



## **2009-2010 TEX-21 ACTIVITY REPORT**

Thanks to enthusiastic participation of each TEX-21 member, this fiscal year-to-date has been extremely busy and productive for advancing of TEX-21's legislative activities and priorities. Please find highlights below.

**Congressional Caucus in Washington D.C.:** TEX-21 retained all 34 members of the Texas Congressional Delegation. In addition to the Texas Delegation's 100% participation, the staff members that handle transportation issues for each of these Caucus members continued their active involvement in the TEX-21 Congressional Caucus Staff Workgroup. Several Workshops were held for this Workgroup, during which representatives of TEX-21 were able to discuss issues related to the 2009 Legislative Package. These workshops were well attended and created an environment for open discussion and relationship-building between TEX-21 members and representatives and key staff members on the Hill.

Topics and Presenters included:

- **July 14, 2009**
  - **The importance of High-Speed Rail in Texas** – Mayor Bill Jones, City of Temple, Vice President of the South Central High-Speed Rail and Transportation Authority, Inc; and Travis Kelly, Dean International, Inc.
- **September 16, 2009**
  - **General Aviation with emphasis on its importance in Texas Transportation** - Darci Neuzil, President of the Texas Airport Council and Deputy Director of Addison Airport in the Town of Addison, TX
  - **Update on the Current State of Affairs at DFW International Airport and Commercial Aviation** - Colleen Dziuban, Managing Director, Government & Stakeholder Affairs, DFW International Airport
- **January 20, 2010**
  - **Update on State and Federal issues surrounding High-Speed Rail** - Mayor Pro Tem Rose Cannaday, City of Irving; Member, Board of Directors, South Central High-Speed Rail and Transportation Authority, Inc

**Legislative Caucus in Austin, Texas:** During the year, the TEX-21 Legislative Caucus grew to include 101 members of the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature. The staff members of this Legislative Caucus continued their active participation in the TEX-21 Legislative Caucus Workgroup. Workshops for this Workgroup were conducted throughout the year in Austin with many members of TEX-21 traveling to these lunch meetings to continue building relationships with key legislative and committee staff members.

Topics Included:

- **July 24, 2009**
  - **Briefing on Inland Ports and High-Speed Passenger Rail with emphasis on their impact on Texas Transportation** – Councilmember Tennell Atkins, City of Dallas; Fred Sandoval, City Manager, City of Pharr; Commissioner Kenny Mallard, Brazos County
- **October 9, 2009**
  - **The State of General Aviation** – Darci Neuzil, President of Texas Airport Council and Deputy Director of Addison Airport in the Town of Addison, TX
  - **Update on the Current State of affairs at DFW International Airport and Commercial Aviation** - Colleen Dziuban, Managing Director, Government & Stakeholder Affairs, DFW International Airport
- **January 22, 2010**
  - **Discussion on the need for a safe and efficient High-Speed Rail Line in Texas** – Judge Robert Eckels, Chairman, Texas High-Speed Rail & Transportation Corporation (THSRTC); Tarrant County Commissioner Gary Fickes, President, South Central High-Speed Rail & Transportation Authority, Inc.; Dallas County Commissioner Maurine Dickey, Treasurer, South Central High-Speed Rail and Transportation Authority, Inc; City of North Richland Hills Councilmember Tim Welch, Member, Board of Directors, South Central High-Speed Rail and Transportation Authority, Inc; Bowie County Commissioner John Addington, Member, Board of Directors, Texas High-Speed Rail and Transportation Corporation
- **March 19, 2010**
  - **Discussion on Innovative Methodology for Financing Infrastructure Projects** - Brian Brooks, City Manager, City of Forney, discussed Transportation Reinvestment Zones; Bob Thompson, Vice Chairman, Alamo Regional Mobility Authority discussed various innovative finance methods being considered by Regional Mobility Authorities as they seek complete long-term transportation plans

**Standing Committees:** The Federal, State, Regional & Local, and Transit Committees and the Public Works Task Force met regularly throughout the year to develop the 2010-2011 Congressional and Legislative Targets. TEX-21 has also been involved in forming a new standing committee to direct attention towards aviation within Texas. The Aviation Task Force will work with public policy issues impacting airports within the state.

