

# LEOH Trip

## Houston TranStar

6922 Katy Rd  
February 5, 2025



**HOUSTON  
TRANSTAR®**

- Regional Transportation Management
- Emergency Management Planning and Response
- Real-Time Traffic Information
- 24-Hour Roadway Flood Monitoring

*Travel Smart  
with* **TranStar**

**HoustonTranStar.org**

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

A partnership of the City of Houston, Harris County, METRO & TxDOT



A large TV screen displays real-time freeway traffic around Houston.

LEOH travelers arrived by car/carpool, and were greeted in the lobby by TranStar staff, who provided a very informative and interesting tour.



Houston TranStar, established in 1993, is a partnership between the City of Houston, Harris County, METRO, and TxDOT.

The name itself is composed of *Tran* (for transportation) and *Star* (for our Lone Star state).

These agencies share resources and information to primarily keep roadways clear and safe, and to inform motorists of travel conditions.

TranStar acts as the primary coordination site for local and state agencies, including 13 counties in the region, and covering 3,000 miles of roadway, when responding to incidents and emergencies.

TranStar goals include improving travel safety and reliability using state-of-the-art technologies, enhancing emergency planning, coordinating resources, and delivering needed information to the public.

There are over 11,000 cameras on the freeways, to monitor traffic and incidents.

These include cameras along I-10 west from Luling to I-10 east at Beaumont.

Tools to alert motorists include electric freeway signs with continually updated information, roadside sensors to report speed and travel time data, and the TranStar app, which provides up-to-date information on traffic, road construction/closure, the rail system, ferries, and much more.

The TranStar building has numerous safety-related features to ensure operations can continue during a variety of emergency situations.

- It has 4 entrances
- It is rated to withstand a Category 4 hurricane, and is situated on ground higher than its surroundings
- It has its own water supply
- It does not have a built-in kitchen; it uses a mobile kitchen instead
- Its windows are thick, with some bullet-proof
- It has positive pressure, which assists in preventing potential contaminants and germs from entering the building

HARRIS COUNTY

# EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER ACTIVATION LEVEL

4

3

2

1

### NORMAL READINESS

No hazardous conditions are observed and the normal capabilities of the Emergency Operations Center do not require the support of other agencies.

### IMMINENT READINESS

Predefined conditions exist and your area is alerted to hazardous conditions for life and/or property.

### CRISIS READINESS

Predefined or dangerous conditions exist and are imminent and pose a significant threat to life and/or property.

### DISASTER READINESS

Predefined and dangerous conditions exist and are a threat to life and/or property.

Large wall displays greet visitors as they enter the TranStar building.

All are reminders of important safety information.

The screenshot shows the 'Ready Harris' website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Get Prepared', 'Newsroom', 'Resources', 'About', and 'Contact'. Below the navigation is a 'Ready Harris' logo and a 'Ready Harris Accessible Alerts' button. The main content area features three smartphone-style cards with emergency numbers: '3-1-1' for Harris County or City of Houston residents needing transportation, infrastructure, debris pick up, and other services; '9-1-1' for 'LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES'; and '2-1-1' for post-incident support and other needs. Navigation arrows are visible on the left and right sides of the cards.

This banner is part of the Ready Harris website. It features a blue background with a white and yellow border. At the top left is the Harris County logo and the 'Ready Harris' logo. To the right are navigation links: 'Get Prepared', 'Newsroom', 'Resources', 'About', and 'Contact'. A search bar and a 'Select Language' dropdown are also present. The main content area contains three circular icons in a row: a price tag with '\$99.99', a hand holding a smartphone, and a right-pointing arrow. Below these icons, the text 'See it', 'Snap it', and 'Send it' is written in white. At the bottom, a white banner with a blue border contains the Harris County logo on the left and the text 'REPORT PRICE GOUGING' in bold, with 'PRICE' in red. Navigation arrows are on the left and right sides.

