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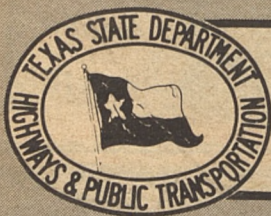
Maintenance forces fight fire

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Photo by J. Griffiths Smith

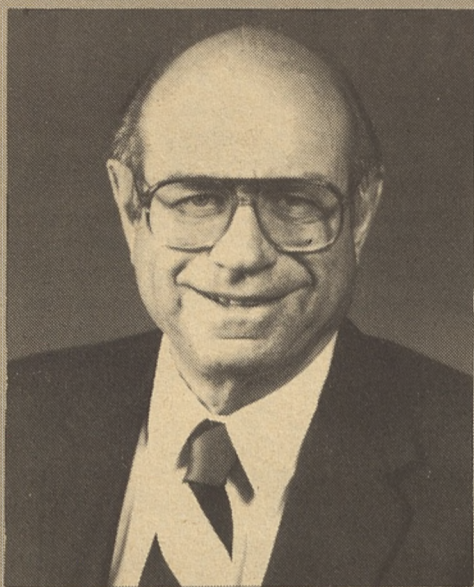
TRANSPORTATION news



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“My heroes have always been cowboys,” the country song goes. But a new kind of hero is making a mark on Texas.

When the horse was the common mode of transportation, the men who tamed those majestic animals won the respect of their neighbors. On horseback, they blazed a trail into the future. And, in legend at least, they embodied the fearless “good guy” who protected other people from danger.

Cowboys remain a powerful symbol in the American culture.

But today’s “good guys” wear hard hats, not 10-gallon Stetsons. They are the highway department’s heroes.

Dozens of them proved their mettle in March when a range fire erupted in West Texas. Department heroes from three districts — Abilene, Brownwood, and Wichita Falls — faced danger and bore discomfort to build firebreaks and otherwise assist volunteer firefighters. This team effort, pitting humans against one of nature’s most destructive forces, required courage and caring.

Those same qualities radiated from Texas across the world last fall, when highway heroes helped rescue tiny Jessica McClure from a well that nearly became her grave.

A few months earlier, the tornado that destroyed the hamlet of Saragosa sounded a call to highway hands. They responded eagerly. On the scene within 20 minutes, they began the grim task of helping Saragosa bury its dead and rebuild for its living.

None of this is glamorous work. It’s dirty, and it’s dangerous.

Most of us are not called upon to test our courage and strength in this way. We serve by performing to our very limits in ordinary ways. But it’s that kind of commitment, that kind of character, that allows us to rise to the occasion in an emergency.

Our “highway family” members who have met, and conquered, such challenges represent us all. They tell our fellow citizens that highway department people care. They make us all look like heroes.

Raymond Stotzer

Engineer-Director

Texas story goes to Washington

A comprehensive report on Texas' involvement on the national Transportation 2020 project was sent to Washington officials during April. The following executive summary highlights the findings of six public forums and 2,000 questionnaires.

Study Purpose and Process

Texas Transportation 2020 sought to obtain public participation in developing a consensus national transportation program. To achieve representation of all sectors of the state, six forums were held at San Antonio, Houston, Arlington, El Paso, Lubbock and Austin.

One hundred sixty-seven speakers, including state and local officials, industry representatives, civic groups, and private citizens, appeared at these forums. Public testimony addressed issues involving expansion, revision, or continuation of existing federal policies. Substantial data pertaining to the development, planning, and implementation of transportation programs at the federal level were also presented.

In addition to the public forums, 120 written comments were received from persons who could not attend. A questionnaire probing people’s thoughts on transportation needs in the next century was sent to 12,000 Texans and groups that had expressed an interest in transportation policies. The return of almost 2,000 of these questionnaires is considered excellent, and data obtained from them reinforces policy proposals made during the forums. The mass of information gathered from the forums, written material, and questionnaires surfaced the following major policy initiatives:

Funding Policies

Transportation funding in the future is a major concern. With the responsibility for many federal programs being returned to state and local governments, the overwhelming conclusion is that some level of funding responsibility for transportation must remain at the federal level. Support for this position was reflected in almost unanimous agreement to continue the federal highway trust fund. Equally important to the study’s participants was the continued dedication of all money in this fund for highways.

In a similar vein, forum presenters decried the practice of forcing states to adopt certain policies through sanctions against their share of the highway fund. Linked to the dedicated funding issue is the belief that the highway trust fund should be removed from the unified federal budget. This would eliminate the temptation to use this money as a tool to reduce the federal deficit and would release billions of dollars for improvement of the nation’s transportation systems.

Additional funding for one new federal program and several current ones was proposed. Preservation of the existing federal/state system warrants creation of a new federal funding category dedicated to the preservation of the highway system. It was advocated that increased funding be invested in federal assistance to urban areas for confronting traffic congestion. This funding would support added capacity, improvement, and signalization of a city’s major arterial system. Lastly, an increase in research funds for improved construction methods and innovative transportation attracted support.

It was also suggested that innovative means of funding highway construction through private-public cooperation be

explored, including transportation corporations, road utility districts, and increased use of toll facilities.

The manner in which federal funds are distributed was also a major topic during the forums. Speakers suggested more autonomy for local governments. A grant-type program for county and city street rehabilitation was viewed as an efficient way of addressing the urban traffic congestion problem, as well as a solution for rural, off-system bridge replacement and repair programs.

Planning policies

Planning, like funding in many instances, is considered too closely held as a federal responsibility, with very little leeway granted for local options. Forum participants believe federal policy should acknowledge that local planners have a better appreciation of local needs.

To achieve the most efficient mix of travel options, participants called for federal policies to encourage planning for integrated transportation modes. The needs of aviation, public transportation, waterways or marine commerce, and railroads were discussed in the context of how they can interact with surface transportation to provide the most options for commerce and the traveling public. It was recognized that the interests of the trucking industry must also be addressed in the transportation plan with a suggestion that separate lanes (perhaps toll roads) be provided for trucks.

Expansion of the highway network

All regions of the state favored a continuation of the Interstate construction program, so that urban areas not eligible and therefore not included in the original plan could be brought into the system. In addition, a need is seen for improving and extending the federal-aid primary and state secondary road system. The use of transportation as a means to build regional economic vitality was stressed at every forum. This is especially true in the Texas-Mexico border area where a burgeoning population and the addition of *maquiladora* plants has emphasized demand for a better road network to transport supplies and move products to the market.

Traveling public considerations

National policy concerning the daily traveler was not forgotten in the forums. Spokespersons for interest groups representing the needs of the elderly, the handicapped, and the bicycling and touring public spoke on behalf of their constituencies. The maintenance of rest stations, the aesthetics of the roadside, and the safety of the public were also addressed.

Conclusion

The Texas Transportation 2020 effort has been successful. It energized the people of the state to review current problems, calculate transportation needs for the future, and make general proposals about policies to address these needs. When consolidated with the proposals from other states, the Texas results should provide an excellent blueprint for use in developing national transportation policies.

“Transportation 2020: The Texas Experience” is the product of an interdivisional team chaired by deputy director Marcus Yancey. The team included Marcy Goodfleisch, coordinator, and Karen LeFevre of Travel and Information; John Barker of Transportation Planning; and Louis LeFevre and Al Eells of Planning and Policy.

Traeger named 'Road Hand'

A good friend of the highway department, retired state Sen. John A. Traeger, has been welcomed to the Hall of Honor of Texas Road Hands.

Traeger's name will be permanently displayed in the lobby of the department's main building in Austin. However, the former senator's legacy as a staunch defender of the department long precedes the honor bestowed on him last month by Engineer-Director Raymond Stotzer.

In the early 1970s, Traeger was an important force in maintaining dedicated highway funds during the legislative session on constitutional revision. "This stands out as one of his most important contributions," Stotzer said during the award presentation April 7 in Austin.

Traeger was a sponsor of the 1984 legislation that increased the gasoline tax from five cents a gallon to 10 cents a gallon, and he sponsored additional legislation in 1986 to raise the gasoline tax another nickel.

In addition to assuring motorists a sound transportation system, Traeger affected another important population in Texas — state employees.

"Traeger oversaw legislation to ensure a fiscally sound pension fund, making state employment a viable career," Stotzer said.

Traeger retired from legislative service last year after 24 years, but did not stop lending a helping hand. He served as a legislative consultant for the Texas Good Roads/Transportation Association.

"I know that when good roads come into the picture, he'll always be ready to assist in any way possible," said Stotzer.★



State Sen. John A. Traeger, left, accepts his Road Hand Award from Engineer-Director Raymond Stotzer. (Photo by Geoff Appold)



Road Hand recipients view their names on the Road Hand Hall of Honor at a recent get-together in Austin. The March 23 meeting was the first gathering of Road Hands since the department instituted the award in 1973. Road Hands were honored at a reception sponsored by Texas Good Roads/Transportation Association, and met at the Dewitt C. Greer building for a briefing on the state of the department. The special guests heard presentations on several programs, including maintenance and landscaping, planning and construction, automation, antilitter, and funding. The Hall of Honor, in the lobby of the main office building in Austin, lists 110 recipients of the Road Hand award, which salutes those who have contributed to the development of good transportation facilities in their home communities. (Photo by Geoff Appold)

Cooperation is key, Thomason says

A conversation with ... Deputy Director Henry Thomason

Henry Thomason is one of the department's four deputy directors. He oversees three divisions — Equipment and Procurement, Materials and Tests, and Safety and Maintenance Operations. Before being named a deputy director in 1984, Thomason was chief engineer of safety and maintenance operations. He joined the department as a summer employee in 1955, working as a rodman in the expressway office in Wichita Falls.

