

TEXAS HIGHWAYS MAGAZINE PRESENTS THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

1917
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ILLUSTRATION BY LARRY GOODE

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The Texas Highway Department is signed into law on April 4, 1917 by Gov. James E. "Pa" Ferguson.

Nearly 200,000 Texans sign up to become registered drivers.

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Legislature passes first gas tax of one cent per gallon; 75% to highways and 25% to schools.

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Congress amends Federal Aid to Roads Act of 1916, requiring states to take over exclusive control of road design, construction, and maintenance after 1925.

1926
Texas cut off from federal matching funds due to poor road maintenance.

1927
First "Transportation Short Course" at Texas A&M.

1925
975,000 vehicles registered.

1921
Number of districts increases to sixteen, each overseeing about 1000 miles of highway.

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Survey records 148,000 miles of road in Texas—almost all of them unpaved dirt and clay tracks.

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1928
Safety program initiated to reduce on-the-job accidents.

1929
Vehicle registration fees lowered, now based on weight instead of horsepower.

1932
State Highway Building at 11th and Brazos (now the Greater Building) brings Art Deco to downtown Austin.

1931
Texas blockades Oklahoma, Oklahoma invades Texas in "border war" over Red River toll bridge near Denton.

1930
1.4 million vehicles registered.

1930
"Black Tuesday" stock market crash.

1933
Department has 17,960 miles of highway and 6,900 employees.

1932
Number of districts increases to 25.

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Federal funding is restored.

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1936
Highway commission establishes "information houses" across the state to serve travelers.

1935
Department of Public Safety created; Highway Patrol reassigned to DPS.

1934
Department begins center striping of highways for safety.

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Number of districts increases to 25.

1940
Work begins to strengthen roads and bridges for Army maneuvers in East Texas; in the course of World War II, tanks and artillery cause damage to Texas roads.

1938
Agency adds office of Traffic and Safety Engineer to study issues such as shoulders and fencing as well as accidents, congestion, and parking.

1942
Speed limit lowered to save rubber and fuel.

1944
Federal Aid Highway Act creates framework for interstate highway system; I-35 will start in this spot in Laredo and run to Duluth, MN.

1951
First farm-to-market road opens in Sabine and San Augustine counties; FM1 connects a sawmill with US 96, eliminates older ways of getting around (such as the Pendleton Ferry, shown here).

1949
Texas voters approve "Good Roads Amendment," making the gas tax allotment of 75% to highways and 25% to schools part of the Texas Constitution.

1946
Agency forms Motor Vehicle Division, merging Registration Division and Office of Certificate of Title.

1945
World War II ends.

1952
First leg of the Gulf Freeway in Houston opens; Texas's first urban expressway is 50 miles long, cost \$28.5 million.

1953
Texas legislature approves full funding for farm-to-market and ranch-to-market roads.

1950
3.1 million vehicles registered in Texas.

1945
World War II ends.

1956
Federal Highway Trust fund created to pay for interstate highway system.

1955
Integrated circuit invented at Texas Instruments in Dallas ushers in the electronic age.

1954
Agency adds automation division.

1953
Department vehicles debut updated look.

1962
Legislature allows state to match federal funding for farm-to-market and ranch roads.

1963
Highway commission mandates red and white STOP signs, eliminating use of yellow and black.

1964
Capitol tourist bureau opens, serves 5,470 in first week.

1965
Agency adds automation division.

1970
Texas Coastal Waterway Act authorizes Texas to manage its portion of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, assigns responsibility to Highway Department.

1972
Finance division created (shown: The Bergstrom sisters were accounting stalwarts).

1974
Texas Highways magazine, which began life in 1953 as in-house publication, becomes Texas state travel magazine.

1975
Agency hit with financial crisis caused by inflation and flat gas tax revenues; lays off 5,500 employees.

1979
Average cost of a gallon of gas - \$0.86.

1981
Headquarters building is renamed the Dewitt C. Greer State Highway.

1982
Texas ferries carry 4.1 million vehicles annually.

1980
Agency renamed the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation.

1984
US "Route 66" decommissioned and replaced in Texas by interstate 40; original signs of "Mother Road" are sold at auction.

