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TEXAS STATE DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION

**MIDLAND, ODESSA
CELEBRATE NEW LINK**
STORY ON PAGE FIVE



photo by Hilton Hagan

TRANSPORTATION **news**



April is 'Buckle-Up Month' p.6
Transit conference slated p.3

April 1984

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Department boasts talent

Public service isn't the easy career path it's sometimes made out to be, is it? At least in the area of providing and supporting a transportation system for millions of people, as we strive to do, it can get downright tough.

The job requires skilled, talented, dedicated, and keen-minded workers. And it requires those workers to be leaders in their professions, or Texas will fall behind in the great struggle to stay mobile.

In this and other editions of Transportation News, articles have documented the fact that we have the best and the brightest in this department. Top engineering honors, high achievement awards in the areas of automation, tourism, and research, as well as commendations in almost every other discipline in the department have come our way. And it's not by accident. We have achieved acclaim for the jobs we do because of the exceptional abilities of many department employees and their aptitude for practical application of those talents.

Organizations and associations of professionals outside the department have long recognized the outstanding contributions made by our employees to their varying disciplines.

I would like to add my compliments to those of you who have won, either individually or as a staff effort, the commendations and plaudits you richly deserve. CONGRATULATIONS!

Mark Goode

Lufkin Engineers receive top professional awards

Two Lufkin district engineers received top honors of the Pineywoods Chapter of the Texas Society of Professional Engineers for 1983.

District Engineer J. L. Beard was selected for the Engineer of the Year Award, and Tina L. Walker of the district design section, was judged Young Engineer of the Year.

Beard, a Lufkin native, received a degree in chemistry and mathematics in 1950 from Stephen F. Austin State University and a civil engineering degree in 1957 from the University of Texas. Having joined the department in 1953, he returned to Angelina County in 1957 where he worked as senior engineering assistant and resident engineer until 1961. During 1961 he transferred to the



Tina Walker... Young Engineer of the Year.

district headquarters at Lufkin where he served successively as senior laboratory engineer, supervising construction engineer, and district construction engineer prior to assuming his duties as district engineer in Dec. 1975.

He has been chapter president and state director of the Texas Society of Professional Engineers, a regional director of Professional Engineers in Government, and is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Walker received her bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from Purdue University. She worked in the Highway Design Division during the summer of 1979. After completing graduate studies in 1980, she has been working in the District 11 design section.

Walker has been active in the National Society of Professional Engineers since 1975 when she joined the Purdue Student Chapter. She held the offices of executive secretary in 1977 and president in 1978. In the Pineywoods Chapter, she has been a chapter director, librarian/historian and a member of the State Committee on Young Engineers. This year she has been the chapter scholarship chairman and a member of the Mathcounts Committee.

Other professional activities include membership in the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the Transportation Research Board and the American Society of Civil Engineers where she is a member of the Highway Division's Committee on Construction, Maintenance and Operations. ★ Gene Rudd

J.L. Beard... Pineywoods' Engineer of the Year.

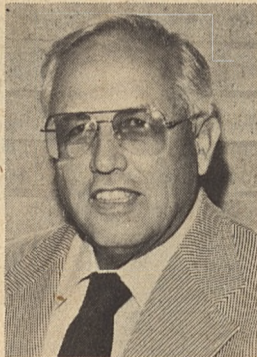


Walthall selected 1984 Bexar County 'Engineer of Year'

Thomas J. Walthall, assistant district engineer in San Antonio, was selected Engineer of the Year by the Bexar Chapter of the Texas Society of Professional Engineers.

Walthall, a native of San Antonio, has spent his entire 35-year career with the department, beginning soon after his graduation from Texas A&M University.

His first assignment was with the San Antonio Urban Expressway office as an engineering assistant. Following his professional engineer registration in 1951, he supervised the construction of much of the Interstate Highway system in San Antonio



Thomas J. Walthall... tops in the Alamo City.

and Bexar County and the early stages of the award-winning McAllister Freeway.

He became district administrative engineer in 1976 and he planned and implemented the upgrading of the district's fleet equipment and the expanded automation program.

He has actively sought out and recruited numerous engineering graduates for the district and has maintained active interest in their career development. ★

Galveston employee wins chapter title

Faye Cartwright, a 31-year veteran with the Galveston County resident engineer's office, was elected Woman of the Year by the HUB of the Mainland Chapter of the American Business Women's Association.

Annually, each ABWA chapter selects a member for the award, based on her achievements in the fields of business, education, community activities and participation in the association's activities.

The association is dedicated to the professional, educational, cultural and social advancement of business women. It has more than 2,000 chapters in the United States and Puerto Rico, with more than 110,000 members.

Faye lives in Dickinson with her husband, Zack, and son, Gregg. ★

Yielding takes engineer honor for Dallas area

Dallas DE Bob Yielding was named Engineer of the Year by the Dallas chapter of the professional engineering society.

Yielding, head of the Dallas district since April 1980, is in charge of highway activities in Dallas, Navarro, Ellis, Kaufman, Denton, Collin and Rockwall Counties. Since taking over, he has been responsible for the con-



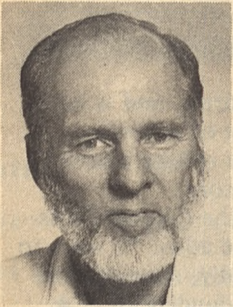
Bob Yielding... Dallas Engineer of the Year.

struction of projects totaling more than \$335 million.

A 1943 graduate of Corsicana High School, he served in the naval air corps in World War II and earned a civil engineering degree from Southern Methodist University. He has 37 years service with the department. He received the Dewitt C. Greer Award in 1974. ★

Fort Worth employee wins Silver Beaver

Lloyd Slawson, a draftsman in the Fort Worth district office, has been awarded the Silver Beaver, one of Scouting's highest awards for adult leaders.



Lloyd Slawson... receives high scouting award.

Slawson, who has 22 years with the department, served as scoutmaster for 20 years and presently is scouting coordinator for the troop. For the past three years, he has spent his vacation taking the troops to summer camp. ★

Transportation News

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Number 7

A newsletter published monthly by the Travel and Information Division of the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation at 11th and Brazos Sts., Austin, Texas 78701.

Hilton Hagan, editor; Rosemary Williams, assistant editor; Ernest Jordan, art editor; Kerry Bullock, Pete Haight, Bo McCarver, Bob Neely, Matt Samaripa, contributing editors; Jan Skapple, administrative aide.

Manuscripts, photos, news tips invited. Telephone (512) 475-6070, or TexAn 822-6070.

REGISTRATION FORM - USE SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH ATTENDEE

TWELFTH ANNUAL TEXAS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE
WACO HILTON HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTER
APRIL 30 - MAY 2, 1984

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Enclosed: _____ Make checks payable to and mail this form to:

Conference Registration Fee	\$50.00	Texas Public Transportation Conference
Conference Registration Fee After April 20th	\$60.00	P.O. Box 5051
Extra Guest Tickets for Reception	\$20.00	Austin, Texas 78763

TOTAL _____

Annual transit meeting April 30-May 2 in Waco

Waco's convention center is the site for the Twelfth Annual Texas Public Transportation Conference April 30 through May 2.

Dick Chapman, coordinator of the meeting, said the keynote luncheon will open the conference at noon on Monday, April 30, followed by a general session at which national and state leaders have been invited to speak.

Ralph Stanley, administrator of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, has been invited and Engineer-Director Mark Goode will present the state outlook.

Chairman Tom Nlskala of the Transit Industry Advisory Committee, Rudy Bruhns of the Texas Taxicab Owners Advisory Committee, and Scott Keller of the Texas Intercity Bus Operators Committee, will discuss public transportation.

The first day's program will close with a presentation of the vendor's view of the industry by Daniel M. Reichard, vice-president of sales of General Farebox, Inc.

Tuesday will be devoted to sessions specifically designed for large transit systems, small transit systems, intercity bus systems, taxis, and small urban and rural transportation systems.

On Wednesday, May 2, legislation and regulation will be the general topic and will include a discussion of current issues with an UMTA representative, an examination of the outlook for taxi regulation, and a frank discussion between the department and transportation providers concerning legislative needs and what might realistically be expected from the next session of the Legislature.

Climaxing the conference will be the Friend of Texas Transit Luncheon at noon at which

the coveted award will be presented. Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby has been invited to address this gathering.