He spoke with Transportation News recently as part of a series of interviews with department leaders.

Any of the three large divisions you coordinate would rival major corporations in number of employees, budgets, and equipment. How do you stay in touch with what's going on?

First of all, we've got three excellent division heads, and they're supported by equally competent managers and staffs. The four of us get together from time to time — usually we have lunch together — and talk about what's going on that impacts two or sometimes all three divisions. Since we've all worked together and known each other for many, many years, we have a very good working relationship. The four of us understand each other's problems, and share a delegating style of management.

What sort of changes in the areas of equipment, safety and maintenance, and materials and testing have you seen since you first joined the department?

The emphasis is on safety a lot more than it was in the department's earlier years. Although we've always had a concern for the safety of motorists and our own people, we're now seeing things like crash cushions and breakaway signs. Before we put anything out there that he may be hit by a motorist, we try to make it as safe as we can.

Also, we've got a lot better equipment for the safety of our people, and our people have a much better attitude about safety practices.

Another trend for the future seems to be larger commercial trucks with higher-pressure tires. What's the department doing to minimize the effects of these heavier trucks on our pavement?

We have an obligation to provide transportation to everyone who wants to use the highway system. The trucking industry — just because of the nature of the work — requires more from the roadways. In years gone by, we've sometimes experienced an adversarial relationship between highway engineers and the trucking industry. Now, we're making a real effort to overcome that and develop a rapport that will ultimately benefit the engineers, truckers, and taxpayers.

About a year ago, the commission passed a minute order establishing a Motor



Floyd Karstetter, assistant foreman for the Cedar Park maintenance section, enjoys a break with deputy director Henry Thomason.

Transportation Advisory Committee, and made me its chairman. We were directed to work with other state agencies and with the private sector to resolve problems in advance that in the past materialized during legislative sessions. We've had our initial meeting with state agencies, and we'll have the first of our meetings with private industry in the next month or two.

What sort of things do you discuss with this advisory committee?

The three main areas that concern the highway department are the oversize/overweight truck permits, weigh-in-motion activities that categorize commercial trucks, and registration and fee collection.

We've been working with the comptroller's office, the Department of Public Safety, the Railroad Commission, and several other state agencies, trying to provide a focal point for the trucking industry to deal with in state government.

At the same time, we're trying to come up with a representative group from the private sector. Some of the organizations, like the Texas Motor Transport Association, will be members of the committee. We'll have others from private trucking companies as well as bus lines and suppliers. We want to be able to sit down several times a year and see if we can't at least define some of the problems that we can handle before they become misunderstandings. When either the state or the private sector is involved in legislature matters, we think it can be handled a lot better through the committee than by waiting until we're in the halls of the Capitol.

Is this attitude of trying to find a common ground with outside groups a major trend?

Photos by Geoff Appold

We think so. And the department will take a leadership role in this sort of thing. The relationship with the trucking industry is just one example.

How is our relationship with environmental groups affected?

One of the strongest relationships we've built recently has been with an environmental group — Keep Texas Beautiful.

We have a much better relationship than we've ever had with all environmental groups. And to me, this indicates the efforts departmental employees have made to understand the concerns of these groups and try to mitigate damage that they — and we — are concerned about.

Years ago, we considered ourselves the "environmentalists" before that became a popular word. We're the ones who built the scenic overlooks, provided the landscaping and roadside parks, and planted the flowers. And I think it came as a great surprise to department employees that environmentalists considered us their adversaries when they first began to develop their influence several years ago.

But I think now we have good partnership with those groups. We don't let them dictate our work — we're still the ones who must decide how to locate, design, and operate Texas highways. But we do listen to them, understand their concerns, and respond appropriately.

Since we're on the subject of beautification, what's been the public's response to our efforts?

This is one area of our work that almost guarantees positive comments and pleasant reactions. I think it's an activity that the public appreciates, and it's very visible. Although it accounts for only about 1 percent of our construction budget, the effects are very noticeable. And I believe they'll be a lot more visible in years to come. A lot of what we're planting and getting established now

won't be fully appreciated until it's had an opportunity to mature. It'll be a few years before the public realizes just what sort of highway beautification benefits we're getting from these investments.

We're trying to put new landscape projects in locations where the maximum number of motorists can appreciate them. In the past, we may have scattered them out in the more rural areas. But today, we're trying to put beautification efforts where more people drive.

The real impetus behind all this has been the interest of the commissioners in beautifying Texas highways. Mr. (Robert) Dedman and Mr. (Bob) Lanier, as chairmen, plus all the other members of the commission, have provided the leadership and have supported the efforts of the staff.

There's been a recent administrative order concerning landscaping in urban areas. Can you discuss the policy and the reasoning behind it?

The problem with wildflowers in an urban area is this: We don't want to mow the rights-of-way until the flowers have finished blooming and had a chance to seed and develop next year's crop. And, while they look great while they're blooming, in this interim period before we can mow they really get to looking ragged. It concerns some people that we may be mowing too soon, and it concerns others that we're not mowing soon enough, and it becomes a controversial situation.

The other side of the beautification effort is the antilitter program. Has its success surprised you?

I think it's surprised everybody. I don't think any of us could have foreseen the great success that we've enjoyed with our "Don't Mess with Texas" and Adopt-a-Highway programs and our involvement with Keep Texas Beautiful.

In addition to the actual benefits of a better-looking highway system, we've gained lots of support from people who now feel that they're more a part of the department's operations.

We've talked about equipment, safety, and maintenance. What about our materials and tests facilities?

We have the outstanding highway laboratory in the nation. I'm talking about not only the facility that Billy Neeley (director of the Materials and Tests Division) runs at Camp Hubbard in Austin, but all the other laboratories in our residencies and our districts. We've developed many of the tests that are used in other states. Whether we're talking about paint or the pavement itself, the pipes underground or bridge signs overhead, anything that we incorporate into our construction is tested and proven. And it's because of our very practical tests that we have such a high-quality system.

Not only do we have excellent equipment to do these tests, but we've got some top-notch laboratory engineers and technicians who are very competent and well-recognized for their abilities.

We are planning to pursue some certification programs for these individuals who possess specific credentials for conducting certain tests.

This business of certification reflects an effort all across this department to develop the best-trained staff that we've ever had. In the past, we relied quite a bit on on-the-job training, and that's still important. But this administration has emphasized the importance of supplementing "OJT" with formalized training in the classroom or



Thomason, at wheel of motor grader, is responsible for safety and maintenance, materials and tests, and equipment and procurement operations.

laboratory. It's part of what makes working for this organization such a good deal now.

Has that got something to do with the fact that we lost so many people recently with all their on-the-job experience?

That's an important part of it. When we lost 1,000 top-notch people in a very short period of time, we had to fill some depth in a hurry. But we've replaced some of those we thought were irreplaceable with some people who are doing an excellent job now.

The fact that we kept these people so long is indicative of the kind of organization we run. We furnish for our employees the very best equipment we can. Our Equipment and Procurement personnel as well as our warehouse operations throughout the state are being challenged with work loads like we have never experienced before. They are responding with outstanding efforts to meet the needs of all our employees. We also try to furnish the best working conditions.

From entry-level workers to those who have been around for years, all our jobs are challenging. We have minimized or eliminated work that's just routine and mundane and boring. Our work changes enough from day to day that it offers a challenge, whether you're in Lajitas or Houston. That makes it interesting and fulfilling, and that's a big part of what makes people stay.

But another big part of it is the tradition in this department to recognize and emphasize the importance of people's families. We expect employees to put in a day's work while they're at work, and often we require a lot more than eight hours under certain circumstances. But our top management has always been family-oriented people who understand the need for our employees' involvement in things besides their jobs — being involved with their families, civic organizations, church groups, and contributing to the whole of the community.

Is that why so many people continue with the department when they could be working for private industry at higher salaries?

I think almost every one of us could find jobs where we could make more money, but we wouldn't find the kind of people that we work with here, or the challenge and opportunity that our work provides.

We train our people to act appropriately under different circumstances, but one of the

things that makes our organization unique is the lack of job descriptions to handle so many of the situations that we're expected to respond to. And I think it's particularly true in our maintenance forces, because they're required to respond at any time, without any warning, to catastrophic circumstances — whether it's a fire in West Texas, blizzards in North Texas, or floods or tornadoes anywhere in the state. The citizens of Texas expect us to be the first on the scene, and we always are.

And the same is true on the highway system. When you've got an overturned gasoline truck in an underpass, or catastrophic wrecks, or other manmade disasters, it's the people in the highway department who are always there and always seem to know what to do. You can't train people to do this sort of thing. But they always rise to the occasion.

The tradition of the highway department, then, is continuing with a new generation?

That's true. I saw an example of this last year, right after that tornado hit the little town of Saragosa in West Texas. When the first news coverage of the event came on TV, I saw all the destruction there on the evening news. And the announcer didn't say anything about our department. But there in the background, the first on the scene to help put things back together, was a line of yellow trucks with the Texas flag on the doors. That's the kind of thing that gives you a real strong feeling about being a part of this whole outfit.

Let me mention something else here:

We're seeing more and more shared work between our engineering forces and our maintenance forces. When our maintenance forces are required to do extended hours of demanding work, they can anticipate being assisted by the engineering forces. And when we get in a bind on our construction projects and need more inspectors or other help, our maintenance forces join in.

It's the people in the highway department who are always there and always seem to know what to do. You can't train people to do this sort of thing. But they always rise to the occasion.

All of your department activity must demand some sort of diversion. What are your hobbies or outside interests?

Photography and racquetball. I'm also a member of the University of Texas Track and Field Officials Association. I officiate at all the university track meets in Austin. It's quite a joy to be involved with that type of program and see the fine, young, athletic talent that's developing throughout the Southwest Conference and the nation.

