

International Activities Report 2009



*Prepared by the Government and Public Affairs -
International Relations Section (IRO)*

Acknowledgments

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**2009 Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
International Activities Report
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Executive Summary

This report reflects the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) international activities for the 2009 calendar year. TxDOT has continued to work to support infrastructure that facilitates international trade movement. In addition, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) continues to increase the number of TxDOT's bi-national and multi-national connections. Texas' expansive border with Mexico, one of the United States' most significant trade partners, requires focused communication and collaborative planning.

The IRO is responsible, as first contact for TxDOT, for international interests. The three border districts, El Paso, Laredo and Pharr, play critical roles in planning with Mexico. Many divisions of TxDOT receive visitors from around the world and share their expertise with them.

Ultimately, this report details each of TxDOT's divisions, districts or offices that carry out international activities of one sort or another. It further contains a list of relevant committees.

Structure of Report

This report is divided into two major sections delineating the international activities in which TxDOT is involved. Section I contains detailed descriptions of the activities of each division, district and office and Section II contains information about meetings and conferences in which IRO participates.

Additional information on most of the activities included in this report can be obtained from IRO by calling (512) 416-2030 or emailing Esther Hitzfelder at Esther.Hitzfelder@TxDOT.gov

This report may also be found at

http://www.txdot.gov/txdot_library/publications/international_relations.htm

SECTION I
ACTIVITY SUMMARIES BY TxDOT ENTITY

Texas and International Trade - Intimate Partners

According to TradeStats Express, Texas has led the nation in exporting activities for eight consecutive years since 2002, with a total of \$163 billion in revenue last year alone. Further, the Business Roundtable (an association of chief executives of leading U.S. companies,) states that about 2.2 million Texas jobs, (1 in six), are linked to foreign trade. Additionally, Texas remains the top-ranked global destination for foreign direct investment, with an average \$10.15 billion invested annually since 2003. (Financial Times – FDI Markets). The population growth in Texas, according to a U.S. Census Bureau press release in December 2009, estimated the population increased by 1,327.7 people per day in the course of a year (July 1, 2008 to July 1, 2009). Hence today, Texas stands strongly at the vanguard of global trade and realizes the importance of the rest of the world to its economy and population.

To continue these trends, Texas should be strongly focused on further development of infrastructure and multi-modal transportation.

To support TxDOT in its planning processes and awareness of global developments, IRO has added to its focus the gathering of information regarding important trade partners, developments in transportation modes, best practices and changing global trading trends. Currently, top trading partners include: Canada, China, Mexico, Japan, Germany, UK, Netherlands, South Korea, France, Taiwan and the Netherlands. Trailing closely are Brazil, Italy, Singapore, Malaysia and Ireland.

Mexico: Importance of the Border Area

Mexico is the United States' third most important trading partner and the number one trading partner for Texas. Surface transportation trade between the United States and its NAFTA partners Canada and Mexico totaled \$735 billion in 2009 (as indicated by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) of the U.S. Department of Transportation).

In 2009, northbound Texas border crossings totaled 2.8 million commercial crossings carrying the lion's share of the \$305 billion of trade between Texas and Mexico. There were also 101,293 bus crossings, 35 million private vehicle crossings and 18.7 million pedestrian crossings. It is clear that TxDOT plays an important role in expediting the flow of commerce and traffic between Mexico and the United States, therefore remaining strongly committed to the development of transportation infrastructure in this critical area.

Government and Public Affairs International Relations Section (IRO)

TxDOT's International Relations Office was created in 1994, as a result of the changes NAFTA would bring to Texas. In 2007, with the objective of ensuring that national and international communications from TxDOT are consistent and centralized, the IRO was merged with the Government and Public Affairs Division.

During 2009, in an effort to facilitate a stronger understanding of the impact of global trade on Texas and the U.S., the IRO broadened the scope of its work to include a more global perspective, while still supporting U.S.-Mexico relationships.

Currently, IRO coordinates functions, operations and information relating to international activities for TxDOT. The IRO performs facilitative, liaison and research functions and carries out the following:

- Act as liaison for TxDOT on international relations activities with the Governor's Office, the Secretary of State's Office (SOS), legislative officials, other governmental entities (foreign, federal and state), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), businesses, interest groups and the public.
- Maintain current information pertaining to international bridges and border crossings in Texas.
- Maintain information and contact with NAFTA partners on the Texas-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders, including NAFTA trade.
- Assist Districts, Divisions, and Offices in coordinating and facilitating cross-border informational exchange with Mexican Border States and the numerous U.S. and Mexican Federal, State, and Local government entities.

- Distribute news and create a newsletter for TxDOT and other interested stakeholders regarding global events and practices that may be of interest to TxDOT.
- Maintain awareness of, monitor or participate in, as needed: The United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT), the Free and Secure Trade lanes (FAST), the Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) lane program, and Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT), the Border Safety Inspections Stations (BSIFs), the Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) projects and Mexican infrastructure plans that impact the border.
- Provide planning for and support of international visitors to TxDOT. Provide cultural and factual information regarding visitors' countries of origin for TxDOT staff.
- Administer the Border Technology Exchange Program (BTEP) which is dedicated to technology and information exchange between the U.S. and Mexico. The Texas BTEP exchanges technology and information with the Mexican states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila and Chihuahua.
- Represent Texas and TxDOT in the U.S.-Mexico Joint Working Committee for Transportation Planning (JWC), the U.S.-Mexico Bi-National Bridges and Border Crossings Group (BBBX), and the U.S.-Mexico Border Governors' Conference Logistics and International Crossings Work Table (BGC).
- Provide translation services for TxDOT divisions and offices from English to Spanish and vice versa.
- Identify, plan and coordinate studies that impact the Texas-Mexico border. Current studies include Border Wait Time Studies and the Regional Border Master Plan, Laredo District.
- Track commercial, private vehicle and pedestrian movements at the Texas-Mexico border.

