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Early numbers point to success for Austin toll roads

The state's flagship toll road – the Central Texas Turnpike Project – is once again setting new records. After just five months of tolling and with only 44 miles open, the turnpike project is surpassing the original 2002 traffic projections.

Traffic data collected in May show that on an average weekday, there were approximately 129,600 toll transactions on the Central Texas Turnpike Project, which is 63 percent higher than the original traffic projections.

“Our report card is in. The Central Texas Turnpike Project is clearly off to a running start,” said Phil Russell, TxDOT's turnpike director. “This toll road is doing what it was built for – giving motorists another option to get out of the gridlock – which is why so many are making the choice to drive the toll road.”

Traffic data indicates more motorists than expected continue to choose the Central Texas Turnpike Project as their preferred driving option. According to data collected in May, toll transactions on each toll road – Loop 1, SH 45 and SH 130 – are higher than expected when compared to the 2002 projections.

On Loop 1, the average weekday toll transactions totaled 53,600, which is 30 percent higher than projections.

On SH 45, the average weekday toll transactions totaled 42,900, which is 168 percent higher than projections.

On SH 130, with only 28 miles open, the average weekday toll transactions totaled 33,100, which is 48 percent higher than projections.

Traffic on SH 130 is expected to continue climbing as additional segments open later this year to US 71 near the Austin Bergstrom International Airport and to US 183 in southeast Travis County.

Adding to the early success of the CTTTP is that more than twice as many motorists than expected are choosing to pay their tolls with TxTag, the state's electronic toll collection program. Today, more than seven of every 10 weekday transactions are paid with TxTag. Based on toll industry trends, it takes toll authorities approximately 10 to 15 years to attain this level of usage for electronic toll collection.

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“The use of TxTag on the CTTTP is off the charts compared to other toll roads across the country,” said Gerry Neilsten, with the traffic and revenue firm of Stantec. “This kind of tag usage is simply unprecedented for a new toll facility.”

In Austin, nearly 250,000 TxTags have been activated, with several thousand tags set up each week.

Thru May, the CTTTP has earned \$9 million in revenue, which is used to pay off the bonds.

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For more information, call Gabriela Garcia at (512) 475-2134.

The foregoing information was recently provided to local news media at a news conference held by the Texas Department of Transportation (the "Department"). The information shown represents only portions of the Central Texas Turnpike System 2002 Project which have opened to traffic. This information is preliminary, has not been audited, verified or reconciled with other data and may be subject to adjustment. The information is not broken down by class of vehicle and will not necessarily equate to revenues collected. Please refer to quarterly reports to be prepared by the Department which will be available on its website at Texastollways.com for further information on the Central Texas Turnpike System 2002 Project.