

# Transportation NEWS

November 1996 Volume 22 Number 3

## Recycled material eyed for roadways TxDOT considers variety of reusable resources for construction use

**Rebecca Davio**  
General Services Division

Everything but the kitchen sink!

Well, that may be a little exaggerated, but TxDOT is considering a variety of "new" recycled materials for use in road construction. These include broken glass bottles, roofing shingles, tire chips, shredded brush and compost, crushed concrete, plastics, toilets and bottom ash.

These materials were investigated as part of more than \$7.5 million in research by Texas' leading engineering universities. "We tried to identify recycled materials that meet or exceed our specifications and are available at a competitive price," said Katherine Holtz, director of the Materials and Tests Division. "The environmental benefits that come from using recycled materials are icing on the cake."

Looking at these alternative recycled materials benefits the road construction industry in a number of ways. First, many parts of the state do not have local sources of high-quality, naturally occurring road construction materials. The Houston District (HOU), for example, does not have a good quality aggregate source. Many times HOU imports crushed limestone from Central Texas, paying high transportation costs. By using crushed glass containers as an alternate aggregate source, HOU could significantly reduce material transportation costs. Glass is readily available nearby and meets TxDOT specifications. Texas Tech University, which conducted TxDOT's glass research study, found that glass has good compaction and drainage characteristics, can be installed with conventional construction equipment, and would be an excellent supplement or replacement for gravel.

Recycled road construction materials also can improve performance over existing materials. The Paris District (PAR) believes that the bottom ash—which, like fly ash, is produced when coal is burned to generate electricity—is superior to the local field sand in hot mix.

"The particles of bottom ash are more

angular and therefore yield better, longer term performance for our hot mix pavements," said Wayne Clements, PAR director of construction.

Recycled materials may also help the department stretch its dollars. TxDOT only has about 40 percent of the funds needed to address road building requirements in Texas. As an example, compost appears to offer cost benefits when used for erosion control.

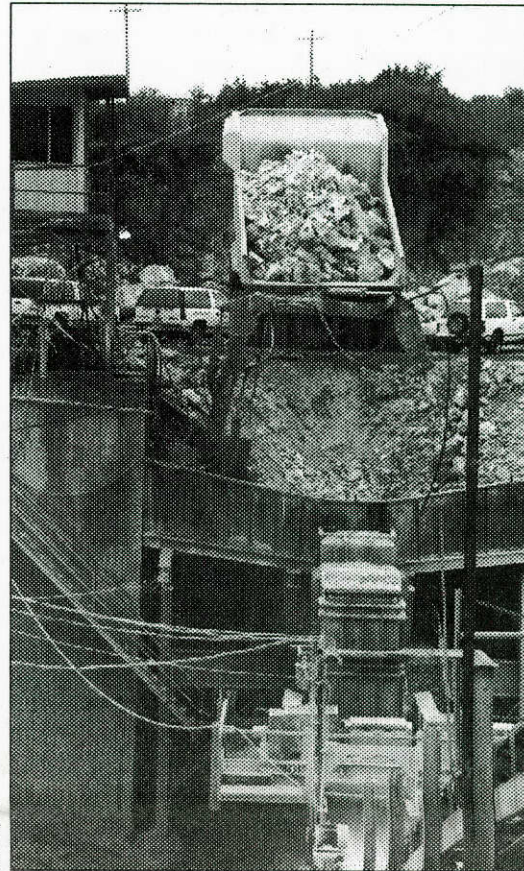
John Barton, Bowie area engineer and project director on the compost research project conducted at the Texas Transportation Institute's Hydrology Laboratory, said, "Compost offers a number of benefits when used as an erosion control technique. Specifically, compost may favorably alter the soil texture, use large volumes of vegetative materials that would otherwise be burned or sent to the landfill."

To ensure that the benefits of using recycled materials can be reaped across the state, three specific initiatives are under way, including a CD-ROM, field tests and a conference.

A lot of information was generated in the initial research projects about recycled roadway construction materials, but it was hard to get at it. To make this easier, a CD-ROM titled "TxDOT Recycles!" is being produced. This will be a full multimedia CD, with sound, video, text and graphics. Information from previous recycled roadway material research will be included, as well as survey data from the other state transportation departments regarding recycled materials they're using, and information on how to find recycled materials in a particular Texas region.

To verify initial research findings and get firsthand experience with recycled materials, TxDOT and local road building partners soon will begin field testing. The goal is to develop statewide specifications that can be used by any district—or our road building partners—when the recycled materials are available economically.