- Respond to inquiries from individuals and governmental agencies from other nations, providing referral and resource information as appropriate.
- Maintain awareness of best practices globally pertaining to transportation planning, logistics, government strategy, and government transparency to heighten TxDOT's awareness of international trade trends.
- Provide recommendations and support to administration with regard to proposed legislation, policies, procedures and actions regarding international trade and the border.
- Assist TxDOT in the development, implementation, coordination and monitoring of strategic and operational plans pertaining to international and border activities.

In support of these responsibilities, the office publishes the following reports:

- *Texas-Mexico International Bridges & Border Crossings: Existing & Proposed*
- *International Activities Report*

Border Safety Inspection Facilities (BSIF)



Texas Senate Bill 913, 76th Legislature (1999), directed TxDOT to select locations for border safety inspection facilities along major highways at or near border crossings with Mexico in Brownsville, Laredo and El Paso, thereby allowing federal, state and municipal agencies that regulate the passage of commercial vehicles crossing the border to be located in one place.

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and TxDOT were responsible for site selection and possible acquisition of right-of-way for the BSIFs and construction of weigh stations near the existing federal inspection stations.

Temporary operational BSIFs are located at:

- World Trade International Bridge, Laredo
- Colombia-Solidarity International Bridge, Laredo
- Camino Real International Bridge, Eagle Pass
- Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge, Pharr
- Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates, Brownsville
- Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios, Brownsville

Each of the facilities provides an efficient method of inspecting and weighing commercial vehicles entering the United States at the Texas-Mexico border.

Two permanent facilities were completed. Presently, they are operational and are located at:

- Bridge of the Americas, El Paso
- Zaragoza-Ysleta Bridge, El Paso

Construction on the permanent facility at the Columbia-Solidarity International Bridge began in 2010.

Border Technology Exchange Program (BTEP)



On April 29, 1994, the U.S. and Mexican Secretaries of Transportation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that recognized the desire of both countries to improve the coordination and quality of land transportation systems in the border region.

As a result, the U.S.-Mexico Joint Working Committee was created, and BTEP, under its auspices, became the primary vehicle for the two countries to carry out their coordination efforts. The program in Texas is funded by various sources: the FHWA, TxDOT, in-kind contributions from Mexican Border States and the SCT state offices along the border.

The BTEP program directly supports TxDOT's goal of increasing transportation safety by the mutual sharing of expertise with Mexico. BTEP sponsored Attendance to conferences such as the ATSSA (American Traffic Safety Services Association), permits our Mexican counterparts to see firsthand the most innovative safety equipment used in the United States. Also, visits from Mexican state and federal transportation engineers to TxDOT construction sites, gives them the opportunity to observe the safety tools used in road construction.

The Texas BTEP promotes five central objectives:

- Improve safe and efficient trans-border transportation systems in the border region.
- Share planning information, standards and specifications
- Enhance professional and technical capabilities.

- Increase institutional, technical and legal compatibility and understanding.
- Institutionalize the technology exchange process

Texas works closely with its Mexican border state counterparts to exchange infrastructure planning information, identify each state's technical needs and establish positive, open communications. In an effort to further the exchange of information, Technology Transfer Centers (T2) have been established in Nuevo León, Tamaulipas and Coahuila. Training courses and activities such as official visits, planning meetings, technical exchanges, conferences and workshops on transportation-related topics have been implemented.

The entities that participate in BTEP include: TxDOT, the FHWA, the DOTs of California, Arizona and New Mexico, the Mexican Transportation Institute, the SCT state offices along the border, the Mexican states of Baja California, Sonora, Coahuila, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas, and the Mexican Universities within the six Mexican states. BTEP programs have been established over the last year in some U.S. states along the border with Canada.

TxDOT divisions and districts make valuable contributions to the BTEP program. The Transportation Planning and Programming, Bridge, Maintenance, Design and Construction Divisions, and the Laredo, El Paso and Pharr Districts regularly exchange technological information through the BTEP program.

To coordinate the BTEP related work of TxDOT districts, divisions and offices, IRO develops an annual statewide plan compatible with the BTEP border-wide bi-national strategic plan supported by the FHWA. In addition, each border district generates a local BTEP plan, (coordinated with IRO plan and their respective Mexican border state counterparts), highlighting exchange opportunities.

The continuous exchange of U.S. highway technology and information aids in enhancing the relations between TxDOT and its Mexican border state DOTs, improving transportations, safety and traffic flow between the United States and Mexico.

International Visitors/Inquiries



Belgian Delegation Visits TxDOT to discuss Rail Planning

As the first point of contact, IRO is responsible for coordinating and welcoming TxDOT's international visitors, arranging meetings and presentations, and assuring that protocols are followed. In addition, in preparation for receiving the visitors, IRO provides briefings to TxDOT personnel, highlighting relevant information and cultural considerations related to the visiting country. Visitors are from both private and public sectors, and generally stay one to two days.

Occasionally, the department also receives international visitors, often engineers or engineering students, for more extended periods. The sharing of transportation related techniques and methods, whether through short visits, longer visits or the simple exchange of transportation information, is beneficial to all involved.