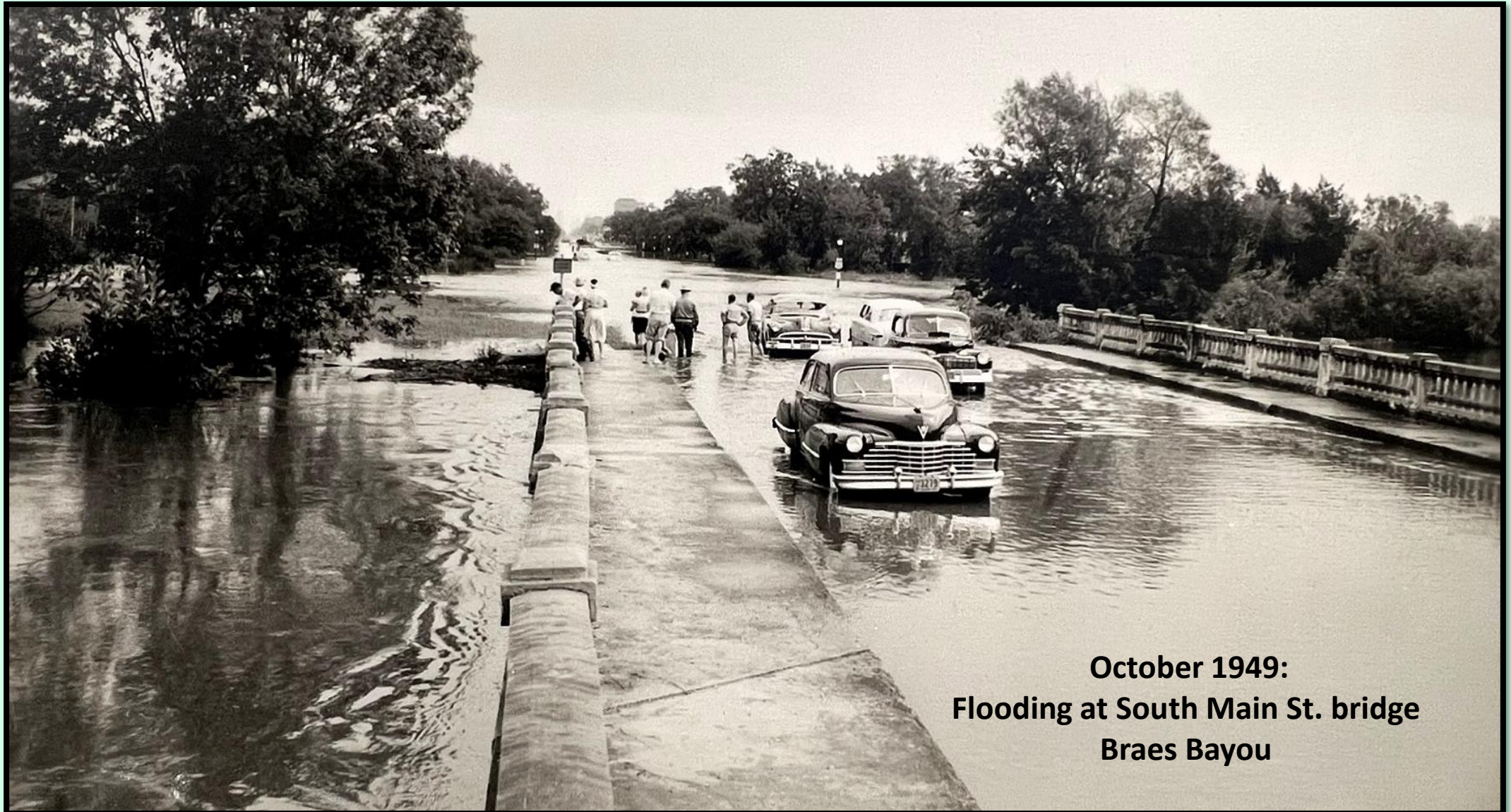
This banner is part of the Ready Harris website. It features a dark blue background with a yellow border. At the top left is the Harris County logo and the 'Ready Harris' logo. To the right are navigation links: 'Get Prepared', 'Newsroom', 'Resources', 'About', and 'Contact'. A search bar and a 'Select Language' dropdown are also present. The main content area features the Harris County logo on the left and the text 'REGISTER WITH STEAR' in bold white letters. Below this, it says 'If you need EXTRA HELP during an EVACUATION register with...'. The text 'State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry' is written in large, bold, yellow and white letters. On the right, there is an illustration of a woman in a wheelchair being pushed by another woman. At the bottom right, a yellow arrow points to the text 'CALL 211 to REGISTER'. Navigation arrows are on the left and right sides.

