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Newest Segment of State Highway 121 to Open Late Sunday *SH 121 Officially Joins NTTA System; Current Rates to Adjust*

North Texas motorists will receive some congestion relief on Sunday, Aug. 31, when the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) completes nine additional miles of State Highway (SH) 121 from Old Denton Road in Denton County to Hillcrest Road in Collin County. At that time, SH 121 will become part of the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) System.

A one-way trip down the 16-mile corridor is expected to take from 15 to 20 minutes during peak traffic times. A trip from Plano to Lewisville currently takes 35 to 45 minutes. Motorists can expect to save time and fuel because they can drive continuously at higher speeds without stopping at traffic signals.

In 2007, TxDOT awarded the NTTA the right to design, construct, operate and maintain SH 121 in Collin, Dallas and Denton counties. For this right, the NTTA paid the region \$3.2 billion to be used on other mobility projects throughout North Texas.

“The NTTA’s \$3.2 billion payment for SH 121 is allowing other vital projects that might never be constructed to be built today, when relief is needed, at a lower cost and ahead of schedule,” said Bill Hale, TxDOT Dallas District Engineer. “We are fortunate in North Texas to have such a strong and committed transportation partnership with the vision to help realize the goals of our region -- increased mobility, reduced congestion, improved air quality and enhanced safety.”

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Aug. 31 also marks the date that SH 121 in Collin, Dallas and Denton Counties officially joins the NTTA System for the next 50 years.

“We have long anticipated adding this important mobility project to our system. It is a critical regional mobility link that extends through three of the NTTA’s member counties and terminates at the county line of the fourth,” said NTTA Board Chairman Paul N. Wageman. “We’d like to thank our partner, TxDOT, for delivering to the NTTA segments one and two of the project. The NTTA has also been working diligently on SH 121 and we look forward to opening the entire corridor to traffic by January 2012.”

As an all-electronic toll collection roadway, SH 121 has no tollbooths. Customers with an NTTA TollTag, a TxDOT-issued TxTag or a Harris County Toll Road Authority EZ Tag will have tolls deducted from their accounts. Vehicles without one of these electronic transponders, ZipCash customers, will have a photo taken of their license plate and will be billed by mail. ZipCash rates are higher than TollTag rates to reflect the higher cost of collection.

Some changes will occur with the transfer of SH 121 to the NTTA System. The SH 121 main lanes in Collin, Dallas and Denton counties will be referred to as “121 Tollway” until a new name is selected. The name will be decided once input is solicited and received from the corridor cities, counties and the public. The service roads will retain the SH 121 designation.

An adjustment to toll rates on the portion of SH 121 currently open to traffic will occur Sept. 1. The change is required so the NTTA can conform to the regional toll rate schedule the NTTA’s Board of Directors agreed to in the SH 121 project agreement.

For two-axle passenger cars or trucks with TollTags, the segment one adjusted rates at ramp gantries will increase between one and four cents, depending on which exit ramp is used. For two-axle passenger vehicles or trucks using ZipCash, the segment one adjusted rates at ramp gantries will increase between 2 and 12 cents, depending on which exit ramp is used.

The rate (45 cents) charged at the main lane gantry in segment one for TollTag users will not change. ZipCash customers will be charged an extra two cents at the main lane gantry.

Rates for all vehicles traveling on The 121 Tollway or any other NTTA facility are posted on the NTTA Web site, www.ntta.org, and will be prominently displayed on rate signs along The 121 Tollway.

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Segment three, which runs from Hillcrest Road in Frisco/Plano to Hardin Boulevard in Allen/McKinney, is under construction and scheduled to open to traffic by January 2010.

The NTTA is receiving bids for segment four, the 121 Tollway/U.S. 75 interchange, so construction can start this fall. The interchange is scheduled to be open to traffic by January 2011.

Segment five, the addition of direct-connect bridges linking the 121 Tollway with the Dallas North Tollway, is currently in the environmental-approval process and is scheduled to be open to traffic by January 2012.

For more information on the 121 Tollway's toll rates or how to obtain a TollTag, contact the NTTA Customer Service Center at 972-818-NTTA (6882). To ensure accurate billing, TollTag customers are asked to keep their TollTag account updated.

About the NTTA

The North Texas Tollway Authority, a political subdivision of the state of Texas, is authorized to acquire, construct, maintain, repair and operate turnpike projects in the north Texas region. The nine-member governing board is comprised of Chairman Paul N. Wageman; Vice Chairman Victor Vandergriff; and Directors Kenneth Barr, Gary Base, Bob Day, David Denison, Michael Nowels, Bob Shepard and Alan E. Sims.

The NTTA serves Collin, Dallas, Denton and Tarrant counties and is responsible for the NTTA System, consisting of the Dallas North Tollway, President George Bush Turnpike, 121 Tollway Addison Airport Toll Tunnel, Lewisville Lake Toll Bridge and the Mountain Creek Lake Bridge. The NTTA is able to raise capital for construction projects through the issuance of turnpike revenue bonds. NTTA toll projects are not a part of the state highway system and receive no direct tax funding. Tolls are collected to repay debt and to operate and maintain the roadways.

Visit the NTTA Web site at www.ntta.org or call 214-461-2000 for additional information about the NTTA. For customer service, please call 972-818-NTTA (6882).

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