The 2010-2011 Congressional and Legislative Targets will be adopted on April 23, 2010 during the TEX-21 Statewide Quarterly Meeting in Killeen, TX. The following is a selection of notable provisions included within the draft package:

- Discontinuing the diversion of transportation revenues to non-transportation sources
- Increasing the state motor fuels tax
- Indexing the state motor fuels tax
- Supporting a local option tax

**Mission Trips:** TEX-21 has conducted four mission trips to Washington, D.C. over the course of the past year. TEX-21 members were able to dialogue with members of the Congressional Caucus. During these meetings, members were able to promote several key legislative priorities, including an increase to \$.95 per dollar in the rate of return on federal gas tax dollars for Texas, indexing the federal motor fuels tax, and supporting the authorization of funds for rail security improvements.

**Legislative Caucus growth:** The TEX-21 Legislative Caucus has grown over the course of the past year to include 101 members of the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature (22 senators and 79 representatives as of April 15, 2010). The most recent members to join the Legislative Caucus during the Winter Statewide Quarterly Meeting held in Houston in January, 2010 were State Senator Glenn Hegar (R-Katy) and State Representative Randy Weber (R-Pearland).

**TEX-21 Legislative Days in Austin:** During the 81<sup>st</sup> Session of the Texas Legislature, over fifty TEX-21 members took time to travel to Austin to visit with State Senators, State Representatives, and several state agencies to advocate various priorities within the TEX-21 Legislative Package. Members of TEX-21 were able to participate in over 125 appointments with officials representing areas across the state.

**Texas Senate Committee on Transportation and Homeland Security and House Transportation Committee:** Senator John Carona, Chairman of the Texas Senate Committee on Transportation and Homeland Security, and Joe Pickett, Chairman of the House Transportation Committee formally requested that TEX-21 work with them and their colleagues in the Texas Senate and House and with the TEX-21 Legislative Caucus to create a shared vision for the future of transportation in Texas. TEX-21 continues to cover all of the Transportation hearings from both bodies of the Texas Legislature.

**Recruitment:** TEX-21 members have diligently met with many cities and counties throughout the state regarding their participation in the organization. Recruitment continues to be a key priority and will play an even more important role moving forward. As the services provided to TEX-21 members expand, participation in TEX-21 will continue to increase in value even as membership dues for FYE 2011 continue at the reduced rates. Many TEX-21 members have diligently met with neighboring cities and counties, informing them and encouraging them to consider joining the TEX-21 organization. TEX-21 also hosted several Regional Recruitment Meetings around the state.

Topics Addressed during Regional Recruitment Meetings:

- **September 25, 2009 - Hosted by Mayor David Southern, City of Granbury**
  - **Issues Facing Aviation within the State** - TEX-21 Member John Happ, Director of Aviation, Easterwood Airport in College Station
  - **The Importance of Commuter Rail** - Mayor David Southern, City of Granbury
  - **The Role of Transportation Reinvestment Zones (TRZ)** - Brian Brooks, City Manager, City of Forney
  
- **October 12, 2009 – Hosted by Mayor Joe Lambert, City of Decatur**
  - **Transportation Issues During the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature** - Texas State Senator Craig Estes
  - **Update on Funding for Pass-through Highway Projects** – Mayor David Southern, City of Granbury

**Media Training:** This program is provided twice annually at no extra charge as a service to TEX-21 members with the next program planned for September 2010 in Dallas. We invite you to dialogue with, and learn from, the outstanding media experts who will be joining us for our training seminar. This seminar equips TEX-21 member representatives with the necessary skills to interact with and benefit from members of the media, schedule and conduct press conferences, and initiate and participate in editorial board meetings.

