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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Harris County Toll Road Authority to Resume Toll Collection

Relief Granted in Response to Hurricane Ike Ends Saturday

HOUSTON – Harris County Judge Ed Emmett and county Toll Road Authority officials decided today that traffic conditions now warrant the resumption of toll collections on the Harris County Toll Road system. Therefore, drivers should be prepared to begin paying normal tolls with cash or EZ TAG this Saturday, September 27, 2008.

Emmett authorized waiving tolls beginning at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, September 10, to assist the evacuation of the southeast Texas region prior to the impending landfall of Hurricane Ike. In the aftermath of the storm and with the declaration of the Houston-Galveston region as a disaster area, tolls continued to be waived. “The toll road’s capacity was needed to help with traffic management efforts,” said Toll Road Director Gary Stobb, “while traffic signals on surface streets suffered from storm damage and/or loss of power, as well as to allow passage for service providers, emergency responders, and citizens returning home.”

With power now restored to more than 75% of Centerpoint Energy customers, and more and more traffic signals coming online by the hour, officials have agreed to resume normal operations on the Harris County Toll Road system. With the City of Galveston re-opened to residents today, free access to the toll road system provided a means to divert some of that traffic around Houston rather than through it.

Signage will be placed throughout the system, at toll plazas and in EZ TAG stores notifying the public that the toll waiver will be lifted Saturday, September 27, 2008.

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