1985
Maribel Jaso assumes management of Abilene District; first female to be named district engineer.

1986
"Don't Mess with Texas" anti-littering campaign begins with Cotton Bowl ad featuring Stevie Ray Vaughn.

1988
Agency merged with Department of Aviation and Motor Vehicles Commission and renamed Texas Department of Transportation.

1998
Texas ferries carry 4.1 million vehicles annually.

2000
Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century authorizes a 90.5% return for Texas on federal motor fuel taxes paid by the state.

2001
September 11 Attacks.

2000
Agency now has 14,419 employees.

2004
Largest roadway safety program in Texas history includes 644 projects to widen and straighten roads, install medians, add turn lanes, and build overpasses.

2005
TxDOT sets up emergency centers at Orange and Washem, assisting over 100,000 Louisianans displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

2006
Texas raises speed limit on some West Texas highways to 80.

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Hurricane Ike; 1100 TxDOT employees deployed to clear Galveston roadways and restore traffic.

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2013
TxDOT reduces fleet from 16,000 to 10,000 to maximize equipment usage and realize savings.

2011
Texas receives \$5.6 million from U.S. DOT to plan high-speed passenger rail from Dallas-Fort Worth to Oklahoma City, providing an alternative to I-35.

2010
Department of Motor Vehicles created; Vehicle Titles and Registration, Motor Vehicle and Automobile Theft and Burglary, and a portion of the Motor Carrier Division are reassigned to DMV.

2009
Hurricane Ike; 1100 TxDOT employees deployed to clear Galveston roadways and restore traffic.

2015
Voters approve Prop. 7, requiring the state to direct a portion of the oil and gas revenue to the State Highway Fund; measure passes with over 89% of the vote.

2014
Voters approve Prop. 1, requiring the state to direct a portion of the oil and gas revenue to the State Highway Fund.

2012
Wildfire in Gastrop area the most destructive in Texas history.

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★ ★ TEXAS HIGHWAYS MAGAZINE PRESENTS ★ ★

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

★ A 100 YEAR JOURNEY THROUGH TIME WITH TxDOT ★

2017

ILLUSTRATION BY LARRY GOODE

1916

President Woodrow Wilson signs Federal Road Act of 1916, requiring each state to create a highway agency and submit projects for federal matching funds. Construction of cross-country Bankhead Highway begins same year.

1917

The Texas Highway Department is signed into law on April 4, 1917 by Gov. James E. "Pa" Ferguson.

First highway commission and state highway engineer appointed, propose an 8,865-mile network of state highways.

Nearly 200,000 Texans sign up to become registered drivers

Ahead of his time: state highway engineer George Duren advocates for hiring and training of women in construction and maintenance.



Commission creates first districts in Dallas, Fort Worth, Amarillo, Houston, San Antonio, and San Angelo

1918

First highway project begins; 20-mile road between Fallfurrias and Encino will become US 281.

WWI ends

1921

Number of districts increases to sixteen, each overseeing about 1000 miles of highway

Survey records 148,000 miles of road in Texas—almost all of them unpaved dirt and clay tracks

1919

Hays County project; first stretch of what will eventually become Interstate 35

1924

Legislature passes first gas tax of one cent per gallon; 75% to highways and 25% to schools

1923

SPEED LIMIT 35

Congress amends Federal Aid to Roads Act of 1916, requiring states to take over exclusive control of road design, construction, and maintenance after 1925.

Austin district headquarters constructed at Camp Hubbard

1937

Texas centennial celebration draws 6 million visitors; A&M cadets at 13 tourist centers hand out first widely-distributed travel map

Landscaping efforts to date including the planting of 300,000 trees and 500,000 shrubs

1936

Highway commission establishes "information houses" across the state to serve travelers

Department of Public Safety created; Highway Patrol reassigned to DPS

1935

Equipment division moves to Austin's Camp Mabry

1925



975,000 vehicles registered

Texas cut off from federal matching funds due to poor road maintenance

1926

First "Transportation Short Course" at Texas A&M

1927

Department has 17,960 miles of highway and 6,900 employees

Federal funding is restored

Agency adds highway patrol and right of way divisions

1928

Safety program initiated to reduce on-the-job accidents

1929

SPEED LIMIT 45

Vehicle registration fees lowered, now based on weight instead of horsepower

1930

"Black Tuesday" stock market crash

1.4 million vehicles registered

State Highway Building at 11th and Brazos (now the Graer Building) brings Art Deco to downtown Austin