This banner is part of the Ready Harris website. It features a dark blue background with a yellow border. At the top left is the Harris County logo and the 'Ready Harris' logo. To the right are navigation links: 'Get Prepared', 'Newsroom', 'Resources', 'About', and 'Contact'. A search bar and a 'Select Language' dropdown are also present. The main content area features the Harris County logo on the right and the text 'TAKE C.H.A.R.G.E. OF BATTERY SAFETY' in large, bold, white and yellow letters. Below this, it says 'CHOOSE CERTIFIED PRODUCTS.' in bold yellow letters. At the bottom, there is a white box with the text 'Take C.H.A.R.G.E. of Battery Safety' and 'The Harris County Fire Marshal's Office urges residents to learn about the dangers of Lithium-Ion batteries. Click the image to learn more.' Navigation arrows are on the left and right sides.



This Flag of Honor remembers those who died in the terrorist attacks on February 26, 1993, and September 11, 2001. The red and blue stripes are composed of the names of these individuals. To learn more about this organization, visit [flagofhonor.org](http://flagofhonor.org)

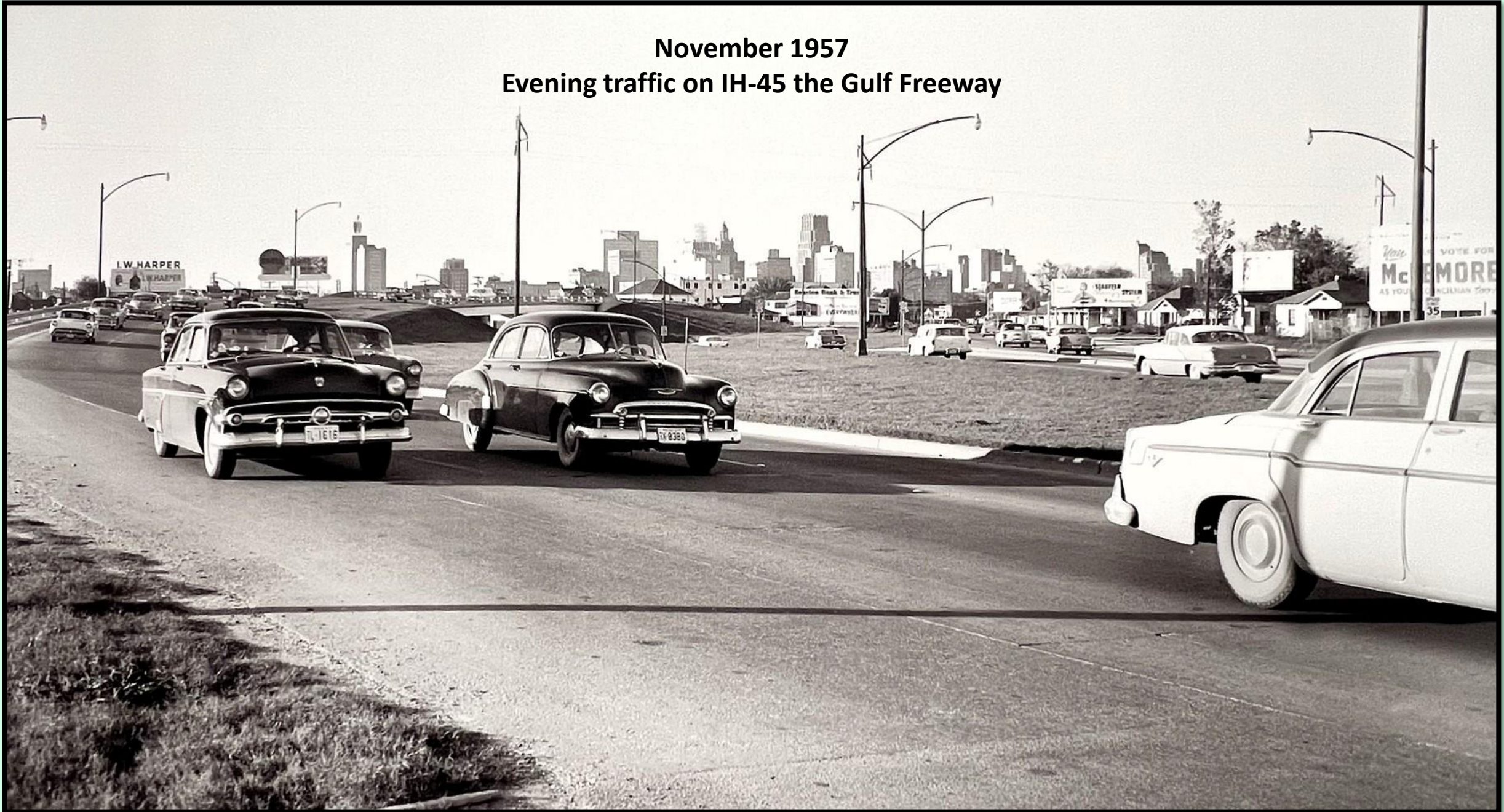
Interesting traffic-related photos from Houston's past were displayed on the walls.