On July 16, 2009 and January 19, 2010, individuals gathered from across the state for media training days. At these well-attended events, attendees received high-quality training in how to handle interviews and properly manage media in all situations from promotional campaigns to crisis management. Speakers included:

- Jeff Crilley, an Emmy Award winning TV reporter in Dallas and winner of the National Headliners Award, the Edward R. Murrow Award, and the Thurgood Marshall Award. In 2004 he was named by the Texas Associated Press, "The Best TV Reporter in the state." and has made hundreds of national news appearances with over 30 years experience in corporate reputation and issues management, media relations, association governance and technology communications in corporate, agency and non-profit settings.
  
- Paul Harral, retired as Vice President and Editorial Page Editor of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* and has 45 years of professional experience in all forms of mass media.
  
- Steve Lee, President and CEO of QuickSilver Interactive Group, which he founded to help senior executives understand the latest interactive and marketing trends in order to create clearer visions of their business and communications needs.

**Funding Options Report:** TEX-21 consultants are working with the National Multi-Modal Transportation Steering Committee and have prepared an Executive Summary of a Needs Assessment Report which includes a funding options report. The report offers a brief history of early and ongoing methods of infrastructure financing and provides excerpts from some of the key research reports that focus on federal, state, and local efforts to fund future transportation

needs. Key House and Senate Committees have begun meeting to lay the groundwork for the next surface transportation bill. Because of this ongoing debate, this document will continue to be updated throughout the year. It is not intended to serve as a recommendation of funding strategies, but to offer TEX-21 members and other key participants in the ongoing dialogue some crucial background information so that they may remain active on the overall funding discussion.

**Annual and Quarterly Meetings:** The Annual Meeting was held on August 13, 2009 in conjunction with the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Transportation Summit in Irving. Last year's Annual Meeting was attended by Chairman of the Texas House Transportation Committee, Texas State Representative Joe Pickett; Vice-Chair of the House Transportation Committee, Texas State Representative Larry Phillips; and Texas State Representative Linda Harper-Brown. The Quarterly Meetings, which were held around the state, had many prestigious speakers address the group on a variety of topics.

Topics Addressed at Quarterly Meetings:

- **Fall Statewide Quarterly Meeting - October 15-16, 2009 – Hosted by the City Lubbock**
  - **Texas' Perspective on Transportation Issues** – Commissioner Fred Underwood, Texas Transportation Commission
  - **Federal Legislation Regarding Truck Weight and Lengths** - Whitney Hanson, Senior Field Director, Texans for Safe Roads
  - An overview of all Seven Modules for the Infrastructure Project Development Program was provided.
  - **The Importance of Improving Texas Transportation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** - The Honorable Kent Hance, Chancellor, Texas Tech University and former U.S. Congressman
  - **Overview of the National Transportation Security Center of Excellence at Texas Southern University** - Carroll Robinson, Associate Dean of External Affairs, Texas Southern University
  - **TEX-21 Members approved Resolution 01-2009 which adopted Senator John Carona's Transportation Priorities.**
  
- **Winter Statewide Quarterly Meeting - January 28-29, 2010 – Hosted by Texas Southern University in conjunction with the Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs and Houston's Citizen Chamber of Commerce**
  - **Texas' Perspective on Transportation Issues** – Texas State Senator Dan Patrick (R-Houston) and State Representative Randy Weber (R-Pearland)
  - **Update on the work of the Sunset Advisory Commission** - Texas State Senator Glenn Hegar (R-Katy) and Texas State Representative Bill Callegari (R-Katy).
  - **Update on Sunset Review for TxDOT** – Texas State Representative Linda Harper-Brown (R-Irving)
  - **New Federal Legislation regarding the Weight and Length of Trucks** - Whitney Hanson, Senior Field Director, Texans for Safe Roads
  - **National Security Issues related to Transportation** - Sharon Adams, Director, Center of Excellence-Petrochemical at Texas Southern University

- **Transportation Issues Facing Houston** - Mike Alford, Deputy District Engineer, Houston District, TxDOT
- **TEX-21 Members approved Resolution 2010.03, supporting the mandate that all DUI and DWI offenders have ignition interlock devices installed after their first offense, and Resolution 2010.04, opposing the increase in Truck Weights or Lengths operating on Federal, State, and County Highways within the state.**

