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New Transport Mode to Redefine Freight Movement *Autonomous Freight Shuttle Grew From Texas A&M Transportation Research Institute*

BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION – Texas Governor Greg Abbott on Friday helped unveil a new mode of transportation and applauded the partnership of university research and industry investment that made it possible.

Abbott was joined by Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp in rolling out the autonomous Freight Shuttle System (FSS), which operates on its own guideway using single, remotely controlled transporters carrying truck trailers or shipping containers, powered by linear-induction electric motors. It's the product of "exemplary collaboration," the Governor noted.

"For more than a decade, Texas has been the number-one exporting state in America, and freight movement is vitally important to our state's economy," Abbott said. "As the product of innovative research at the [Texas A&M Transportation Institute](http://tti.tamu.edu), the Freight Shuttle System will help ensure that we are able to meet our growing demand for efficient freight movement in Texas and ensure our long-term prosperity."

Sharp emphasized the A&M System's commitment to public-private ventures.

"Our System universities are places where brilliant ideas emerge as visions, and our private investment markets are places where those visions can be transformed into commercial reality," Sharp said. "Freight Shuttle International and the Texas A&M Transportation Institute are showing us today how such partnerships can transform our state's future."

The first commercial example of that transformation, officials said on Friday, could be underway soon at the Port of Houston Authority (PHA), where increased container traffic has grown even greater since the expansion of the Panama Canal. PHA Executive Director Roger Guenther said that PHA officials and officials of Freight Shuttle International, LLC (FSI) have agreed in a recently signed Memorandum of Understanding to work together to evaluate options over the next few months for deployment of the FSS at the port. PHA and FSI will announce more details of the agreement on Monday.

“The FSS is the result of more than a decade of research at TTI,” said TTI Agency Director Dennis Christiansen. “The technology has produced 17 patents held jointly by the A&M System and FSI.”

Researchers say the FSS borrows the best characteristics from both truck and rail transport, and uses only about one-third the energy required by diesel trucks. Additional benefits of the FSS include:

- Zero point-of-service emissions – dramatically less pollution than from trucks.
- Reduced roadway congestion.
- Reduced potential for truck-related highway crashes.
- Improved delivery time reliability.
- Reduced infrastructure damage.

The FSS is being introduced at a time when the freight industry faces mounting challenges – strained rail and roadway system capacity, environmental concerns, and a chronic shortage of truck drivers, to name only a few.

“The industry cannot thrive without augmenting our existing transportation system and fundamentally changing how we approach freight movement,” FSS Inventor and FSI Founder/Chairman Steve Roop says. “The Freight Shuttle System is designed to blend into today’s intermodal network, integrating proven technologies with novel patented designs into a new mode of transportation.”

Photos, b-roll and background on the FSS will be available September 9th at 3:00 p.m.
<http://tti.tamu.edu/freight-shuttle>.

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