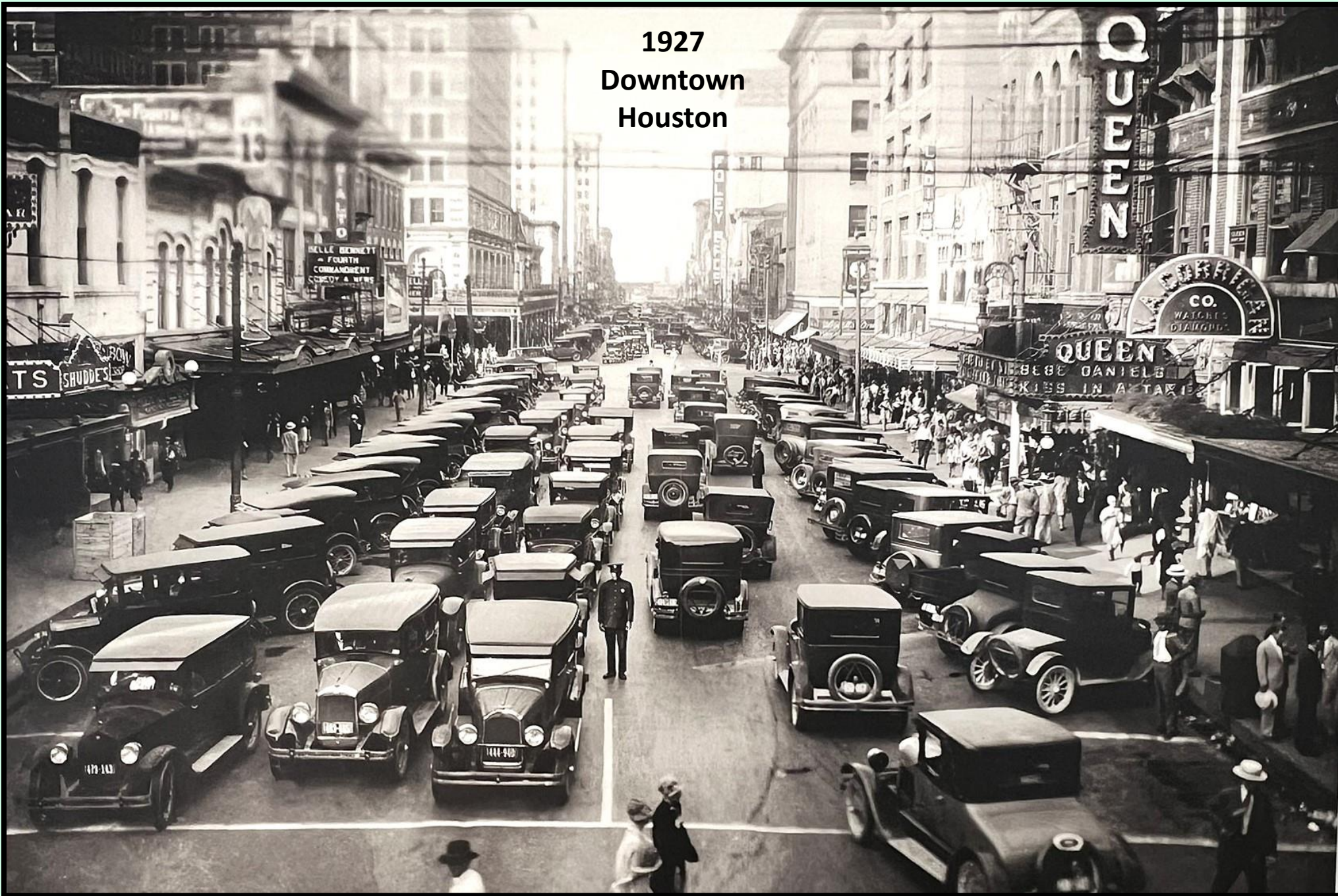
**October 1949:  
Flooding at South Main St. bridge  
Braes Bayou**



