



FEDERAL HIGHWAY
ADMINISTRATION
TEXAS DIVISION

State of Texas Border Partnership E-Newsletter

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TxDOT Seeking Ideas for "Green" Freight Transportation Systems

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is looking for innovative and environmentally-sensitive ways to move freight across the state. But before the agency puts pen to paper on the planning side, they are asking transportation specialists for "how to" ideas.

TxDOT published a Request for Information (RFI) today asking for suggestions on how to develop future freight transport systems that minimize environmental impacts, specifically technologies with low carbon emissions. In addition, TxDOT wants information on developing a business model to finance, develop and operate these facilities.

Potential systems could include technology involving electromagnetic propulsion where the electricity is supplied by green technology such as wind or solar generation. Such systems could potentially operate on a rail or other fixed channel.

"At this stage, we are asking for ideas that are financially and technologically feasible, environmentally appropriate, supportive of a robust and growing Texas and that lessen long term carbon dependency", said TxDOT's Director for Innovative Project Development Phil Russell, "The door is open for bold new ideas to move Texas forward."

With Panama Canal improvements and Texas' growing global market presence, the efficient movement of freight is a key

component in the future of Texas transportation and economy, particularly facilities that provide

"green" alternatives.

Information submitted to TxDOT will be used to develop a plan for potential future freight transportation systems. Plan development could begin as early as this spring if a proposal is selected, with the possibility of an agreement to follow. Implementation will follow only after complete environmental and feasibility studies are conducted.

The deadline to submit a response to the RFI is 90 days after the notice appears in the Texas Register. Responses should be submitted to Mark Tomlinson, P.E., Texas Turnpike Authority Division, 125 East 11th Street, Austin 78701-2483. For additional information, please see the following web-link: <http://www.dot.state.tx.us/news/078-2008.htm>



U.S. DOT eyes State of Texas for high-speed rail

Texas will be part of a federal-aid program to create high-speed passenger train service, according to the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#).

The U.S. DOT said it plans to begin accepting bids from companies that will finance, design, build, operate and maintain high-speed trains in eleven federally designated corridors, according to U.S. DOT Secretary Mary Peters.

“Americans need new ways of traveling between major cities, and a properly structured intercity passenger rail system can, and must, play a larger role in our nation’s transportation future,” Peters said in New York City. “There is growing interest in intercity passenger rail as an alternative to driving and flying but, for it to really work, it must be viable, efficient and competitive.”

The corridors, as currently designed by the [Federal Rail Administration](#), stretch across the country, but only half — those in the eastern portion of the United States — actually connect with one another.

If initiated, Houston will be part of the 1,022-mile Gulf Coast Corridor, based out of New Orleans, La., connecting the city with Mobile, Ala.; Meridian, Miss.; and Birmingham, Ala., according to the Federal Rail Administration.



The rest of Texas has its own corridor, called the South Central High-Speed Corridor, that would link Dallas-Fort Worth; Austin; San Antonio; Texarkana; Oklahoma City; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Little Rock, Arkansas. For additional information, please see the following website:

<http://houston.bizjournals.com/houston/stories/2008/12/15/daily21.html?surround=1fn>

ATA develops guidebook for security professionals

The Security Council of American Trucking Associations has developed the Certified Cargo Security Professional Resource Guidebook, which provides an overview of motor carrier security – from pick up to delivery – from the human aspect to the technological influences.

The new Guidebook covers risk management, trucking security, physical security en route, physical security at facilities, personnel security, information & computer security, investigations in the logistics environment, emergency disaster management, Federal security regulations for hazardous materials transportation, cross-border security, intermodal security, and food security. The Guidebook is being touted as one of the best study resources for the Certified Cargo Security Professional (CCSP) certification exam administered through American Trucking Associations and is recognized by the North American Transportation Manage-

ment Institute. Sample questions and answers for the CCSP certification are provided.

For additional information about ordering the Guidebook please see the following website for more information: www.ATABusinessSolutions.com or you may order a copy of this guidebook by simply calling 1-866-821-3468 (toll free).