1933

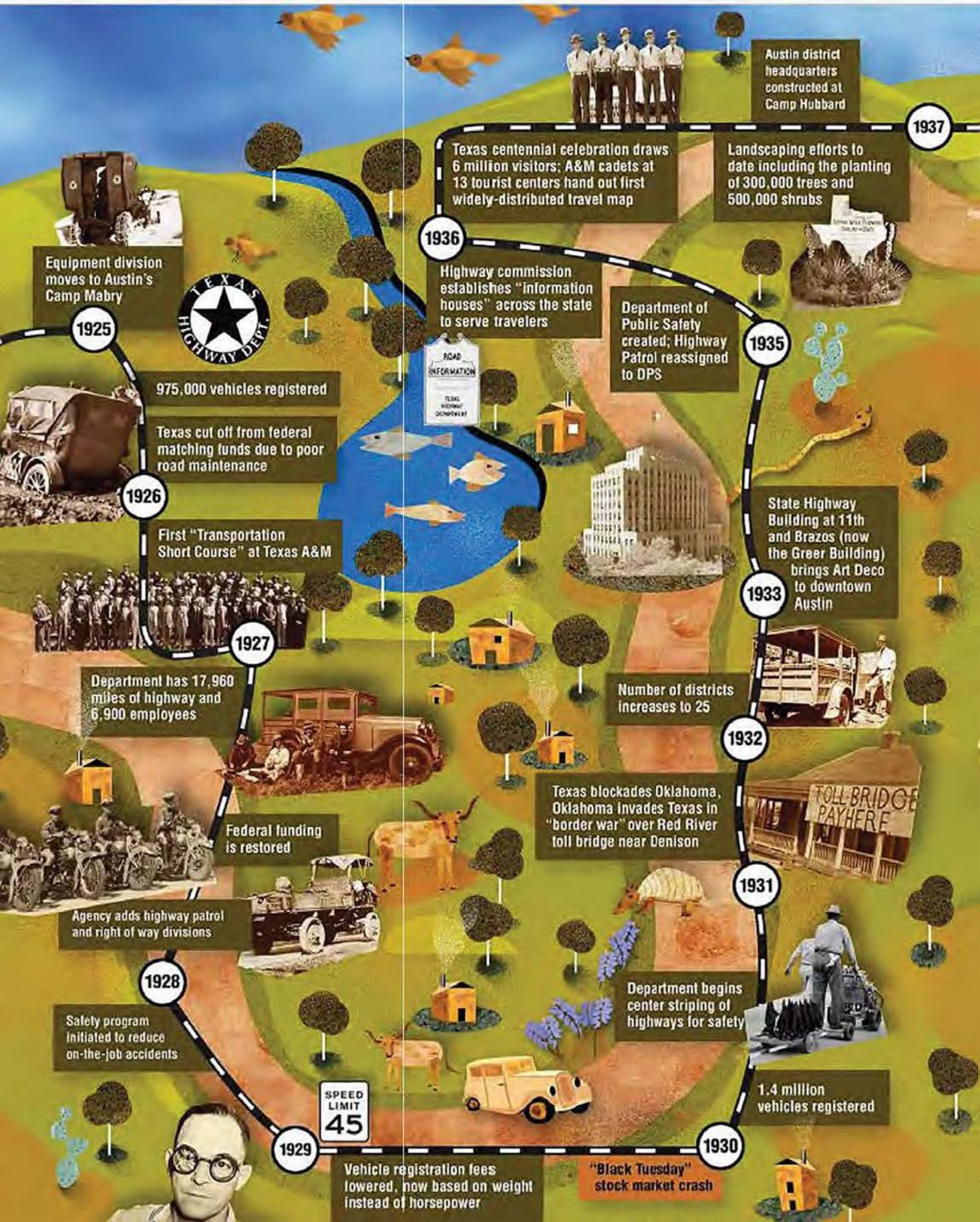
Number of districts increases to 25

1932

Texas blockades Oklahoma, Oklahoma invades Texas in "border war" over Red River toll bridge near Denison

