

## Highway barrier makes strong impact

"Though the concept is disarmingly simple, the product is going to revolutionize safety on our highways."

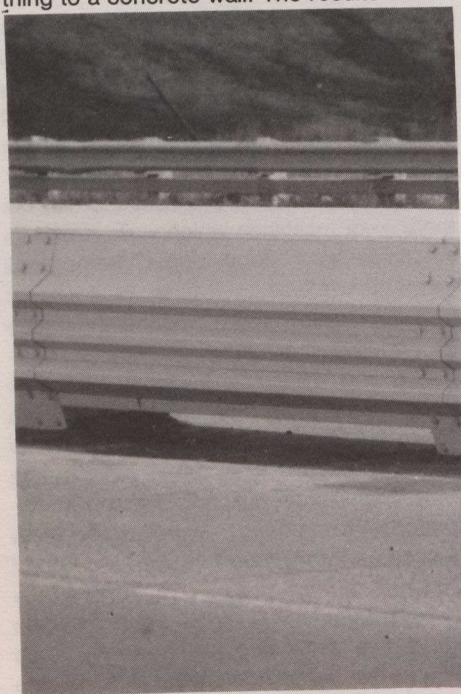
That is the kind of endorsement that highway officials in Europe and the United States are giving a new Canadian highway barrier — the IBC MK VII Barrier — produced by International Barrier Corporation (IBC) of Toronto, Ontario.

The IBC MK VII Barrier has been in development for more than five years and at least a million dollars have been spent on research and testing. However, what is attracting increasing attention to the barrier is its radically different design.

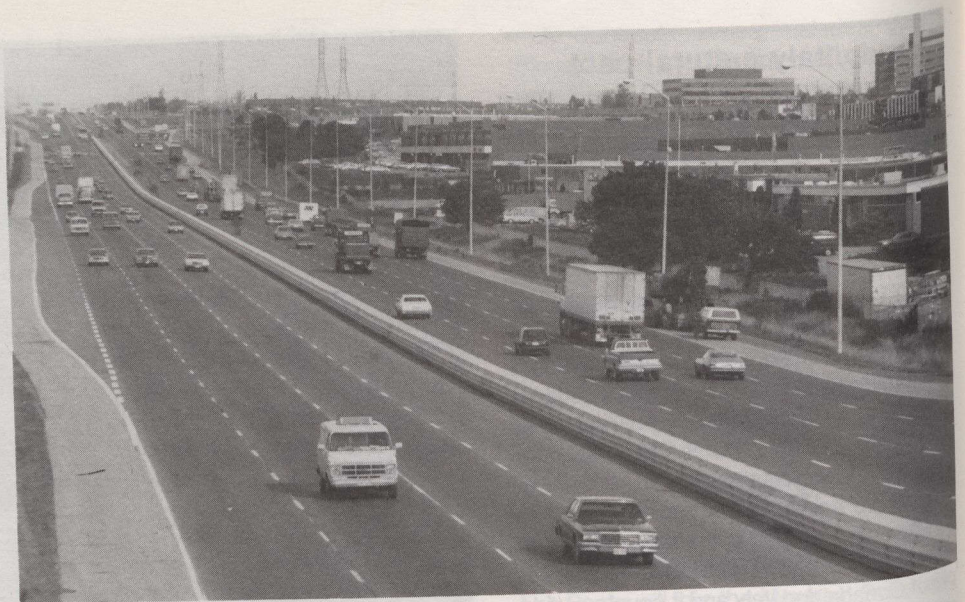
IBC president, Kris Harrison, says "Our barrier is soft, not hard. It is like a big pillow designed to catch cars that leave the highway. Unlike most highway barriers, ours isn't anchored to the ground."

The IBC Barrier is actually a hollow cylindrical tube 1 070 millimetres high and filled with sand that runs along the centre median like a steel snake between lanes of traffic. If a vehicle strikes the sand-filled tube it gives slightly, helping the vehicle to continue in its original direction instead of smashing to a halt or overturning — two of the most serious consequences of standard highway dividers.

"Imagine slamming your hand into a bag of sand," explains Lincoln Cobb, head of design at IBC. "Now think of doing the same thing to a concrete wall. The results would



IBC drainage module allows water to pass underneath barrier.



IBC highway barrier snakes along Highway 400 north of Toronto.

be completely different. The sand in our barrier supports the steel, but it does so softly. We don't want anything in our barrier to be too hard."

### Tests conducted

Tests have been conducted on the IBC Barrier at the Calspan Advanced Technology Centre in Buffalo, New York; at the Motor Vehicle Test Centre at Blainville, Québec; and by the British government at the Motor Industry Research Association in Nuneaton, England. Results of these tests have been compared to test results of other standard highway barriers.

Frequently during testing, when a vehicle hit a concrete highway barrier it would flip over. Because of the design of the IBC Barrier's vertical side, no vehicle that hit it has ever overturned.

According to Jack Wear, research engineer at the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, "The barrier has been extremely well designed to present maximum benefit to the driver when contact is made."

The IBC Barrier is currently installed on two highways in North America — Highway 400 north of Toronto, and the I-95 outside Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

The section of Highway I-95 in Florida chosen for the barrier's installation carries heavy commuter traffic in and out of Miami. Because adjoining sections are covered by a concrete barrier, the performance of the new barrier can be compared.

### No personal injuries

During the first four months of installation, the IBC Barrier was hit 22 times and not one vehicle overturned nor was anyone killed. In fact, the drivers of those 22 vehicles suf-

fered no personal injuries and there was only slight damage to their automobiles.

In the same four months the adjoining concrete barrier was struck 25 times. Four cars overturned, three people were killed and there was extensive damage to the cars involved.

"It's quite simple," says Harrison. "We have a safe barrier. We are saving lives. When cars hit concrete there are often disastrous results. We have run everything from a Mini-Minor to a school bus into our barrier and all of them have been redirected safely."

During this year, Harrison expects more of the IBC Barrier to be installed in both Ontario and Florida. He also expects to announce installation for England, the Canadian section of the Alaskan Highway, and at least six other American states.

Article from Canada Commerce.

## Canada at New Orleans

The New Orleans world's fair — Expo 84 — opened recently and the Canadian pavilion, which promotes Canada's image as a world-class provider of high technology, is already drawing 10 000 visitors a day. The pavilion is financed and created by the Department of External Affairs and is expected to attract about 3.5 million visitors during the six-month fair.

The exhibit is built around an interactive videodisc-videotex public access system that offers information on a variety of general interest Canadian subjects. Developed by Genesys Group Inc. of Ottawa, the system is capable of storing and delivering up to 2 000 pages in full-motion video.