

### 3. Corridor Concept

Trade corridors defy simple description, presenting a problem that resembles the parable of the blind wise men trying to describe an elephant. Each touched a different part of the animal and consequently gave a vastly different description of it.

The concept of an international trade corridor is just as difficult to describe or define. To some, it is a vision of an evolving new trade pattern. To others, it is a narrow band of interconnecting highways and railways stretching from Mexico to Hudson Bay and beyond. And to still others, it is a group of communities and gateways in three countries gradually forming a geographic and economic region. The reality is that all of these descriptions are accurate in some respects, but capture only portions of the overall concept.

Despite the reality of its economic impact, this corridor is still largely a vision of the future, but with an increasingly large and avid group of supporters. It does not consist of any comprehensive or official organization, nor does it exist as an institution like a company or government. This corridor concept is endorsed and promoted by some voluntary associations, primarily comprised of government officials and transport researchers, who have been working effectively, but on a largely informal basis, to share information and investigate common interests.

#### *Definitions:*

One recent useful definition of the corridor was put forward by Transport Canada, describing its purpose as being: "... expansion of Canada's international trade and economic development based on the transportation system of the mid-continental North America region".

In the joint submission to the Task Force from the Government of Manitoba, City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg 2000 and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, another important definition was stated:

*The mid-continent trade corridor is more than an isolated route from Winnipeg to Mexico City and more than a ribbon of pavement, or railway track. It is a geographic swath and a band of economic influence through the center of the continent, from the Arctic through Mexico, en route cutting a wide path through the US heartland ... Its northern segment is tied to the world through the port of Churchill and the Winnipeg International Airport.*

For the Task Force's purpose, we describe the Mid-Continent International Trade Corridor as an economic region having the following key features:

- focusing on trade and economic development activity;
- comprising multimodal elements of transportation;
- connecting communities and companies across a wide tract of central North America from the western prairies to the Mississippi River;