

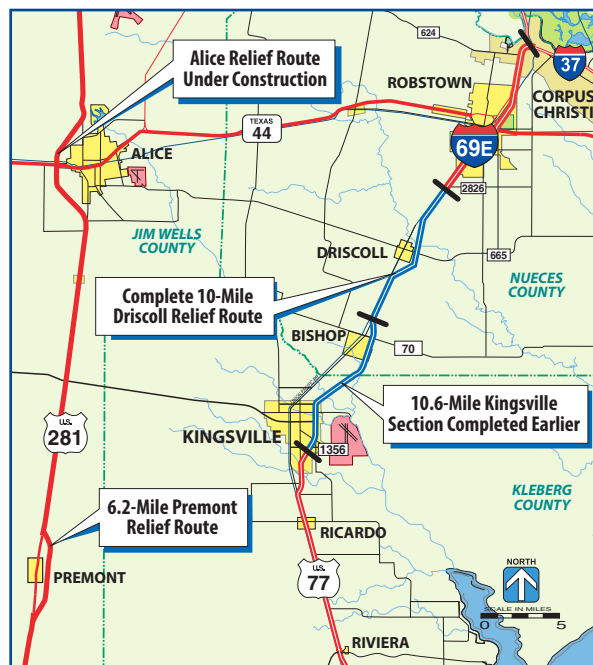
November 8, 2023

Alliance Annual Meeting

❑ **SEE YOU IN HOUSTON** – We are getting closer to the Alliance Annual Meeting on Thursday, November 30th, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Downtown Houston. Make your Annual Meeting luncheon reservations [HERE](#). We have much to celebrate in terms of the growing investment being made to develop I-69 and the positive impact it is having on communities. Our keynote luncheon speaker is Commissioner Alex Meade, one of two recently appointed members of the Texas Transportation Commission. The meeting will provide an excellent opportunity to showcase the strong local support for I-69 to Commissioner Meade and to encourage his active engagement in TxDOT’s efforts to accelerate development of I-69. The Board of Directors will convene at 9 a.m. for a business meeting including updates from TxDOT’s district engineers.

❑ **PREMONT RELIEF ROUTE OPEN TO TRAFFIC** – The 6.2-mile-long Premont Relief Route on US 281 opened to traffic in late October. The interstate standard project allows freight and passenger vehicles to bypass the last remaining traffic stoplight on the 150-mile leg of future I-69C stretching from US 59 at George West to I-2 in the Rio Grande Valley. Work on the project started in April 2020 and all final checklist items should be complete by the end of January. Northbound traffic has been flowing on the relief route since late last year. Traffic was able to move from the old highway to the southbound lanes with the recent completion of bridge structures at the north and south ends of the relief route. The project also includes three other overpass structures at local road intersections. The full freeway opening comes just in time for the busy holiday season which sees significant increases in family travel to and from Texas cities, the border region and Mexico.

The Premont Relief Route is just the latest of the I-69 projects completed to interstate highway standard in 2023. Others include the addition of mainlanes on the Lufkin East loop, the 4-mile Cleveland extension, and the 12-mile Fort Bend County extension. The 20-mile Driscoll/Bishop/Kingsville extension will be complete in December and ready for the final review and approval for signing.



❑ **ZAHN RETIRING FROM ALLIANCE BOARD** – Charlie Zahn is leaving his post as Port of Corpus Christi Authority commission chairman and is retiring from his very active role as a member of the I-69 Alliance executive committee. Zahn is term-limited in his port position after 12 years of service. His energy and dedication will be missed by the port authority, the Coastal Bend region and the Alliance. The I-69 System serves as a valuable connectivity asset for all Texas maritime ports. The Alliance has benefitted from support and involvement over the years from ports at Houston, Corpus Christi, Victoria, Brownsville and Harlingen.

❑ **FEDERAL REPORT** - Congress continues work on the FY '24 appropriations bills prior to the lapse of the current continuing resolution on November 17th. The Senate has passed its FY '24 Transportation bill and the House is scheduled to consider it this week. Federal aid highway funding remains essentially level: FY '23 was \$58.8 billion; the Senate bill for '24 was \$60+ billion and the proposed House bill is the same. The Alliance continues to support efforts to include specific funding for several I-69 Corridor projects included in the FY '24 House Transportation bill. Looking ahead to 2024 policy issues, with the advent of electric cars, fewer people are paying gas tax into the Trust Fund. It is estimated that 20% of the cars sold in California now are battery powered. And if the Administration’s proposed new CAFE standards are adopted, fuel purchases could drop by 200 billion gallons, meaning billions of dollars of lost fuel tax revenue in the Highway Trust Fund. Freight movement is expected to increase by 50% in tonnage and vehicle miles traveled are projected to jump by 22% by 2049, increasing the need for robust investment in transportation infrastructure. This means that Congress will be working to develop new policies to fund the Highway Trust Fund. The Alliance will work to make sure I-69 and Texas are fully involved in this policy development.

❑ **LEADERSHIP** – Newly-elected U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson represents Northwest Louisiana and a segment of the I-69 Corridor that runs from the Sabine River around the east side of Shreveport/Bossier City and into southern Arkansas. The Johnson family resides in Bossier Parrish which is on the future I-69 path.