Belgian Ambassador Portocarrero and Tuc Rail Representative

TxDOT continues to host individual visitors interested in various aspects of the transportation industry. During the past year, approximately 25 visitors visited TxDOT, bringing the total visitors hosted since 1994 to approximately 1,770. Each visit provides a rich experience about TxDOT’s advanced technologies and skills at the business of transportation.



South Korean visitors

TxDOT's visitors have disembarked from all over the world: Algeria, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Egypt, England, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Jordan, India, Indonesia, Italy, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Mexico, Mongolia, the Netherlands, New Guinea, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Viet Nam and Venezuela.



**Kuwaiti Engineer with Thomas Bohuslav,
Director of Construction Division (on left)**

IRO also receives and responds to numerous inquiries from groups and individuals seeking information regarding commerce, international protocols, licensing, insurance, titling and research issues.

District/Division/Office Activities



Border Studies Currently Underway

Border Wait Time Measurements Studies

Border Wait Time Measurements Studies by TxDOT and FHWA are being conducted at the following Texas/Mexico border crossings: Bridge of the Americas in El Paso; Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge in Pharr, World Trade Bridge and Colombia Solidarity Bridge in Laredo; and Veteran's International Bridge in Brownsville. The studies are obtaining data for travel time and wait time of commercial vehicles crossing the border using Radio Frequency (RFID) technology.

These Studies will provide on-going, real time and archived crossing times at the major commercial crossings in Texas. Crossing data will be available to stakeholders and agencies and real time crossing times will eventually be available to companies and trucks using the crossings.

Regional Border Master Plan (BMP) - Laredo

A BMP is a bi-national effort to coordinate planning and projects at land Ports of Entry (POE) for transportation infrastructure serving those POEs in the border region. The U.S.-Mexico Joint Working Committee has requested that the U.S. Border States conduct Regional Border Master Plans along the U.S.-Mexico border.

TxDOT contracted with the University of Texas - Center for Transportation Research (UT-CTR) to develop the first Regional Border Master Plan (BMP) for Texas. The preliminary study area is currently defined as TxDOT's Laredo District and the corresponding area in Nuevo León, Tamaulipas, and Coahuila.

The BMP objectives are:

- Design a stakeholder involvement process to ensure participation.
- Increase the understanding of the POE and transportation planning processes on both sides of the border.
- Develop and implement plan for prioritizing and promoting POEs and related transportation projects, including evaluation criteria and rankings over the short, medium, and long term.
- Establish a process to ensure continued dialogue among federal, state, regional, and local stakeholders in Texas and Mexico to ensure continued coordination on current and future POE and supporting transportation infrastructure needs and projects.

El Paso District (ELP)



Border Fence

Border fence picture obtained from the following:

http://watergaps.files.wordpress.com/2009/05/img_8780.jpg

In El Paso County, a 9.6-mile section of the fence was built, beginning one mile east of the Bridge of the Americas port of entry and extending to one mile east of the Ysleta port of entry. It is part of a 60-mile stretch of fencing that will extend east to Fort Hancock. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) contracted the work for construction. The USACOE coordinated with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for a Joint Use Agreement and a Right of Entry request for processing and approval from TxDOT Administration.

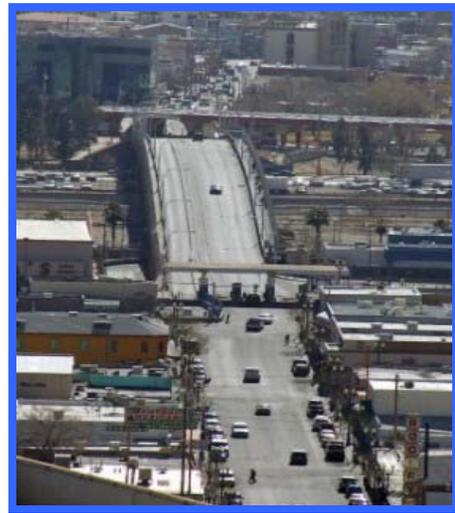


Bridge of the Americas (BOTA) / Zaragoza Border Safety Inspection Facilities (BSIF) Project - TxDOT Photo

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) improvements in the El Paso area Ports of Entry continued as the second phase of construction began in July 2008. Improvements included the installation of transponder readers that will read microchips assigned to trucks enrolled in the “trusted truck program” and through integration with computer software, will identify the enrolled trucks and drivers. Presence detectors were also installed to detect truck movement and through the utilization of Flow Managers and Dynamic Message Signs, will direct truck traffic through the different stages of inspection. Weight scales capable of measuring lengths, widths and heights of trucks were also installed as well as CCTVs to monitor truck traffic throughout the facility. All ITS equipment has been installed and is currently pending system integration with an anticipated completion by June 2010.



Stanton Street Bridge



Paso del Norte Bridge

Pictures obtained at
http://www.elpasotexas.gov/international_bridges/

Paso Del Norte and Stanton Bridge Improvements

The City of El Paso is awarding the contract for improvements to the Paso Del Norte and Stanton Bridge in April 2010. Construction is expected to begin in the summer of 2010. Improvements will include new toll facilities, lighting, canopies and landscaping.

