



Texas Department of Transportation

VEHICLE TITLES AND REGISTRATION DIVISION • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78779-0001 • (512) 465-7611

April 4, 2001

Registration and Title Bulletin # 036-01

To: All County Tax Assessor-Collectors

Subject: TxDOT Mainframe Problems/Registration & Title System (RTS) Impact

PURPOSE

To apologize to you and the customers in your office for the inconvenience brought on by our mainframe problems at Austin Headquarters. To also describe the short and long-term solutions.

DETAILS

A series of mostly unpredictable events completely overloaded the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) computer system early this week, which, in turn, created "*The Perfect Storm for RTS.*"

The department's mainframe computer at Austin Headquarters was pushed to its limit, operating at near 99% capacity because of the following:

- 1) A record volume of registration and titling transactions processed statewide
- 2) The department was awarding highway construction bids on a date that fell earlier in the month than usual
- 3) Batch processing did not complete within its prescribed overnight window and continued through the next day
- 4) Monthly Construction Estimates
- 5) Very small mainframe reserve capacity
- 6) Other internal computer problems

TxDOT ACTIONS

The problems you experienced at your 2,000 customer service lines statewide did not go unnoticed. Our RTS Help Desk staff logged hundreds of calls from your offices. We understand your frustrations of not being able to deliver customer service to the public in your offices. We in Austin and the regional offices had similar problems.

Throughout the day, we worked with the department's Information Systems Division (ISD). That group went into an emergency response mode and met "*The Perfect Storm for RTS*" head on. They came up with seven specific technical actions that were implemented non-stop between the afternoon of April 3 and mid-morning on April 4. We want to thank ISD Director Judy Skeen, along with her staff of dedicated and talented employees who worked tirelessly and without a break to improve the system performance: Barry Six, David Paine, Mitch Pope, Cindy Gendron, Madjid Benchouia, Joe Bradford, Gia Dirks, and others.

We are pleased to report that, as of 10:30 a.m. on this date, the system is operating at normal

capacity statewide. While there's never a guarantee that we won't ever encounter a similar situation, the ISD staff has come up with two emergency contingency plans to address the kind of problems we saw on Monday and Tuesday. We have also shared your frustrations – and those of your customers – with top department administrators who make the decisions affecting information technology matters. As you can see, this situation could not be predicted, and was due to system overload – not human error.

This is not a permanent fix. TxDOT needs additional mainframe capacity, which has been approved by the department's Information Resource Committee (IRC). ISD is working with the Legislative Budget Board to provide long-term solutions. TxDOT is committed to providing appropriate resources to meet your customer service needs.

VTR CONTACT PERSON(S)

Again, on behalf of the department, our apologies to you, your staff, and your customers. Thank you very much for your patience and resilience while the mainframe made the Registration and Title System inoperable. Thanks also go to the ISD staff for their performance as they fought through "*The Perfect Storm for RTS*"

If you have any questions relating to this letter, please contact your local regional office manager, or Darrel Hunt or me at (512) 465-7570.

Sincerely,



Jerry L. Dike, Director
Vehicle Titles and
Registration Division

cc: TxDOT Commission
TxDOT Administration
Ms. Judy Skeen, P.E., ISD Director
Mr. Randall Dillard, PIO
District Engineers, Attn: PIOs