

Metropolitan Transit Authority

Harris County



Texas Department of Transportation

City of Houston

Greater Houston Transportation and Emergency Management Center

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OVER 1 MILLION USERS VISIT THE HOUSTON TRANSTAR PARTNERSHIP'S FREEWAY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT WEB SITE

“Total number of users equates to over 48,000,000 web hits in 2001”

(Houston, Texas) ----- Today, John R. Whaley, III, Director of Houston TranStar, announced that Houston TranStar's United States Department of Transportation-Federal Highway Administration award winning freeway traffic management web site (<http://traffic.tamu.edu>) was used by over one million individuals in 2001 equating to over 48,000,000 web hits for the year.

In 1999 the web site received 475,472 users. In 2000 the site received about 652,447 users, and in March of 2001, web traffic increased significantly to more than 1,068,869 users (see graph on page three). Much of this significant user increase is attributed to the addition of freeway snapshots and incident management detection icons on the web site.

These freeway snapshots and incident management detection icons are used to give motorists a first hand view of travel conditions before they actually enter the freeway system. With the freeway snapshots, citizens can literally see what the travel conditions are before they embark on their travels.

The incident management detection icons identify areas of congestion caused by incidents on the freeway. This information is generated from the Houston TranStar control room floor when operators spot vehicle collisions, fender benders and stalled vehicles.

In addition to serving the transportation management needs of the region, the web site has also been employed successfully during man-made emergency conditions and emergency weather situations especially during Hurricane season that runs from June 1st to November 30th.

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During Tropical Storm Allison, many of the region's streets and roads were flooded causing emergency responders and citizens alike to use the web site to navigate around the region and to identify alternative routes.

Also, in September of 2001 the web site received more than 3.5 million web hits from citizens seeking information on the greater Houston region's preparedness for such an attack and for news updates from the partner agencies.

The United States Department of Transportation-Federal Highway Administration recently recognized Houston TranStar's freeway traffic management web site as one of the top three traffic sites in the nation after a national review of more than 103 traveler information web sites covering both content and usability of the sites.

The freeway traffic management web site <http://traffic.tamu.edu> is sponsored by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), a valued Houston TranStar partner agency, in cooperation with the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI). The web site features snapshots of Houston area freeways, real-time travel information, text reports, speed charts, historical data, route builder and emergency road and construction closures.

Houston TranStar's freeway traffic management web site is one component of a larger web server system maintained by the Houston TranStar partner agencies. The entrance address to this web server system is found at www.houstontranstar.org. This site allows users to access the web sites maintained by all four Houston TranStar partner agencies as well other related sites in the region.

According to John R. Whaley, III, "The Houston TranStar partnership is excited about the significant increase in public activity on our freeway traffic management web site. The goal for the system of web sites provided by our agency partners has always been to provide the most up to date and accurate information to travelers in a very user-friendly fashion. We have recently tripled our network capacity to insure that citizens of the region can view these web sites when they need the information that we collectively provide".

The Houston TranStar web server system creates one central resource for regional transportation and emergency management information. Users can connect to 15 different sites. These include the City of Houston, Harris County, METRO, Texas Department of Transportation, RoadWorks, Houston Airport System, Port of Houston, Harris County of Emergency Management, City of Houston Office of Emergency Management, Houston Local Emergency Communications Committee, Region IV Educational Service Center, National Hurricane Center, National Weather Service, National Weather Service Southern Region, and the Storm Prediction Center from this one web site system.

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For more information on Houston TranStar’s web server system or its freeway traffic management web site, please contact Artee T. Jones, Executive Public Information Officer for Houston TranStar at 713-881-3244 or email: ajones3@houstontranstar.org.

http://traffic.tamu.edu			
Number of users			
	1999	2000	2001
Jan	29,665	44,217	55,785
Feb	29,643	49,514	62,863
Mar	38,518	51,682	63,911
Apr	39,476	52,193	79,746
May	38,701	55,771	95,532
Jun	40,153	55,381	173,647
Jul	33,327	51,573	91,141
Aug	43,435	58,737	103,355
Sep	44,647	57,127	84,795
Oct	44,156	55,604	87,855
Nov	47,653	62,137	85,175
Dec	46,278	58,511	85,064

