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Ports-to-Plains project progressing

THERE'S GOOD NEWS in the latest Ports-to-Plains progress report for Lubbock and West Texas residents who recognize the evolving trade route's potential economic benefit to our area.

Extending from the most active U.S.-Mexico border port, Laredo, through Lubbock and West Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Colorado, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor links the nation's plains states to the border centers of commerce.

The Texas Department of Transportation is analyzing funding alternatives including opportunities for private investment and partnerships to pay for moving freight and utilities along the trade route.

On the Net:

Want more information? Visit

- Ports-to-Plains Coalition Web site

Using Ports-to-Plains as a case study, TxDOT will research the best potential applications of the Trans-Texas corridor concept for routes that may not attract tolling as a primary revenue source, such as here in West Texas.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor Research Consortium, including Texas Tech University, is attempting to establish the potential for utilization of the route by a typical trucking company.

Other studies due for completion this spring include mapping truck data from Lamesa to Amarillo using what's called GIS, a computer system capable of integrating, analyzing and displaying geographically-referenced information.

Nationally there is an ongoing change in trade patterns being driven by changes in international trade, according to the PTP's current newsletter.

Historically U.S. trade patterns have been laid out east-west, such as the current alignment of the majority of the interstate highway system. With increases in international trade - especially of container cargo and capacity issues at seaports on both the east and west coasts - that historical pattern is changing, and the need for north-south corridors is growing.

Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor and its sister corridors in the Great Plains area have a significant opportunity to keep freight moving and grow their economies. Both highway and rail modes will be affected by this shift.

"Being able to tie our regions together," says U.S. Rep. Randy Neugebauer, R-Lubbock, Ports-to-Plains Congressional Caucus co-chairman, "will ensure our nation's farmers, ranchers and businesses have a direct route to ship their goods."

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