**Further** issues discussed during the meetings include the following:

1. 2010 TEX-21 Federal, State, Regional & Local, Transit Task Force, and Public Works Task Force Agendas - Discussion of TEX-21's legislative and policy priorities for 2010-2011
2. International Trade and Transportation
3. Sunset Review process
4. TTI 2007 *Urban Mobility Report* (<http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/>)
5. SAFETEA-LU implementation and reauthorization in 2010
6. FMCSA Mexican truck demonstration project
7. Initiative to convert existing interstate highways into toll roads
8. High priority corridors
9. National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission
10. National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission report
11. FAA 2008-2012 Flight Plan Report
12. Federal Railroad Safety Accountability and Improvement Act (HR1516/S018)
13. Discussion of policy items remaining from the 81<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session and Moving Forward Strategies
14. The diversion of transportation revenues
15. Index the state motor fuel tax to restore its lost purchasing power
16. Regional rail initiative and local option sales tax
17. Interim charges to the Texas Legislature
18. Discussion of other miscellaneous TxDOT matters of interest
  - a. State recording license plates as part of transportation study and use of red-light cameras
  - b. Trans-Texas Corridor Update
    - i. TTC-35
    - ii. TTC-69

### **Quarterly Meetings with TxDOT Executive Director Amadeo Saenz**

Over the past year, and continuing again this year, TEX-21 has made it a priority to meet with TxDOT Executive Director Amadeo Saenz. These regular standing meetings have been very beneficial and productive. Through this face-to-face interaction with the Executive Director and his leadership staff the groundwork has been laid for extensive cooperation between TxDOT and TEX-21 in relation to improving transportation in Texas. In 2009, members of TEX-21 met with Amadeo Saenz on July 24 and October 9. Already in 2010, members of TEX-21 have met with

him on January 22 and March 19. Additional meetings are scheduled for June 18 and September 17, 2010 in Austin, TX. These meetings are open to all TEX-21 members.

**Work with outside agencies:** TEX-21 consultants surveyed numerous entities across the State in order to discuss each of their respective priorities for the 111<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress and the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature. These included all TEX-21 members; all transportation aides of the TEX-21 Congressional Caucus; Director of the Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee, Steven Polunsky; Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) President and CEO, Gary Thomas, Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Coalition; Port of Houston; Director of Transportation for North Central Texas Council of Governments, Michael Morris; Director of TXDOT's government and business enterprises division, Coby Chase; Jay Barksdale; Staff Liaison for Partners in Mobility, Vic Suhm; Executive Director of Consulting Engineers Council of Texas, Steve Stagner; Alamo Area Council of Governments; South Texas Development Council; Bryan/College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization; Capital Area Council of Governments; Concho Valley Council of Governments; Central Texas Council of Governments; Panhandle Regional Planning Commission; Rio Grande Council of Governments; East Texas Council of Governments; Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council; ARK-Tex Council of Governments; and South Plains Association of Governments. Subsequent interaction has taken place with members of Congress and their key staff members as well as members of the Texas Legislature and key staff regarding a variety of legislative issues affecting Texas transportation policies.

**Outreach:** TEX-21 distributes weekly "e-blasts," alerting its members of recent and relevant transportation news around the state and nation as well as a monthly newsletter entitled *State in Motion*. The TEX-21 website provides up to date information on the organization's activities.

There will be a huge focus on transportation again during the next session of the Texas Legislature beginning in January 2011. TxDOT is still under Sunset Review, and new methods of project delivery and finance are under hot discussion. Numerous Interim committees of the legislature are hard at work on these and other issues. As members of TEX-21, you receive notices of these meetings and first hand reports of what transpires at each as well as similar notices and updates on all Texas Transportation Commission meetings and written reports after each. Additionally you receive detailed monthly newsletters featuring many members of our Legislative and Congressional Caucuses and of the working of the numerous committees active with TEX-21. In the coming year, we will continue with the second half of the in-depth Infrastructure Project Development Program which was so well received. We look forward to working closely with you and your colleagues as transportation policy issues are addressed and dealt with in Austin and Washington, DC.