Another effort to spread the word about recycled road construction materials is "The



**The use of recycled material in roadway construction benefits the environment and saves money. Broken glass bottles, roofing shingles, tire chips, shredded brush and compost, crushed concrete, plastics, bottom ash and toilets (shown here being crushed) are being used or considered for use in Texas roadways.**

Road to Recycling" Conference, set for Jan. 28-29 in Austin.

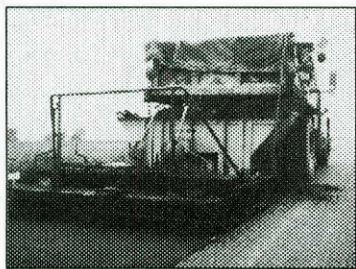
"We hope department employees involved in road construction, including construction inspectors, lab technicians, area engineers and project designers, will want to learn about these recycled materials and consider attending this conference," said John Aldridge, acting director of the Construction and Maintenance Division and a member of the conference planning committee. In addition to TxDOT employees, contractors, material suppliers and recycled material providers are encouraged to attend. ★

### Inside



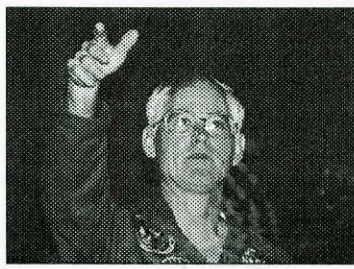
Life for Tonya Keneda has meaning, because she now has a porpoise.

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A 15-year-old idea finally bears fruit, and pays for itself the first time it's used.

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Transportation Conference news, including astronaut Mike Mullane's speech, starts in a special section.

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A reproduction of a painting by June Morgan graces a rest stop in East Texas.

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**Q:** I was recently told that military service time bought back will count toward retirement, but does not count for longevity. An Employee Retirement System employee told me that most state agencies do allow purchased service time to be applied to their longevity time. However TxDOT is one agency that does not allow this.

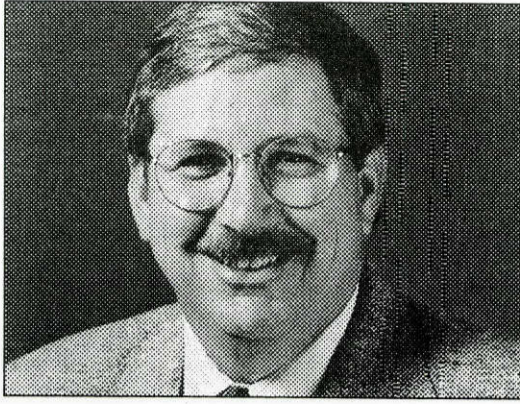
According to the Human Resources Manual 4-44 Section 8, "years of service" is defined as employment by a state agency, a legislative office, or state college and university.

If military service is not included in the TxDOT definition of qualifying prior service time, why is it included by other state agencies? Why also is military time used in calculating retirement time, yet does not qualify for longevity? Although there is a limit of five years of military time to be purchased and applied to retirement, why can't this same limit be placed on longevity time, and then be applied.

I would think qualifying prior service time, once determined by the agency to be qualifying and then purchased by the employee, should then be treated as service time, for all purposes of calculating benefits, not just a few.

Other than the obvious (we benefit from one now, and the other after retirement), I don't understand the difference being placed on longevity and retirement in respect to qualifying conditions. Can you clear up my confusion on this subject?

**John J. Hudson**  
Atlanta District



**Bill Burnett**

## Ask Bill

**A:** John, thanks for your letter. I checked and this is what I found out. State agencies are not permitted to use any purchased military service time to increase an employee's longevity payments. This policy has been confirmed with the offices of the State Auditor, State Comptroller and Employees Retirement System. I'm sorry you were misinformed.

.....

**Q:** Under what conditions can a supervisor fill a job vacancy by lateral transfer rather than by posting a job vacancy notice? Where would an employee obtain a copy of the guidelines given to supervisors to follow when making lateral transfers? Does TxDOT

have procedures in place to prevent supervisors from displaying favoritism by giving an employee a position by lateral transfer rather than using the job vacancy notice procedures to allow a fair competition between all interested applicants?

**Brenda J. Thompson**  
Houston District

**A:** Managers and supervisors may fill a position without posting a job vacancy notice when the transfer is a result of a business necessity or as a humanitarian accommodation. Both have conditions which must be met before such action may be implemented. These conditions are listed in the Human Resources Manual, Chapter 1, Section 12, page 1-53 (revised 6/95).

