Texas Bullet Train announces winners of student film competition

- **Video production, design students from Texas A&M and UT Arlington take top prizes**
- **Student film competition showcases freedom of time, exploring Texas and safety**
- **Category winners get $2,000 for their school and $5,000 split among team members**

DALLAS [Nov. 28, 2017] – Texas Central, developer of the Texas Bullet Train, announced today the university student winners of its short film competition, showcasing the high-speed project's many benefits.

The films' most common themes included giving riders freedom to use their time more productively while traveling and the chance to explore Texas more frequently in new and safer ways in a stress-free environment.

Video production and design students submitted entries based on creative vision, editing quality, use of sounds and visuals and other criteria. A panel of industry judges and online voting determined the winners, who will receive $2,000 for their school and $5,000 split among team members. They are:

- **Animation Excellence Prize:** Me, Myself, The Guy – Casey Moore, University of Texas at Arlington.
- **Live Action Excellence Prize**: No Train No Gain – Julia Walter, Brooke Cyphers and Jacob Whitley – Texas A&M University.
- **Creative Film Prize:** Texplorers – Stetson Carlile, Erin Brown and Miranda Mabery, Texas A&M University.

They can be viewed on the website at texascentral.com. The films were a mix of animated, live action and a combination of the two that came from individual students and student teams actively enrolled in an accredited Texas university on or near the train's route. It will connect North Texas and Houston, with a midway stop in the Brazos Valley, in 90 minutes.

"Students are some of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Texas Bullet Train," said Holly Reed, managing director, external affairs, for Texas Central, the investor-owned developer of the high-speed passenger train.

"As was stated in one of the submissions, they know this train will let you 'Be More and Do More.' They clearly recognize the train will make it easier, faster and safer to get home and to campus. And the train will connect students to a wider range of internships, guest lecturers, recruiters and more," Reed said.

"This innovative new high-tech industry creates a huge opportunity now and in the future. We enjoyed seeing the films they produced, with a creative vision for the Texas Bullet Train and the future of Texas," she said.

The eligible schools included, but were not limited to:
- **Texas A&M University** (College Station)
- **University of Houston** (Houston)
- **University of Texas at Dallas** (Richardson)
- **University of Texas at Arlington** (Arlington)
- **Southern Methodist University** (Dallas)
- **Texas Christian University** (Fort Worth)
- **Prairie View A&M University** (Prairie View)
- **Rice University** (Houston)
- **Texas Southern University** (Houston)
- **Sam Houston State University** (Huntsville)
- **University of North Texas** (Denton)

"Our students love using their video production skills for real-world applications and we couldn't have been more excited to partner with Texas Central on this opportunity," said LaDonna Aiken, broadcast lecturer at UT Arlington. "We have incredibly talented and creative student production teams, and I loved seeing how they envision all the Texas Bullet Train has to offer, while they experienced the thrill of seeing their work make a real difference in their community."

A panel of judges chose eight finalist videos that were shared on Texas Central's website, texascentral.com, for the final round of judging, which included pubic voting.

Participating judges were:
- **David Lowery**, filmmaker known for *Ain't Them Bodies Saints* (2013), Disney's remake of *Pete's Dragon*, and *A Ghost Story.*
- **Janis Burkland,** the Dallas Film commissioner,
- **Christiano Dias**, award-winning director, producer and writer, known for *Hurricane* (2016), *Monster in a House* (2014) and *King Eternal* (2013).
- **Yen Tan**, film producer and director, known for his award-winning films *Happy Birthday* (2002), and *Deadroom* (2005).
- **Jenna Jackson** of P+R Productions, an Emmy winner known for her work on the CBS program *48 Hours*.

- **Rick Ferguson**, the executive director of the Houston Film Commission.
- **Shezad Manjee**, founder and creative director, DHD Films.
- **Roy Burger**, owner and CEO, RB Film Productions whose current film is *The Burning of Brenham.*
- **Jalene Mack,** actress, writer and producer. Mack is known for her work on *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016), *Better Call Saul* (2015) and *Lucky Girl* (2015).