Pre-registration can be accomplished by sending the adjoining form in by April 20. ★

Engineer names transit authority

Bill E. Davis submitted the entry selected by the Interim Executive Committee as the winner in the City of Arlington's "name the transportation authority" contest.

Arlington Transit Authority (ATA) is the name that will be assigned to what eventually could be the city's transportation authority.

Davis, a 27-year Arlington resident, is the



Billy Davis...picks winning name.

Fort Worth district maintenance engineer. He was presented a \$100 cash award by Tom Clayton, chairman of the Interim Executive Committee.

The contest to name the transportation authority was initiated by the Interim Executive Committee to heighten public interest in transportation issues they are studying. ★

Fort Worth transit official heads group

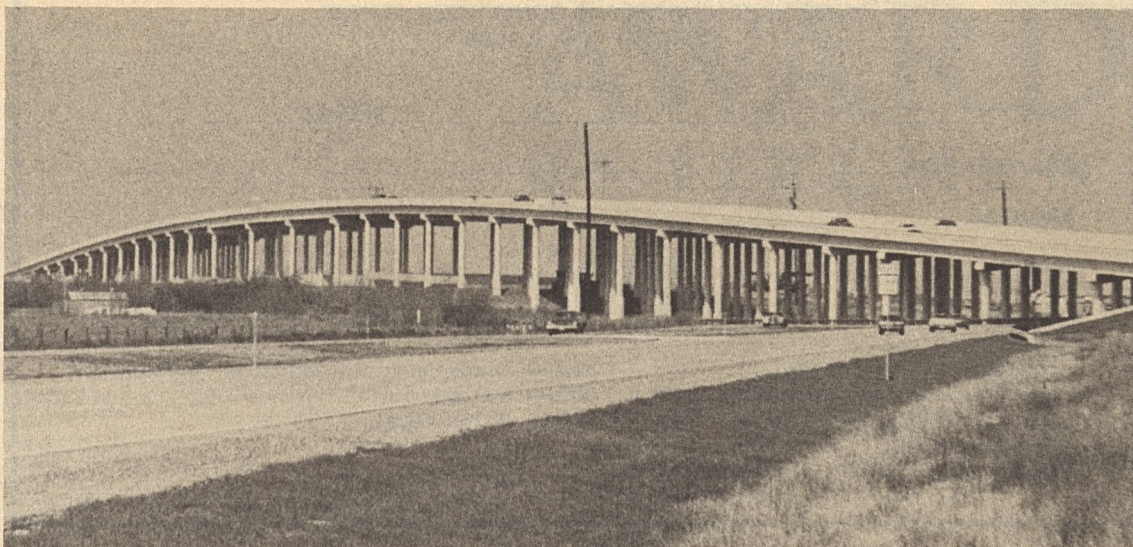
Larry Heil, president of McDonald Transit Associates, Inc., of Fort Worth, has been elected president of the South West Transit Association.

Heil, who won the department's 1981 Friend of Texas Transit Award, heads the firm which supplies contract management services for CITRAN in Fort Worth, CITIBUS in Lubbock and the Waco and Abilene transit

systems as well as other systems in Florida, Georgia and California.

The association, founded four years ago, includes professionals in the urban transit industry in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and New Mexico. Heil previously served as secretary/treasurer and vice-president of the association. ★

Long-awaited bridge dedicated in Brazoria



Graceful arch carries traffic across Brazos River diversion channel.



Local, state dignitaries share in dedication.

Ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the opening of the Texas 36 bridge over the Brazos River Diversion Channel in southern Brazoria County were conducted on Feb. 17, ending dependency on an old movable bridge.

The Brazosport Chamber of Commerce sponsored the ceremonies which were attended by community leaders and state, county and city officials.

It was a moment of triumph to the many who had worked for years for this project. But standing on the magnificent \$30 million structure, which stood tall and proud in the morning sun casting a huge, arching shadow down the channel, one couldn't help but sense the mixed emotions of those looking down the channel, at the old movable bridge whose life soon come to an end after many years of faithful, if less than adequate, service.

Construction on the new four-lane bridge was started in 1980 by Williams Brothers Construction Company. The bridge has a 50-foot navigational clearance and is roughly 3,300 feet long.

In attendance at the ceremonies representing the department were: Warren Lee Smith for DHT Commissioner John Butler; Frank Hebner, Houston District's Construction Engineer; Richard McDonald, Supervisory Resident Engineer on the project; and Richard Christie, District 12's Public Affairs Officer. Also in attendance was former supervisory resident engineer for Brazoria County, Francis Miksovsky. Miksovsky was involved in the early planning stages of this project.

★ Richard Christie

Childress retiree took over after men went off to war

After 42 years and six months, Maynette Stiner has retired from a job her boss almost didn't give her—because he didn't think she would stay.

But she was hired and thus launched one of the longest careers in the history of the Childress district. And she could have worked several years more if she'd wanted.

"My career has been interesting and challenging, but I think it's time to make a change in my life," she said.

Times were changing in 1941, too, with changes that would affect the direction of her career with the department.

"Shortly after I went to work as secretary to Mr. Percy Bailey, the district engineer, many of the highway engineers joined the military or went to work for the Corps of Engineers during World War II," she said. "I happened to be in the right place at the right time."

She was transferred to the engineering side of the district's work to help take up some slack.

"When I was hired, Mr. Bailey was actually looking for a man with some engineering experience. William B. Alderman had left to become editor of Texas Parade. Mr. Bailey told me he thought I could do the work, but he didn't think I would stay. I had worked nearly every place in town, leaving each time for a better job."

But stay she did, doing a lot of what back then was thought of as 'a man's work.' "I have done secretarial work and engineering

work and everything in between," she said.

She has a special talent for understanding and processing highway construction contract-related documents. In a world of rules and regulations governing how the state does business with contractors, this kind of attention to detail is important.

**Maynette Stiner
... Almost didn't
get the job.**



District Design Engineer Huck Castleberry said Stiner always has been the person the engineers rely on when problems surface in various documents related to plans, specifications and payments for highway contracts.

"She has helped us get the job done right," he said. "When we have someone who knows her job as well as she does, you just stand back and let her do it."

District Engineer Lewis H. White said he hopes her retirement will be a very satisfactory experience. "Her experience and

knowledge gained over 42 years will be greatly missed," he said.

Stiner said then-Assistant District Engineer Palmer Massey gave her the best basic training in her duties on the engineering side of the work. "Others along the way have helped and I, in turn, have been able to help others as they started," she said.

The computer has taken a lot of the drudgery out of highway work, she said, noting the changes that have occurred since she began.

She plans to stay in Childress, and is looking forward to a wide range of activities, including some travel, some college courses and some art and music lessons.

As an active member of the Central Christian Church in Childress she adds: "I want to continue to develop spiritually, mentally and physically and lead a well-rounded life." ★

Fredericksburg's Jones ends 37-year DHT career

Rufus Jones, a 37-year veteran with the department, retired at the end of February. Since 1960, he has been in charge of the Gillespie County maintenance section.

Three Austin district engineers attended his retirement ceremony, held at the section headquarters in Fredericksburg. They were Bob Brown, present DE, and retirees Mulkey Owens and Ed Bluestein.

Jones also received a letter from Mrs. Lady Bird Johnson, thanking him for his concern with making the highways in Gillespie County more beautiful and for his assistance to the former first lady in other projects in the LBJ Ranch country. ★



After the dedication, the crowd heads for the barbecue in the big tent.

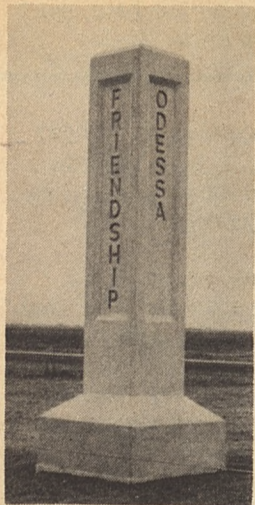
New highway link seals Midland-Odessa friendship

Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby drew a laugh when he called the two cities "capitals of cooperation."

Midland and Odessa have not always been friendly neighbors. If the feud between the two Permian Basin population centers was not on the scale of the one between Dallas and Fort Worth, it was just because the two Metroplex cities were bigger. Midland and Odessa squabbled with just as much intensity.