Also, I'm a jogger. I participate in the Capitol 10,000. This was my sixth year. A lot of highway people run it now — probably three dozen or more.

I always tell people it's a spectator sport, but you've got to participate in order to "spectate." You have to get out there in the midst of that mass of humanity to see what's going on.

My goal in running the Capitol 10,000 is to run it in the same number of minutes as my age, but I haven't made it yet. I figured, if I could just hold my own, that one of these days my age would catch up. I'm not sure whether I'll get there. Seems to me like I'm getting older faster than I'm getting faster.★

Registration system due for big change

By Gina McAskill

The 20-year-old automated system Texas uses to administer vehicle titles and registrations barely keeps up with the 13 million vehicles registered in the state.

But a department team of 29 has been working full speed ahead for over a year on a new Registration and Title System to be installed in 1991.

The team, led by project administrator Bob Braden, has just finished identifying user requirements, the second step in a 13-task development plan.

"We've really tried to do our homework over this last year, establishing what the actual requirements of this system are," said Braden. "Not doing the homework is often a cause for project failure in this type of situation. That's why we've been taking the necessary time in these early phases."

The goal is to provide a uniformly automated system to the 254 county tax assessor-collector offices, which are the "point of sale" for vehicle documents. The current system is burdened with excessive manual processing of paper forms, duplication of effort at various levels in the system, delays in updating the master file after a transaction, and other snags in information flow.

Back in 1986, the highway commission approved a five-year plan to improve the process, based on recommendations from a consultant study. The department estimates that developing and implementing the new system could cost \$33.7 million, which includes purchasing and installing the necessary hardware in the counties and training county workers. The initial cost of the new system should be returned to the department in benefits within five years after implementation.

The team created to undertake this enormous task includes personnel from the Division of Motor Vehicles and the Automation Division, plus several new employees hired for their expertise. The team is headed by Braden, technical manager Eleanor Smith, and operations manager

Lawrance Smith, and reports directly to Al Castello, deputy director for support operations.

The primary purpose of the Registration and Title System, say project team members, is to improve service to the public by avoiding delay, repetition, and confusion.

Second, RTS will comply with all laws, especially the statute that says new and replacement titles must be issued by mail within five days of application. The current system is, in general, physically incapable of producing titles in five days.

A third goal is to provide current and reliable information to law enforcement. As it stands, it takes six to eight weeks for the master file on registration and titles to be updated. The file doesn't accurately reflect reality for officers running checks on vehicles. The goal is to have the master file updated within 24 hours after a transaction has been processed at a county — and that delay is planned only to allow for correcting errors at the point of sale.

Finally, the system will provide cash accounting and inventory control sufficient to deal with the ever-increasing number of Texas vehicles.

The new system will have "something in it for just about everybody," said Braden. "There are benefits for all the players — public, state, county, and other agencies in the chain."

The RTS team has solicited recommendations from those who will be using the system — the tax assessor-collectors, state comptroller, Department of Public Safety, and Division of Motor Vehicles regional offices. Some of the other groups involved in putting the package together include Automation, Finance, and Transportation Planning divisions, associations such as automobile dealers, and finance companies.

A demonstration RTS package, using personal computers, will be displayed at the Tax Assessor-Collector Association annual conference in mid-May. Though not a prototype system, the microcomputers will show some of the results of project efforts,

and the team hopes to elicit helpful comments from the conferees.

According to Braden, the most-heard comment from local governments about the RTS system has been, "When can we have it?" Over the past year, numerous counties have clamored to become pilot sites when a prototype is tested.

The team has not limited its homework to Texas. Members have visited New Jersey, California, Colorado, and New Mexico so far, observing the states' motor vehicle systems. Florida, South Carolina, Wisconsin, Indiana, Kentucky, and Virginia are among other states on the "to visit" list.

Over the next couple of months, the RTS team will issue a "Request for Information" to vendors. The document will contain the requirements, objectives, and scope of the project. The team hopes to receive a wide variety of information about products and services they may ultimately use in the new system.

All the information gathered will be combined to produce several alternative systems. The RTS project team plans to submit these alternatives to an executive committee of top department administrators by the end of the year.

When one approach is approved, the project will move into its second phase — system design. After the testing of the finished system, the implementation phase will begin, with a view toward full acceptance of the new system by the end of 1991.

"We knew a change was overdue," said Braden. "There's an obvious need for an improved system." When the brand-new Registration and Title System swings into action, it will mean better service to the public, a lot less paper shuffling, and fewer headaches for all.★

Name that section

By Becky Beck

How does a section find a new name when its old one no longer fits? If it's the Electronic Data Processing Section of the Division of Motor Vehicles, it holds a contest.

The section needed a moniker to more accurately describe the work it handles. Besides issuing titles on newly purchased vehicles, the section issues certified copies of original titles that are lost, provides salvage titles to vehicles "totaled" by insurance companies, and examines title transfers that involve operation-of-law and gray-market vehicles.

Each of the four work groups in the section submitted a name idea, and the DMV board, with the consensus of division director Dian Neill, chose the winning entry: Title Control Systems (TCS).

The winners, members of the input group, were treated to lunch. They include: Dorothy Doran (group head), Cathy Adams, Pam Arnold, Arleen Christensen, Ninfa Diaz, Ramona Inmon, Roxanne Loper, Lynda Lutz, Margie Marone, Margie Montgomery, Rosie Patton, Mimi Wheeler, Carolyn Williams, and Julia Williams.

And since the change, TCS also has a new nickname: Top Cat Section.★



Engineer-Director Raymond Stotzer previewed the department's planned RTS system for members of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, meeting in San Antonio last February. Division of Motor Vehicles Director Dian Neill, left, hosted the conference (Photo by Jack Lewis)

And hey, let's be careful out there!

Tyler recognizes safety

By Laura Rayburn

There was bad news and good news at the Tyler safe driver awards ceremony March 10. Insurance Division Director Quinner Williams gave the bad news first: Overall, the department has experienced an increase in the number of work-related injuries and vehicle accidents.

Then came the good news: The Tyler District had posted a decrease in both accidents and injuries.

Williams told employees that he hoped Tyler could lead the way for a continued decrease in accidents, breaking the "roller-coaster" cycle in which district accidents drop, then rise, then drop again.

Williams also praised District 10 workers for their guidance and help with summer employees. For the first time in the history of the district, no summer employee was injured or involved in an accident on the job — a feat unmatched by other districts.

District Engineer Bobby Evans presented two special awards: to Billy Black, district public affairs officer, for his work on a functional review team and Transportation 2020; and to Tom Schlegel, Odessa resident engineer, whose staff designed the Athens Loop in addition to their regular work.

Special recognition awards went to four district organizations that distinguished themselves during the past year. The Longview maintenance section and Longview residency received plaques for outstanding work on the reconstruction of the burned Rabbit Creek bridge on Interstate 20. The maintenance sections of Jacksonville and Palestine were honored for their work during November tornadoes.

Seven employees were recognized for achieving 25 years of safe driving: Larry Stegall of Canton maintenance, Willie Odom of Longview, Charles Pierce of Palestine, Laurent Hallonquist and Clarence Lee of Quitman, and William Suggs and Tommie Williams of North Tyler maintenance. More than 300 employees were honored for a total of 3,548 years of safe driving. ★



Heading the list of Waco's safe drivers are: (front row) Billy Cole, Clarence Phillips, Charlie Herrell, and Henry Papendorf; (back row) Billy Gann, Bobby Hilliard, Elvin Meeks, and Junior Meador. (Photo by Randy Spear)

Waco wows drivers with celebration

By Helen Havelka

Being a "safe driver" has a new meaning in the Waco District.

Deputy Director Henry Thomason and Insurance Division Director Quinner Williams joined Waco District Engineer Kirby Pickett in honoring about 240 employees during a March banquet.

When Thomason called the occasion "the very best safe driver awards banquet that has ever been held in the district," he knew he was right. It also happened to be the first annual awards banquet.

"This banquet gives us an opportunity to show our appreciation to our many employees who have made safe driving a habit, and to encourage others to follow their example," said Pickett. The banquet honored drivers with no accidents in 1987 and with five or more years of accident-free driving.

Eight drivers topped the list, with 30 years or more of safe operation. Billy Gann of Waco, Elvin Meeks of Hillsboro, and Clarence Phillips of Meridian logged 32 years each. Junior Meador from Hillsboro achieved 31 years. And 30-year honors went to Billy Cole of Hamilton, Charlie Herrell of Hillsboro, Henry Papendorf of Marlin, and Bobby Hilliard of Temple.

Seventeen drivers were recognized for 20 or more years of safe service, and 58 qualified for 17-year awards. (Seventeen years ago, the department changed its criteria for the award to include operators of all motor vehicles, not just heavy equipment.)

On hand to help celebrate the occasion were 19 retirees and visitors, including former Waco District Engineer Brooks Evans. ★

Yoakum honors drivers

By Pearlle Bushong

In two days of ceremonies, 315 Yoakum employees were honored for safe driving. Al Castello, deputy director for support operations, and Quinner Williams, director of the Insurance Division, presented awards March 22 and 23.

Other special guests included a number of Department of Public Safety personnel, neighboring district guests, and several department retirees.

Special awards went to the Calhoun and Austin counties maintenance sections for 1,000 days without a lost-time accident.

Service awards also were presented during the two days, including a 40-year award to Curtis Jacobs.

The award ceremony is split into two days to allow attendance by nearly all district employees. Festivities include a meal of barbecued brisket and fixings. ★



District 10's safety honorees included (left to right) George Beddingfield, G. W. Franklin, George Covington, Thomas C. Hammerstone, Terry D. Williams, Jay Townson, Jeff Myers, Lonnie D. Henry Jr., Benny V. Steen, Leon Smith, Mike Gregory, and Charles H. Jones. (Photo by Laura Rayburn)

Highway hands help save lives, property

by Ray Green

It started simply, with someone burning trash.

