

August 6, 2024



Kenedy County Groundbreaking Ceremony

❑ **CELEBRATING ANOTHER MILESTONE** – Local officials from Rio Grande Valley communities joined in a July 31st groundbreaking celebration of a project that will add 11.6 more miles to Interstate 69 East in Kenedy County. Speakers included Kenedy County Judge Charles Burns, State Senator Morgan LaMantia, Cameron County Judge Eddie Trevino, Harlingen Mayor Norma Sepulveda, Cameron County Commissioner David Garza, Ana Maria Garcia representing Sen. John Cornyn, Pharr District Engineer Pete Alvarez and Jennifer Shepard for the Alliance.

Senator LaMantia, whose district includes more I-69 miles than any other senator, noted that Rio Grande Valley leaders have been pushing for connection to the national interstate system for decades and called on TxDOT to complete the work. “Until the last mile is done we’re not done.” Judge Burns said the county of 300 population welcomes the extension of I-69E across Kenedy County. Judge Trevino praised the years of leadership and persistence of Rio Grande Valley officials noting that Cameron County has been investing county funds in I-69 development because it is crucial to the Rio Grande Valley and all of South Texas. He believes project funding is long overdue and is confident TxDOT will find the money to complete the interstate to connect to I-37 at Corpus Christi. Commissioner Garza said the key to funding success is to be in front of decisionmakers on a regular basis to highlight the need. That need includes connectivity that improves the free flow of trade.

❑ **LOOP 610/I-69 COMPLETE** – It was time to celebrate on Aug. 1st when TxDOT declared the completion of the 7-year project to reconstruct the I-610/I-69 interchange near the Galleria in southwest Houston. The new \$259 million interchange is at the heart of one of the most heavily traveled stretches of highway in Texas. Work included adding lanes to new connectors, new access ramps, added shoulders, increased vertical clearances and major drainage features.

❑ **2025 UTP ADOPTION** – The latest update of TxDOT’s UTP is on the agenda for adoption on August 20. It allocates more than \$140 billion in expected available funds to projects statewide over the next 10 years. That includes about \$13 billion for projects across the I-69 System. The I-69 Alliance provided comments on the draft 2025 UTP including a request that the Transportation Commission prioritize development of more I-69 System projects that pass through relatively low population areas. The Alliance applauded the addition of funding in the 2025 UTP to begin development of widening projects on US 59 sections in Webb, Duval, Live Oak, Bee and Goliad Counties where the current roadway is only two lanes. Widening is an incremental step toward ultimate interstate highway standard for this section of US 59 in South Texas.

❑ **LAREDO CEREMONY** - TxDOT will hold a celebration at Noon on Thursday, August 8th, marking the completion of two more fly-over direct connectors between I-69 West and I-35 at a site on the southwest corner of the 69/35 interchange. Two more connectors will come in the next phase.

❑ **THE FUNDING GAP** – The recently adopted TxDOT long-range plan setting targets through 2050 estimates that a minimum total investment of \$665 billion to \$740 billion will be needed over the next 25 years. That is about \$28 billion a year compared to about \$13 billion now available. A significant increase in transportation funding will be needed to close that gap in the coming years. The plan puts major emphasis on connectivity like that provided by the I-69 corridor.

❑ **OLIVAREZ HONORED** – TxDOT Corpus Christi District Engineer Valente Olivarez Jr. is retiring after 25 years of service to the department. He was honored by the Transportation Commission in a ceremony that included his family, State Sen. Juan Chuy Hinojosa and many friends. Olivarez has been a champion of developing I-69 projects in the Coastal Bend region which includes a combined 280 miles of future I-69E, I-69C and I-69W. His career started in the Pharr District and he had been in Corpus Christi since 2014. (Photo Page 2)

❑ **ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP** – Harrison County Judge Chad Sims has been elected secretary-treasurer of the I-69 Alliance. He takes over a position held for many years by Cameron County Commissioner David Garza.

❑ **ANNUAL MEETING DATE** – Please save the date on your calendar for the I-69 Alliance annual meeting to be held in Houston on Friday - December 6th.

Don Rodman -- I-69 Alliance / (361) 877-0409



Rio Grande Valley community leaders and contractors participate in the groundbreaking ceremony kicking off construction of 11.6 miles of Interstate 69 East through the ranchlands of southern Kenedy County. Highway access will be provided to ranch gates and overpasses will be built every five miles to provide emergency access.



Senator Morgan LaMantia



Cameron County Judge Eddie Trevino



Kenedy County Judge Charles Burns and Pharr District Engineer Pete Alvarez



Transportation Commission members and Senator Juan Hinojosa honor retiring Corpus Christi District Engineer Valente Olivarez Jr. (center holding resolution) and his family.



Alliance for I-69 Texas

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