But this chilly, blustery Saturday was going to help change all that. This, after all, was the dedication of State Highway 191, a modest designation for a highway that is a new link between the two cities.

The new north link extends from Spur 492 (42nd Street) and Loop 338 in Odessa to Loop 250 in Midland. The facility now consists of two frontage roads, each operating



Median marker is a symbol of friendship.

with one-way traffic. There is room in the wide median for freeway lanes ultimately.

There was nothing modest about the dedication.

Ribbon-cuttings have been rare enough in these money-short times for the department. But this had to be the biggest, by many standards, in quite a while.

For one thing there was the crowd. The sponsors of the dedication ceremonies, the chambers of commerce of both cities, sold 1,000 tickets to a barbecue lunch after the festivities at the dedication. Almost that many were there.

Perhaps not all who had tickets showed up because of the weather. It was supposed to be beautiful, temperature in the 70s—partly cloudy—a rare spring day in West Texas. But what the weather served up on this March 10

was 41 degrees and wall-to-wall overcast, plus the 20-mile-an-hour-and-more zephyrs West Texas is rightfully famous for. That put the wind chill down toward the high 20s.

Commission Member John Butler left Houston that morning without a topcoat. The Houston weather prophets were still predic-

ON THE COVER

Officials from Odessa and Midland fill in the last lane divider dash on the new north link between the cities.

ting the balmy 70s when his plane took off. DE Bill Lancaster made some points by lending Butler an overcoat, a fact Butler himself acknowledged before the crowd.

Butler also told the group: "Good-natured civic rivalry is fun, sometimes, but those who dare to dream big dreams also strive to keep it in perspective." He urged the cities to cooperate even more in preparing for the

growth that is on the way to Texas in the next two decades.

He also urged the area to look for other industries, including tourism, to supplement the area's heavy involvement with the oil industry.

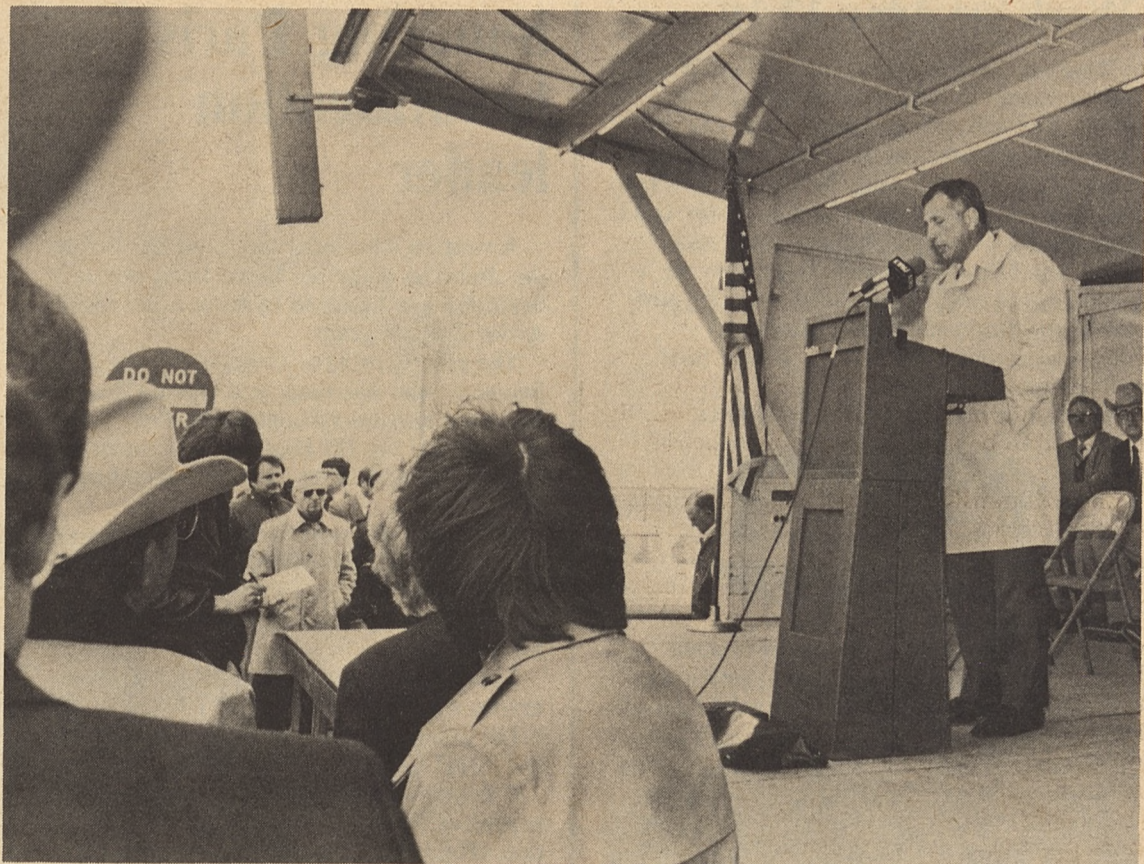
House Speaker Gib Lewis also was there for the festivities and two former Odessa district engineers were introduced to the crowd: DHT Assistant Engineer-Director Henry Pearson and retiree Paul Coleman, who is living in Paris.

There was no ribbon-cutting. Instead, the last dash line separating lanes on the new highway was left outlined only.

Midland city and county officials wielded paint rollers from one end on the incomplete stripe, while their counterparts from Odessa and Ector County filled in the other end of the stripe. The paint rollers met midway and the crowd let up a bipartisan cheer.

Not far away there is a towering monument, an obelisk with the word "friendship" flanked by the names of the two cities. Duane Jones, president of The University of Texas of the Permian Basin, unveiled a plaque donated by the university which further enunciated the new buddy-buddy relationship. The plaque will be placed on the obelisk at a later date. The impressive monument stands squarely on the county line in the median of the new highway.

All in all, it was a most impressive day. ★ Hilton Hagan



Commission Member John Butler speaks to the crowd.

Increase in seat belt use aim of program

Governor White has proclaimed April "Buckle-Up Month," and has urged all Texans to "take a few extra seconds to protect themselves and their passengers by use of safety belts and car seats."

The Department is encouraging its own employees and the motoring public to buckle up through several special efforts. (See also the letter to employees from Mr. Goode, Transportation News, July 1983.)

Texas leads the nation in traffic deaths of children between the ages of 0 and 4, according to the National Transportation Safety Board, and is second only to California in fatalities in the 5- to 17-year-old age group.

Part of this problem may be that usage of safety belts in Texas is so low. Observations reveal the following usage rates for Texas drivers: San Antonio with 8.7 percent usage, Houston with 9.4 percent, Dallas with 6.3 percent, Lubbock with a range of 2.6 to 7.3 percent, and Austin with a high ranging from 9.5 to 18.3 percent. Comparatively, an average of usage in 19 of the nation's major cities equals a 13.8 percent utilization of safety belts by drivers.

To increase use among employees, the Department has had a long-standing policy requiring employees to buckle up. In a questionnaire survey of employees conducted in March, 1983, by Roland Klar, District 15 Traffic Safety Specialist, 54 percent of those responding said that an official order or regulation requiring safety belts would have "very much" influence on their safety belt use. However, in the same questionnaire, 39 percent stated they "never" wear a safety belt, while only 18 percent said they "usually" or "always" wear a safety belt.

Since many employees therefore either are not aware of the policy or have forgotten it, the Department will be installing stickers in official vehicles. These stickers read: "Safety belt use is required." Department employees also have available to them from Safety and



"Don't be a hairbag, buckle up," reminds Bruce Weitz of Hill Street Blues.

Maintenance Operations and Insurance Divisions literature and audio-visual material on safety belts.

With the use of federal and state funds, the Department is also supporting several projects in the state. More than \$400,000 will be used to encourage and evaluate the use of car safety seats for children. Another \$400,000 will be spent this fiscal year to encourage and evaluate the use of safety belts.

"Don't be a hairbag! Use your safety belt," growls Detective Mick Belcker of Hill Street Blues (actor Bruce Weitz) in a public service announcement. A pilot project for Austin and Travis County has been designed to test the concept of a large-scale community safety belt effort. Actor Bruce Weitz, Cowboy Tony Dorsett, and Trooper Mike Bourland are featured in public service materials for the program. They urge viewers to "reach for it" and buckle that safety belt.