It ended as the worst range fire ever in West Texas — so bad, in fact, that the governor declared it a disaster. In four days, 300,000 acres of grassland east of Abilene took on the appearance of the Black Sea.

Shackelford County suffered the most damage with about half the county burned away. Callahan and Throckmorton counties also received extensive damage. Almost 400 miles of fence was destroyed, 300 head of cattle perished, and another 500 were injured. Wildlife destroyed and injured cannot be calculated.

But it could have been worse, without the efforts of Abilene District employees and many others.

Employees of District 8 have already experienced disastrous floods and tornadoes. Range fires can now be added to their resumes.

Around midnight on March 10, the governor's office, through the Department of Public Safety, called District Engineer Bill Burnett, requesting assistance to transport National Guard equipment to the fire. The blaze had begun two days before and was almost under control when strong winds, which kept shifting directions, allowed it to break out again. Fifty volunteer fire departments from as far away as Arkansas were already on the scene, but were losing the battle. The U.S. Forest Service had already been called in to coordinate the effort.

A second call for help came shortly after lunch on Friday, March 11. This time equipment and personnel were needed — the fire was completely out of control.

In less than an hour, 27 motor graders, 17 front-end loaders, 11 water trucks, and a bulldozer were on the way to Albany. Four employees and three vehicles from the Wichita Falls District also assisted in the effort.

As directed by the Forest Service, most of the department's equipment was used to cut fireguards around the towns of Baird and Albany.

Good news came at about 2:30 p.m. March 12. The hundreds of professional and volunteer fire fighters, the National Guard, chemical-carrying airplanes and helicopters,

crop dusters loaded with water, and the highway department had gained a decisive advantage.

Only one home, a trailer house, was lost. Somehow, there were no injuries. The department was released by the Forest Service, and equipment began returning to its assigned sections.

Those involved agreed on one thing: They hope they never see anything like it again.

"We are extremely proud of our employees, as I am sure all organizations who provided equipment and manpower must be," said Burnett. "Their efforts were a big factor in saving lives and property."★



Scorched earth shows scars of the fire that tore through 300,000 acres of grassland in three West Texas counties. (Photo by Ray Green)



Brownwood crews used maintainers five abreast to carve firebreaks through land threatened by raging range fire. From left are Ben Mackey, Jerry Lobstein, Darrell Modgling, Odis Holsenbeck, Gene Keel, Joyce Reed, and Brown County Roadway Maintenance Supervisor James Hair. (Photo by Jean Sparks)

Fighting range fire all in a day's work

By Jean Sparks

Highway maintenance workers are accustomed to handling emergencies as routine, but March 11 was exceptional even for seasoned employees of the Brownwood District.

Before the day ended, 13 men from Brownwood, five from Eastland, and two radio dispatchers had gained firsthand experience in fighting a major range fire. And two of them had the added satisfaction of rescuing three young boys from impending danger. The men worked far into the night in Callahan County in cooperation with Abilene personnel, other volunteers, and firemen to stop the raging blaze that was devastating three counties.

A telephone call at 1:30 p.m. from Central Fire Station in Brownwood alerted the Brown County maintenance office that help was needed to fight the fire, which had been leaping across pastures and highways and was advancing toward the area between Cross Plains and Baird.

After learning of the call for help, District Maintenance Engineer Tom Newbern gave quick approval to send men and equipment. Joyce Reed, Brown County secretary and radio dispatcher, contacted the crew leaders and asked Ben Mackey to start ahead of the others, to find out exactly where men and equipment were needed and to coordinate their efforts as they arrived.

As soon as other crew members could leave their projects, they either started "roading" or hauling three maintainers and other equipment to Cross Plains. Mackey had talked with the Cross Plains Fire Department and been directed to an area north of Baird.

In the meantime, Eastland crew leaders Jim Davis and maintenance technicians Wayne Sharp, Scottie Elliott, Ben Cagle, and Clinton Brown were on their way with two additional maintainers and other equipment to meet the Brownwood group.

When all the maintainer operators had joined Mackey, they cut several firebreaks "about as wide as the Interstate," by lining up five maintainers side by side. Plowing swaths through the range land is designed to halt the fire by removing its fuel — grass.

Nevertheless, Mackey recalls, the flames shot 30 to 40 feet high at times. "Our firebreaks didn't even begin to stop it," he said. "The first one we bladed, the fire jumped it like it wasn't even there." He explained that every time the men bladed a firebreak, they would fall back about a mile and begin another. "Before we would get a firebreak finished, other people would start a backburning operation," he said.

Cagle estimated that the wind was gusting at 30 to 60 miles an hour, and the fire was moving "faster than a race horse."

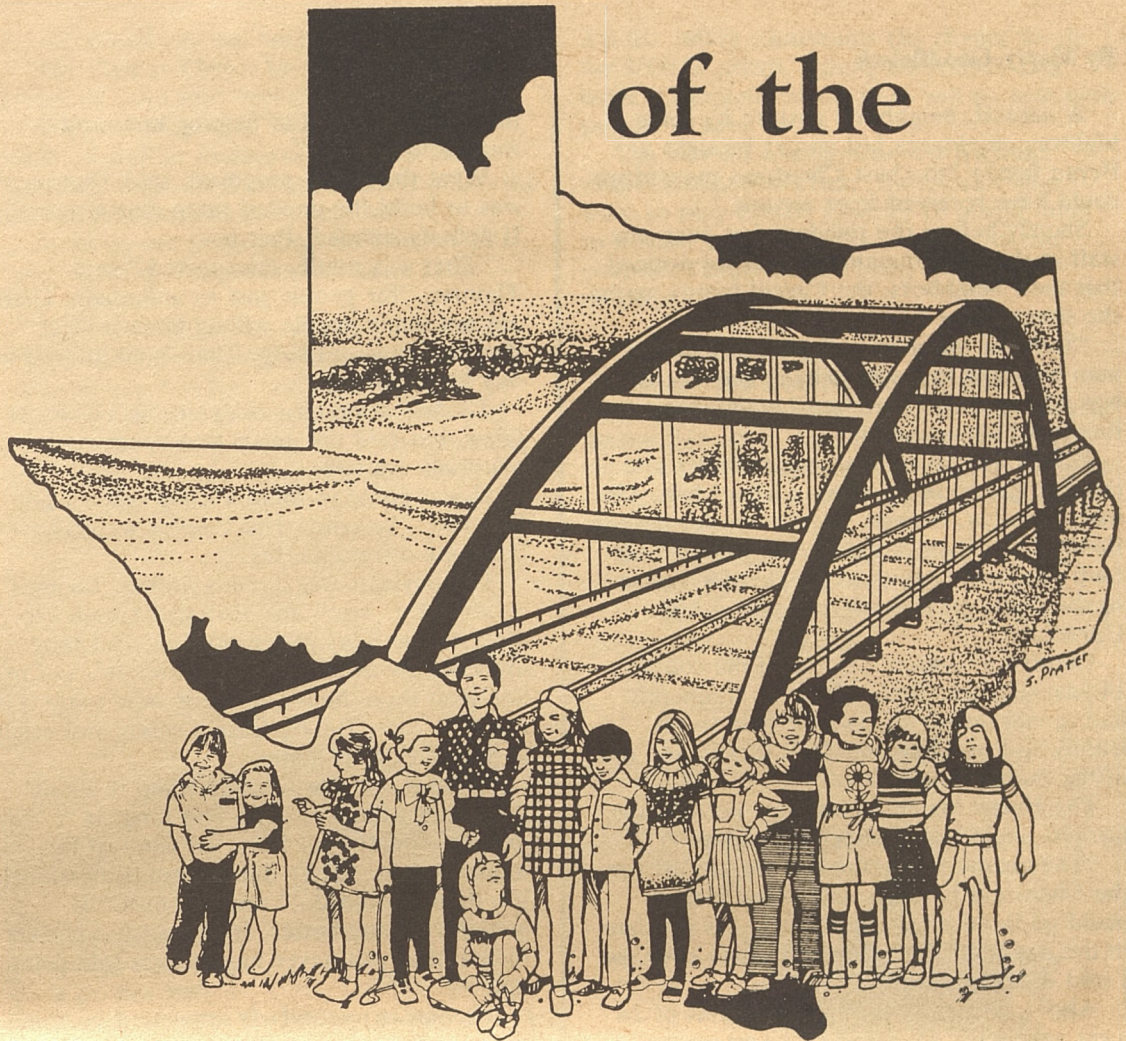
"There were two levels of fire coming toward us," Cagle said. "One, higher up among the broomweeds, was the fastest, and following it was a slower-moving fire on the shorter grass.

"It was pretty scary in the daytime, but after it got dark so that you could see the fire better, it was really scary," Cagle recalled. "And it was so smoky, you could hardly see the end of the maintainer."

Jerry Lobstein from Brownwood was in a flatbed truck following the maintainers as they bladed the firebreaks. On the truck were diesel fuel and gasoline as well as emergency tools, a first-aid kit, and

EMPLOYEES

of the



TEXAS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

If you see fellow employees wearing a shirt with this design, give 'em a pat on the back. They're part of the department's team of volunteers lending a hand to the Texas Chapter Games of the Special Olympics in Austin May 25-26. About 50 employees signed up to assist with the games for 3,500 disabled Texans. The theme of this year's games is "A Time for Heroes."

something else the maintainers lacked — a radio. If there were any problems, Lobstein was there to see that they could either get help or get out.

After dark, Lobstein noticed three boys, walking some distance behind his truck, headed toward the fire.

