



---

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

**For Immediate Release**

July 15, 2013

## **I-69 MAKES HISTORY IN RIO GRANDE VALLEY AS SOUTH TEXAS' FIRST INTERSTATE HIGHWAY**

*Designation of 67 new I-69 interstate miles signals economic growth, mobility, international trade in booming South Texas region ([Photos](#) and [video](#) available for download)*

**AUSTIN** — In an effort to enhance mobility and attract international commerce to the growing Rio Grande Valley, the Texas Department of Transportation with approval from the Texas Transportation Commission today officially designated 67 miles of regional roadways as part of the new Interstate 69. The designation means drivers will now see sections of US 77 and US 281 with I-69 highway signs. Being developed on existing roadways as a critical artery for moving freight, I-69 will ultimately become a 1,600-mile-long highway stretching from Michigan to Texas.

“This marks a milestone for Texas, especially South Texas, as the signs unveiled today symbolize growth, connectivity and economic development for a critical region of our great state,” said Texas Transportation Commissioner Jeff Austin. “The Rio Grande Valley has experienced tremendous growth over the past three decades and we’re pleased to take this important step toward safely mobilizing a growing population while nurturing the economic prosperity of this hub for international trade.”

With more than 1 million people living in the Valley and approximately 1,000 newcomers arriving in Texas each day, the I-69 corridor also will help accommodate the state’s growing population.

“As the booming population of Texas continues to add more vehicles to our roads, we must find ways to keep motorists moving safely and efficiently,” said TxDOT Executive Director Phil Wilson. “An interstate designation carries the highest design standard of any class of highway, so we are proud to have more miles of I-69 added to the map of Texas.”

In total, 67 miles of Rio Grande Valley roadways will now be marked with I-69 interstate highway signs. A 53-mile stretch of US 77 will now be designated as I-69E from the junction of Business 77 north of Raymondville to just north of the U.S./Mexico border. A 14-mile length of US 281 will be designated as I-69C from the junction of FM 2812 in Edinburg to US 83 in Pharr.

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

## **Quotes from local, state and national leaders regarding I-69**

“This marks a milestone for Texas, especially South Texas, as the signs unveiled today symbolize growth, connectivity and economic development for a critical region of our great state. The Rio Grande Valley has experienced tremendous growth over the past three decades and we’re pleased to take this important step toward safely mobilizing a growing population while nurturing the economic prosperity of this hub for international trade.”

**Texas Transportation Commissioner Jeff Austin.**

“As the booming population of Texas continues to add more vehicles to our roads, we must find ways to keep motorists moving safely and efficiently. An interstate designation carries the highest design standard of any class of highway, so we are proud to have more miles of I-69 added to the map of Texas.”

**TxDOT Executive Director Phil Wilson**

“The official designation and signing of I-69 in the Valley is the culmination of a twenty-year collaborative effort between local, state and federal leaders who recognize that this interstate will encourage economic development, enhance freight movements and improve safety of the traveling public. The Alliance for I-69 Texas is proud to have been a partner in this effort and we are committed to working to see a seamless I-69 complete from Texarkana to Laredo and the Lower Rio Grande Valley.”

**Polk County Judge John Thompson, Chairman of the Alliance for I-69 Texas**

“In the over 25 years of public service of which I have been involved with in our area, this has to be the most important , significant and historical game changer for the entire South Texas Region, both strategically and economically.”

**Cameron County Pct. 3 Commissioner David A. Garza**

“What a historical day for the Rio Grande Valley with the unveiling of 111 miles of designated Interstate highway. The Rio Grande Valley is one of this country's largest markets, poised to become even more competitive with an interstate. I-69 allows this region to connect to major Texas markets, as well as, others across North America.”

**President/CEO of the Rio Grande Valley Partnership Julian Alvarez**

“This occasion is significant in lots of ways. It is the culmination of work by so many individuals, past and present, who contributed to the dream of achieving interstate designation to the Rio Grande Valley. Finally, the Rio Grande Valley is validated on federal transportation maps as being a region with tremendous economic potential that serves as national and international hub for commerce, trade, retail and tourism. This is truly something to celebrate. At the beginning of my career in the Legislature in 1986, the Rio Grande Valley didn't have a six lane highway. I'm humbled to have played a part in making our collective dream become reality, and I'm grateful to the Texas Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and our counterparts in Congress.”

**State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr.**

“This is another historic day for the entire region of the Rio Grande Valley with the unveiling of the official designation of the I-69 Interstate Highway. Travel and commerce are key to the

economic growth of the RGV and both Cameron and Hidalgo County will benefit greatly with the completion of the I-69 Interstate Highway. RGV is the gateway to the future financial development of not only the RGV but to the entire state of Texas. As much as I wanted to participate in the actual unveiling ceremony, due to a second special session, I am called to complete my legislative duties at the Capitol in Austin. It has been an exhilarating experience to be a part of the Texas Legislature during this momentous time and I am honored to be included in the unveiling of this project. I look forward to seeing many aspirations for our state come to fruition with the completion of the I-69 Interstate Highway."

**State Representative R.D. "Bobby" Guerra**

"It took a lot of work and a lot of great thinkers and planners, plus a lot of federal, state and local investments to create our new Interstate Highway system, but we did it. Despite the naysayers early on, those of us who had a vision for the future of the Rio Grande Valley knew this could be a reality. This new interstate will be an engine of economic growth for the entire Rio Grande Valley. It will bring new businesses and investments and create thousands of jobs in our region. It will allow us to take advantage of new transportation routes in Mexico that will bring even more trade and commerce through our ports of entry. It will end the isolation of more than 1.5 million people living without an interstate highway system. This is quite an extraordinary accomplishment. I am proud to have been a part of it!"

**Congressman Rubén Hinojosa**

"Today's unveiling of I-69 and I-2 is the culmination of decades of work by local, state, and federal officials. For the first time, cities in the Rio Grande Valley are linked by an interstate highway which allows Valley motorists to travel safely and promotes trade across our region. I look forward to working with TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration to complete more segments of I-69."

**Congressman Filemon Vela**

"Interstates like I-69 are vital to the entire nation. They are 'rivers of trade' that keep America's economy strong."

**Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration's Texas division Bob Tally**

"After years of development, I am proud of the tremendous efforts put forth to make this project a reality. When communities work together and invest in infrastructure, we all win. I would like to thank the Texas Department of Transportation, Rio Grande Valley Partnership and The Alliance for I-69 Texas for their support and dedication to help fund this development."

**Congressman Henry Cuellar**

###

#### **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).