Research on safety belt use has shown that incentives and corporate employee programs

can be highly effective in increasing safety belt use, so these two components are strongly featured in both Austin and San Antonio, which is conducting a similar program with community and federal support. Lockheed Austin Division has launched an extensive program for its employees, as has the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Austin/Travis County Health Department and City of Austin, and Lamar Savings in Austin, plus USAA, Tesero, and Southwestern Bell in San Antonio. As Larry Jenkins, Vice President and General Manager for Lockheed Austin Division, said when approached to participate, "It's difficult to be against a campaign to keep people alive."

Once the evaluation results are in from the Austin program, one or two additional cities may be approached to take on a similar effort.

The Texas PTA is combining volunteer action with some traffic safety funds to work with the schools in Texas. Five model schools, which are currently conducting evaluation and incentive programs for the students and parents, will provide the examples for expanding this project next fiscal year.

In addition, the Department will not be alone in its effort to increase safety belt use among its state employees. At least three other state agencies have safety belt use policies in effect. The Department of Health has incorporated safety belt promotion in its employee wellness program. The staff of the Attorney General's Office has recently given a series of presentations on the importance of safety belt use.

The Texas Safety Association, in cooperation with this Department and the Governor's Office, has targeted 30 state agencies in which to provide special training and safety belt and alcohol awareness.

The message to everybody will be, as Tony Dorsett says, "Before you hit the road, reach for it! And buckle up." ★ Susan Bryant

National Transportation Week set May 13-19

This year, National Transportation Week will be observed during the week of May 13-19. The event is sponsored jointly by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Traffic Clubs International and other organizations. Many DHT districts are active participants each year.

National Transportation Week provides a planned, organized means of reminding people of the vital role that all modes of transportation play in their lives and their economic well-being.

Second, it affords an opportunity to



demonstrate the part that the department plays in an integrated transportation system.

Third, it provides friends and neighbors of local organizations of the department opportunities to get better acquainted with the men and women of the department through such events as open houses, displays in shopping areas, speaking engagements and special programs during the week. ★

District joins in honoring Paris beautification leader

A woman who inherited from her father the desire to make her home town more beautiful was honored in Paris in a special Arbor Day program.

The efforts of Mrs. Georgia B. Mayse Bessano, who has been instrumental in planting crape myrtles throughout the city and especially along US Highway 271 northward toward the Red River, will be remembered forever.

A marker just north of the city limits near one honoring Road Hand Sam Weiss, was dedicated during the Arbor Day festivities. District Engineer Ray Lindholm was among the speakers.

Lindholm accepted more than 260 crape myrtle which were combined with more than 1,370 other plants along the highway, making it a floral gateway into the state.

"Your purchase of crape myrtle plants contributed greatly to our highway beautification efforts and we thank you very much. I want to assure you that we will continue to

cooperate with your efforts to make US 271 north a crape myrtle vista to be enjoyed by those entering Texas from Oklahoma and for the enjoyment of local citizens as well," Lindholm said.

Mrs. Bessano was unable to attend the program, but sent word by her son, Pat, that she had inherited her will to beautify Paris from her father, the late A.G. (Pat) Mayse. In 1934, Mayse began planning to make Paris the "Crape Myrtle City," in anticipation of the Texas Centennial in 1936. ★



DE Lindholm pays tribute to Mrs. Bessano.

ERS trustees extend Blue Cross for FY 85

The trustees of the Employees Retirement System voted to extend for another year the Blue Cross health insurance contract which calls for a 24.8 percent increase in premiums.

The board's action, taken at a March 27 meeting in Austin, was at odds with a strong recommendation from the Group Insurance Advisory Committee (GIAC) which had earlier voted 17 to 0, with one member abstaining, to reject the Blue Cross increase and open the contract to other bidders.

The GIAC also recommended that the health insurance package be restructured to become a six-year contract with a single plan having several cost-containment features. While the trustees were generally receptive to the GIAC recommendation that the health insurance program be restructured for the next bidding period, it elected to continue with the Blue Cross contract for several reasons.

The trustees, mindful that recommendations by the Governor's Task Force on

Employee Insurance and Cost Containment will probably require rebidding the contract next year, felt that rebidding this year would not draw any new bidders (who are also aware of the pending recommendations). The trustees acted under strong evidence that rebidding would probably result in no bids at all.

In other actions, the ERS board approved several new health maintenance organizations (HMOs) and indicated that others will be considered during meetings later this summer. The newly approved HMOs are Centroplex Health Plan, Temple; Central Texas Health Plan, Austin; Planned Health, Corpus Christi; Good Health Plus, San Antonio and Maxicare Texas, Houston.

The board of trustees also approved a 15.43 percent decrease in premiums for optional life and disability insurance.

The net result of these actions will be a continuation of the present Blue Cross health insurance package at a 24.8 percent increase

through August, 1985, with a 15.43 reduction in life and disability insurance premiums. (A three percent pay increase is presently scheduled for next September.) However, the increasing numbers of HMOs will offer other options for employees wanting more comprehensive coverage with less out-of-pocket expenses.

With more than 4,000 surveys tabulated from last month's Transportation News, it is apparent that more comprehensive coverage is desired with less deductible. At press time, approximately sixty percent of the returns indicate a desire for a single plan, similar to the current high plan coverage, with increases in premiums—rather than in deductible—under a self-insured program. More than eighty percent want to retain accidental injury coverage while almost a third are willing to have more cost-containment features in the policy. The complete results of the survey will be published in next month's issue. ★ Bo McCarver

SPECIAL DELIVERY: 'Copter used in lifting equipment to office roof

Some new equipment took the high road to the top of the Dewitt C. Greer State Highway Building March 10.

The 800-pound blowers were too big to manhandle up the stairs to the roof of the building, so the Equipment and Procurement Division turned to Austin Business

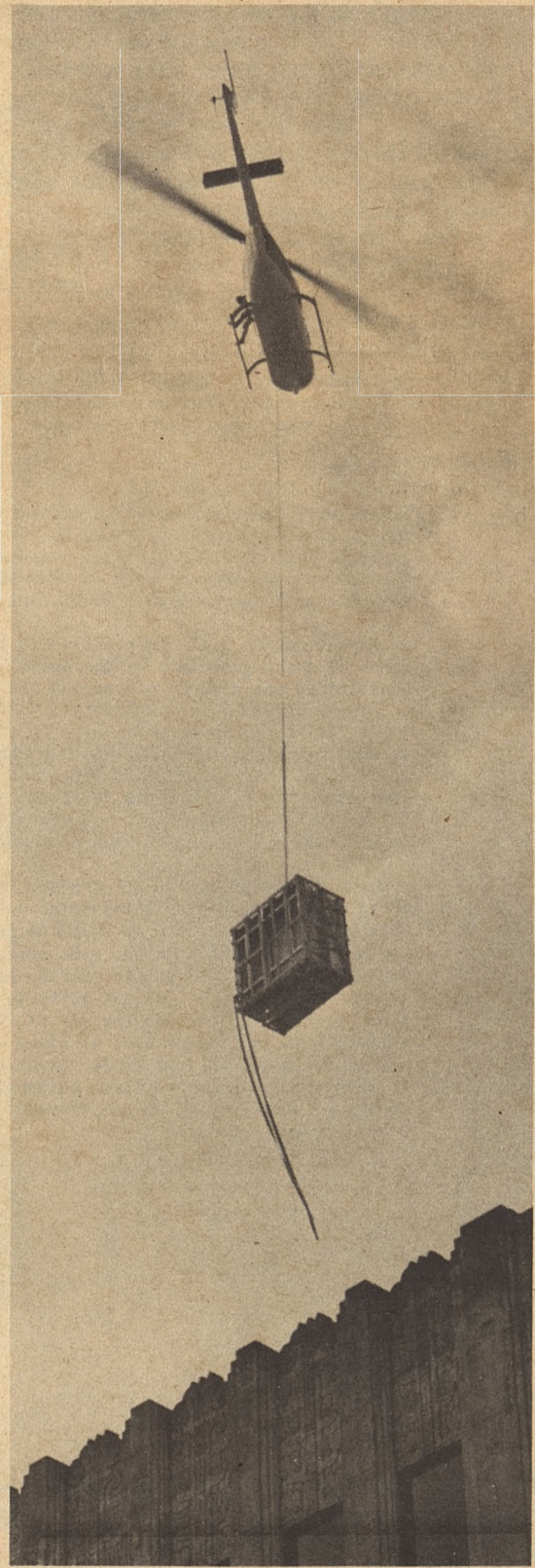
Helicopters for a lift.

