

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.



Gerry Schwebel

❑ **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.



Twin bridges are part of Alice Relief Route on US 281/Future I-69C

❑ **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.

## 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](http://www.i69TexasAlliance.com)

January 2026