

March 1, 2005

Show of state pride raises funds for Safe Routes to School program

Imagine a young girl walking to school who ventures into the street because of a damaged sidewalk or a boy who pedals his bike into a poorly marked school crosswalk. Projects to reduce incidents like these are underway thanks to the Texas Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program. In 2003, TxDOT began offering the God Bless Texas specialty license plate, as well as the God Bless America plate, to raise funds for the program. The God Bless Texas plate is TxDOT's featured specialty license plate for the month of March.

By purchasing a God Bless Texas license plate, drivers can display pride for their state while contributing dollars for safety-related construction projects around schools. Funded projects include sidewalk improvements, creation of pedestrian and bicycle paths and crosswalks, and installing school zone flashers, to name a few. The Safe Routes to School program is the result of House Bill 2204 passed during the 77th Legislature.

"We are excited about this program and the positive impact it has already had in many communities across Texas," said (NAME), tax assessor-collector for (COUNTY NAME) County. "Parents can rest easier knowing their child's trip to school, whether by bike or on foot, will be safer."

The God Bless Texas license plate design includes an image of the state flag, and the phrase "God Bless Texas" runs along the bottom of the plate. Both the God Bless Texas and God Bless America license plates are available for passenger cars, light trucks and motorcycles for a \$40 annual fee, plus \$40 if personalized, in addition to regular registration fees. Of the \$40 annual fee, \$32 is deposited in the state highway fund to improve safety in and around school areas. In 2004, more than 700 God Bless Texas plates were sold.

Applications for the God Bless Texas and God Bless America specialty license plates are available at county tax offices, on TxDOT's web site (www.dot.state.tx.us), or by calling the TxDOT Help Desk at (512) 465-7611 or TxDOT's Fax-On-Demand forms line at (888) 232-7033. Customers requesting orders for specialty license plates through the fax service should enter the code 0999 to receive the form for the license plate they are ordering.

TxDOT started its specialty license plate program in 1965. Today, there are more than 100 different plate designs, many of them benefiting a particular group, organization, college or university. Since 1994, more than \$10 million have been raised for sponsoring organizations and scholarship funds.

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For more information, call (COUNTY CONTACT PERSON'S NAME), (CONTACT PERSON'S TITLE), at (CONTACT PERSON'S PHONE NUMBER). For a view of the plate or and ordering information, go to www.dot.state.tx.us/vtr/spplates/allplates.htm.