The packages were blowers, actually stairwell pressurization fans, to be mounted on top of the two stairwells in the building. The installation is a part of a new fire protection system going into the 50-year-old main headquarters building of the department.

Early that Saturday morning, the equipment was arrayed on the visitor parking lot at 11th and Congress, a professional rigger standing by. The helicopter flew in and, without landing attached the line dangling from the craft to the load.

Up and away went the 'copter, neatly depositing the load on the roof. The same procedure brought up the equipment for the other side of the building and, in minutes, the job was done.

The flagpole atop the building, a capitol area landmark for years, was lowered to accommodate the flights. ★



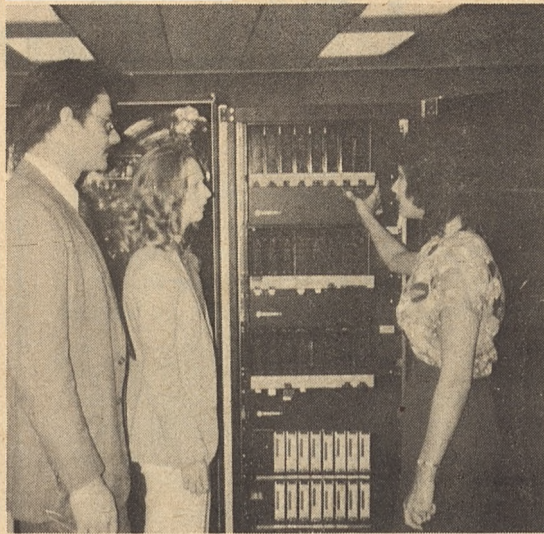
photos by Bob Gates

New magazine staffer gets district tour

Remember when you first started working for the highway department and you had all kinds of questions? Jack Lowry was no exception.

Recently named the associate editor of *Texas Highways* magazine, Lowry wanted to find out how a district office functioned on a daily basis, and what were the responsibilities of its employees.

After contacting Mark Ball, Austin district public affairs officer, Lowry and Lisa Cramer, secretary to the magazine staff, showed up for a tour of the facilities. Cramer, a department employee for the last



Gina Orton of the Austin Regional Computer Center shows Lowry and Cramer some of the equipment on a recent tour of the District.

four years had never been to a district office. Lowry had previously worked in the Latin American Studies section of the University of Texas and was surprised to find out how complicated it was to get a road built and then maintained.

"I had no idea there were so many people working towards building roads," said Lowry. "It would be nice if those who think no one is doing anything about our traffic problems would take the same tour we had and see that there are people who care."

After meeting with District Administrative Engineer Claude Garrett, the two set out on getting answers to their questions on construction, design, traffic, maintenance, permits, right-of-way, signs, and computers.

"It really was interesting," said Cramer. "I think they should do this for all new employees." ★

Charlie Sthapitanonda retires at Amarillo

Prachan "Charlie" Sthapitanonda of Amarillo recently retired from the department announced District Engineer A. L. McKee.

Sthapitanonda started to work for the department in 1961 in Amarillo. He worked as a draftsman and field party chief until 1976. He then worked as a field party chief for the City of Amarillo 1976-78 when he returned to work for the state agency as a right-of-way utility agent.

Born in Bangkok, Thailand, Sthapitanonda graduated from the Royal Thai Air Force Academy in May 1943. In 1957, he graduated from Amarillo College with an associate degree in applied science. Also, he attended Texas Tech and has completed a maintenance officer's course at Sheppard and Amarillo Air Force bases.

In 1955, he retired from the Royal Thai Air Force as a first lieutenant.

Sthapitanonda and his wife, Mary Joan, have four children and six grandchildren. ★

Three key people retire in Lubbock

Three key people in Lubbock district headquarters organization retired recently.

James T. Hill, in charge of the district laboratory, retired March 1 after 39 years service with the department. A native of Fort Smith, AR, Hill began in 1945 as a junior office assistant.

Also retiring was Eugene C. Bradford, sign superintendent, who retired Jan. 31 after 38 years of service, 36 of them as sign supervisor.

Also retiring was Jimmie Pendley, personnel assistant. Jimmie began as a clerk-typist in 1963 in the accounting department of the district office. ★

Gilbert Moldenhauer is retiree

Gilbert Moldenhauer, with the Boerne maintenance section, is retiring after 26 years of outstanding service to the people of Texas.

Recalling his first days with the SDHPT, Moldenhauer said, "The first two weeks on the job I did nothing but carry rocks. After that I ran a mower." His dedication and hard work led to his eventual promotion to senior motor grader operator. ★

Some things never change



COMMISSION
JOHN S. REDDITT, CHAIRMAN
REUBEN WILLIAMS
FRCD E. KHETSCH

TEXAS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
Austin, Texas
March 15, 1947

STATE HIGHWAY ENGINEER
D. C. GREER

To: Messrs. G. A. Youngs, H. C. O'Neal, J. L. Ross,
All Resident Engineers, Maintenance Foremen
and other Supervisory Employees

FILE NO.

Gentlemen:

I have previously attempted to emphasize the importance of confining your use of State Equipment to State Business, and avoid any use what-so-ever of State equipment for personal business. On occasions I still note that some of you top men, as well as some of your other employees, use your vehicles on business that I would term personal.

My attention has again been called to this matter by actions recently taken in the Legislature by the Audit Committee, as well as some of the Legislators who also have observed the illegal use on personal business of State equipment.

In addition to the use of State Equipment for personal use being a real infraction with rather stiff penalties provided, our policy, as well as your common sense, should be sufficient to cause to strictly adhere and to thoroughly acquaint your men who also have the use of pickups, station wagons, etc., which are parked at their homes.

I would like your utmost cooperation in this matter and to remind you that it is generally what we consider as rather minor infractions that get us into more trouble than what could be deemed major infractions. All of our work is generally in the wide open and since we are an organization enjoying goodwill and public confidence but still vulnerable to certain groups everywhere who are not quite so friendly, it behooves us at all times to strictly confine the use of State equipment to State business. I realize it is a temptation at times when possibly the family car is not available to get in your State car or other piece of equipment and run to town for groceries or other personal business, but this temptation should be side-tracked as you consider the consequences that might result.

Sincerely yours,

Ed Bluestein
District Engineer

EB:nj

The recent administrative reminder about the use of state cars recalled that the problem has been one of concern for a long time. This 37-year-old letter from District 19 illustrates the point.

Houston district conducts first secretarial seminar

Sixty support people in the Houston district participated in the district's first Secretarial Seminar in January.

Developed by four career employees, the classes were designed to include bookkeepers, clerks, and others performing or overseeing clerical work, in addition to the secretaries.

The developers of the course were Janet Hartman, secretary to the district maintenance engineer; Joanne Hemme, district personnel director; Darla Lawrence, secretary to the district engineer, and Sylvia Zuniga of the district design section.

Purposes of the seminars were to standardize the district's correspondence procedures, to provide reference material that would be helpful in daily operations and to furnish an

insight into the 'personality' aspect of the employees' jobs.

The seminar kicked off each morning with a talk on self-improvement, motivation, and how to get ahead with the department. The participants got into the act by listing and discussing good traits that make a support person "outstanding" and bad traits that make a boss "go bananas." A "Rate Yourself" exercise listing these various traits was given to see if there was any room for improvement.

A personal inventory was completed by each attendee that showed what type of personality each has, and how to deal with other personalities in the office. This resulted in lots of fun and laughter.



Participants in the first secretarial seminar of the Houston district.

All who attended the seminar received copies of *The Gregg Reference Manual* to use at their desks. Sessions on grammar, spelling, punctuation, and related subjects were presented. The support people had exercises to do which helped them remember old things forgotten and gave them practice for using the reference book for future questions. Each support person was also given an *Instant Spelling Dictionary* for quick, easy reference.