Guidelines for managers and supervisors are provided on pages 1-54 through 1-54D of the Human Resources Manual. These guidelines require supervisors to initiate an impact assessment to determine the feasibility of the proposed transfer. Also, examples are cited to illustrate situations that could be considered. A copy of the Human Resources Manual should be available from the employee's supervisor or human resources officer.

Management Team members (or designees) are responsible for ensuring that the conditions and guidelines outlined under Department Transfers are followed. Meeting the conditions set out and following the written guidelines in the Human Resources Manual should provide for fair and equitable treatment of all employees.

## Byman takes driver's seat at Public Transportation

Judy Byman has been selected as the new director of the Public Transportation Division (PTN).

Byman brings more than 20 years of public transportation experience to her new post, including 12 years as director of the largest rural public transportation system in Minnesota and one of the largest in the nation.

Byman earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota and a master's degree in social work from the University of North Carolina before embarking upon a career in public transportation. She served two years as general manager of a paratransit system serving three counties in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

Byman also served as a consultant to the transit industry for six

years, working in Arizona, California, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Texas and West Virginia, where she specialized in paratransit and fixed-route transportation system management and evaluation.

"As director of the Public Transportation Division, I have the opportunity to work with a diverse and talented staff to enhance the working partnership between the division and all of the transit systems and to work toward a common goal of meeting the mobility needs of the people of Texas," Byman said. "I think I have a unique blend of experience — a business background, transit operating and management experience — that will help us to really build upon that working partnership. We're only limited by our imaginations."

She replaces Richard G. Christie, who retired in August. ★

## Tomlinson appointed to Amarillo DE position

Mark E. Tomlinson is the new district engineer in the Amarillo District, Executive Director Bill Burnett announced.

Tomlinson has been director of transportation planning and development in the San Angelo District since 1993. Tomlinson's appointment fills a vacancy left when Amarillo District Engineer Billy Parks was assigned to head TxDOT's Corpus Christi District earlier this year. Tomlinson assumed the duties of Amarillo district engineer Nov. 1.

"I know that Mark will be missed in San Angelo," Burnett said. "His enthusiasm and professional expertise will continue the positive transportation program in the Amarillo District. I also want to express my appreciation to Martin Rodin, who has served as interim district engineer in Amarillo since September." Rodin is the district's transportation planning director.

Tomlinson began working for TxDOT in 1980 as an engineering aide while earning a bachelor's degree in civil engineering at the

University of Texas at Austin. Following graduation, he went to work for the San Angelo District in 1983 as an engineering assistant. He was licensed as a professional engineer in 1987. Tomlinson served as the district's traffic engineer, assistant design engineer and design engineer before taking the job of director of transportation planning and development. ★

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# Sammons mixes career, reserve duties

## Approach to both is the same: work hard and keep moving up

*"The reservist is twice the citizen."  
—Winston Churchill*

*"In the future, we will rely even more heavily on our citizen-soldiers . . . so employers' support will be even more crucial."  
—Secretary of Defense William J. Perry*

What kind of person would give up one weekend a month and two weeks a year of personal time to dress up in a uniform closely resembling forest foliage in order to perform tasks ranging from crawling through mud while bullets are whistling overhead to completing reams of documents that could wallpaper homes in a small subdivision?

This same kind of person also has agreed to leave hearth and home at a moment's notice to be placed in harm's way to defend our nation's liberty. This same kind of person also has a full-time "real-life" job that contributes to making America's government and economy the strongest in the world. This person probably has a family who feels like they don't get to spend enough time together anyway.

What kind of person would do that? I met one the other day, and her boss said he wishes he had a dozen more like her.

Laura Sammons is the kind of person who cheerfully does all of the above. A desktop publisher in the Electronic Publishing Section of the General Services Division, Staff Sgt. Sammons is also an Air Force reservist in the 433rd Civil Engineer Squadron headquartered at Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio. She is one of TxDOT's 147 employees who are members of the Reserves or National Guard.

"TxDOT is a wonderful organization," Sammons told me proudly. "Supervisors will work with employees who are in the Reserves or the Guard so there is little, if any, conflict between our careers here and our military duties."

And the home front support is well-established also. Sammons' husband, Barry, is a master sergeant in her unit where he applies his regular job skills as an electrician. "It's a good thing we're both in the Reserves," Sammons admitted. "This way, we both understand what each other is doing and can offer mutual support."

**"The most common reasons for leaving the service given by separating reservists, and the frequency with which they were given, were as follows: conflict with family or leisure, 31.6 percent; conflict with civilian job, 30.9 percent."**

*—Department of Defense study*

Sammons made it clear, though, that she works diligently to make sure neither job is compromised and that she's able to keep up with her commitment to both careers.

