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TxDOT's four goals: Maintain a safe system, address congestion, connect Texas communities, and be a Best-in-Class state agency

**For Immediate Release**

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## **INCREASED TRAFFIC, CRASHES PROMPT NEW CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE SAFE DRIVING ON ROADWAYS NEAR OIL, GAS WORK AREAS**

*TxDOT launches new effort to save lives as oil and gas industry booms in Texas*

**KARNES CITY**—The recent boom in oil and gas production in the Eagle Ford Shale has created hundreds of jobs and many new opportunities for Texas communities in that region. Unfortunately, with an influx in traffic, there also has been an increase in crashes. In response, the Texas Department of Transportation is launching *Be Safe. Drive Smart.*, a public education campaign to remind motorists to use extra caution when driving through any energy work zone.

“Historically, south Texas has not been an area where traffic was a concern, but now with a re-energized oil and gas industry, driving conditions have changed,” said John Barton, TxDOT’s deputy executive director. “Passenger vehicles are now sharing rural roads with more and more heavy trucks, and that’s a recipe for trouble when drivers don’t obey traffic laws, slow down or pay attention.”

The new *Be Safe. Drive Smart.* campaign urges all drivers to take the following basic safety precautions: buckle up; drive a safe speed; pass carefully; always stop at red lights and stop signs; and avoid using cell phones while driving.

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) is joining TxDOT in this effort to promote this important initiative.

“DPS has a responsibility to protect travelers on our roadways, and we urge all drivers — commercial and passenger — to do their part to keep our roads safe,” said Highway Patrol Major Casey Goetz. “Drivers will continue to see periodic DPS special enforcement operations in areas with increased truck traffic, which are designed to enforce commercial vehicle regulatory requirements and discourage dangerous driving by passenger vehicles.”

Preliminary TxDOT crash reports indicate there were 2,723 fatal and serious injury crashes and 248 traffic fatalities in 2012 in the Eagle Ford Shale energy sector, a 23-county region that stretches from Laredo to Madisonville. The death count represents a 40 percent increase in roadway fatalities over the previous year. The leading causes of these crashes according to law enforcement were failure to control speed and driver inattention. Almost half of fatal and serious injury crashes involved a single vehicle, and commercial trucks were involved in nine

percent of reported crashes in which someone was killed or seriously injured. The most dangerous time of day was between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m.

TxDOT is partnering with oil and gas companies, the Texas Department of Public Safety and communities across the Eagle Ford Shale region to promote roadway safety. The campaign will include safety messages on TV, radio, billboards and gas pumps in the area.

For media inquiries, contact TxDOT Media Relations at [MediaRelations@txdot.gov](mailto:MediaRelations@txdot.gov) or (512) 463-8700.

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**Texas Department of Transportation**

The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining 80,000 miles of road and for supporting aviation, rail, and public transportation across the state. TxDOT and its 11,000 employees are committed to working with others to provide safe and reliable transportation solutions for Texas by maintaining a safe system, addressing congestion, connecting Texas communities, and being a Best in Class state agency. Find out more at [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov). Fan us on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/txdot](http://www.facebook.com/txdot); and follow us on Twitter, [www.twitter.com/txdot](http://www.twitter.com/txdot).