



## Editorial: Corralling NTTA toll runners

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Where's Amber Young?

That's a question thousands of law-abiding toll payers have asked since the North Texas Tollway Authority started posting its all-star list of lawbreakers this summer, with Young on top of the \$300 million heap.

And the answer is — she's still out there, somewhere, free to keep racking up unpaid tolls, free to run her debt beyond the \$182,136.43 she owed NTTA as of its last reckoning.

The elusive Young and the other 33,000-plus drivers on the most-wanted list have played the system for a big sucker, but that could take a turn today, and it's about time. The agency is poised to adopt rules that could lead to banning the violators and even towing their cars if they're caught on NTTA roadways.

Go for it, this newspaper says, as a first step. We're looking forward to the administrative hearings that would be held to ban violators from NTTA roads. It might even have entertainment value — or at least satisfy our curiosity — to hear these drivers explain how they thought they were entitled to a free ride while everyone else paid the freight.

When NTTA dispensed with toll-collection booths and went all-electronic a few years ago, it banked on the honor system, to a point. The good news is that 98 percent of tollway users drive by the rules. The 2 percent turned out to be a far too slippery bunch, considering the limits on NTTA's enforcement system.

Mailed notices didn't faze them. Collection agencies or court summonses didn't scare them. Publishing the big scofflaw list did entice more than 1,500 people to pay up, but the list of big-time violators still grew this summer.

NTTA has two more cards up its sleeve to deal with the 2 percent, and we'd like to see both played. First, the agency is about to turn a list of 6,000 randomly selected violators — Young included — over to outside lawyers, who'd file lawsuits against them on a contingency basis. (Ah, the profit motive.)

The second card is even better: The NTTA will ask the Legislature to allow it to block the re-registration of vehicles of people who have more than 100 violations. Further, the agency wants lawmakers to make it a crime for a banned violator to use North Texas toll roads.

That's the key word: *crime*. Violators need to get the message that they're not *free*-ways. They're *toll*-ways.

### Cracking down

To combat the thousands of drivers who are dodging toll bills, the tollway agency:

Will take up proposed rules today to effectively ban, after a hearing, repeat toll violators from NTTA roads. If caught on a toll road, a violator's car could be towed.

Has turned over a list of 6,000 repeat violators to outside law firms that could pursue the unpaid debt on a contingency basis, including civil lawsuits.

Will ask the Legislature to let the agency block re-registration of vehicles owned by repeat toll violators and to make it a crime to use toll roads in violation of an NTTA ban.

**SEE** the top toll violators list. [ntta.org](http://ntta.org)

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