Her approach to military and civilian jobs has been the same: Sammons took entry-level jobs to get her foot in the door so she could go on to more responsible positions.

"When I entered the Reserves, I started in food service as a cook," she said. "And everyone's nice to cooks, but it was a hard life; my shift started at 3 a.m. There's a lot of preparation involved before the food goes on the table."

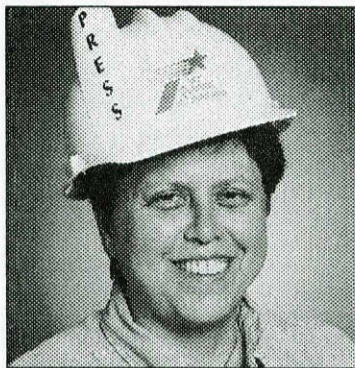
The Air Force cooking school is in Colorado, where Sammons learned how to cook in mobile kitchens and feed 300 people at a time. "I was a cook for two years, and then I decided I wanted to work outside with the other airmen," she said. "So I cross-trained and finally got schooling to be an electrician, which I did for the next five years."

Always a seeker of more knowledge, Sammons changed military occupational specialties again and is now in force management. "What that means," she explained, "is when we get called up to mobilize for deployment, I get to make sure everyone's personnel files, medical records and personal obligations are up-to-date so they can move out in 72 hours."

Once her unit is mobilized, Sammons becomes a radio operator in a disaster control center.

Sammons started her career at TxDOT 13 years ago as a receptionist for the Electronic Publishing Section "when it was still over at the Main Office," she related. "I would bug my supervisor to teach me more skills and let me take on additional responsibilities.

"I'd stay late and work overtime, whatever it took," she said. "So soon I became a word processor operator. Then, our section split in two: word processing and typesetting."



**Eloise Lundgren**

### A Day in the Life

with one employee working 2-10 p.m. "There are five of us on the day shift and two on the night shift," she explained. "I love my hours; I don't have to deal with traffic problems."

On-the-job training accounts for most of Sammons' skills but she attends seminars whenever she can. She wants to return to school to learn the print shop part of the business. If you're getting the feeling that ink runs through her veins, you're right. Her father was the city

According to Sammons, her goal was to become a typesetter, so she started immediately learning, little by little, what that would take, and as soon as there was an opening, she got a typesetting job.

"Now we're called desktop publishers," she said. "And I love this job; it's a lot of fun. I'm doing something different every day."

Sammons publishes anything from newsletters to posters to certificates to brochures to forms.

She works 5:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday through Friday. The other shift works 4:30 p.m.-midnight,



**Laura Sammons, a desktop publisher in the Electronic Publishing Section of the General Services Division, is also an Air Force reservist. She is one of TxDOT's 147 employees who are members of the Reserves or National Guard.** editor of the Laredo Times for 17 years before he went to work for the State Department.

"I used to spend a lot of time at the newspaper watching what all the printers did," she said. "I think I enjoyed the newspaper's morgue the most." (For you civilians, the "morgue" is the newspaper's library.)

She left with her family to live in Washington, D.C., when she was 14, but they didn't stay long in the nation's capital. "We were there for six months before my father was assigned to Bolivia," Sammons said. "I attended a multicultural school where it was not unusual for kids to speak three or four languages.

"Boy, I just thought I spoke Spanish," she laughed. "I discovered quickly that there's a world of difference between Tex-Mex and Castilian Spanish."

She graduated from high school in Honduras before moving back to D.C., where she lived for the next 12 years. "I managed a jewelry section at a large department store for about seven years," Sammons said, "but I missed Texas a lot and hated the weather in Washington, so I moved to Austin in 1981, where I worked for a temporary service until I came to TxDOT."

Living abroad was a wonderful experience, according to Sammons, but there's no place like home. "The United States is a great country," she said. "Where else can you find a place where women can be anything they want?"

"Lots of people ask me if it's difficult to work in a military environment with a lot of men," she continued. "I've never had a problem. Since I'm an NCO (noncommissioned officer), I supervise other

Please see Sammons, page 15

# TxDOT races clock to solve Year 2000 issue

**Jerry Vinyard**  
Information Systems Division

Long before the clock strikes midnight Dec. 31, 1999, every computer user will be affected. The culprit: the year 2000 problem.

And before the problem is solved, an estimated 7 million lines of code will need to be inspected and analyzed.

Since computers were invented, many programmers have processed and stored year data using two digits instead of four. For example, the year 1996 often is represented as 96. This works until the end of 1999. The year 2000, however, will bring a whole new set of problems. If nothing were done, many of the applications that we depend on would quit working, or worse, keep running, but start producing incorrect results.

