

Alliance for I-69 Texas



Update

Working to Better Connect Texas Communities and Create Economic Opportunities

January 14, 2026

FEDERAL FUNDING INITIATIVE – The Future Interstates Advocacy Day in Washington, DC, postponed by the federal shutdown in October, will take place on February 3 and 4. Representatives of groups advocating for several interstate corridors in other states will join Texas backers of I-69, I-27 and I-14 in Capitol Hill meetings. They will be raising awareness of the proposed Future Interstate Highway Formula Program that would dedicate federal funding to congressionally authorized multi-state Future Interstates.

2026 I-69 DC FLY-IN DATES – Please save the dates and plan to be part of the Alliance Texas delegation meeting with Members of Congress and federal highway officials during this year's annual I-69 DC Fly-In on March 18 and 19. Registration materials and information on sponsorship opportunities will be coming to you soon.

2027 FREIGHT PLAN – Work has begun to update the Texas Freight Mobility Plan which focuses on freight corridors and identifies and recommends priority freight projects for state investment and federal funding. The last version of the plan was approved in 2023. Stakeholder engagement activities have begun and will continue throughout 2026. Key plan objectives are moving freight safely, optimizing freight system performance and prioritizing the most impactful investments. The I-69 System in Texas already carries significant freight traffic and truck trips are projected to increase dramatically over the next two decades. Work will also be going on during 2026 on an update to the Texas-Mexico Border Transportation Master Plan. In December the Freight Advisory Committee was asked to help guide development of the plan's freight recommendations, including multimodal freight issues, before final plan adoption in early 2027.



SCHWEBEL IS NEW FAC CHAIR – Gerry Schwebel, Senior VP of IBC Bank and a vice-chairman of the I-69 Alliance Board of Directors, has been elected as chairman of TxDOT's Freight Advisory Committee. Former Harris County Judge Ed Emmett

stepped down in December after serving 13 years as the committee's only chairman. Schwebel, who was elected by the 24 committee members, has been an active committee participant since its inception and is a long-time vocal transportation advocate.



ALICE RELIEF ROUTE PROGRESS – Interstate standard construction continues along the entire 9.5 miles of the US 281 Alice Relief Route which will be part of future Interstate 69 Central. The \$138 million project is adding two new grade separations including the 1.25-mile set of twin bridges over a floodplain and two county road intersections. Work on initial phases of the South Texas relief route began more than a decade ago with construction of a major overpass of SH 44 and the CPKC Railroad's mainline. Three other overpasses were built previously and the elements are all being connected in a project scheduled for completion in 2028.

NEXT WHARTON COUNTY PROJECTS – TxDOT will post a virtual public meeting from Jan. 19-29 to receive comments on a plan to change the projected letting date for I-69 projects on US 59 between Wharton and El Campo. The Yoakum District is planning to separate the project into two lettings with the first in December 2026 as planned and the second delayed until December 2028. Comments are due by Jan. 29.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS – Callie Barnes, Director of Seaport Connectivity for the Port of Houston Authority, is the newest member of the Alliance Board of Directors. She previously worked for the Houston-Galveston Area Council MPO, the TxDOT Houston District and as a transportation project manager for two engineering firms in the region. Also joining the board is Mayor Randy Johnson of Nacogdoches who replaces Larissa Brown who remains on the board and is now representing the City of Lufkin where she is the new Director of Economic Development.

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

To add additional recipients to this newsletter distribution, email their full contact information to: don@therodmanco.com

Judge Emmett Service Honored

Former Harris County Judge Ed Emmett (right) is presented a book of photos from his years of volunteer service to Texas as chair of the Freight Advisory Committee.

Caroline Mays, TxDOT Director of Modal Programs, and Transportation Commission Member Alex Meade made the presentation. Judge Emmett is a fellow in energy and transportation policy at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy. He has been an outspoken advocate of I-69 development to serve freight traffic.



Alliance 2026 Board of Directors

NORTHEAST

Chad Sims, County Judge, Harrison County
Alliance Board Vice-Chairman
Scott Norton, Executive Director, TexAmericas Center
Rush Harris, Executive Director, Marshall EDC
Olin Joffrion, Mayor of Carthage
Rodger McLane, County Judge, Panola County
Steve Williams, City Manager & E.D.
Carthage Improvement Corp.

EAST

Sydney Murphy, County Judge, Polk County
Alliance Board Chairman
Larissa Brown, Lufkin Economic Development Director
Greg Sowell, County Judge, Nacogdoches County
Keith Wright, County Judge, Angelina County
Randy Johnson, Mayor of Nacogdoches
Andrew Harmon, Assistant Executive Director
Deep East Texas COG

NORTH CENTRAL

Steve Kean, President & CEO
Greater Houston Partnership
Callie Barnes, Director of Seaport Connectivity,
Port of Houston Authority
Melisa Montemayor, Sr. VP, LJA Engineering
Michel Maksoud, SVP, Public Infrastructure, Westwood

CENTRAL

Phil Spenrath, County Judge, Wharton County
Carolyn Gibson, Executive Director
City Development Corp. of El Campo
Tim Barker, Mayor of Wharton
Courtney Sladek, City Manager, City of El Campo
Courtland Holman, Executive Director, Wharton EDC

COASTAL BEND

Kent Britton, CEO, Port of Corpus Christi Authority
Alliance Board Secretary-Treasurer
Connie Scott, County Judge, Nueces County
Paulette Guajardo, Mayor of Corpus Christi

WEST SPUR - SOUTH TEXAS

Gerry Schwebel,
Sr.VP, International Bank of Commerce
Alliance Board Vice-Chairman
Tano Tijerina, County Judge, Webb County
Victor Trevino, Mayor of Laredo
Ben Zeller, County Judge, Victoria County
Duane Crocker, Mayor of Victoria
Sean Stibich, Executive Director, Port of Victoria

EAST SPUR - SOUTH TEXAS

David Garza, County Commissioner, Cameron County Representative, Rio Grande Valley Partnership
Richard Cortez, County Judge, Hidalgo County
Teclo Garcia, CEO, Mission EDC
Raudel Garza, Executive Director, Edinburg EDC
Representative, City of McAllen
Cynthia Garza-Reyes,
Assistant City Manager, City of Pharr

Regional Mobility Authorities

Pete Sepulveda, Executive Director,
Cameron County RMA
Pilar Rodriguez, Executive Director,
Hidalgo County RMA
Glenn Green, Executive Director,
North East Texas RMA

Ex-Officio Members

Helen Walker, Robert Eckels,
John Thompson
(Former Alliance Board Chairs)
Michael Behrens, Amadeo Saenz
(Former TxDOT Executive Directors)



Alliance for I-69 Texas

Alliance Contacts: Jennifer Shepard, Alliance Executive Director & State Representative - (703) 963-3822; Jennifer@jgshepard.com
Larry Meyers, Washington Representative - (202) 484-2773; LMeyers@hslawmail.com
Don Rodman - State Adviser & Communications - (361) 877-0409; don@therodmanco.com
Judge Sydney Murphy, Alliance Board Chairman - (936) 327-6813; smurphy@co.polk.tx.us
101 N. Shoreline, Suite 500, Corpus Christi, Texas 78401

www.i69TexasAlliance.com

January 2026