U.S. Department of Transportation Signs Agreement with Kansas City Southern Railway to Relieve Freight Congestion at Laredo Border

WASHINGTON - An alternate route for freight rail traffic to and from the United States and Mexico to improve cross-border goods movement is one step closer to reality thanks to an agreement signed this week by the U.S. Department of Transportation and Kansas City Southern Railway, U.S. DOT Secretary Mary E. Peters announced recently.

The East Loop Bypass project proposes a new rail bridge east of Laredo, Texas, continuing across the border and south into Mexico.

"Border congestion creates an unnecessary obstacle to efficient trade with our international partners. Providing alternative routes for freight transport is good for the economy and the American people," DOT Secretary Peters said.

The project is part of the U.S. Department's Transportation Border Congestion Relief Program designed to facilitate and accelerate transportation-related capacity and operational improvements at border crossings. Other projects include the Otay Mesa East Port of Entry project and the Cascade Gateway Expanded Cross-border Advanced Traveler Information System project in Blaine, Washington.

The new railroad bridge and East Loop Bypass project would improve freight movement dramatically in the region by increasing rail transport capacity at the Laredo gateway and diverting freight vehicular traffic onto rail and off congested roads. The project also would enhance safety by eliminating numerous highway-rail grade crossings.



"This project is a great example of a public-private partnership that will create more opportunity for America's businesses while simultaneously improving safety," said Federal Highway Administrator Tom Madison.

Secretary Peters also added that as part of the congestion relief program, the project would receive priority access to many of the Department's assistance programs, including loans and other innovative financing mechanisms. For a copy of the announcement, please see the following website:

<http://www.dot.gov/affairs/fhwa2708.htm>

BTS Freight Transportation Services Index (TSI) Rose 1.0 Percent in October from September 2008

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) reported this past month that the Freight Transportation Services Index (TSI) rose 1.0 percent in October 2008 from its September 2008 level, rising after two consecutive monthly declines.

The TSI is a seasonally adjusted index that measures changes from the monthly average of the base year of 2000. It includes historic data from 1990 to the present.

Release of the November index is scheduled for Jan. 14, 2009. BTS has issued a new technical report explaining the TSI. *BTS Technical Report: "Transportation Services Index and the Economy"* is available for download at: <https://www.bts.gov/pdc/index.xml> in the BTS bookstore.

The October 2008 increase followed a two-month decline of 4.3 percent in August and September 2008 that was the freight index's largest two month drop in more than eight years. The index declined 5.9 percent in March and April 2000.

The September 2008 decline of 2.5 percent was the fifth largest monthly decline in the last 10 years and the August decline of 1.9 percent ranked as the eighth largest. They were both exceeded by the March decline of 2.9 percent, the second largest in 10 years and the largest since a 4.1 percent decline in March 2000.

At 109.1 in October 2008, the freight TSI is up 1.1 percent from its recent low of 108.0 in September 2007 and down 3.5 percent from its historic peak of 113.1 reached in November 2005. For additional

historical data, go to <http://www.bts.gov/xml/tsi/src/index.xml>.

For the first 10 months of 2008, the index rose 0.7 percent. The index rose 0.9 percent in the first 10 months of 2007 before dropping in the last two months to finish the year down 0.5 percent. The freight TSI measures the month-to-month changes in the output of services provided by the for-hire

freight transportation industries. The index consists of data from for-hire trucking, rail, inland waterways, pipelines and air freight.

The October 2008 freight TSI level was 0.6 percent lower than the October 2007 level of 109.8. The freight index is at its lowest October level since 2003. Despite the