Regional Port of Entry Operations Plan

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in cooperation with the City of El Paso, has initiated a series of public involvement and outreach activities to guide the development of the Regional Ports of Entry Operations Plan. The Plan focuses on how to best utilize existing border crossings in the El Paso-Juárez metropolitan area – from Santa Teresa, New Mexico to Tornillo/Guadalupe – in an effort to facilitate international travel and trade. The public involvement and outreach activities are designed to ensure that all interested groups in the El Paso region are actively engaged in the planning, development, and implementation of the Plan. Participants in these activities will be asked to provide input on the

most critical needs and issues facing the region's ports of entry and to identify potential solutions to address neighborhood and regional border mobility issues. The project team will also use the results of the public outreach activities to assess the transportation, economic, and environmental implications of potential operational improvement strategies.

Laredo District (LRD)

LRD continues to move forward with numerous improvements that will positively impact the flow of traffic and goods at the TX-Mexico border. Below are photos showing excavation for the Colombia Solidarity Border Safety Inspection Station.



Work on Colombia Solidarity BSIF - TxDOT Photo

Pharr District (PHR)



PHR carried out numerous projects this year that impact ingress/egress between Mexico and Texas. The Bryan Road project that connects the new Anzalduas International Bridge and US-83 in Mission was underway in 2009 with an estimated cost of \$24,879,578 dollars.

The FM 493 road extension connects the new International Bridge in Donna to US-281 (Military Highway). This project began in August of 2009 and has an estimated cost of \$2,191,727 dollars.

The SP-115 road project widens Spur 115 from FM 1016 in McAllen to SP-241 in Hidalgo, which connects to the McAllen/Hidalgo International Bridge. The project cost is estimated at \$12,362,670 dollars. Construction began in April 2009 and is estimated to be completed in November 2010.

The US-83 (Garcia St.) Roma project, a "One-Way" pair with Spur 200 (Bravo) and Mendez streets leading to and from the Roma, TX - Ciudad Miguel Aleman, Tamaulipas International crossing was completed in 2009. Also created was a One-Way pair on US-83 with Grant St. (SB), existing US-83 and Garcia St. (NB), which was previously an Off-System city street. The traffic has been flowing well and there have not been any complaints since the project was completed.

Construction Division (CST)



Construction Division Laboratory Operations Building

CST is a prime source of information for the international transportation industry. The division shares expertise and facilitates information exchange by hosting international visitors from the public and private sectors interested in:

- construction contract administration
- contract letting
- construction specifications
- material testing
- material quality
- pavement design
- pavement management
- pavement data collection
- pavement condition data equipment development
- forensic investigations
- research and design criteria and processes

CST also furthers technology exchange by providing information on research and design criteria and processes.



TxDOT's State of the Art Steel Laboratory

In addition, CST participates in many international conferences, committees and workshops held in the United States. Several members of CST staff serve on expert task groups for pavement and materials related subjects. They also serve on panels for National Cooperative Research Program (NCHRP). CST also provides technical expertise on panels at the annual Transportation Research Board meeting, which hosts over 9,000 attendees from the U.S. and numerous other countries.

The international committees or conferences, that CST participates in, include:

- American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM)
- Road Profilers users Group

- Association of the Asphalt Paving Technologist (AAPT)
- Falling Weight Deflectometer (FWD) users Group
- South East Asphalt users producers Group
- Rubber Pavement Association (RPA)
- Concrete Pavement Surface Characteristics Research Workgroup
- American Concrete Institute (ACI)
- American Welding Society (AWS)
- Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute (PCI)
- American Association of State Highways - Subcommittee on Materials (AASHTO/SOM)
- FHWA Asphalt Binder Expert Task Group
- FHWA Asphalt Fundamental Properties and Advanced Modeling Expert Task Group
- Pavement Preservation Expert Task Group, Asphalt Emulsion Task Force

Environmental Affairs Division (ENV)



Excavation of an archeological site

ENV's involvement in the international arena includes:

- Involvement in special study requirements for archaeological investigations where foreign laboratories must be used.
- Cooperation and exchange of information between archaeological laboratories.
- Excavation of archaeological sites of international importance.
- In September 2009, ENV's air quality specialist provided a transportation air quality presentation at the 46th Meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee for the Improvement of Air Quality in the Ciudad Juárez Chihuahua, El Paso, Texas and Doña Ana County, New Mexico Air Basin. The committee is jointly sponsored by the US-EPA and the Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, the Cabinet level department of Mexico's Executive branch responsible for developing environmental policy and legislation.
- ENV anticipates that in 2010, a project to restore the Roma Bridge across the Rio Grande will begin, requiring coordination among Texas and Mexico.

Motor Carrier Division (MCD)

MCD staff members participate in informational seminars and transportation fairs related to cross-border trucking, briefings for international visitors, and NAFTA-related issues.

MCD is a voting member of the Western Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (WASHTO) Committee on Highway Transport, which meets twice a year and promotes uniform laws, regulations, and practices among jurisdictions for the efficient and safe movement of goods and services. These laws also impact Canadian and Mexican truck uniformity.

MCD oversees rules for commercial motor carrier registration and insurance requirements under Texas Transportation Code, Chapter 643, and the Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) program under the Texas Transportation Code, Chapter 645. MCD provides public assistance (including assistance in Spanish), conducts field audits, and administers complaint resolutions related to motor carriers operating in Texas. The administration of these responsibilities by MCD affects international motor carriers operating in Texas.

MCD is responsible for administering the UCR program in Texas. The UCR program requires individuals and companies that operate commercial motor vehicles in interstate or international commerce to register their business. In 2008, MCD mailed over 7,500 applications to Mexican motor carriers and processed thousands of applications submitted by Mexican carriers seeking to register their businesses.

