



Houston TranStar Wins National Award

Web Site served the region during Hurricane Rita evacuation

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HOUSTON (November 1, 2006) – As many of the region’s inhabitants boarded up their windows and collected their personal belongings to evacuate Hurricane Rita’s expected path, they accessed Houston TranStar’s Web site for continuous, up-to-date information about traffic on the area’s major thoroughfares. For its service, Houston TranStar has received a 2006 Best of Texas Award from the national research and advisory association Center for Digital Government. The award, “Best Application Serving the Public for 2006,” was given for outstanding information technology (IT) innovations and contributions.

“During the Rita evacuation and reentry, the Houston TranStar web site was accessed more than 9.8 million times by 475,000 visitors. During the peak, the web site was serving 8000 connections and 30 megabits per second, and just like every other day of the year, it performed like a champ,” said John Whaley, director of Houston TranStar. “We’re honored to receive this recognition for best-in-nation service—service we provide every day of the year, every hour of the day.”

The Best of Texas awards program salutes IT professionals and local government organizations for dedication, hard work and contributions in the state of Texas. Winners are selected based on criteria including collaboration between agencies, innovative use of technology and service improvement for citizens or state employees.

The Houston TranStar website, www.houstontranstar.org, has evolved into one of the US’ most extensive traveler and emergency information systems, providing--

- Real-time and historical speed and travel time information;
- Freeway incident and road closure information;
- Roadway weather sensors;
- Road construction information;
- Hurricane evacuation routes;
- Closed Circuit Television traffic snapshots;
- Dynamic message sign notices such as Amber Alerts; and
- Email- and Web-based traffic alerts and trip reports.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, Houston TranStar was the first center in the nation to combine both transportation and emergency management functions in a single complex; and the first to include state, city, county, and public transportation operations under one roof.

Houston TranStar member agencies plan, design, maintain and operate regional transportation and emergency management functions in a unique collaboration of four government organizations in a 13-county area. Sharing their resources to serve area residents are the City of Houston, Harris County, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (Metro) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).