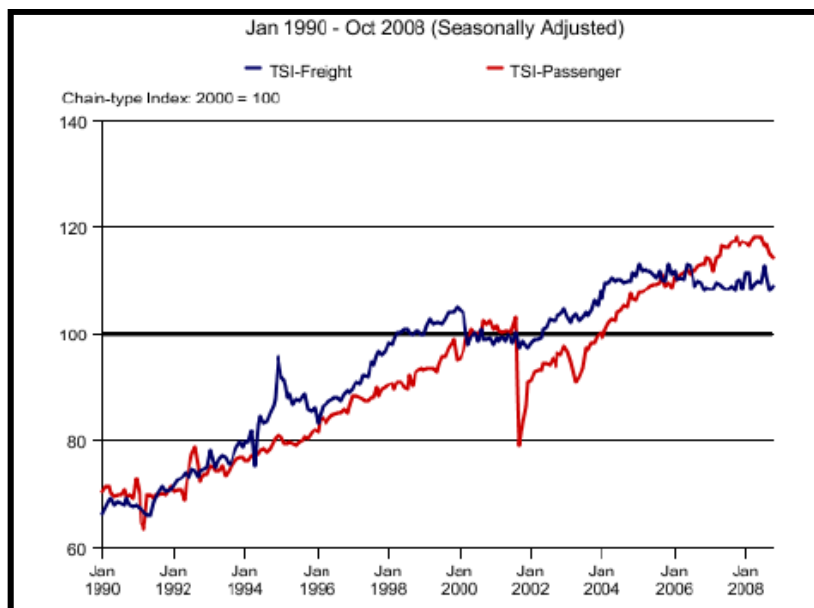
losses since 2004, the freight index has increased 2.8 percent in five years and 8.4 percent in 10 years.

Combined Freight and Passenger Index

The combined freight and passenger TSI rose 0.6 percent in October from its September level. The combined TSI October 2008 level of 110.1 was 1.3 percent lower than the October 2007 level, and was the first October-to-October decline in 7 years since October 2001.

The combined index also fell for the first 10 months of the year. However, the combined index is up 6.1 percent in five years and 12.1 percent in 10 years. The combined TSI merges the freight and passenger indexes into a single index. For additional information, please go to:

<http://www.bts.gov/xml/tsi/src/index.xml>



Rand McNally Updates Map Software

Rand McNally has introduced additions and updates to its IntelliRoute and MileMaker software.

The additions will provide more flexibility and customization in freight rating and truck routing, more specific routing in Mexico and up-to-date U.S. and Canadian postal codes, weigh stations and toll costs, the company said recently.

The IntelliRoute Dock2Dock software provides street-level routing in Mexico, the company said. Rand McNally worked with map data provider NAVTEG to incorporate this data.

Carriers can use company's IntelliRoute and MileMaker software to customize route for trailers 48 feet or less in length, the company said. The new software also includes 918,000 updates



to reflect changes to tolls, postal codes, ferries, weigh stations and more.

The updates are available to all current customers free of charge, Rand McNally said. For additional information, please see the Rand McNally website at: <http://www.randmcnally.com/rmc/promo/promoPage.jsp?rule=Guide19&leftnav=false&footer=true&header=true>

Oregon Considers Satellite Technology for Mileage-Based Tax

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski (D) is exploring ways to use a vehicle mileage tax and satellite technology to pay for roads, instead of a fuel tax, the Albany (Ore.) Democrat-Herald reported last week.

As part of a transportation bill filed for the state's 2009 legislative session, Kulongoski said he plans to recommend a path to transition away from the gas tax, the paper said.

"As Oregonians drive less and demand more fuel-efficient vehicles, it is increasingly important that the state find a new way, other than the gas tax, to finance our transportation system," Kulongoski said on his Web site, the Democrat-Herald reported.

He wants a task force to partner with auto manufacturers to develop technology that would enable residents to pay for the transportation system based on how many miles they drive, the paper reported.

A technology tested in 2006 and 2007 used a global positioning system that tracked in-state mileage driven by volunteers,

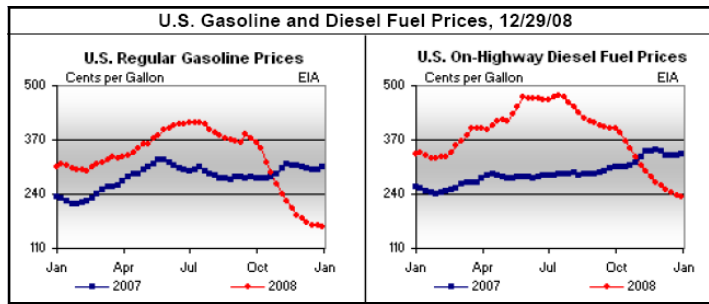
which read their mileage when they bought fuel, charged them 1.2 cents a mile and gave them a refund of the state's 24-cent gas tax, the paper said. For additional information, please see:

<http://www.ttnews.com/articles/basetemplate.aspx?storyid=21046>



Diesel Drops 5.6¢ to \$2.366; Gasoline's Decline Slows

The national average price of diesel fuel fell 5.6 cents to \$2.366 a gallon, while gasoline's decline slowed to less than a penny, the Department of Energy reported recently.