November 1957  
Evening traffic on IH-45 the Gulf Freeway



1927  
Downtown  
Houston



A policeman monitors traffic while shoppers and theatregoers fill the sidewalks.

Note the Foley Bros sign further down the street, the V.A. Corrigan Watches & Diamonds sign, and the Queen movie theater, where the silent comedy "Kiss in a Taxi", starring Bebe Daniels, was playing.



A visit to a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room gave everyone a birds-eye view of the 24-hr surveillance of Houston and surrounding areas for traffic conditions, as well as potential emergency issues.

It reminded everyone of Mission Control at NASA!



## **Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at TranStar**

TranStar was the first center in the nation to combine transportation and emergency management under one roof. Lina Hidalgo, Harris County Judge, serves as the county's chief executive and emergency manager.

The EOC at TranStar is activated for emergencies such as hurricanes, severe flooding, industrial explosions, or other types of disasters, such as a terrorist attack.

Representatives from the four collaborating agencies gather at TranStar to coordinate a quick and effective response. Other agencies and individuals also come together at TranStar. They may include the police, firefighters, Amateur Radio Operators, Red Cross, representatives from area local governments, U.S. Army, Salvation Army, and more.



Misty Gunn, the EOC manager, elaborated on how the EOC operates, and the variety of issues it addresses, including water problems, industrial accidents, hazmat situations, and huge events, such as sporting events and conventions.

She explained that during an emergency, the wall behind her may become lined with sticky notes of emerging information and requests that must be addressed, while above that and behind the wall, the county judge and other officials are providing oversight, and fulfilling other duties.



The large EOC room is filled with rows of computers and phones to accommodate the variety of agency personnel that may be on site at any given time.

The chairs are quite expensive, as they must be extremely comfortable as well as sturdy, to accommodate anyone required to sometimes sit for many hours during an emergency situation.

Fire and police have dedicated seating in the room, and even designated computer printers (red for fire, blue for police). Satellite phones are available for use as needed.