He notified the maintainer operators and doubled back to intercept the boys, whom he estimated to be about 12 years old.

Lobstein learned they had gone up on the hill north of Baird after school to explore and see the fire. They were chilled from the norther that had blown in just after dark, catching them in shorts and summer shirts. "Evidently, they didn't realize the danger they were in," Lobstein said. He took them to Jim Davis, who drove them back to Baird to the custody of the deputy sheriff. The deputy was administering the boys a stern safety lecture when Davis left them.

Davis and his colleagues agreed that if the boys had not been stopped, they might very well have been caught in the range fire or bitten by a rattlesnake. The rattlers were disturbed and moving, Cagle noted.

A deer in its panic to escape had caught its antlers in a fence and had fallen victim to

the fire. "A lot of cattle were killed by that fire, too," Cagle said. "Ranchers were cutting fences and moving cattle across highways and to other pastures in order to save them," he said.

Back at the Brownwood base station, Joyce Reed was still standing by in radio contact with the men and the Baird maintenance office. She stayed by her post until 10:30 that evening, winning high praise for her part in handling the emergency. Tammy Creacy in Eastland was also keeping radio contact that night in case more men or equipment were needed, and was also highly commended for her work.

The men worked until 11:30 p.m., taking turns operating the maintainers so they wouldn't have to stay in the smoke and heat for too long at a time. They all reported feeling the effects of smoke inhalation and fatigue the next day.

Others who helped at the fire front were James Hair, B. J. Snow, Troy Pallette, Darrell Modgling, Odis Holsenbeck, Eugene Keel, Leroy Dyer, Randall Healer, Charlie Teague, Silas Hays, and Dan Neuse. All were commended by Brownwood District Engineer Wes Heald and Abilene District Engineer Bill Burnett.★

Bryan Maintenance eases the way

Neighbors made part of family

By Marcy Goodfleisch

A natural, neighborly gesture by some highway employees last winter brought a Bryan family "the best Christmas present we could have received from anyone."

Shortly before the holidays last year, the staff at the local maintenance office noticed that their neighbors, the Cargill family across the street, were having some problems.

"Some of the men had noticed that the man was now in a wheelchair, and his wife was having to lift him," said maintenance foreman Delmar Smith.

Bobby Cargill suffers from diabetes and last fall had to begin using a wheelchair. His wife, Carolyn, became responsible for getting Bobby from their mobile home into the car each day, to be taken to his parents' house so she could go to work at Texas A&M University.

Carolyn had some help from the couple's 14-year-old son, Shane. But she frequently had to call on her in-laws for help to lift Bobby and his chair the 2-1/2 feet in and out of the mobile home.

The Bryan maintenance crew decided the Cargills could use a wheelchair ramp.

"They came to me the day we got off for the Christmas holidays and asked if they could go build one," said Smith. "It was late in the day, and our office party was over, so I told them to ahead."

About 15 members of Smith's staff of 24 went across the road and knocked on the Cargills' door. Would it be all right, they asked, if they built a ramp? Carolyn Cargill, a bit overwhelmed, called her father-in-law, Robert Thomas, for advice.

"When I first got the call, I was afraid there was some emergency and we had to go to the hospital," said Thomas. "I went over, and there were all these men in the yard. I know a couple of them, so they told me what they wanted to do. They had seen her go

through the ordeal of helping him, and wanted to do this."

What the group proposed, said Thomas, was to build the needed ramp that afternoon. If nobody minded, that is.

"That was totally unexpected," said Thomas, "for people just to volunteer. There are not many people willing to stop what they're doing and help. They even offered to buy the materials."

Thomas gratefully accepted the volunteer labor, but told the group he already had materials available.

"I was going to build a ramp when I got the time," he said. "But I never would have built one as nice as this."

The daylight was already fading, Thomas recalls. And surely the men had families to meet and holiday plans to make. But they immediately assembled the materials, and in less than three hours, a sturdy new ramp was ready to carry Bobby Cargill safely and easily in and out of his home.

Thomas said the finished ramp is about three feet wide and eight feet long. It extends directly out from the front of the mobile home. "They did a more professional job than I could do," said Thomas. "It couldn't be any better. It's on such a perfect incline that you never have to struggle going up."

Thomas is particularly impressed by some added safety touches. The crew covered the ramp's deck in roofing material to make it skid resistant in wet weather. And strips were added every few feet as further skid protection.

Although the event was clearly the high point of the Cargills' Christmas holiday, the Bryan maintenance crew was very quiet about the whole thing. They took the simple attitude that when people need help, well, that's what neighbors are for.



Carolyn and Bobby Cargill call the ramp built by Bryan employees "the best Christmas present we could have received." (Photo by Mike Imhoff)

"I think that's one of the kindest things I've ever seen," said Smith of his crew's actions. "They just all went over there and pitched in and did it real quick. They didn't think anything of it; the men weren't looking for recognition or anything."

As a result of the men's modesty, District Engineer Carol Zeigler didn't hear about the act of kindness until recently. He is rightfully proud of the Bryan crew, but he isn't surprised.

"We have some wonderful employees here," said Zeigler. "This is a good example of their attitude toward both their neighbors and each other. It takes a sense of caring to think of performing an act of giving. And it takes good teamwork for it to happen the way it did."

Smith agrees. He remembers those few hours spent by his men in a drizzly rain when he sees Carolyn Cargill use the ramp each evening to get Bobby into their home.

"We've got a real good crew out here," said Smith. "One of the best, as far as I'm concerned."

Zeigler and Smith get no argument from Bobby's father.

"I don't think those guys know how much we appreciate what they did," said Thomas. As a token of gratitude, he took some homemade sausage to the crew. And Bobby and Carolyn Cargill wrote a letter of thanks to the district. But the crew's kindness still leaves the recipients in awe.

"I just don't know how we could do anything to repay them," said Thomas. "It makes me feel that we live in a good community."

For Zeigler and the Bryan maintenance crew, that says it all.

"We've been good neighbors, and that's our goal in the highway department," said Zeigler. "These men extended our 'highway family' to the community they serve, and that's as much as we could ever want from great employees."★



Santas, disguised as Bryan maintenance personnel, are: (back row, left to right) Richard Nolin, James Fuchs, Inez Dimas, Leroy Nixon, James Riley, Raymond Thompson, Billy Johnson, and Reynolds McClure; (front row) George Pobletts, J.T. Anthis, Ronald Waller, Russell Stauffer, and Paul Mitchell. (Photo by Mike Imhoff)



Billy Prentice of the Childress District has received certification as a professional public buyer (PPB). After months of study, he passed a four-hour written exam in December. (Photo by Keitha Tiffin)

Blood available to highway family

Employees in the Austin divisions donated 217 units of blood in a recent blood drive, the Employees Advisory Committee reported.

"We want to thank all employees who donated blood and those who worked to make the drive a success," said committee member Ray Tesmer.

The department's account with the Central Texas Regional Blood Center now has 231 credits available to employees, spouses, parents and in-laws, children, and dependent relatives living with employees.

Applications to use blood from this fund may be made through Ray Tesmer at 465-7634.★

Atlanta District honored by chamber of commerce

By Marcus Sandifer

The Atlantic District was honored in March by the Atlanta Area Chamber of Commerce during its Annual Industrial Appreciation Day luncheon.

The district headquarters was singled out for recognition because its presence in Atlanta resulted from an earlier generation's commitment to economic development.

The headquarters was lured to Atlanta in 1930 when local citizens donated a 20-acre park and constructed a two-story brick building on the site for the department to use.

"Now that's economic development," said luncheon chairman Burton Cook, who presented a plaque to District Engineer Lawrence Jester Jr. "The highway department has repaid the city of Atlanta for its expenditures many times over."

The district office employs 134 people in Atlanta, producing a \$3.4 million annual payroll, Burton noted.★

To annual Spring Fling

Corpus invitation attracts big catch

Did somebody say "party?" The Corpus Christi District did, and a bunch of folks said "yeah!"

Department people from all over the state, as well as employees of other state agencies, responded enthusiastically when the district proposed its party last fall.

So plans are progressing for District 16's "Spring Fling," scheduled for June 11 at Port Aransas.

Now it's time to buy tickets for activities, which include a fishing tournament, softball competition, fish fry, and dance. The deadline for presale tickets is May 20, and they can be ordered with the coupon on this page. The district suggests making hotel reservations early, and has offered to provide information on accommodations.

All activities will be at the Port Aransas Civic Center, on Texas 361 between the ferry landing and Park Road 53.

The fishing tournament, from sunrise to

3 p.m., offers contestants the chance to vie for \$500 in prizes, fishing for redfish and trout. Complete information will be sent with presale tickets.

The softball tournament is a friendly, single-elimination event. Individuals who want to play can let District 16 assign them to a team by making that request on the coupon. Teams should bring their own umpires.

The fish fry, offered by "Chef Extraordinaire Charlie Zapalac and his culinary associates," will feature fish, shrimp, beans, cole slaw, french fries, hush puppies, and iced tea. That megameal can be worked off dancing to live music by Jada and Gary Beck Group.

For informal activities, horseshoes and volleyball will also be available. Children's activities, including a perch tournament, will be offered at no charge.★

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO:

SPRING FLING
ATT: Cliff Bost
P.O. Box 9907
Corpus Christi, TX 78469

(512) 855-8281
(Home) 853-2464

Presale tickets by May 20, 1988

Yes, we'll participate in the June 11 Spring Fling at Port Aransas. Please send presale tickets for the following activities:

	Number	Amount
Fishing Tournament (\$10/person)	_____	_____
Softball Tournament (\$10/team) (we'll bring an umpire)	_____	_____
Fish Fry (\$5/plate) (no child's plate)	_____	_____
Dance (\$5/person)	_____	_____
Total Enclosed:		_____

(Make checks payable to Spring Fling '88)

The following number of children are interested in activities planned for them (no charge):

Perch Tournament: _____

Other activities: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Agency: _____

Telephone No.: (Work) _____ (Home) _____

Please include information on accommodation with presale tickets: _____

Tobola scores big on job, diamond

By Pearlle Bushong

Putting people out is Vikki Tobola's favorite pastime.

