8%. Our person to railroad mile ratio is about 13 times better than China (remember they don't have any cars, either), and about 14 times better than India.

SUMMARY

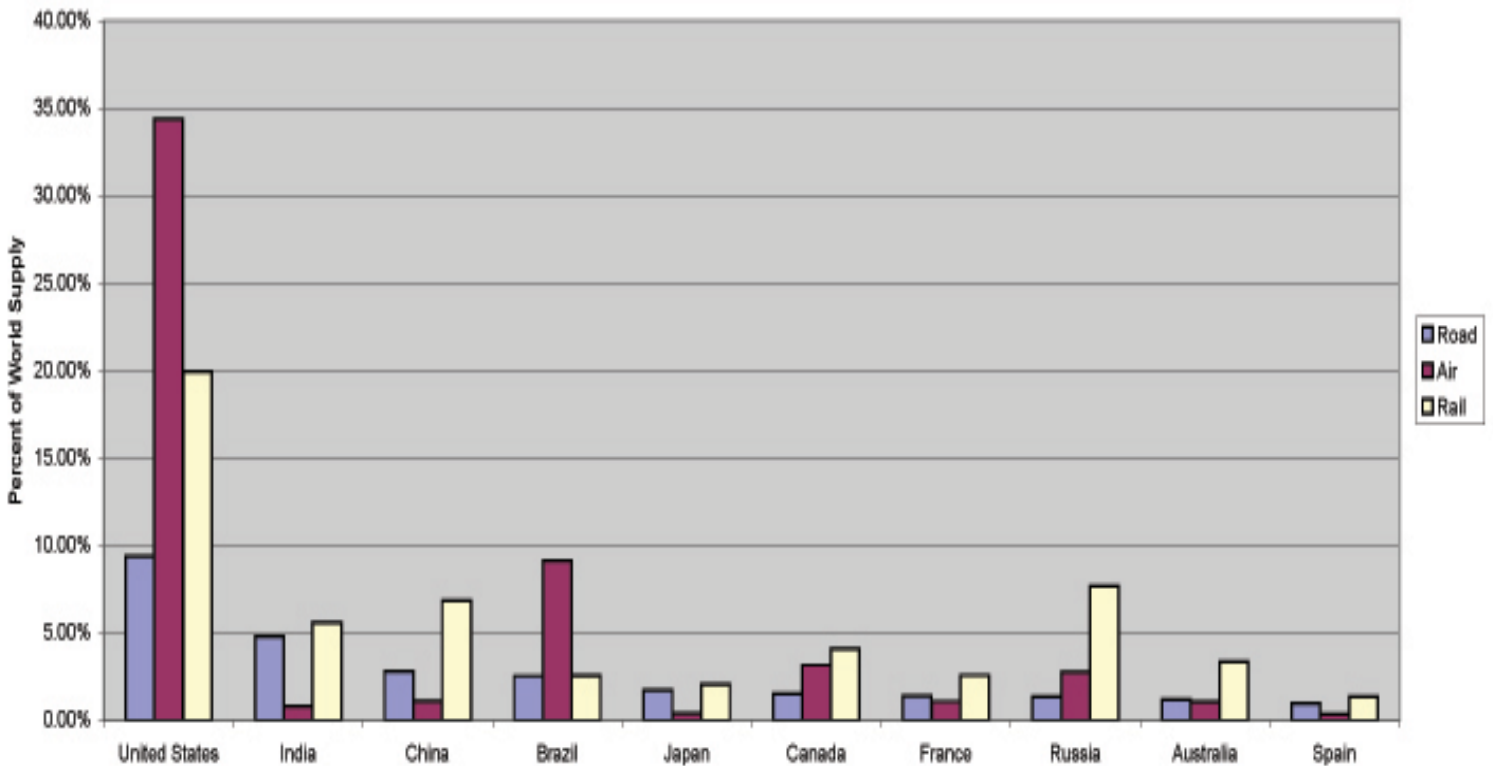
In short, if you live in the USA and want to go somewhere, there are plenty of ways to get you there--and almost none of those ways involve your own feet or a donkey.

We'll be looking at Sanitary Sewer in the next issue.

Top Ten Countries-Land Area



Top Ten Transporters-Roadway Miles, Airports, and Railroad Miles



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