A *District 12 Standard Office Procedures Manual* was also handed out to each person. The SOP manual contained district policies and procedures on a number of things, including correspondence, mail handling, and letter styles and formats for use in the District to ensure that all correspondence would look the same regardless of the office preparing it.

The SOP manual also contained a section with organization charts of the department and the district, a description of what each district office section is responsible for, and information on a typical resident engineer's office and a maintenance section to aid in routing telephone calls and visitors.

Each day ended with Charlene Sierra, Janelle Gbur, and Richard Christie presenting general information and word processing, records management, telephones, and telephone courtesy. ★ Richard Christie

San Antonio marks hazardous carriers

San Antonio may be the first district to mark its equipment with placards identifying hazardous materials. Approximately 60 fuel trailers, asphalt distributors and paint striping trucks were tagged.

Adhesive backed, weather-resistant placards are applied to both sides and the rear of equipment if it is normally used to haul hazardous—usually flammable—material. Magnetic markers are available for temporary use. The asphalt distributors are given stickers outlining safe operating instructions.

Although the State is exempt from federal statutes requiring it, the placarding can be a life saver for employees and citizens alike. In the event of an accident, the placards alert police and fire fighters to the dangers they face if a fire erupts.

The program, expected to spread to other districts, was suggested by District Safety Coordinator Tim Mercer and his assistant, Karen Migl. Lloyd Mair, shop superintendent, coordinated the effort through the district shop. ★

Comptroller changing to paper for warrants

There will be a little extra in your paycheck soon. But don't get excited, the check itself will be bigger, not the amount.

The State Comptroller's office notified Director of Finance Al Castello that it is converting the printing of state warrants, including those used to pay employees, from card stock to paper stock.

Although the warrants will be the same design and color, they will be a quarter-inch wider. The old ones were 3-1/4 inches wide and the new ones are 3-1/2 inches wide. ★

EVENTS

DHT

CALENDAR

APRIL

- 3-4 Highway Construction Lettings, Austin
- 3-5 Geotechnical Engineers Conference, Austin, D-9X
- 3-5 Urban Planning Financial Management Course, San Antonio, D-10P
- 10-11 Regional Maintenance Conference (Districts 1, 10, 11, 13, 17, 19, 20 & 21), Bryan, D-18M
- 10-13 Training for FIMS Implementation (Districts 1, 10, 11, 18, 19, & 20), Austin, D-3
- 11 Commission Public Hearing, Austin
- 16-20 Texas Travel Counselors Conference, Waco, D-16
- 17 Bridge Deck Repair and Maintenance Demonstration Project, Abilene, D-10R
- 17-20 Training for FIMS Implementation (Districts 12, 13, 14, 16, 17 & 21), Austin, D-3
- 24-25 Regional Maintenance Conference (Districts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 23 & 25), Abilene, D-18M

- 24-27 Training for FIMS Implementation (Districts 5, 6, 7, 8, 15 & 24), Austin, D-3

- 30-May 2 Public Transportation Conference, Waco, D-10M

MAY

- 8-9 Highway Construction Lettings, Austin
- 8-9 Traffic Engineering Conference, Austin, D-18T
- 8-11 Training for FIMS Implementation (Districts 2, 3, 4, 9, 23 & 25), Austin, D-3
- 15-16 District Safety Coordinators Meeting, Austin, D-20
- 16 Commission Public Hearing, Austin
- 21-23 Traffic Safety Specialists and Traffic Accident Records Contact Persons Meeting, Austin, D-18TS
- 22-25 Training for FIMS Implementation (Divisions), Austin, D-3
- 28 Holiday, Memorial Day

AWARDS RETIREMENTS

Service Awards

(April 1984)

Automation Division

Cone R. Dansby Jr., Morgan W. Price, 30 years; Bert A. Lundell, 20 years; Karen V. Vanhooser, 10 years; Adrian J. Janak, five years.

Bridge Division

Norman A. Loney, 40 years.

Construction Division

Connie F. Jett, 25 years; Frances Saenz, five years.

Equipment and Procurement Division

Christopher W. Fulkes, 35 years; William G. Willman Jr., 30 years; Burrell B. Bentley, 25 years; Robert C. Johns, 15 years; Werner G. Schmidt, Donald A. Tutt, Bertha H. Whitley, 10 years; Michael A. Castillo, five years.

Finance Division

Lee S. Reese Jr., 35 years; William A. Grote, 25 years.

Highway Design Division

Richard B. Rogers, five years.

Human Resources Division

Maria M. Bell, 25 years.

Insurance Division

James D. Arceneaux, five years.

Materials and Tests Division

Samuel A. Walker, 35 years; Carmon M. Grant, 30 years; Douglas L. Neely, 15 years.

Motor Vehicle Division

William H. Billingsley, 25 years; Charles D. Ray, 20 years; Michael O. Lansdowne, Mary W. Reaves, 15 years.

Safety and Maintenance Operations Division

Robert B. Ledesma, 15 years.

Transportation Planning Division

Everett T. Keese, 30 years; Roger D. Jones, Lena P. Margos, Kenneth D. Wharton, 15 years.

District 1

Riley C. Corzine, 35 years; Earl Abbott, Byron M. Logan, Emmett J. Tredway, 30 years; Benjamin H. Goforth, 15 years; Tracy M. Johnson, Keith W. Mitchell, Jesse L. Towers Jr., five years.

District 2

Calvin C. Maxwell, 40 years; Ira C. Lyon, 30 years; Raymond T. Buzalsky, Rosalie H. Crabtree, Betty W. Gammon, Nolan W. Griffith, Charles T. Ryan, William L. Wimberley, 15 years; M.E. Armstrong, Vergie A. Graham, 10 years; Ernest R. Carr, Randall E. Grand, James P. Jennings, Tai T. Nguyen, James N. Weaver, Velina G. Willis, five years.

District 3

Allen O. Blodgett, Lloyd E. Walters, 35 years; Eugene R. Wood, 25 years; George P. Larison, 20 years.

District 4

Joe P. Farrar, 35 years; Jo Ann C. Banks, Thomas E. Wheat, 25 years; Burton D. Davis, David M. Hix, Gerald R. Wyche, 20 years; Claudene L. Hartranft, 10 years; Wallace R. Fritts, Joe R. Moore, five years.

District 5

Jerry D. Anderson, Walter L. Josey, 20 years; Delphine S. Sharp, 10 years; Lance C. Hudgin, Brian G. Rudd, John S. Taylor, five years.

District 6

Felipe G. Arredondo, Jose T. Barrantey Jr., Bobby M. Monteith, 30 years; Ignacio Gonzalez, Price H. Pool, 25 years; Jack L. English, 15 years.

District 7

Heliberto G. Salazar, 40 years; Frank L. Ayres, 35 years; Horacio Castillo, Irma E. Dodson, Gavier M. Gonzales, William G. McBee, 25 years; Richard R. Horne, Rutilio V. Robledo, 20 years; Heraldo F. Martinez, 15 years; James C. Bell, Albert F. Estrada, Reuben P. Montez, Dean W. Pritchard, Francisco Vasquez, five years.

District 8

Thomas Jones, Waymon J. Sowell, 25 years; Solomon Torres, 10 years; Larry J. Dagestad, Carol H. Musgrove, Pablo L. Reyes, Phoebe B. Trammell, five years.

District 9

Louis L. Estill, Raymond F. Fronek, William L. Knight Jr., 35 years; Kenneth D. Wooley, 25 years; William J. Adkison, David R. Whatley, 15 years; Jackie H. Allen, Willis L. Patton Jr., Weldon W. Rice, Dwaine H. Wolf, five years.

District 10

Goode W. Rogers, 35 years; James H. Sparkman Jr., 30 years; Charles W. Hines, 20 years; Jerry G. Alvis, 15 years; Kenneth S. Folmar, Kerry W. Milham, Roger D. Roberson, five years.

District 11

Carlton J. Ogden, 25 years; Emory M. Adams, Gordon B. Turner, 20 years; Ruth C. Atchley, Julius Evans, Vernon C. Teel, 15 years; Carolyn C. Blackburn, Leroy McBride, Richard D. Modisette, five years.

