

Jan 21, 2007

What do you think?

Gov. Ed Rendell is considering proposals to lease the Pennsylvania Turnpike to a private company — in exchange for perhaps billions of dollars that could be used for other state transportation projects. Do you favor that idea?

Call us at 771-2004 or e-mail your response to letters@ydr.com by **noon Monday**. Please give your name, address and phone number for confirmation. You can also answer this question online at ydr.com/opinion. We ask readers to limit responses to one per month, and to keep responses to about 100 words. We will print responses next week.

party's number, you're in for the ride of your life. "If you are reporting an accident on the turnpike, don't bother us. That's not our business. Call the Pennsylvania State Police or 9-1-1 or your brother-in-law. The one off-duty trooper we hired to patrol the 530 miles of the turnpike might show up.

"If you need directions, don't ask our associates in the toll booths. They're busy, they're working on commission, and they are not being paid to be your AAA travel service. Buy a GPS system.

"If you are calling to report a ticket machine misfeed at the Harrisburg entrance. Don't worry, we'll just charge you for an entire trip along the length of our own little Autobahn.

"If you are calling to report a mechanical problem with your car, we hope for your sake that you've been able to pull off to the side of the road. If you are a member of our privately owned car rescue service, press 1. If you are not a

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I'm a little concerned about this chatter about selling the Pennsylvania Turnpike to a private company. Maybe I'm a true York countyian. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

GORDON FREIREICH

Based on some of my experiences with calling private companies in an attempt to get to the community relations departments when I have a problem, I'm well aware of the horrors of telephone answering systems.

Sometime in the future — if the Pennsylvania Turnpike is sold to a private operator:

"Thank you for calling the privately owned Pennsylvania Turnpike hotline.

"If you know your party's extension, press that number at any time.

"If you don't know your

Gordon

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member of our privately owned car rescue service, get out of your car and quickly walk away. You won't be able to afford what we charge for non-member services. We'll eventually tow your car, sell it, and pocket the money for the inconvenience you have caused us.

"If you are calling about the food, service or condition of the bathrooms of any of our restaurants along the privately owned toll road, ha! If you want cheap-

er food, get off our road and re-enter when you have eaten or whatever. (As a reminder, the restaurants are now open only from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. You should've packed sandwiches.) If you urinate along our roadway, we have a picture of your license plate and we'll show up and do the same thing on your lawn.

"If you are calling to inquire about that new excavation along the turnpike between Harrisburg and Lancaster, the joke's on you. That's a pothole. We have it scheduled for repair sometime after hunting season, if our maintenance man returns.

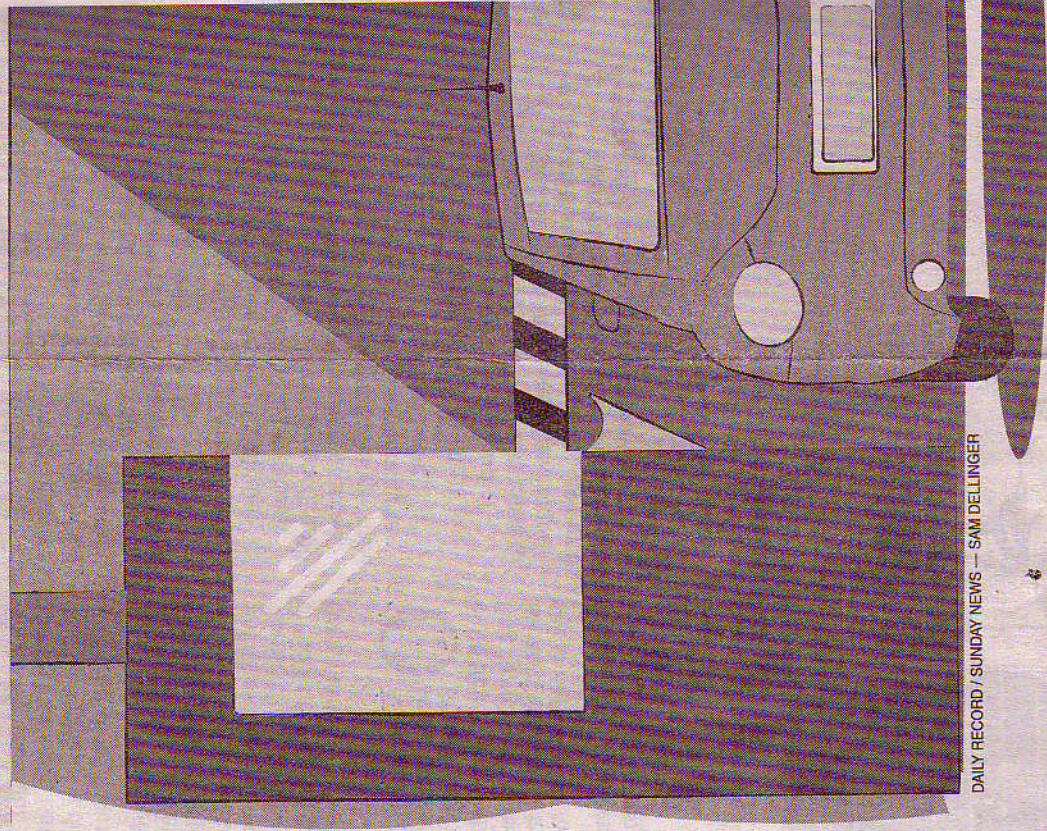
"If you are calling to compliment us on how much you like the privately owned turnpike, please leave a message. We'd love to hear from you. Whatever you do, don't push 0 for an attendant. There isn't one. We can't afford frills.

"Thank you for calling your privately owned turnpike company. If you would like to hear these selections again, don't do anything. Put down your car phone and just drive. You're on our property — and we're watching you.

"Have a nice day."

Gordon Freireich is a former editor of the York Sunday News. E-mail: gordon@newtongroup.com.

PAY TOLL



DAILY RECORD / SUNDAY NEWS — SAM DELLINGER

Rough road ahead for privatized pike