

investment drop in Nuevo León was more severe, falling 54 percent from US \$856 million in 1994 to US \$395 million in 1995. Tamaulipas suffered a relatively modest 16 percent drop to US \$227 million, while investment in Coahuila fell by 37 percent to US \$50 million.

Most analysts believe that investment rebounded strongly in 1996, and that the lull in investment activity has opened a window of opportunity for companies not already established in this market. Canada has been a major participant in new investments. Even though Canada accounts for only 7 percent of accumulated direct materialized investment in Mexico between 1994 and June 1996, it was the source country for 21 percent of investment in the first half of 1996.

INFRASTRUCTURE

TRANSPORTATION

The northeastern region has excellent transportation links to other parts of Mexico, to the United States and Canada, and to the rest of the world.

ROADS

The recently-opened eight-lane Solidarity International Bridge provides a road link to Texas, about 250 kilometres to the north and roughly 32 kilometres west of Laredo, Texas. The new, modern port features a truck-rail intermodal connection with facilities for 5,000 containers a day. It has facilities to take advantage of the new trade administration system, called the North American Trade Automation Prototype. The new bridge was expected to relieve the congestion and delays experienced at the port of Laredo. But, so far, the planned toll highway linking the bridge to Monterrey has not been built, and the bridge has not been heavily used.

There are plans for an industrial corridor that will involve all three states in the northeastern region. In August 1996 it was announced that funding had been authorized to connect the bridge to the Monterrey-Nuevo Laredo toll highway. Highways will also be improved on the American side, connecting the bridge to Interstate Highway 35, which serves Laredo. Completion is expected during 1997.