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Department begins center striping of highways for safety



Annie Earhart disappears over Pacific Ocean

First farm-to-market road constructed between Mount Enterprise and Shiloh in Rusk County

1938

Agency adds office of Traffic and Safety Engineer to study issues such as shoulders and fencing as well as accidents, congestion, and parking

1940

Work begins to strengthen roads and bridges for Army maneuvers in East Texas; in the course of World War II, tanks and artillery cause damage to Texas roads

Dewitt Greer named state highway engineer

First paved farm-to-market road opens in Sabine and San Augustine counties; FM1 connects a sawmill with US 96, eliminates older ways of getting around (Such as the Pendleton Ferry, shown here)

SPEED LIMIT 60

1942

Speed limit lowered to save rubber and fuel

SPEED LIMIT 35

1944

Federal Aid Highway Act creates framework for interstate highway system; I-35 will start in this spot in Laredo and run to Duluth, MN

Division of Information and Statistics formed; later renamed Travel Information Division

1953

Baytown Tunnel opens, replaces Morgan's Point Ferry as way to cross the Houston Ship Channel

F5 tornado hits downtown Waco

1952

Department vehicles debut updated look

First leg of the Gulf Freeway in Houston opens; Texas's first urban expressway is 50 miles long, cost \$28.5 million

1951

3.1 million vehicles registered in Texas

Gulf Intracoastal Waterway opens between Corpus Christi and Brownsville

Texas legislature approves full funding for farm-to-market and ranch-to-market roads

1949

Texas voters approve "Good Roads Amendment," making the gas tax allotment of 75% to highways and 25% to schools part of the Texas Constitution

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K99-999 TEXAS

Agency forms Motor Vehicle Division, merging Registration Division and Office of Certificate of Title

1945

World War II ends

FARM ROAD 2336

THE NEXT 1200 MILES OF THIS ROAD IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION
LOOK OUT FOR LOOSE DIRT BRIDGE OUT



1956

Federal Highway Trust fund created to pay for interstate highway system

IBM 650 computer installed at headquarters; second state in the union (after CA) to embrace "the workhorse of modern industry"

Agency renamed the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation



1978

Texas Coastal Waterway Act authorizes Texas to manage its portion of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, assigns responsibility to Highway Department

Integrated circuit invented at Texas Instruments in Dallas ushering in the electronic age



Agency hit with financial crisis caused by inflation and flat gas tax revenues; lays off 5,500 employees

1975



Texas Highways magazine, which began life in 1953 as in-house publication, becomes Texas state travel magazine



1962

Legislature allows state to match federal funding for farm-to-market and ranch roads



1974

Speed limit reduced to 55 mph in response to gas shortages



NASA's Manned Spaceflight Center opens in Houston



20,500 employees is all-time high

1972



Highway commission mandates red and white STOP signs, eliminating use of yellow and black



Finance division created (Shown: The Bergstrom sisters were accounting stalwarts)

1963

President John F. Kennedy assassinated

Legislature creates Texas Mass Transportation Commission

Speed limit raised to 70 mph (day) and 65 mph (night)



Agency now has 20,272 employees

Apollo 11 lands on the moon

1964

Capitol tourist bureau opens, serves 5,470 in first week



After fifty years, department has 66,000 miles of highway and 17,000 employees

1969



1965

Agency adds automation division



First rest area with restrooms opens on I-35 between Round Rock and Georgetown

1967

First specialty license plate becomes available



1979

Agency now has 14,419 employees

Average cost of a gallon of gas - \$.86

1981



Headquarters building is renamed the Dewitt C. Greer State Highway

1982

"Leanderthal Lady" skeleton discovered during expansion of FM 1431 in Williamson County; dated at over 10,000 years old, grave is one of the most significant archeological finds in North America



1984



US "Route 66" decommissioned and replaced in Texas by Interstate 40; original signs of "Mother Road" are sold at auction