This is the second university-related contest hosted by Texas Central, coming a year after its design competition for Texas architecture students to help produce an inspiring vision for the high-speed train passenger stations. The competition drew 45 proposals, representing almost 100 Texas architecture students with students from UT, UT-Arlington and Prairie View A&M taking the top prizes.

The winning films' vision statements were:

Texplorers. "Texas is known for many things. Our beautiful landscapes, cowboys, our booming economy. But most importantly we are known for being big. That is great for the most part, until it comes to traveling. It takes around 3 hours and 40 minutes to get from Houston to Dallas. As most would know, a car ride that long is never appealing. However, the Texas Central Bullet Train could be the answer to making that trip worthwhile. The bullet train travels from one city to the next in approximately 90 minutes. Obviously, the ease of use this train is going to attract businesses from the areas to use it, but the demographic can be so much bigger than that.

"Two major obstacles that prevent young adults from traveling: time and inconvenience. However, this train solves both of those. Getting an airline ticket and navigating an airport is stressful, and taking the time to drive from North Texas to Houston is tedious. Therefore, it can be pretty difficult for young adults to visit family members, or spend a fun weekend away. It may not even feel worth the effort at times. The short film advertisement we will be creating will have a modern style with a story to tell. We want to reach young adults with the newest travel alternative: The Texas Central Bullet Train- connecting them to their travel plans at the utmost convenience."

Me, Myself, The Guy: "How does the bullet train benefit Texans? My chosen sub-prompt was to focus on how the bullet train will save us time. When it comes to commuting for work or pleasure, I can imagine most people would be very sour when thinking about all the time they waste in the act of just getting there, and I can also assume they are hungry for a time-efficient solution.

While I was visiting Japan a couple of years ago, I had the pleasure of traveling via the bullet train. I experienced firsthand the convenience and speed that the train brings with it, and being able to take that thrill back to Texas is something I would highly value.

My thought process for the aesthetic choice in the video, beginning as vintage and transitioning to a sleek design, is to further illustrate how the bullet train will bring us more closely to the modern era, and further innovate our travel as we move into the future. I hope you feel the same."

No Train No Gain: "We live in a country obsessed with time: fast food, speedy loans, and waiting two minutes for gourmet coffee. America runs on speed. The goal for our advertisement was to show just how much time can be saved by the creation of the bullet train. This yields more time for the joys of life: spending time with loved ones, leisure, relaxation, and fostering creativity. Change is best enacted when people find they own a personal stake in the matter. When Texans see that the bullet train not only provides a safe route, clean travel, and economic benefits (all great things that benefit the whole), but directly affects the individual by providing an easier, faster way to travel, people are more likely to get involved.

The idea of joining live action film and motion graphics is familiar with most audiences, but not overused in the world of advertisement. The video glides through shots of real people, in real situations, enabling our audience to feel personally connected to the situation and cause. Instead of throwing fact after fact out, we wanted to create a story through scenes pulled from everyday life (people spending time with family and friends, performers and hobbyists, etc.) to show how the Bullet Train not only helps Texas as a whole, but also connects communities and appeases the individual. Happy, yet subtle background music accompanied by a soothing narration pushed the calm, personal feel of the video. Lastly, the motion graphics provided are implemented within the video clip environments to look more natural, while simultaneously being aesthetically pleasing through organic and curved forms.

With clean, quirky illustrations, high quality film, and an overall relaxing atmosphere, we hope that our video is able to connect with people from all walks of life on the subject of time and how the Texas Central Bullet Train can help you save it."

ABOUT TEXAS CENTRAL
Texas Central is developing a new high-speed train that will connect North Texas, the Brazos Valley and Houston, using proven, world-class technology. The 90-minute trip will provide a safe, reliable and productive transportation alternative. The company's market-led approach is backed by investors, not government grants, a new business model for infrastructure advances. Texas Central and its affiliated entities will be responsible for the system's design, finance, construction, operation and maintenance. See more at www.texascentral.com.

For more information, please visit www.texascentral.com or contact:
Kate Heckenkemper
Hill+Knowlton Strategies
Kate.Heckenkemper@hkstrategies.com
(214) 584-6060