The diesel downturn left trucking's main fuel 94.2 cents below the same week last year, DOE said following its weekly survey of filling stations.

Diesel is now at its lowest point since Aug. 1, 2005, when it averaged \$2.348 a gallon, and has fallen almost \$2.40 since its record \$4.764 set on July 14. Gasoline, meanwhile, fell just 0.6 cent, to \$1.653 a gallon, leaving it \$1.327 below the same

week last year, DOE said. Gas has fallen \$2.461 since its \$4.114 record set on July 7 and is at its lowest level in almost five years, since it was \$1.648 a gallon on Feb. 16, 2004. Oil prices closed below \$40 a barrel Friday for the first time in four and half years, Bloomberg reported.

Each week, DOE surveys about 350 diesel filling stations to compile a national snapshot average price. For additional information, please see the following web-link: <http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/oog/info/gdu/gasdiesel.asp>

Daimler Delivers LNG Trucks to Port, Intermodal Carrier in Long Beach, CA

LONG BEACH, Calif. — Executives of Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA) celebrated the official delivery of its first production-model heavy-duty trucks powered by liquefied natural gas here last week at the busiest port complex in North America.

About 50 of the white, day-cab tractors ringed a storage lot at the Port of Long Beach for the ceremony, making a total of 232 LNG trucks that Daimler has delivered.

Of that total, 132 have gone to California Cartage Co., a major drayage operator based here, and 100 to the Clean Truck Program operated by the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, which are separate, adjacent facilities.



The trucks, which cut emissions by about 90% compared with traditional diesel engines, are designed to help the ports reach their goals of substantially reducing emissions.

Chris Patterson, DTNA's president, told the gathered officials and news media that the ceremony marked "a piece of environmental history" as the company delivered what he called "the cleanest commercial trucks available today" which produce "near-zero levels" of greenhouse gases. For additional information on this subject, please see: [http://www.ttnews.com/articles/](http://www.ttnews.com/articles/basetemplate.aspx?storyid=20985)

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Famous Quote of the Day:

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

-- Thomas Edison,
American inventor

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Information provided is a compilation from other news and on-line media sources, any information relayed is based upon the accuracy of the information provided by other news gathering organizations and does not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Federal Highway Administration or the State of Texas Border Partnership Working Group.

Next FHWA HQ's Talking Freight Web

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Freight Management and Operations and the Office of Planning host the "Talking Freight" seminars. The web seminars are part of a broader Freight Professional Development Program aimed at providing technical assistance, training, tools, and information to help the freight and planning workforce meet the transportation challenges of tomorrow.

These web seminars are held on a monthly basis throughout the year and are open at no cost to all interested parties in both the public and private sectors. The next FHWA HQ's Talking Freight Seminar will be held on January (12-1:30 PM-CST)

**Definition of the
Month: HORSEPOWER
(hp)**

Measure of power (the amount of work that can be done over a given amount of time). One horsepower is defined as 33,000 foot-pounds of work in one minute.

For freight-related courses and training opportunities including how to register for this webinar event, please see the following FHWA web-site: http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/fpd/talking_freight.htm

BTS Pocket Guide to Transportation

The U.S. transportation system is an extensive, interrelated public and private network of roads, airports, railroads, transit routes, waterways, terminals, ports, and pipelines.

Millions of people and businesses rely on this expanding system to get to work, embark on vacations, conduct business, and ship goods within the United States and abroad. The transportation system links regions and connects small and large cities and urban and rural areas.

The BTS Pocket Guide to Transportation (February 2008) provides an excellent source of data and statistics related to freight movements, border crossings, system performance, and other key transportation-related statistics at your fingertips.

To download this free publication, please see the following website for additional information:

<http://www.bts.gov/publications/>

[pocket_guide_to_transportation/2008/pdf/entire.pdf](http://www.bts.gov/publications/pocket_guide_to_transportation/2008/pdf/entire.pdf)