Playing the corners — first base and sometimes third — on a Class A women's softball team gives her plenty of opportunities to do just that.

Tobola, a maintenance technician in the Victoria maintenance section of the Yoakum District, started playing for the Alcorn Ruffneks six years ago. The team won the district championship 12 times, took state honors four times, and has placed in the top 10 in the national championships three out of five times. In 1985, Tobola was named to the Class A all-state team.

Tobola starts off the diamond, too. She started working for the department 4-1/2 years ago as a mower operator. Progressing to tractors and rollers, she started operating heavier equipment such as maintainers a year ago.

Tobola is the first woman to graduate from Texas A&M University's Heavy



Vikki Tobola is at home in heavy equipment and on the softball field. (Photo by Pearlle Bushong)

Equipment Operator School and the first woman in the Yoakum District to be trained as a maintainer operator.

She gets high scores, too, from Ronnie Roecker, Victoria maintenance supervisor. "If I could get 20 more like her, I would gladly take them," Roecker said. "She has an excellent attitude. She's always smiling and never says a cross word to anyone." ★

La Marque mechanic revs up roadster

By Beverly Nowakowski and Robert Moss

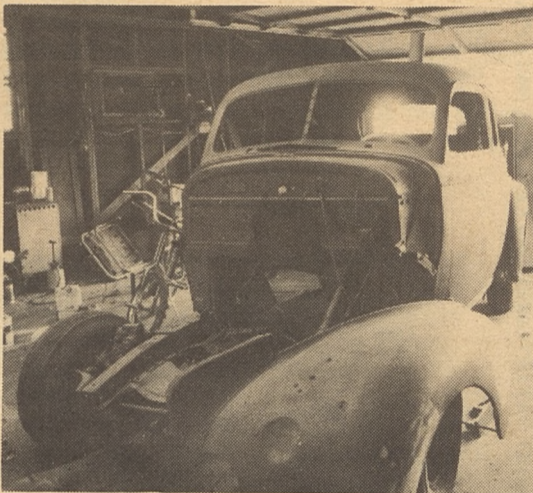
Alvin Scott knows how to make a good investment. The Chevy that he bought for \$1,000 a couple of years ago is now worth 11 times that much.

Scott, a seven-year department veteran and mechanic for the La Marque maintenance section in Galveston County, searched for five years before finding his 1940 Master Deluxe Chevrolet sedan. Between June 1986 and November 1987, he restored the car to its original glory, investing about \$8,000. His work paid off when the car recently was appraised for \$11,500.

The car has been completely rebuilt inside and out. Its features include a 350 C.I.D. stock engine with a 350 turbo automatic transmission, a 1957 differential, a Mustang power rack-and-pinion front end, power disk brakes with a 1978 Ford Granada brake booster, and steering assisted by a 1979 Chevrolet truck power steering pump. The wheels are Einki mags. The interior contains a Buick tilt steering wheel, under-the-dash air conditioner, AM/FM stereo system, and

light red velour upholstery with matching carpet. Flat nylon shims were added to the rear leaf springs to raise the rear of the vehicle and provide a better ride.

Scott's not finished yet, however. He's now looking for a 1932 or 1935 Ford for his collection. ★



Converting junk (above) to joy (below), Alvin Scott restored a 1940 Master Deluxe Chevrolet sedan.



Bohuslav returns

Ben Bohuslav has come home to Yoakum as district engineer.

Bohuslav has been a familiar face in the Yoakum district since joining the highway department in 1961. He was appointed as San Angelo district engineer in 1986, and returned to the Yoakum district April 1 to succeed Leonard J. Vincik, who resigned from the department.

While working in the Yoakum district, Bohuslav served as supervising traffic engineer and district maintenance engineer prior to accepting the post in San Angelo. He graduated from Texas A&M University in 1958, and served in the U.S. Air Force from 1958 through 1961. Bohuslav received the 1981 Gibb Gilchrist Award, which is presented annually to an outstanding engineer within the department.

Bohuslav directs department operations in Austin, Calhoun, Colorado, De Witt, Fayette, Gonzales, Jackson, Lavaca, Matagorda, Victoria, and Wharton counties.

A native of Moulton, Bohuslav was a member of the Yoakum city council for eight years. He served on the Yoakum Catholic Hospital Board, participated in the development of the Yoakum Community Center, and was an active member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church. He also served as city engineer with the City of Victoria and was on the City of San Antonio water board. Bohuslav is a member of the Texas Society of Professional Engineers.

He and his wife, Lou, have three children. ★Juliana Fernandez



Walter McCullough

Walter McCullough heads San Angelo

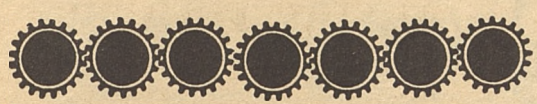
Walter G. McCullough, a 17-year veteran with the department, has been named district engineer in San Angelo. He succeeds Ben Bohuslav, who became district engineer in Yoakum.

McCullough is a native of Comanche and graduated from high school there. He received his bachelor's degree in civil engineering at Texas Tech University in 1971. He also holds an MBA degree from Baylor University.

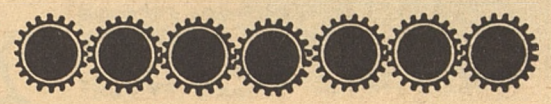
He joined the department in the Waco district office, but most of his career has been in the San Angelo area. Until his April 1 appointment, he was district construction engineer.

As district engineer, McCullough directs department operations in Coke, Concho, Crockett, Edwards, Glasscock, Irion, Kimble, Kinney, Menard, Reagan, Real, Runnels, Schleicher, Sterling, Sutton, Tom Green, and Val Verde counties.

He and his wife, Deborah, have three children. They attend Southland Baptist Church. McCullough is active in the Downtown Rotary Club. ★Hilton Hagan



Tech Trade



J a m m i n' w i t h t h e P i o n j a r

By Gina McAskill
and Evelyn Hughes

It's a hard land, West Texas. Even the ground itself is rocklike *caliche* soil that resists the picks, shovels, and posthole diggers of highway maintenance crews.

In the Odessa District, the hard land has been conquered by the use of an ingenious and versatile tool. The Pionjar drill/breaker and its dozens of attachments drills, drives in signposts, breaks up pavement, and tamps down patching, among other things.

"This one piece of equipment does almost exactly what an air compressor with a jackhammer and air drill can do, but on a smaller scale," said Jesse Gutierrez, maintenance foreman.

The machine, powered by a two-stroke engine, really shines in the sign-replacement department. Strong winds, heavy traffic, and vandalism take a hefty toll on signs in the area. Before the Pionjar arrived in District 6 five years ago, workers had to use manual hole-diggers or tools hooked up to an air compressor. Manual repair was time-consuming, and the compressor had more urgent uses.

Crews used to replace a sign by inserting posts into large holes and cementing them in, requiring two trips to the site and the transport of bulky pneumatic and concrete equipment.

Now, crews drill a starter hole with the Pionjar's reamer bit, then install any one of several types of signposts with the machine's



With the Pionjar, one person can drive a signpost from atop the rear of a pickup truck.

special post-driving tools. It takes about 15 minutes.

"The Pionjar cuts our sign work labor up to 90 percent," Gutierrez said. Overall, labor costs have been brought down by half. And this one-cylinder wonder fits in the back of a pickup truck, since it weighs 57 pounds and is only 29 inches high without attachments.

Each of the district's 12 sections has a Pionjar, kept primarily on the sign truck. But the district has found other uses for the compact drill/breaker, which carries a list price of \$2,800. A pavement breaker attachment helps remove pavement and base material so that premix or hot mix can be placed on a clean, dry surface. Then it can tamp down the patching material.

A damaged delineator post can be removed by using the Pionjar to break up the concrete around its base, or by wielding the machine's chisel tool to cut off the post at ground level. Then it completes the job by drilling a new hole and driving in the new six-foot post, guided by a worker standing in the back of a pickup.

The self-contained machine's portability and compact strength really help maintenance personnel contending with the seemingly endless dusty distances and often concrete-hard soils of this arid area.

