



Texas Department of Transportation

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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2012

TxDOT presents prestigious Road Hand Award to East Texan

Lufkin, Texas – An East Texas transportation advocate today was surprised by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Texas Good Roads Association when the department's coveted Road Hand Award was bestowed upon him. Walter Diggles, executive director of the Deep East Texas Council of Governments (DETCOG) was presented the prestigious Road Hand Award today before his colleagues at a meeting in San Augustine.

TxDOT says Diggles has been a true long-time friend of transportation.

"Not only is he a major player at the local and state levels but the national level as well in transportation planning for the future of Texas," said Dennis Cooley, Lufkin District Engineer. "He also plays a key role in the vision needed to bring viable transportation projects to fruition in the East Texas Area.

The Texas transportation system is vital to economic development and tourism – one of the state's largest industries. Maintaining and improving this system wouldn't be possible without the dedication and hard work of citizens across the state. Though these individuals come from all walks of life, they recognize that transportation plays an important role in their communities. The Road Hand Award was created in 1973 by former State Highway Engineer the late Luther DeBerry. He recognized that TxDOT owes a great deal to its many friends and supporters for their efforts to make the Texas highway program the best in the world. The award is the highest tribute to citizens who freely give their time to champion transportation projects in their area.

Diggles' service includes leadership positions in DETCOG, the Alliance for the I-69 Texas Board of Directors, and the Gulf Coast Strategic Highway Coalition. He was instrumental in establishing the Deep East Texas Rural Transportation Planning Organization and arranging training for the organization's board and officers through the Texas Transportation Institute. To further develop transportation efforts in Northeast Texas, he merged the efforts of DETCOG, the East Texas Council of Governments and the Ark-Tex Council of Governments by signing a memorandum of understanding to strengthen transportation planning and coordination. The agreement allowed the three groups to work together to provide collaborative and prioritized transportation for the 35-county region.

The names of Road Hand recipients are inscribed on the Road Hand Hall of Honor plaque which hangs prominently in the foyer of the historic Dewitt C. Greer Highway Building in Austin. With this year's five recipients, 217 people have been named Road Hands. Two of this year's recipients are from East Texas. A second presentation will be made on February 2.

For more information, contact Kathi White, Public Information Officer, at (936) 633-4395. Information on TxDOT is also available on the department's website at www.txdot.gov.