MCD has established a Spanish queue on the 800 One-Stop-Shop phone system to better serve Spanish speaking customers. People are able to call into the toll free MCD 800 phone system to ask questions and receive answers in Spanish. In 2008, the phone queue processed approximately 6,600 Spanish speaking calls.

The division posts a Mexican-based Commercial Motor Carriers Vehicle Checklist on the TxDOT website. The website address is: http://www.txdot.gov/services/motor_carrier/checklist.htm The website also contains a link to information on NAFTA and Cross-Border Traffic.



Hydrotreater Reactor - TxDOT Photo

MCD issues permits for oversize/overweight loads such as this 1.9 million pound Hydrotreater Reactor for a power plant. This component was manufactured overseas, entered the country at the Port of Corpus Christi and was transported to Three Rivers, Texas.

MCD is responsible for administering Texas' oversize/overweight permit program under the Texas Transportation Code, Chapter 623. These requirements impact Mexican-based carriers transporting oversized or overweight loads into Texas.

In 2008, MCD hosted international visitors from Toshiba International Corporation to help coordinate and pre-plan the activities associated with two very large super heavy loads that will be coming from Japan. MCD had staff that manned a booth at the Permian Basin International Oil Show in Odessa, Texas. The event was attended by international transportation related vendors from Mexico, Canada, South America and Europe. Vendors and exhibitors attending the Oil Show had booths displaying products and information. The website to the 2008 show is located at <http://www.pbioilshow.org/>.

Research and Technology Implementation Office (RTI)

RTI administers the federal Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). TxDOT contracts with Texas A&M University System's Engineering Extension Service for the program. LTAP program administrators are available to meet with counterparts in Mexico to advise and coordinate activities.

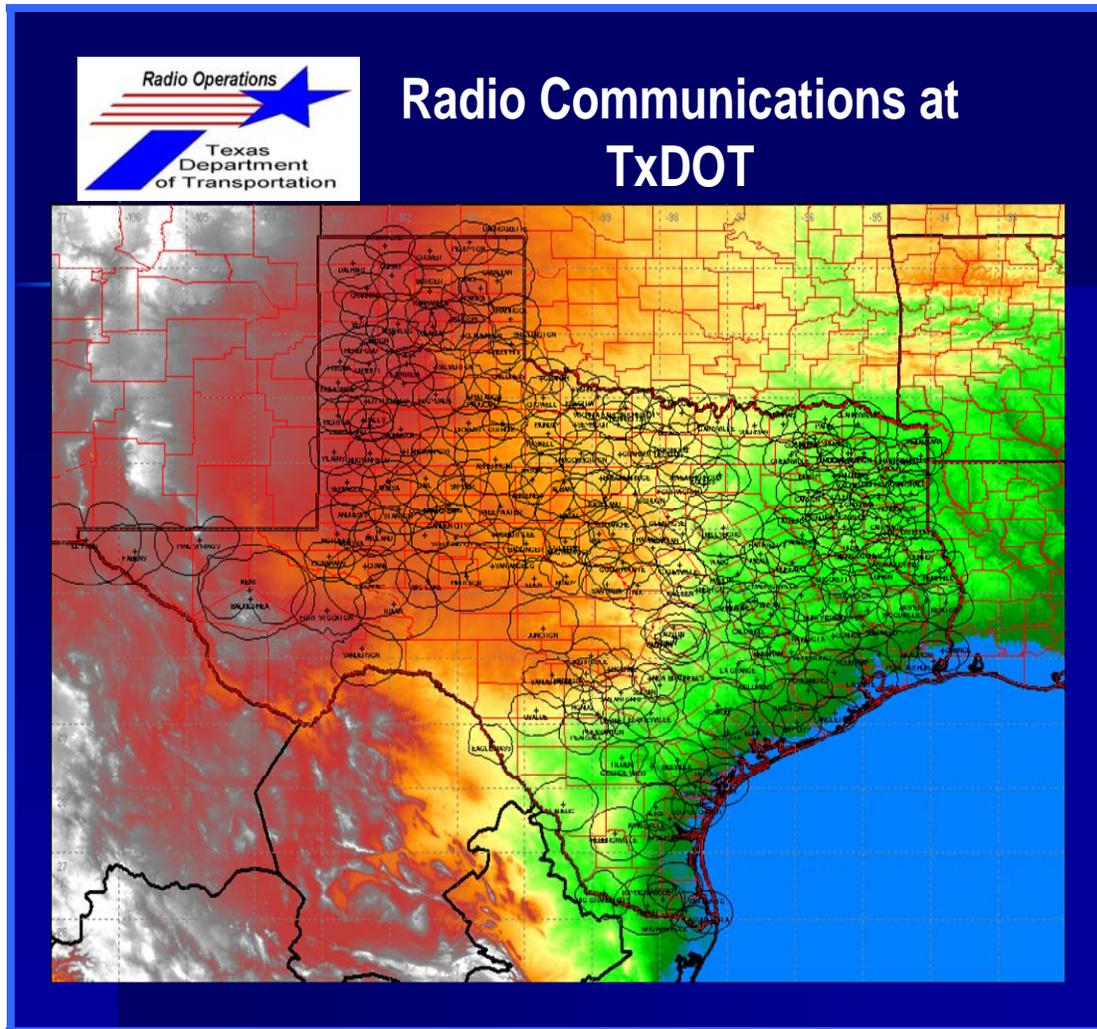
During the annual LTAP and TTAP (Tribal Technical Assistance Program) meeting, RTI's LTAP Implementation Director meets with international representatives from several foreign countries to exchange ideas and discuss various transportation issues. Additionally, courses on safety, signage, marking, and pavement management are now available to Mexican nationals. There is no fee for attending and classes are available in Spanish.