"It is a blessing for us here in West Texas because of the terrain," Gutierrez said.★



MAY

- 3 EEO Training, Childress, D-13
- 3-4 EEO Training, Lubbock, D-13
- 3-4 Highway Construction Lettings, Austin, D-6
- 4 EEO Training, Amarillo, D-13
- 10-12 Basics of Bridge Inspection Course, Austin, D-5
- 16 Commission Hearing and Meeting, Austin
- 16-20 InterPro 32C Workstation User Training, Austin, D-19
- 17-18 1988 Safety and Traffic Conference, Austin, D-18STO
- 18 District Chief Accountants Meeting, Austin, D-3
- 25-26 FREQ Workshop 3, Austin, D-18STO
- 30 Holiday, Memorial Day

JUNE

- 1-3 Basics of Bridge Inspection Course, Austin, D-5
- 7-8 Highway Construction Lettings, Austin, D-6

- 8-10 1988 Transportation Planning Conference, Corpus Christi, D-10P

- 9-10 Research Area IV Advisory Committee Meeting, Fort Worth, D-5

- 28-29 Commission Meeting, Austin

- 30 District Engineers/Division Heads Meeting, Austin, File BCB

JULY

- 1 District Engineers/Division Heads Meeting continued, Austin, File BCB

- 4 Holiday, Independence Day

- 7-8 Highway Construction Lettings, Austin, D-6

- 15 Commission Hearing and Meeting, Austin

- 18-19 Area II Research Committee Meeting, Fort Worth, D-10R

AUGUST

- 11-12 Highway Construction Lettings, Austin, D-6

- 17-18 Area I Research Committee Meeting, Houston, D-10R

- 22-26 Capacity and Planning Applications for Arterial Analysis, Austin, D-10P

- 30-31 Commission Meeting, Austin

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Holiday, Labor Day

- 13-14 Highway Construction Lettings, Austin, D-6

- 28 Commission Hearing, Austin

- 29 Commission Meeting, Austin

OCTOBER

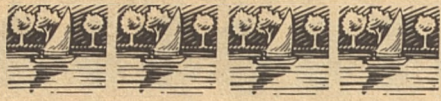
- 4-5 Construction Engineers Meeting, D-6

- 6-7 Area III Research Committee Meeting, Laredo, D-10R

- 12-13 Highway Construction Lettings, Austin, D-6

- 17 District Engineers/Division Heads Meeting

- 18-20 62nd Annual Highway and Transportation Short Course, College Station, File BCB



AWARDS



Service Awards

(March 31, 1988)

Administration

Rae S. Barho, 15 years.

Automation

Billy G. Caffey, Sharon V. Dungan, 20 years; William E. Kokas, Larry C. Smith, 10 years; Louis D. Sierra, five years.

Construction

Shirley K. Macik, 15 years; Baldemar P. Maldonado Jr., 10 years; Carolyn P. Cauley, five years.

Equipment and Procurement

Mirlyn M. Griffin, 20 years; Beverly M. Williams, 15 years; Ellen A. Glass, 10 years.

Finance

Donna L. McGee, 10 years.

Planning and Policy

Walter P. Paluch, 10 years.

Highway Design

James L. Brown, 25 years; Ann M. Irwin, Wayne C. Young, 10 years; Thomas D. Beeman, five years.

Materials and Tests

Bessie R. Dougherty, Charles D. Jennings, 25 years; Albert L. Pozzi, Lawrence W. Worden, 20 years; Karl J. Janak, five years.

Motor Vehicles

Terald D. Houghton, Jackie D. Straley, Lorene P. White, 20 years; Rosie B. Patton, Frances D. Stastney, Rebecca E. Swank, 15 years; Joey M. Connell, Jeanne H. Ramirez, Margaret P. Wood, 10 years.

Right of Way

Sammy W. Mitchell, five years.

Safety and Maintenance Operations

Ingeborg W. Davis, Gary K. Trietsch, 20 years.

Transportation Planning

Harrison L. Scott, 25 years; Joseph A. Mullins, five years.

Paris District (1)

Henry H. Blair, 25 years; Herman O. Howard, 10 years; Joe N. Strickland, five years.

Fort Worth District (2)

Benny G. Fuller, 30 years; Charles M. Morgan Jr., 25 years; Douglas A. Clay, 20 years; Lewis L. Mears, 15 years; Grover A. Schretter, 10 years; Eddie J. Hazard, Benjamin Hinojosa, Sherry T. Hoak, Gilbert I. Latigo, five years.

Wichita Falls District (3)

James H. Pierson, 25 years; Melton A. DeMoss, 10 years; Kyle D. Walker, five years.

Amarillo District (4)

Dale A. Dallas, William V. Gesch, five years.

Lubbock District (5)

Milton G. Estep, 30 years; R. L. Burnett, 15 years; Phillip L. Barnett, Jerrell C. Otwell, 10 years.

Odessa District (6)

Francisco O. Sanchez, Samuel O. Sanchez, 35 years; William R. Wagnon, 25 years; Manual R. Esparza, Elbert D. Speegle, 15 years; Pamela P. Brown, 10 years; John P. Cooper, Cleon L. Payton Jr., five years.

San Angelo District (7)

Jimmie A. Machann, 30 years; Kenneth R. Baylor, Ernest P. Carroll, 25 years; Jimmy G. Basquez, Daniel W. Gower, 20 years; Leonard L. Sanchez, Otto Wilkosz, 10 years.

Abilene District (8)

Otis H. Jones, 35 years; Bobby C. Satterwhite, 30 years; Reynoldo S. Ramos, 10 years; Clyde L. Prince, Jimmy G. Redwine, five years.

Waco District (9)

James E. Goains, Marcus M. Guthrie, 30 years; Irwin G. Hines, 15 years; Woodrow W. Johnston, 10 years; Charles R. Padgett, David J. Pittman, Charles E. Smith, James R. Stimmel Jr., five years.

Tyler District (10)

Thomas S. Cash, Laurent O. Hallonquist, Olen R. Odom, 25 years; Emmitt H. Venable, Wendel L. Womack, 20 years; Stephenia C. Hunt, 10 years; Jerry L. Frick, Coy E. McKinney, five years.

Lufkin District (11)

Walter A. Cones III, Edward J. McKey, 30 years; James D. Parker, 25 years; Truman H. Johnson, 20 years; Clyde J. Mathews Jr., Curtis W. Shoemaker, five years.

Houston District (12)

Lupe Alderite, 30 years; Harold L. Heidemann, Harold M. Joiner, Feriss L. Markert, Austin D. McMahan Jr., Weldon E. Ray, 25 years; Angel M. Collado, Francis C. Courtright, Willie Grayer, 20 years; Judith W. Davis, Louis R. Lindley, Richard A. Spence, Shirley D. Woods, 15 years; Stephen C. Bounds, Martha E. Ellington, Donald J. Lorenz, Lyle A. Smith, Michael Tagliareni, 10 years; Yimkei G. Cheung, Russell D. Shelton Jr., Larry R. Stephenson, five years.

Yoakum District (13)

Gerhard W. Boening, Walter W. Nobles, 30 years; Gregorio Andrade, Lloyd E. Cody Jr., 25 years; Anthony J. Kutac, 20 years; Carl L. O'Neill, James L. Skrovan, 15 years.

Austin District (14)

Frank J. Mikulencak, 35 years; Robert L. Bibles, Howard W. Chapman, Billy D. Smith, Loney W. Smith Jr., 25 years; Dennis W. Friedrich, Victor L. Mazinke, 20 years; Edward Villalpando Jr., 15 years; Mario E. Hernandez, Floyd C. Karstetter, Frank R. Saldana, 10 years.

San Antonio District (15)

Herman L. Brucks, Robert J. Graff Jr., Richard D. Lockhart, Elton J. Oetken Jr., Leroy G. Seibert, 35 years; Manuel L. Gonzales, William W. Hughey, Victoriano J. Leal, Alvin R. Williams, 30 years; Herman W. Dolle, Rodolfo Z. Uriegas, Stayton H. Woodall Jr., 25 years; Lester E. Potter, 20 years; Flora W. Burke, Santos A. Garcia, Billy W. Harvey, Martin M. Uriegas, 15 years; James V. Bates Jr., William A. Miller, Richard Salas, 10 years; Karen S. Gibson, five years.

Corpus Christi District (16)

Jose Avitia, Jose Lopez, Rene Valerio, 20 years.

Bryan District (17)

Floyd C. Boriskie, Joyce H. Cates, 30 years; Reynolds McClure, Thomas J. Strauss, 20 years; Larry J. Kopecky, 15 years; Blane A. Laywell, Robert Ramirez, 10 years; Paul A. Gurka, five years.

Dallas District (18)

William A. Milligan, Wilford L. Mosley, 20 years; Charles M. Musketnuss, James H. Pickel, Philip E. Simons, 15 years; Mildred G. Brooks, Richard S. Dorsett III, Shirley W. Erby, Cathy W. Masters, Shirley B. Smith, 10 years; Chester L. Davis, Stacy E. Kimberlin, five years.

Atlanta District (19)

James W. Oney, 25 years; Rodger D. Jones, 20 years; Connie L. Hudson, 15 years; Jess L. Hodges, Jon S. Williamson, five years.

Beaumont District (20)

Johnnie L. Zeigler, 30 years; Henry L. Ellison, Edward W. Higginbotham, Alfred E. Smith, 25 years; Albert L. Morgan, James E. Williams, 20 years; Thomas D. Black, Doc J. Jeanise, 15 years; James O. Parks, 10 years; Jerry J. Broussard, Charles Brown, Donnie D. McInnis, five years.

Pharr District (21)

Tomas Benavides Jr., 35 years; Baldemar Garza, Harry W. Kiehn, 25 years; Ruben P. Lopez, Amado E. Pena, 20 years; Gilberto Garza, 15 years; Gilberto Pena, five years.

Brownwood District (23)

Melvin L. Crabtree, Thomas P. Edwards, 30 years; Lewis W. Perkins, 25 years; Richard L. Belvin, 10 years.

El Paso District (24)

Lee R. Applegate, Richard A. Hubbard, 25 years; Carlos V. Dominguez, Victor L. Esparza, Jesus G. Perez, Sabino A. Talavera Jr., 20 years.

Childress District (25)

Eugene B. Stewart, 40 years; Jackie N. Burrows, 20 years; Wilie C. Brundige, five years.

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Retirements

(January 31, 1988)

Automation

Dock R. Cowser, Aircraft Pilot II.

Construction

Connie F. Jett, Director I.

Paris District (1)

Bobby H. Bailey, Staff Services Officer II; T. J. Brownfield, Maintenance Technician III; Billy G. White, Engineering Technician V.

Fort Worth District (2)

Jesse M. Lee, Engineering Specialist II.

Wichita Falls District (3)

Max O. Solomon, Maintenance Technician III.

San Angelo District (7)

LeRoy A. Thomas, Administrator of Technical Programs I.

