

# Bush Turnpike officially opened

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The North Texas Tollway Authority hosted the formal opening of the President George Bush Turnpike Eastern Extension Jan. 23 at Firewheel Town Center. The road officially opened in December.

Attending the ceremony were NTTA officials, elected officials, area mayors and local dignitaries.

The 9.9-mile turnpike extension is a portion of the outer loop around Dallas and its suburbs. The corridor will extend through Garland, Sachse and Rowlett. The six-lane road was initially planned in 1957. Construction on the \$958-million-dollar project began in 2008.

Although the corridor has opened to traffic, motorists will continue to see minor construction activity through the first part of 2012 as final touches are made to the corridor's infrastructure.

The turnpike extension is expected to generate \$88 million in economic activity, create over 1,000 jobs, and add \$28 billion of valuation added to Dallas, Collin and Denton county tax rolls.

"The opening of the President George Bush Turnpike Eastern Extension marks an important milestone in the growth of Sachse," Mayor Mike Felix said. "Having approximately 58.29 percent of the 398 acres of land area in this PGBT corridor available, the new Eastern Extension corridor running along the Sachse city limits affords the city approximately 175 acres for retail and restaurant development."

Felix said the city of Sachse has been anticipating development of the PGBT corridor since its initial announcement.

"The zoning and development standards are in place, a retail trade analysis has been completed, and the city is working with the Sachse Economic Development Corporation, the chamber of commerce, and the planning

and zoning commission to promote our pro-business and pro-development community," he said. "The configuration includes frontage roads between Miles Road and Merritt Road. This provides direct access to agricultural land as well as new residential property making Sachse more attractive for development than ever before. That nearby property is now very accessible to the many who are increasingly calling North Texas home and who are wanting to make a livelihood among us."

Dallas County Commissioner Mike Cantrell said the extension brings cutting-edge technology to the area.

"All-electronic toll collection will result in less congestion and better air quality," he said.

The extension features state-of-the-art traffic monitoring through different systems monitored by a command center, special road sensors that detect roadway temperatures and an automatic incident detection system that allows proper resources to be dispatched quickly and efficiently keeping motorists moving.

"Completion of the Eastern Extension has been eagerly awaited by the eastern portion of Dallas County bringing much-needed access through Garland to the cities of Rowlett and Sachse and vice versa," Cantrell said. "It also brings access to popular destinations like the Firewheel Town Center and Lake Ray Hubbard."

Cantrell said the Eastern

Extension will be another link in the region that is a key component to the daily lives of everyone whether it is for work, school or simple day-to-day activities, adding mobility that makes commutes as easy and convenient as possible.

"What a great celebration today," he said. "This project has been long in the making, and I'd like to thank those that worked so hard to make this project a reality.

"There is no doubt that we all will benefit in future years with the improved economic conditions and increased tax rolls. This connection not only provides a quicker means of travel across town, but also frees up the city streets as well."

Councilman Bill Adams said the long-awaited opening of the PGBT Eastern Extension is exciting insofar as travel time convenience, but Sachse's frontage signifies much more to the city than shaving minutes off of a commute.

"Our frontage should, and I believe will be, a turning point in the history of our city for decades to come in regards to financial health and regional exposure," Adams said.

"The overlay standards approved by council in anticipation of the finished product will guarantee that our portion of the corridor will have a first-class look and appeal."

Adams stressed that development will not happen overnight, but Sachse is in position to attract a quality mix of retail and commercial businesses which will go a long way in reducing a significant percentage of the city tax bur-

den presently on our citizens.

"The Sachse Economic Development Corporation is in the process of exploring various ways to make Sachse a unique destination venue," he said.

“Hopefully, if successful, this will result in something that will be instrumental in bringing in thousands or tens

of thousands of visitors to have fun while capturing sales tax revenue for our growth and future financial needs.”

Felix said the development of the 190 district will be a great opportunity to bring a new tax base and showcase the city.

“The development of the city business park is vital to

the continued growth of the community. We believe that the tollway will improve the economic viability of Sachse.

We appreciate all of our neighbors and the partners who worked so diligently over

the years to make the Eastern Extension a reality. Our today is bright and the opportunities are many, for all of us. We want everyone to know the city of Sachse is open for business.”