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**The CAMPO Connection** Feb. 2011

**HERO Program Making A Difference for I-35 Drivers**

A free roadside assistance program launched in September is already having an impact along I-35 in Central Texas. To date, the Highway Emergency Response Operator (HERO) program has provided assistance to more than 1,600 drivers, which was funded through the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO).

The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, through a partnership with TxDOT and the guidance from the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), operates the HERO program to aid stranded motorists, minimize traffic congestion and improve highway safety along Interstate 35 in Central Texas. \$1.8 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus funds are expected to finance the HERO program through mid 2012. The Mobility Authority is studying options to fund the program beyond 2012.



"The HERO program improves safety and minimizes traffic disruptions caused by accidents and stalled vehicles on IH-35," said Mobility Authority Executive Director Mike Heiligenstein. "Similar programs are successfully operating in other metro areas in the United States. Those programs have resulted in improved traffic flow; reduced fuel consumption and vehicle emissions caused by stop and go traffic, and eased stress for drivers - especially during rush hours. We're pleased to have brought this service to Central Texas."

HERO patrols monitor a 31-mile stretch of I-35 from the Hays/Travis County line to U.S. 79 in Round Rock from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm, Monday through Friday. They remove dangerous roadway debris, help move stalled vehicles off the road, provide basic repair services, such as changing flat tires, providing fuel and jumpstarting batteries, and assist first responders at accident scenes. I-35 drivers in need of assistance can call 512-974-HERO (4376).

Visit the [Mobility Authority's website](#) for more information.

## TxDOT's Pass-Through Financing Program

On December 16, 2010, The Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) approved the FY 2011 call for projects to be funded through the Pass Through Finance (PTF) program. TxDOT has estimated that there will be approximately \$250 million in funds made available statewide for this call for projects. Proposals for projects to be developed under the PTF program are due to the Texas Department of Transportation no later than March 1, 2011. Proposals may be submitted by both public and private entities. To be considered for funding through the PTF program, proposals must be in compliance with ten specific conditions. A copy of the TTC Minute Order and the required conditions is attached and is also available at: [http://www.txdot.gov/about\\_us/commission/2010\\_meetings/documents/minute\\_orders/dec16/9.pdf](http://www.txdot.gov/about_us/commission/2010_meetings/documents/minute_orders/dec16/9.pdf)

A notice of the project call was published in the Texas Register on December 31, 2010. Additional information on the PTF program and this project call will be made available at: [http://www.txdot.gov/business/governments/pass\\_finance.htm](http://www.txdot.gov/business/governments/pass_finance.htm)

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or need assistance in completing an application. You can contact us at 512-974-2275.

## SAFETY WORKSHOPS

### Texas a Pedestrian Safety Focus State

CAMPO and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are offering a series of safety workshops led by nationally-recognized instructors, and are aimed at helping transportation staff improve transportation safety. The partnership comes part of the answer to FHWA's designation of Texas as a [Pedestrian Safety Focus State](#).

- [Designing Streets for Pedestrian Safety](#) was the first two-day workshop held at TxDOT's Austin District office February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, and focused on pedestrian safety engineering countermeasures that will make transportation systems safer by reducing the number of conflicts and collisions between motor vehicles and pedestrians.
- [Developing a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan](#) was held at FHWA's Austin office February 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, and is designed to help address pedestrian safety issues through improved planning, policies and strategies.
- [Low Cost Safety Improvements](#) will be held February 15<sup>th</sup>, and emphasizes the application of 40+ traffic operations and highway improvement measures, and their associated crash reduction factors.

For more information, contact [Alex Kone](#) at (512) 974-2529.

## TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

### Active Transportation Monitoring

CAMPO has initiated a bicycle and pedestrian usage program, with the Texas Transportation Institute and additional sponsorship by the City of Austin. Data was first recorded in Spring, 2010 in 15 locations throughout the region. Forthcoming data will track trends over time, allowing performance measurement similar to automotive and transit modes.

Access regional bicycle and pedestrian traffic data in [map](#) or [spreadsheet](#) format and a full report from the Texas Transportation Institute on the [CAMPO Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning website](#).

Contact [Greg Griffin, AICP](#) for more information at (512) 974-2084.



**CAMPO DEVELOPS SOLUTIONS FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES.**