



Houston TranStar Web Upgrades Cut Traffic

Improvements help travelers lessen delays and jams

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HOUSTON (Sept. 28, 2006) – Imagine real-time hurricane evacuation routes complete with the dos and don'ts of emergency preparedness at the click of a mouse. Today it's a reality, thanks to Houston TranStar, the region's transportation and emergency management center.

The collaborative organization has several exciting new Web site upgrades to give the region's travelers complete, detailed information to navigate our area's roadways in a timely, efficient manner.

First, a new feature lets Web visitors see still photos of roadways from nearly 400 cameras on state highways and major county roads, giving viewers a snapshot of the volume of traffic on that stretch. This information is updated every few minutes. The page can be found at <http://traffic.houstontranstar.org/cctv/transtar/>.

Mobile device users can access these Web snapshots as well, giving them information as they make travel decisions. Blackberries, Palm Pilots and Web-enabled telephones display photographs of traffic on the user's selected roadway.

From the Camera List page, Web visitors can access a speed map with icons showing all the cameras' locations in the region. The visitor can click on any camera icon to view that section of the roadway.

Finally, a new hurricane icon on the home page offers extensive links to personal preparedness information, evacuation routes, weather data and other resources. This one-stop shopping site for emergency preparedness can help travelers check the weather, put together disaster kits, pack their cars with vital goods and plan evacuation routes before leaving home.

"Houston TranStar now gives travelers options that no other transportation Web site in the country can offer—whether the person is planning a trip from home or checking traffic on the fly using a mobile device," said Houston TranStar Director Jack Whaley. "And our emergency management links can give a family all the essentials they need to prepare for a hurricane or other severe weather situation."

Houston TranStar is a unique collaboration between four government agencies that coordinate and enhance transportation and emergency management services, responding to incidents and emergencies in Harris County and beyond. Sharing their resources to serve area residents, the agencies are the City of Houston, Harris County, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (Metro) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).