Thank you for joining me here today for this important announcement. Amadeo, it’s always good to see you.

Earlier this year, when we learned that the U.S. Department of Transportation was going to make $54 million available to states for border infrastructure projects, I directed the Texas Department of Transportation to submit an application for funding.

I wanted to make sure that Texas...home of 14 border crossings...far more than any other state...would be the place where the U.S. Department of Transportation knew the funding would be put to good use.

In letters and phone calls to Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta...I reminded him that Texas currently has no permanent border safety inspection stations...

And that federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation would go a long way toward completing the design, engineering and construction of some permanent facilities.

Today, I’m pleased to announce that Texas will be receiving approximately $41 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation to build one-stop border inspection facilities designed to house both state and federal inspectors.

That is nearly 76 percent of the federal funding that the Bush administration has set aside for these types of projects.

At these new inspection stations, we will protect Texas drivers by checking to make sure that the trucks meet all safety standards...

And we will further protect Texas highways by keeping overweight trucks off our roads.

The new funding will help construct inspection facilities at the eight busiest border crossings in our state...including Brownsville, El Paso, Laredo, Pharr and Eagle Pass.

Texas border crossings are already among the busiest in the nation. More motor carrier traffic crosses into this country from Mexico through Texas than in any other border state.
About 80 percent of all U.S.-Mexico commerce passes through Texas.

And the flow of goods and commerce will certainly increase as we continue to build upon our strong economic partnerships with Mexico.

This new federal funding will help us keep border traffic moving as smoothly and quickly as possible while still ensuring the safety of the vehicles and cargo entering our state.

The building of these facilities is important not only to Texas, but to the entire nation.

Construction of more efficient inspection facilities will assure a secure flow of trade in the decades ahead.

In addition to housing state inspection personnel and equipment, TxDOT has offered several federal agencies...including the U.S. Customs Service, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture...the opportunity to house inspection services in these facilities.

These one-stop inspection facilities will improve the flow of traffic across the border while providing a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

The Texas-Mexico border has always been a vital link for commerce and trade. By moving forward to help provide for secure and efficient border crossings, we are working to ensure economic prosperity not just for South Texas...but all of Texas and the United States.

Now...I'd like to invite Amadeo Saenz... assistant executive director of TxDOT...to the podium for a few words...