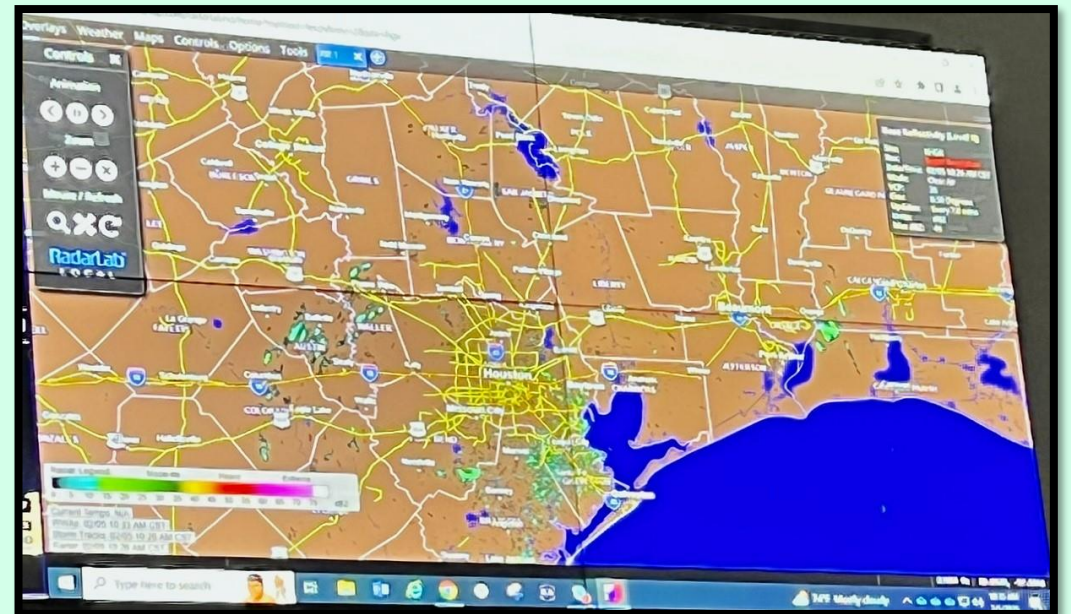
Telephone numbers should be available on paper as a back-up (this is true not just for the EOC, but for the public, during a disaster).

EOC staff and responders must be prepared to stay on-site for days, so go-bags are a must.

Food and drink (including favorite snacks) are also a must, to fuel the team!



Monitors showing events as they happen, line the upper walls of the EOC. All major TV stations, traffic, weather, cyberattacks coming into the U.S., and issues of concern are monitored for news related to any emergency threat.



Last, but not least, the tour group was reminded that the **TranStar app** is a great tool for everyday use.

Once you download it to your smartphone, you will be able to see, in real time, traffic maps, any incidents, road closures, travel times, traffic cameras, etc.

*For example:* when you leave LEOH after another fun and educational gathering, and you're wondering how traffic is on 610 North or South at Bellaire, just open the app and find out!

The TranStar website is also extremely interesting as well as informative to explore!

Check it out at **HoustonTranStar.org**.

As the group exited TranStar, *swag bags* were handed out. A great ending to a great tour!



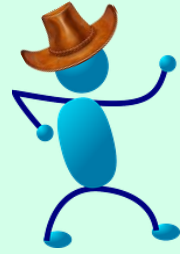




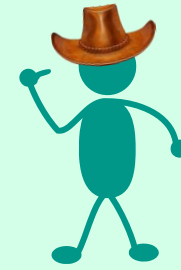
Following the tour, everyone enjoyed lunch at the ***Canyon Creek Bar and Grill***, located nearby on Westcott.



Thank you,  
Ann Fairchild,  
for planning another  
fun and informative  
outing!



# Future Trips



## Wednesday, March 19, 2025: Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo at NRG

A Precinct One bus is unavailable; therefore, travelers will meet at the church to carpool to either the South Metro Rail Station or Yellow Lot to park. Parking cost is \$25/car.

Attendees will be treated to a **VIP** tour of approximately 2 hours.

Trips for April, May, and beyond are in the planning stages. Stay tuned!

### Signing Up for a Trip

Trip Coordinator Ann Fairchild may be contacted at [fairann@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fairann@sbcglobal.net) or 281-686-1325.

She will publish complete trip details, with the opportunity to sign up, closer to the trip date.

If the traveler quota is full, you may ask to be put on a waiting list.