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December 13, 2012

Managed toll lanes in Dallas Fort Worth to be called "TEXpress Lanes"



@gdickson

The new toll lanes that motorists will be able to use on several major highways that are under construction in the Dallas Fort Worth area will have a new name.

They'll be called "TEXpress lanes."

That name was picked as the best suggestion during a naming contest held by the private consortium of companies rebuilding several major roads in the region - including the North Tarrant Express project in Northeast Tarrant County, and LBJ Express in north Dallas.

"The whole term 'managed lanes' didn't make sense to them," said Robert Hinkle, spokesman for NTE Mobility Partners, which is rebuilding the I-35W/Loop 820/Texas 121/183 corridor in Northeast Tarrant County.

More than 3,200 suggestions were submitted in the contest, he said.

The identify of the person or persons who suggested the TEXpress Lanes wasn't disclosed. However, officials with the development consortium said some people who took part in the contest were randomly selected to receive gas cards valued at \$2,500, \$1,000, \$500 and \$100.

The re-branding of the toll lanes comes as North Texas officials work through the complicated process of integrating the toll lanes - which will be an option for drivers who will be able to choose between toll and toll-free lanes on the system - and the two-decade old high-occupancy vehicle lane system that operates mostly in Dallas.

The HOV lanes are available to vehicles with two or more occupants, although the Regional Transportation Council is considering increasing that requirement to three or more occupants beginning June 1, 2016. Some Dallas officials are dead-set against that proposal, saying they'll get too much push-back from voters who are accustomed to using the lanes for free.

As for the TEXpress Lanes, they'll likely make their debut in late 2013 on the first new section of LBJ Freeway in Dallas, said Andy Rittler, LBJ Express project spokesman. Then, over the next two and a half years the TEXpress Lanes will open on the rest of LBJ, as well as Texas 114, Texas 121/183 and Northeast Loop 820 in Tarrant County.

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