1985

Adopt-a-Highway program begins with first adoption in Tyler

ADOPT A HIGHWAY
LITTER CONTROL
NEXT 2 MILES
ROYAL AMBASSADORS
FIRST SABBOT CHURCH KINGSLAND

1986



"Don't Mess with Texas" anti-littering campaign begins with Cotton Bowl ad featuring Stevie Ray Vaughan

1991

Don't mess with Texas



Agency merged with Department of Aviation and Motor Vehicles Commission and renamed Texas Department of Transportation

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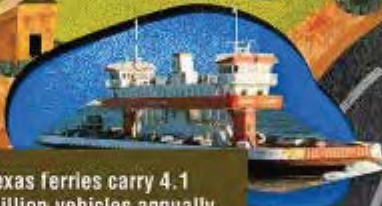
November 7 marks last non-fatality day on Texas roads

1998

Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century authorizes a 90.5% return for Texas on federal motor fuel taxes paid by the state

1997

Texas ferries carry 4.1 million vehicles annually



Internet and World Wide Web gain widespread use

1984



Fred Hartman Bridge replaces Baytown Tunnel as means to cross Houston Ship Channel; built to carry 200,000 vehicles daily and withstand hurricane-force winds

1995

Maribel Jaso assumes management of Abilene District; first female to be named district engineer



Six-mile segment of I-27 in Lubbock symbolizes completion of Texas' 3200 miles of the interstate highway system

1992

Automobile Theft Prevention Authority established

Gas and diesel taxes raised to current rate of 20 cents per gallon

Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act emphasizes high-priority travel corridors, high-speed rail, and trails for bicycle and pedestrian traffic



2001

September 11 attacks



Texas bridges are in better condition now than ever and bridge costs are among the lowest in the nation

TxDOT oversees more than 197,000 miles of highways and rights of way and has an employee allocation of 11,907

2016

Legislation called for the creation of the Texas Mobility Fund, enabling TxDOT to develop and build large scale transportation projects

Voters approve Prop. 7, dedicating a portion of sales tax and other tax revenue to the State Highway Fund; measure passes with over 80% of the vote

2015

2004

Largest roadway safety program in Texas history includes 644 projects to widen and straighten roads, install medians, add turn lanes, and build overpasses

Voters approve Prop. 1, requiring the state to direct a portion of the oil and gas revenue to the State Highway Fund

2014

Move Over/Slow Down law expanded to cover TxDOT workers; motorists must yield to police, fire, emergency, and TxDOT workers when lights are flashing

2005

TxDOT sets up emergency response centers at Orange and Waskom, assisting over 100,000 Louisianans displaced by Hurricane Katrina

In response to Hurricane Rita, TxDOT deploys reverse flow traffic lanes for the first time to evacuate 2.8 million people from Southeast Texas

TxDOT reduces fleet from 16,000 to 10,000 to maximize equipment usage and realize savings

41 mile segment of roadway opens with 85 mph speed limit – the fastest in the nation

2013

Aviation Division allocates \$60 million in grants to plan, construct, and maintain Texas community airports



2012

Wildfires in Bastrop are the most destructive in Texas history

2011

Texas receives \$5.6 million from U.S. DOT to plan high-speed passenger rail from Dallas-Fort Worth to Oklahoma City, providing an alternative to I-35

Dallas High Five Project opens; five-level interchange at LBJ Freeway and US 75 is the height of a 12-story building, carries 500,000 motorists daily

Report demonstrates 11% drop in traffic fatalities due to TxDOT safety improvements

2010



Department of Motor Vehicles created; Vehicle Titles and Registration, Motor Vehicle and Automobile Theft and Burglary, and a portion of the Motor Carrier Division are reassigned to DMV

2006

Texas raises speed limit on some West Texas highways to 80



2008

Katy Freeway Reconstruction Project complete; largest reconstruction project ever performed in Texas more than doubles capacity of Houston's most-used east-west freeway

2009

Hurricane Ike; 1100 TxDOT employees deployed to clear Galveston roadways and restore traffic

TxDOT scheduled for "sunset" when legislature adjourns without reauthorizing agency; special legislative session extends agency life for two years and authorizes new non-toll highways

Rail Division established to plan statewide passenger and freight network