RTI also oversees transportation research conducted at state universities in Texas in response to the needs of the Department. This often involves movements and coordination of activities along or crossing the border with Mexico.

Other on-going research that has or will have an international, particularly Mexican, component includes:

- 0-6095, "Longer Combination Vehicles & Road Trains for Texas"
- 0-6297, "Freight Planning Factors Impacting Texas Commodity Flows"
- 0-6544, "Appraisal of Available Analytical Tools to Assess Environmental Justice Impacts of Toll Road Projects"

Traffic Operations Division (TRF)



Radio Communications at TxDOT

TRF continues to participate in a number of groups, organizations and committees with substantial international memberships. These include the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITSA), the Transportation Research Board (TRB) and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE).

TranStar operation's floor



TRF has assisted in the development of ITS related projects in El Paso, Del Rio, Laredo, and the Lower Rio Grande Valley in conjunction with the districts. These systems are used to alert motorists to delays that may be occurring at border crossings as well as other border-related issues and to support border-related commercial vehicle operations. International visitors show a keen interest in this technology when visiting TxDOT.

TRF is working with the Maintenance Division and Texas DPS in the development of eight Border Safety Inspection Facilities (BSIF). The planned sites include: Laredo (2), El Paso (2), Brownsville (2), Eagle Pass (1) and Pharr (1). TRF is assisting in the design and implementation of ITS components and systems for these sites. From an operational standpoint, each BSIF would provide Texas DPS personnel with a facility to perform fast and efficient safety inspections of commercial vehicles entering the United States from Mexico.

Additionally, the division has researched and deployed various signage initiatives for the Texas-Mexico border region including warning signs and bilingual signs.

Transportation Planning and Programming Division (TPP)



TxDOT Photo

TPP has two major responsibilities relating to international affairs. The division serves as the point of contact for the Texas International Bridge Application Approval Process and TPP also serves as the lead in coordinating four different reports required by state legislation relating to international trade.

TPP is responsible for the state international bridge application process as required by the Texas Transportation Code. Statute allows an applicant to concurrently seek approval from the Texas Transportation Commission and the United States Department of State (DOS). However, if the commission does not approve the construction of the bridge, the applicant shall withdraw the request for approval from the DOS.

Factors Considered in the Presidential Permitting Process

- The facilities potential impacts on the economy of the region, the environment, traffic congestion and mobility, and the flow of free trade.
- The anticipated financial condition of the application and the project.
- Any written commitments from Mexican authorities to provide adequate roadway connections to the bridge.
- The impact of a competing bridge, whether proposed, approved or constructed.
- Whether the bridge construction is consistent with the state and regional transportation plans.
- Whether the future transportation infrastructure on both sides of the border, at the time the bridge becomes operational, will be of sufficient capacity to support the new structure.
- Whether the revenue generated by the bridge will be sufficient to finance the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the bridge.
- Whether there is support on the Mexican side for the necessary transportation infrastructure.

In making its determination, the department consults with the following agencies/offices:

- Office of the Governor
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Texas Historical Commission
- Texas Department of Agriculture
- Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission
- Other agencies the department deems appropriate
- Any entity which will be significantly affected by the project

The reports that TPP is responsible for producing are: Trade Transportation Activities Report, International Trade Corridor Plan, Border Trade Advisory Committee Report, and Cross-Border Transportation and Infrastructure Report. These reports are also located on TxDOT's web site at:

http://www.dot.state.tx.us/txdot_library/publications/transportation_planning.htm

The Trade Transportation Activities Report is required by the General Appropriations Act and is due annually to the border district legislators, to the respective metropolitan planning organizations, the Governor and the Legislative Budget Board (LBB). The report includes trade activities in which TxDOT is involved along the border.

Some of the abovementioned activities include pass-through financing projects, freight rail studies, the Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) Program, Border Safety Inspection Facilities (BSIFs) and the La Entrada al Pacífico (LEAP) Corridor Feasibility Study.

The International Trade Corridor Plan is required by the Texas Transportation Code and is due biennially. The report is presented to the presiding officer of each house of the Legislature. The purpose of the report is to include strategies and projects to aid the exchange of international trade, assign priorities based on the amount of international trade using the multiple transportation modes in the state and address implementation of the recommendations of the Border Trade Advisory Committee. The report provides information on Texas international transportation infrastructure, the volume, value and weight of international trade entering Texas either by land or water and Texas' international trade corridors.

The Border Trade Advisory Committee is established in the Texas Transportation Code. The Texas Transportation Commission appoints the members of the committee and the Border Commerce

Coordinator serves as the presiding officer. The committee's recommendations are provided to the commission and the Governor biennially. The committee convened three times in 2009.

The Texas Transportation Code also requires the department to initiate efforts to meet at least quarterly with our counterparts in Mexico. Results of meetings are to be updated biennially and provided to the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the House of Representatives and each member of the legislature. It is the responsibility of each of the border districts to orchestrate these meetings.

Coordinated Border Infrastructure Program (CBI)

Funding for this program is intended to facilitate and expedite cross-border motor vehicle and cargo movements. Border crossing infrastructure, highway and safety enforcement facilities, electronic data exchange, and international coordination of transportation planning qualify for this program.