District 12

Donald M. Robinson, 30 years; Samuel H. Bryant, Joseph K. Gerlich, Bobbie V. Wade, 25 years; John M. Curry, Curtis A. Gryder, Richard L. LeBlanc, Jerry W. Richey, 15 years; Earl L. Bates, Rufo O. Uribe, Alan M. Voigt, 10 years; Herbert H. Bell, Edridge A. Collins, Russell L. Johns, Annie M. Knapp, Johnny G. Longoria, Emma B. Macik, Joseph R. McNeeley, Israel Moore, Frankie H. Nolen, Gregory W. Schultz, John D. Williams, five years.

District 13

Charles E. Bertling, John A. Greer, 25 years; Benjamin W. Buscha, Victorino Zambrano, 20 years; Felipe Cisneros Jr., Louis W. Etie, Mark J. Lauer, William J. Neubauer, five years.

District 14

Vernon J. Bartsch, Francis P. Goertz, 35 years; Stanley E. Zetak, 30 years; Alvin J. Klima, Lester L. Smathers, Herbert M. Wisian, 25 years; Morris W. Sherry, 20 years; Billy J. Berry, Jean D. McDonald, 10 years; David W. Cox, Felix Hernandez, five years.

District 15

LaVerne B. Dillashaw, Ira W. Fowler, 25 years; Arnulfo T. Rodriguez, 20 years; Hadley B. Elikier, Liborio R. Vasquez Jr., 15 years; Dianne L. Braun, George A. Guerra, Albert J. Reyes, Richard F. Woodrow, 10 years; Jonathan D. Kelley, Bryan W. Mitchell, Aaron Z. Moore, Joe H. Salazar, five years.

District 16

Jose L. Martinez, 25 years; Richard A. Terry, Ronald C. Tonne, 20 years; Kenneth G. Keller, 15 years; Michael E. Johnson, 10 years; Walter E. Burton, Reginald B. Durham, Carl R. Mayberry Jr., Reyes S. Reyes, five years.

District 17

H.J. Cannon Jr., Perry N. Strange, 35 years; Horace H. Mathews, 30 years; Lester L. Oliver, 25 years; Ruben Cervantes, Roger D. Gibson, James A. Parker, five years.

District 18

Charles H. Robison, 35 years; Albert B. Harlan, 25 years; Larry N. Polser, 20 years; Billy J. Burgess, James W. Gaines, Raymond L. Henry Jr., Leslie W. Sikes, W.L. Statham, 15 years; Daniel R. Johnson, 10 years; Thomas A. Dixon Jr., Paul E. Duvall, Robert A. Hammett, Dennis N. Neighbors, Hal G. Newell, Gary W. Stringer, Gail D. Young, five years.

District 19

Clinton H. Bray, James A. Clark, E.V. Ray Jr., 30 years; Marlin E. Robertson, 15 years; Susan D. Gilliam, Elbert J. Goss, Dan H. Metcalf, five years.

District 20

James R. Kincaid, Elbert W. Reavis, 35 years; John R. Wilson, 20 years; Donald R. Cloud, James R. Foshee, 15 years; James D. Ogradowicz, five years.

District 21

Rumaldo R. Rivera, 30 years; Emilio Vela, 25 years; James E. Boerm, Pedro Galvan, Antonio Mercado, Omar Salinas, Merdardo Salinas, 15 years.

District 23

Jack M. Blossman, 30 years; Jimmy J. Power, 15 years.

District 24

Roberto M. Flores, Johnny L. Granado, 25 years; Ramon S. Mendoza, Hubert R. Sanchez, 15 years; Reynaldo Frausto, 10 years; Frank G. Hartnett, five years.

District 25

Patsy H. Crawford, Ronnie L. Ressel, 15 years; David W. Hutton, Linda M. Wilcox, Jerry L. Wren, five years.

Houston Urban Project

Charlie Boyd, 10 years.

Retirements

(January 1984)

Automation Division

Roscoe W. Reeves, Superintendent, Graphic Arts.

Bridge Division

Samuel V. Fox, Engineer V.

Right of Way Division

Arthur B. Grace Jr., Engineer V; Robert L. Brandt, Right of Way Appraiser III.

Transportation Planning Division

Gordon B. Cooper, Engineering Technician V; Paul M. Goertz, Engineering Technician V; Bert Spence, Administrator of Technical Programs I.

Travel and Information Division

Robert C. McCarty, Administrator of Technical Programs II.

District 1

Chester A. Cain Jr., Maintenance Technician III; Cecil Caldwell, Maintenance Technician III; Glen R. Chesshir, Maintenance Technician III; Joe M. McDowell, Engineer V; James F. Middleton, Maintenance Technician III; Kenneth V. Smith, Maintenance Technician III; Homer W. Todd, Maintenance Technician III; Marion A. Tomblin, Maintenance Construction Supervisor III.

District 2

Leon E. Martin, Maintenance Technician III; Jack W. Roach Jr., Maintenance Technician II.

District 3

Jack E. Killingsworth, Draftsman III.

District 4

Arden D. Beghtel, Engineering Technician V; Harold M. Brown, Engineering Technician V; Prachan Sthapitanonda, Right of Way Agent II.

District 5

Eugene C. Bradford, Sign Superintendent.

District 6

Alvis J. Armstrong, Engineering Technician V; Homer T. Lucas, Engineering Technician V.

District 7

Ira L. Langford, Engineer IV.

District 8

Joyce Pugh, Maintenance Construction Foreman III.

District 9

James F. Adams, Engineering Technician V; Clarence D. Handley Jr., Engineer IV.

District 10

Carl E. Fortenberry, Maintenance Technician III; Alvis H. Garner, Maintenance Technician III; Thomas N. Kelly, Purchasing & Supply Officer I; Weldon O. Rice, Maintenance Technician III.

District 12

Billy J. Lafoy, Maintenance Technician III; Baldwin T. Peterson, Maintenance Technician III; Gordon B. Williams, Engineering Technician V.

District 14

Bettie F. May, Clerical Supervisor III.

District 15

Roland C. Welsch, Engineering Technician IV.

District 16

Victoriano Villarreal, Maintenance Technician III.

District 18

Albert J. Beale Jr., Engineering Technician V; Carroll W. Coffey, Maintenance Technician III; James E. Phipps, Maintenance Technician III.

District 19

Robert E. Gorman, Maintenance Technician III.

This month's 60 years of Maintenance Operations feature:

Fourth engineer came back after being fired

The fourth state maintenance engineer and maintenance division head was Julius Buck Early, from Feb. 1929 to Aug. 16, 1938. His given middle name really was "Buck," and he went by "J. B." throughout his career.

Early was a native of Paris, graduating from high school there in 1908. He attended the University of Texas at Austin intermittently from 1909 to 1917, earning an aggregate of three years credit toward a civil engineering degree.

Among the periods of attendance at UT, J. B. worked for the MKT Railroad maintenance department, and the Waco Cement Stone Works, both in Waco. During this time he was also county surveyor for Lamar County and assistant to the Paris city engineer.

From 1917 until Oct. 1923, J. B. was at different times a plant layout-construction inspector for the American Steel and Wire Company coke works in Cleveland, OH; chief surveyor for Lamar County; railroad location surveyor for Wilson Lumber Company, Antlers, OK; consulting engineer supervising the design and construction of a Country Club Lake project for Lamar County; resident engineer for Smith County in the construction of concrete pavement; resident engineer for the City of Paris in the layout and construction of a dam and lake; and resident engineer in charge of concrete street paving in El Dorado, AR.

Also, during the 1917-1923 period, J. B. worked for about five months as a resident engineer for the department both in the Main Office and at Crowell, checking plans and supervising road grading and bridge work. In Oct. 1923 he signed on again with the department, this time as the Eastland field division engineer. (Field divisions were later redesignated as districts.)

J. B. left the department in February 1925, however. In the words of State Maintenance Engineer Leo Ehlinger quoted in the *SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS* ".....J. B. Early was unceremoniously fired despite being capable and having given his very best to the service of Texas and her people....." This was

during a period of the 1920s when it was common for a person's politics to be considered over merit and ability to do the job.

There was implication in the article that the firing had something to do with Eastland (Early's division headquarters) also being the home of one of the highway commissioners. Many other engineers left the department about this same time.



Buck Early . . . later worked on turnpike.

The Amarillo Field Division Engineer, G. G. Edwards, resigned when two men came to his office bearing letters signed by one of the Highway Commissioners, appointing them as replacements for the division's two maintenance superintendents. Both of the replacements were completely inexperienced and untried with highway work, one being a judge from Canyon.

