

Texas transportation leader in San Antonio to talk highway construction

Gov. Greg Abbott was a "great visionary" for approving \$77 billion for a decade of new highway construction in Texas and \$24 billion for road projects already underway, the official who oversees the Texas Department of Transportation told an audience here Wednesday.

Bruce Bugg, an Abbott appointee and San Antonio resident who heads the Texas Transportation Commission, got robust applause addressng the Rotary Club of San Antonio by praising the ongoing widening of U.S. 281 from Loop 1604 to Comal County, along with other multibillion-dollar local projects: expanding Interstate 10 West and Loop 410 at Interstate 35, and taking Loop 1604 from two lanes to five in each direction.

Joking with a crowd of about 120 Rotarians and guests, Bugg's biggest laugh came when he said he and his driver didn't encounter any congestion at all on the drive from Austin on I-35, one of the nation's 10 most congested freeways. Conspicuously absent in the 20-minute talk, billed by his hosts as a discussion of the "crucial mobility issues facing San Antonio," was any mention of the words "buses," "rail," "mass transit," "public transportation" or "climate change." "Ninety-three percent of Texans drive cars or trucks," Bugg explained in an interview afterward. "I'm faced with the realities of what Texans need right now. They're telling me and Governor Abbott they're tired of getting stuck on highways