Don’t Barrel Through Work Zones!

Drive Smart to Arrive Alive

National Work Zone Awareness Week is April 23-27. During this time, TxDOT reminds motorists that there can be more than 1,000 Texas highway work zones in operation during the summer months. With so much construction, motorists have to stay alert. In 2010, 100 people were killed in Texas highway construction and maintenance zones.

The two leading causes of work zone crashes were excessive speed and the failure to remain alert while driving. About 60 percent of those crashes were related to alcohol, drugs or distracted driving. Forty-five percent of all work zone fatalities for 2010 were 35 years or older.

Drive Smart to Arrive Alive

Slow Down: Always follow posted work zone speed limits. Speeding is one of the major causes of work zone crashes. Remember, traffic fines double in work zones.

Pay Attention: Workers may only be a few feet away from passing vehicles.

Be Patient: Delays from highway construction can be frustrating, but it only takes a few extra minutes to slow down for a work zone.

Plan Ahead: Leave a few minutes early to reach your destination on time.

Distracted Driver Crashes in Tarrant County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Crashes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>7,191</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>7,138</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>5,645</td>
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</tbody>
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Traffic crashes reported with cell phone use as a contributing factor:

- 1,141 total crashes in Tarrant County resulting in 308 injuries since 2007

As one of its goals, TxDOT is encouraging Texans to focus their attention on the road and put down their cell phones while driving.

$2 Billion in Additional Funding

TxDOT is in early discussions with the state’s metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) to develop a collaborative process in anticipation of additional funding. TxDOT expects to leverage up to $2 billion over the next two years to facilitate construction on some of the state’s high priority projects. This announcement came in February after several months of analyzing federal funding opportunities, scrapping project budgets and embracing best practices in money management.

Working directly with the state’s MPOs and local communities, TxDOT will prioritize the state’s most-needed projects.

I-20 Passenger Rail Study Begins

In February, TxDOT and Amtrak announced the start of a passenger rail study along I-20 from Dallas/Fort Worth to the Arkansas and Louisiana borders. TxDOT has received $265,000 in federal funds for the study through the East Texas Corridor Council, which promotes economic development in East Texas, northwest Louisiana and southwest Arkansas. Results of the study are expected at the end of the year.

DFW Connector Honor

DFW Connector Project Manager Sam Swan was honored on Feb. 15 by the White House as a “Champion of Change” for his work in fostering innovations on the $1.1 billion DFW Connector project. A 28-mile $45 million project that will connect FM 51 with I-20. The project was included in an $80 million transportation bond package approved by county voters in 2008.

FEDERAL update

The SAFETEA-LU bill, which expired on Sept. 30, 2009, is currently operating under its ninth extension through June 30, 2012. The extension funds the third three months of FY 2012 under the original bill’s apportionment. To keep up with the status of the federal transportation bill, visit these sites regularly.

- transportation.org
- transportation.nationaljournal.com
- trans2group.com
- innobriefs.com

INSIDE:

Drive Smart to Arrive Alive
After 18 months of construction, the North Tarrant Express (NTE) is 22 percent complete and on target to open to traffic by 2015.

All 399 parcels of right of way have been acquired and nearly 100 percent of the corridor is under construction. To date, NTE Mobility Partners has moved 920,000 cubic yards of dirt, tied 6.9 million pounds of rebar, laid 50,000 linear feet of permanent pipe, laid 40,000 tons of asphalt, and poured 40,000 cubic yards of concrete. The contractor has spent $480 million to date.

Having totaled over 1.1 million man-hours, the project is currently employing 900 workers. At this time, the NTE is contracted with 100 disadvantaged business enterprises.

Some of the major project highlights so far include the demolition and reconstruction of the Murphy Drive and Westpark Way bridges, and major work on the managed lane direct connectors from I-35W to I-820. In the coming months, construction activity will increase with work getting under way at the Northeast Interchange and major utility work on the western segment of the project. Bridge work will continue with the demolition and reconstruction of the Hurstview Drive bridge.

By May, a new pedestrian bridge and new westbound frontage road near Hurstview Drive are scheduled to open. A project open house and ceremonial pedestrian bridge walk are tentatively scheduled for late April/early May.

The NTE project team continues to work closely with the six corridor cities (Fort Worth, Haltom City, North Richland Hills, Bedford, Hurst and Euless), Tarrant County, and the HEB Chamber and Northeast Tarrant Chamber to keep residents, businesses and city/county staff informed about construction activities and upcoming closures.
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northtarrantexpress.com
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