Until Early returned to the department in 1927 as the Abilene Field Division Engineer, he worked as a Field Engineer for Caddo Parish, LA, locating and supervising road construction. However, the last six months of this period were spent recovering from malaria sustained while working in Louisiana.

Even during this time, J. B. stayed busy working part time for the Dallas County Engineer's Office preparing right-of-way deeds and maps.

He served as the Abilene field division engineer from 1927 until Feb. 1929 when he was called into the main office to service as state maintenance engineer. He served in this capacity until June 1938.

During J. B.'s tenure as maintenance engineer, a series of maintenance information bulletins was initiated. They were known as "Maintenance Information Exchange Bulletins" and were published twice monthly to pass along useful information from the field divisions and the main office on highway maintenance matters. The reports were usually in letter form with informal style encouraged. J. B. himself was a frequent contributor to these bulletins which were continued through mid-1939.

J. B.'s leaving the department in 1938 far from ended his professional career, however. First he practiced as a consulting engineer in Fort Worth for about 15 months, then as executive engineer for the city of Palestine for seven years through the World War II era until April 1946.

From then until August 1946 he was county engineer for Smith County before becoming city manager for Lufkin for four years; he then was city manager of Cleburne for four years after that.

During the last years of his life from 1954 to 1961, J. B. worked for the Texas Turnpike Authority in the construction and operation of the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike.

He died on March 18, 1961 while living in Grand Prairie. ★ **Ralph K. Banks**

Les French retires at Fort Worth

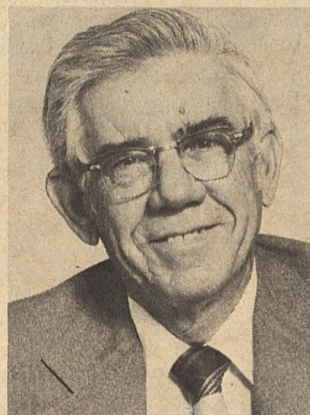
Leslie F. French, assistant district engineer at Fort Worth, retired Jan. 11, with more than 30 years service with the department.

He began with the department in the Wise County residency at Decatur, in 1953, as a design engineer. He was placed in charge of the Wise County Residency in May of 1956. He was transferred to the Fort Worth district headquarters in July 1969 as the district administrative engineer in the district construction section.

French became the district design engineer in the district design section in 1972 and remained in that position until 1983 when he became assistant district engineer. He also served as the district public affairs officer.

French was in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from 1942 to 1946 serving in the Aleutians and helping build the Alcan

Les French... retires in Fort Worth.



Highway in Alaska. He also worked with the Corps of Engineers and various consulting firms from 1946 until 1953. ★

roadrunners



On Feb. 12 at approximately 4 a.m., my car ran out of gas while traveling eastbound on I-30 just west of Fort Worth. There was an open service station about a half-mile away at Green Oaks Road, within easy walking distance.

Usually this would have been no problem. This was no usual morning, however, I had sprained my ankle late Saturday night making even a slight walk very painful. And because I had overslept a bit, my mom was waiting for me at D/FW Airport since arriving there at 2:15 a.m. Throw in 25 m.p.h. winds, good bone-chilling temperatures of 34 degrees and a passing thunderstorm, complete with thunder and lots of lightning and you have a pretty good picture of the situation. Also, I had to be at work at 7:30 a.m.

After having decided to make the wet and painful walk, like a gift from heaven the courtesy patrol pulled up. Besides knowing I was getting help from someone I could trust, I also was grateful it arrived so soon. I never would have expected the actions taken by the two patrolmen, Rusty and Lester.

Not only were they surprisingly cheerful considering the weather and the time, but they were both helpful also. They both seemed very sincere in the performance of their duties showing extreme degrees of friendliness and professionalism. It only took a short time to get my car running again and they waited for me to safely return to the freeway, following me to ensure I was able to make it to the service station.

As a fire fighter, I know that it is often felt that public

service deeds are just "part of the job" to many people. Because of our busy fast-paced world, many good deeds, many well-done services and many exceptional performers go unnoticed, forgotten in our daily struggle to live through seemingly hundreds of tasks, complex and routine, all apparently designed to try your sanity and will.

Even though good services and performers are a lot of times exceptional even through routine duties, they are required to keep the world on its fast pace.

I consider the Freeway Patrol program very much needed and that it should definitely be continued. Besides the routine tasks it was designed for, I feel it is a very good way to show the public a return for the large chunk of our income which we as taxpayers watch disappear from our paychecks.

I often wondered where those dollars went. You better believe, I could not have been happier to find out, especially when I needed it the most. Please extend my thanks to Rusty and Lester and to the director of this program for providing such a beneficial service. I hope much thought will be used to establish this as a permanent service. My compliments on such a valuable courtesy.

James Norkett
Fort Worth

(Fort Worth District Maintenance Engineer Billy Davis says Rusty is Russell W. French and Lester is Lester R. Cummings.)

Recently when returning from a meeting in Brownsville I stopped for dinner and met Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Overall of P. O. Box 63341, Pipe Creek, Texas 78063. When they learned I worked for the Highway Department, Mr. Overall said "let me tell you of my recent experience with the Highway Department." I thought "here we go with a complaint and this is not even in my District," but much to my surprise and gratification he was most complimentary.

The department had just completed rebuilding S.H. 16 from Medina County Line to Pipe Creek. Robert J. "Bobby" Graff, Engineering Technician V was on the project for the Department and "Jake" Jacobs was the Superintendent for Dean Word Company the contractor.

Mr. Overall had nothing but the highest praise for Bobby and Jake as well as all the workers on the project. "They were the most honest men I have ever met. Their word was their bond. If they said they would do something, they did" said Overall. "The work was completed ahead of schedule and they went out of their way to see that it was done right," he continued.

C. E. Hackebell of the District 15 office located in Hondo was the Supervising Resident Engineer for the project, but the Overalls did not have as much contact with him.

Gene Hirschfelt
San Angelo

Aggie Club gift a real mystery

It's a real mystery.

Milton and Diane Diertert have been among the most ardent of Longhorn fans. Milton is assistant chief engineer of safety and maintenance operations.

If the couple's loyalties are so entwined with the burnt orange and white, though, why, then, would they receive a letter from the Aggie Club, an organization which provides scholarships for Texas A&M University athletes, thanking them for their generous contribution to that cause?

Some sources say it has something to do with a wager between the Dierterts and a high-ranking South Texas highway engineer.

A usually reliable source from a large South Texas city, however, says, "I think this really marks the beginning of a major defection on the part of Teasips to get with the winners."★

Red River retirees

Three longtime employees of the Clarksville maintenance section retired Jan. 31, taking with them a combined total of 97 years of highway experience.

They are Kenneth Smith with 32 years service, Cecil Caldwell with 38 years and Glen Chesshir with 27 years. All three are World War II veterans and all three are natives of Red River County.★

1983 traffic death toll is lowest in two decades

Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Hanford Dole has announced that the 1983 traffic death toll was the lowest in 20 years, continuing a downward trend that began in 1981

Preliminary statistics from DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicate that some 43,028 people lost their lives on the nation's roads in 1983, a 2.1 percent decline from the 43,947 killed in 1982. Traffic deaths totaled 49,301 in 1981 and 51,091 in 1980.

There was even a more dramatic improvement in the fatality rate, the number of deaths per 100 million vehicle miles of travel. It declined to 2.6 in 1983 — the lowest fatality rate ever recorded. This was a 6 percent improvement over the 2.8 rate in 1982 and 22 percent better than in 1980 when the fatality rate was 3.3.

"These statistics show clearly that you can save lives by focusing sharply on improved highway safety," the Secretary said. "Our goal now must be to continue this downward trend."

Dole cautioned that it was too early to pinpoint the reasons for the decline, but she credited the groundswell of public support for community, state and federal programs to get

drunk drivers off the road as playing a major role.

Historically, traffic fatalities in the U.S. reached a high of 54,589 in 1972, declined to 45,196 in 1974 when the oil embargo curtailed driving, and then climbed to more than 50,000 in each of the years 1978, 1979, and 1980.

"The three-year fatality drop is particularly encouraging," Dole said, "because it has come about even while the actual number of miles driven has been increasing. In the past, this has almost always meant that fatalities would increase."★

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