The commission allocated \$200 million to the three border districts in March of 2006. The amounts allocated per district are:

- El Paso district \$53,575,843
- Laredo district \$81,867,221
- Pharr district \$64,556,936

Because most of the border crossings are within metropolitan planning area boundaries, the districts are coordinating project selection with the metropolitan planning organizations.

Travel Information Division (TRV)

At the center of Texas' travel industry is the Texas Department of Transportation's Travel Information Division with its core mission of stimulating travel to and within the state. TRV operates 12 Texas Travel Information Centers (TICs); publishes the state's official travel magazine, *Texas Highways*; produces, publishes and distributes travel literature; and manages the statewide litter prevention programs.

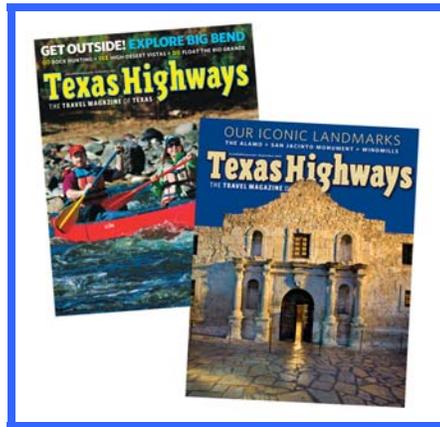


A Texas Travel Information Center - TxDOT Photo

TRV operates 12 Texas Travel Information Centers (TICs) which are located at major entry points into Texas. The TICs provide a safe haven for highway users and are the front door to Texas. TICs personnel serve as ambassadors to Texas and promote travel to and within the state by assisting the traveling public - the center's professional travel counselors provide travelers with travel literature, trip routing, information on events and points of interest, and road conditions. In 2009, the TICs served approximately 2.6 million customers. Travelers who stop at information centers extend their stay, visit more attractions, and have a positive return on investment. National research confirms that the economic

impact to Texas of the number of travelers served by the TICs in FY09 was over \$38 million.

TRV also produces and distributes the travel literature for the state of Texas. These publications include the *Texas State Travel Guide*, the *Texas Official Travel Map*, the *Texas Accommodations Guide*, the *Texas Events Calendar*, the *Texas Public Campgrounds Guide* and various other publications providing statewide information for travelers. In addition to these publications, the Official Travel Magazine of Texas, *Texas Highways*, is also produced by TRV. This award-winning magazine depicts the essence of Texas through engaging writing and photography—showcasing the state’s scenic, historical, recreational, cultural and ethnic treasures.



Currently, the magazine has 1,287 international paid subscribers among its readership with magazines going to 64 countries. *Texas Highways* can also be found at <http://texashighways.com/>.

In Fiscal Year 2009, travel literature packets containing the *Texas State Travel Guide*, *Texas Accommodations Guide* and *Texas Official Travel Map* were mailed to 10,463 international requesters, including 9,273 in Canada and 779 in Mexico.

Through *Texas Highways*, TxDOT has been an active member of the International Regional Magazine Association (IRMA) since 1977. IRMA membership consists of regional magazines similar to *Texas Highways* from all over the United States, Ireland and Canada.



TxDOT's litter prevention programs, which are managed by TRV, have received international attention. People from around the world inquire about the department's famous "Don't Mess with Texas" public awareness campaign.

The other Texas-born litter prevention program, "Adopt-a-Highway," allows individuals, families, members or employees of civic and nonprofit organizations, businesses, and governmental entities to participate in removing litter from state highways, saving taxpayers millions of dollars annually. Since the introduction of this program in the 1980s, visitors from China, the United Kingdom, Japan, Mexico, Switzerland and South Africa have approached TRV to learn about litter prevention and starting similar programs in their countries. Both of these programs work together in keeping Texas roadways beautiful. Organizations seeking more information can access the following websites:

<http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org/>

or

www.texasadoptahighway.org

SECTION II
COMMITTEES, CONFERENCES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Border Governors' Conference (BGC)

Description: Governors of the ten U.S.-Mexican Border States meet once a year to discuss topics of mutual interest and concern. Work groups at the conference include: Agriculture, Logistics and International Crossings, Economic Development, Education, Environment, Energy, Health, Tourism, North American Development Bank, Water for Sustainable Development and Border Security.

The members of the various work tables meet during the year to develop recommendations and follow up on action plans. From this input, a joint declaration is developed and delivered to federal and state governmental entities and presidents of both countries.

Participants: Include border governors, representatives from each of the border governors' offices, and state delegates for each of the work tables. Federal government representatives are invited as observers. TxDOT's IRO Section Director sits on the Logistics and International Crossings worktable and coordinates department input on border crossing and transportation issues.

Purpose: To provide a forum that enables the ten border governors and interested entities to develop personal relationships, address issues and opportunities at the border and promote initiatives for improving the quality of life of the people in the region.

Objectives of the conference are:

- To encourage and strengthen personal relationships between the Border States.
- To promote unified action along the U.S.-Mexico border and on international issues.
- To address border problems and opportunities.
- To jointly promote development throughout the border region.

Meetings: The conference is held annually and in 2009 was held in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon in September. The Logistics and Border Crossings worktable additionally met various times during the year to develop recommendations and action plans.

Benefits: This forum provides TxDOT with an opportunity to work closely with the Governor's Office in establishing coordinated activities related to border transportation. The conference also promotes coordination with neighboring states in making recommendations regarding the border area.