Abilene District (8)

Solomon Torres, Maintenance Technician II.

Tyler District (10)

Raymond D. Hawkins, Maintenance Technician III; John T. Patterson, Engineering Technician V.

Houston District (12)

Lee G. Bennett, Maintenance Construction Supervisor II; David Hodges, Engineering Technician V.

Yoakum District (13)

Lee Roy E. Hartmann, Maintenance Technician III; Jessie J. West, Maintenance Technician III.

San Antonio District (15)

Billie G. Bingham, Maintenance Technician II; Gus Ehlers, Maintenance Technician II; Gilbert L. Wittig, Engineering Technician V.

Childress District (25)

Carl W. Baker, Maintenance Technician II.



In Memoriam



Employees:

Rupert F. Davis, Houston District, died February 17, 1988.

Paul V. Strelec, Yoakum District, died March 22, 1988.

Kilroy Wallace, Abilene District, died March 23, 1988.

Ricky L. Wilbanks, Atlanta District, died March 27, 1988.

Retirees:

James M. Aaron, Hempstead, retired from Houston District, died July 23, 1987.

Jewel Askey, Center, retired from Lufkin District, died March 11, 1988.

Kenneth I. Atkinson, Dickens, retired from Childress District, died January 4, 1988.

Wilmer C. Beeler, Bryan, retired from Bryan District, died April 3, 1988.

William G. Bertch, San Antonio, retired from San Antonio District, died February 23, 1988.

Alfred W. Boyd, Stephenville, retired from Fort Worth District, died February 10, 1988.

Harvey A. Carr, Port Bolivar, retired from Houston District, died December 13, 1987.

Samuel D. Crumley, Lampasas, retired from Brownwood District, died February 22, 1988.

Lester R. Cummings, Fort Worth, retired from Fort Worth District, died January 21, 1988.

Clifton N. Davis, Sweetwater, retired from Abilene District, died January 4, 1988.

Melvin L. Doss, Caldwell, retired from Bryan District, died March 11, 1988.

William R. Faust, San Antonio, retired from San Antonio District, died April 11, 1988.

Emmitt J. Garrett, Nacogdoches, retired from Lufkin District, died March 13, 1988.

Richard B. Granniss, Waco, retired from Waco District, died February 27, 1988.

Thomas E. Gregory, Beeville, retired from Corpus Christi District, died December 17, 1988.

Robert E. Hatfield, Carthage, retired from Atlanta District, died January 25, 1988.

Willie H. Haynes Jr., Queen City, retired from Atlanta District, died March 27, 1988.

Rollin R. Henry, McCaulley, retired from Abilene District, died January 4, 1988.

Wright H. Kilpatrick, Barnhart, retired from San Angelo District, died March 7, 1988.

Homer P. Lee, Colorado City, retired from Abilene District, died February 20, 1988.

Malcolm M. Long, Denton, retired from Dallas District, died December 11, 1987.

Leonard F. Marburger, Austin, retired from Austin District, died February 5, 1988.

Jack A. Martin, Santa Barbara, California, retired from El Paso District, died February 26, 1988.

Erle C. Mayo Sr., Denton, retired from Brownwood District, died February 16, 1988.

Ray A. McCoy, Rocksprings, retired from Del Rio District, died February 15, 1988.

L. T. Nichols, Rowlett, retired from Dallas District, died February 6, 1988.

Woodrow W. Nixon, Wichita Falls, retired from Wichita Falls District, died March 16, 1988.

Marion Parker Jr., Elkhart, retired from Tyler District, died February 11, 1988.

Joe M. Price, Montalba, retired from Tyler District, died February 25, 1988.

William L. Ragain, Colorado City, retired from Abilene District, died January 13, 1988.

Lester Rawlings, McAllen, retired from Pharr District, died February 24, 1988.

William E. Ringwald, Houston, retired from Houston District, died February 19, 1988.

Eduviges Rivera, Alice, retired from Corpus Christi District, died February 18, 1988.

Alvin C. Rogers, Fort Worth, retired from Fort Worth District, died February 21, 1988.

Daniel Tomerlin, Mineral Wells, retired from Fort Worth District, died February 1, 1988.

Cecil Weil, Houston, retired from Houston District, died February 13, 1988.

Harvey H. Williams, Atlanta, retired from Atlanta District, died March 27, 1988.

★ Compiled by Bernice Kissmann,
Human Resources Division



Steve Patterson of the Houston District took second place in the men's division of the recent Auto Thrill and Destruction Derby. Patterson, competing against 27 drivers in the Astrodome, was rewarded with \$900 and an impressive trophy.

roadrunners

On behalf of the City of Meridian, we would like to express our appreciation for the assistance, generous cooperation, and valuable counsel given by **Glenn Drake** and our local highway department. Glenn and his men are a great asset both to your department and to our community.

Glenn is always eager to assist our city, whether it be with his valued advice or with assistance in emergency situations.

Again let me express our heartfelt thanks to the Texas highway department for all your help.

Hugh Trotter, Mayor
Earl Courtney, Public Works Director
Meridian

Glenn Drake is the maintenance foreman for Bosque County in the Waco District.

On January 27, I went to Bolivar via ferry to deliver some signs. We were fortunate enough to catch the *R. Sterling* for the return trip to Galveston that evening. We saw a friend of ours and went up to the top deck to visit. We landed in Galveston a short time later and proceeded to arrive home. It was then that I realized I had left my purse on the ferry. We quickly returned to the landing. When the *Sterling* arrived, I went to the

wheelhouse to see the captain. He handed my purse to me and I thanked him.

In this world of unrest and distrust, it was such a refreshing feeling to know that people are still caring and honest.

C. Blume
Galveston

This letter, printed originally in the Galveston Daily News, commends captain Melton Young Jr., engineer Edward Murphy, and crew members Alan Voigt, Sidney Perrett, Thomas Comeaux, and William Burris.

We have a lot of "thank you's" to hand out and the first and biggest needs to go to **Guillermo Molinar**.

We were leaving Big Bend and going to El Paso on FM 170. We were pulling a "fifth wheel" and also another couple was with us. All of a sudden we were in the road dead still and headed up on an oily road, just oiled and not topped, and no power to pull off the road.

This highway truck came by going the other way, the driver waved, and we felt deserted. This most humble and nice man went down where he could turn around and came back.



Guillermo Molinar

We had a chain, and he was willing to help us.

The state of Texas should feel proud that they are friendly and helpful as we have not had this courtesy in other states. We tried to pay this man and he would take nothing.

Another time in Longview we needed to find a trailer place on Friday and had only about 15 minutes left and couldn't get any help. Our last resort was to stop a highway department truck. The fellows were going in past there and took us right to it.

All of the employees should be told that people appreciate their waves and smiles and help when no other help is available. We are grateful to you.

Margie and Ollie Hilliard
Cape Coral, Florida

Guillermo Molinar works in the Presidio maintenance subsection, El Paso District.

ON OUR COVER:
Hard hats mingled with fire helmets as the highway department helped tame a blazing range fire in West Texas. See stories, pages 8-9. (Photo by J. Griffiths Smith)

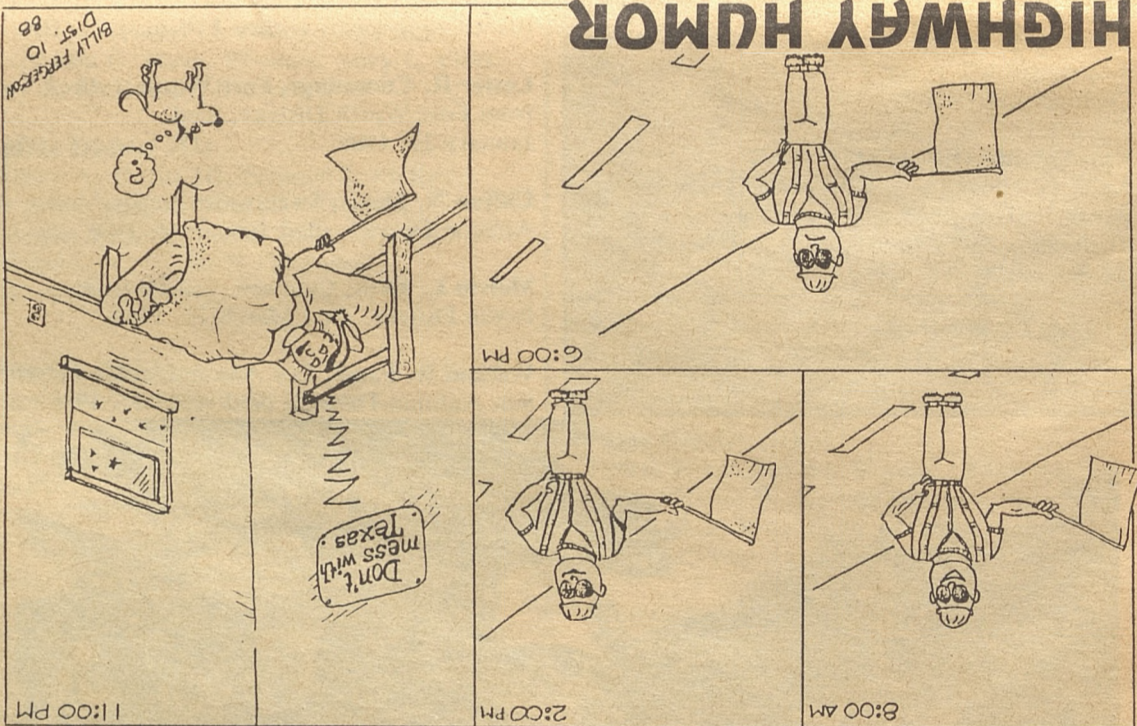
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