To read the 2009 Joint Declaration or find more information on this group's workings, please visit:

<http://bordergovernors.org/en/monterrey.html>

Border Trade Advisory Committee (BTAC)

Purpose: The BTAC was created in 2001 by the 77th Texas Legislature to define and develop a strategy and make recommendations to the commission and the governor for addressing the highest priority border trade transportation challenges. The 79th Texas Legislature in 2005 (Senate Bill 183) provided additional guidance to the commission with regard to the composition of the BTAC. The commission appointed 29 members to the BTAC in June 2006 with the border commerce coordinator serving as the presiding officer.

Participants: Members of the BTAC include the border commerce coordinator, representatives from the MPOs located along the border, each port of entry, universities that conduct research on transportation or trade issues, and local officials.

Meetings: The BTAC met various times in 2009, and focused on working with the four southern U.S. Border States to form a coalition to address pertinent federal issues.

Additionally, they focused on the federal transportation reauthorization process and ensuring that programs that are crucial to providing infrastructure necessary to provide for efficient border commerce continue.

Benefits: The benefit of the BTAC is increased coordinated planning on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Joint Working Committee (JWC)

Description: The JWC is a bi-national group whose primary focus is to cooperate on land transportation planning and the facilitation of efficient, safe, and economical cross-border transportation movements at the U.S.-Mexico border. Due to further development of economic and commercial relations associated with NAFTA, the United States and Mexico recognized the need for a well-coordinated transportation planning process along the border.

Participants: The U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the State Department (DOS), the Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes (SCT), the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE), and the border state transportation departments from both countries.

In addition the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), as well as Mexico's Institute of Administration and Valuation of National Goods (INDAABIN, Mexico's GSA counterpart) and Mexican Customs (Aduanas México) participate.

Purpose: The JWC promotes effective communication concerning transportation planning between U.S.-Mexico Border States and works to develop a well-coordinated land transportation planning process along the border through studies, pilot programs, workshops and peer groups. It fosters a candid and open exchange of information and ideas which takes place on a regular basis, and problem solving and information gathering between agencies is much easier because of established relationships.

JWC Goals: Relieve Congestion, Enhance Safety and Security, Improve Global Competitiveness and Ensure Sustainability

TxDOT coordinates and participates in many of the projects in the two-year JWC work plans that include border related transportation studies and workshops. Information on the Strategic Plan, Work Plan, studies and other issues is available at the web site noted below.

Meetings: The JWC meets twice a year alternating meeting locations between the U.S. and Mexico.

Benefits: The JWC is the only U.S.-Mexico border-wide planning work group.

More information can be found at:
<http://www.borderplanning.fhwa.dot.gov/mexico.asp>

US-MX Bi-national Bridges and Border Crossings Group

Description: This group focuses on proposed international bridges and border crossings, the status/needs of current border crossings facilities and transportation access. There are a total of 27 international bridges and border crossings connecting Texas and Mexico, which share 1,254.7 miles of common border.

Participants: Formed in 1981, the group is composed of delegations from the federal and state governments of the United States and Mexico. The Coordinator for U.S.-Mexico Border Affairs of the U.S. Department of State (DOS) chairs the U.S. delegation, while the Director for North American Affairs of the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE) chairs the Mexican delegation. U.S. and Mexican border state representatives have been included in the sessions since 1994. IRO represents TxDOT in the group.

Purpose: To discuss proposed bridges and border crossings and their related infrastructure and to exchange technical information so that those projects, which both countries federal governments deem beneficial, may complete the approval process of the two respective governments. Related issues such as toll roads and other infrastructure projects are discussed, as well as operational matters involving existing and future crossings.

Meetings: The group meets twice a year. Meetings include participation of the U.S. and Mexican delegations composed of representatives from federal and state agencies that have an interest in/or responsibility for bilateral relations and permitting of new crossings (international ports of entry). Issues discussed include:

- Status of Permits
- Feasibility and prioritization of projects
- Inspections
- Highway/rail access
- Development and construction of facilities

- Environmental Issues
- Monitoring of the international boundary
- Border Security and Inspection Facilities

The meetings include a U.S.-only and a Mexico-only meeting followed by three bi-national sessions over a two-day period. During the public sessions, sponsors of the proposed bridges and border crossings (and related infrastructure projects) make presentations, in which the U.S. and Mexican delegations can query the presenters. During the technical sessions, the delegations meet to discuss specific border crossings and exchange views and technical information. Reports of bi-national committees' activities and major programs that directly impact the U.S.-Mexico border area are made. Each U.S. and Mexican border state representative offers a presentation on the development of current transportation infrastructure projects. Both delegations positions are summarized in the final session. The group also conducts periodic "border walks", alternating between the U.S. and Mexico.

Benefits: This group allows state participation in all sessions of the U.S. delegation, the value of which is twofold. First, state DOT representatives can provide input to which the government delegation members might not be privy. Such project-specific information should be considered in advancing proposed bridge and crossing projects through approval processes. In addition, the information that state DOTs glean from the closed technical session assists those agencies in transportation infrastructure development planning. Texas plays a key role in this forum as it is the only border state that requires a state border crossings permit in conjunction with the issuing of a U.S. Presidential Permit.

Note: Details regarding the border crossings are available in the IRO publication *Texas-Mexico International Bridges and Border Crossings: Existing and Proposed*, available at:

http://www.txdot.gov/txdot_library/publications/international_relations.htm