Year 2000 (Y2K) processing problems will generally fall into three categories: logic errors, sorting errors and date entries. The most prevalent will be logic errors.

Logic errors occur when determining a range of time, such as a person's age. Programs subtract the earlier date from the later date. Within the same century, this works fine. For instance, subtracting 1972 from 1998 would produce  $98 - 72 = 26$ . As we move to the year 2002, the equation looks like this  $02 - 72 = -70$ .

Sorting errors occur because programs that are date-sensitive expect to receive the data in chronological order. As long as we remain within a century this does not cause a problem. After the jump to the year 2000, data will be sorted in an unexpected order. For instance, Y2K data would be listed

before year 1999 data. What happens as a result depends on the what the program does and how it does it. The best case is that the program will stop processing. The worst case is that the program will continue processing and allow bad data to be stored.

Another possible problem is date. For example, retention date fields are used for things like backup and archive tapes. For many years, a retention date of 99 meant that the tape should be kept forever. Systems that haven't converted for the end of the century will begin to lose permanent data in the Y2K.

Many people think that the Y2K problem begins Jan. 1, 2000, but many problems will begin well before then. For the state, fiscal 2000 begins Sept. 1, 1999. Many of our systems use the fiscal year as well as the calendar year. In addition, some of our business processes project into the future for such things as multiyear contracts and budgeting and planning for out years. Computer applications for such business processes must be fixed before projections reach into either fiscal or calendar Y2K. Some of TxDOT's systems are already at that point.

Y2K problems aren't confined to the legacy systems on the mainframe. Every computer and every computer program has the potential to be affected by the Y2K problem. Some desktop computers will not roll over to 2000; user-written systems or reports from mainframe data may need to be modified; applications from outside vendors may not be year-2000 compliant; some Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers will stop working in 1999; traffic control computers may not operate; building security systems

may fail; telephone PBX systems may quit.

TxDOT's Information Systems Division (ISD) plays a major role in solving the Y2K problems, but districts and divisions have responsibilities as well. Offices that have internal data processing operations, applications and reporting systems are responsible for Y2K compliance. Divisions and districts also share some responsibilities with ISD. For instance, divisions sponsoring mainframe applications must assist the Y2K team in analyzing the problems and testing acceptance.

Y2K will affect almost every office at TxDOT. TxDOT employees must inventory all computer applications for which they are responsible, including all report programs that process information from the mainframe files, all desktop hardware and all applications that came from outside vendors, including the Texas Transportation Institute and the Federal Highway Administration.

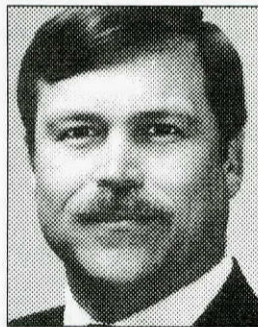
Completing the inventory should define the problem and its magnitude. If districts, divisions or special offices determine they may have Y2K problems, they must set up a project to address them. ISD will provide information on setting up such a project.

For the problems with mainframe data, fixes must be coordinated with ISD. Fixing the legacy systems will be a coordinated effort among the Y2K team, the application maintenance team and personnel from the sponsoring division. The Y2K team is identifying all applications that may have Y2K exposures. \*

## TxDOT pair honored by AASHTO for transportation work

An employee and a former employee have been recognized by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials for their contributions to the development of transportation at the regional or national level.

Jim Randall, Multimodal Operations Office director, helped develop TxDOT's first strategic plan, a master plan for public transportation in Texas and the Texas transit statistical report. He helped establish the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway State Executive Advisory Committee. He was also a major contributor to the Texas Seaport and Inland Waterway Study, which will help the department develop a comprehensive strategic plan and planning process



**Randall**



**Christie**

for Texas' inland waterway and port system.

Richard Christie, former Public Transportation Division director, was recognized for his hand in producing a public transportation marketing campaign. The campaign emphasized multimodalism through public education programs, and used the latest technology and transportation planning to further the department's mission.

Christie helped develop the Intercity Bus Team to foster partnerships between the public and private sectors. One outcome of the team's initiative was the establishment of the Texas Bus Association in May 1995. \*

## Huffstutler, Schwab named to Aviation Advisory Committee

Mark T. Huffstutler of Uvalde and John W. Schwab of San Angelo have been appointed to TxDOT's Aviation Advisory Committee.

Huffstutler is airport manager of Garner Field, president-director of Uvalde Flight Center Inc., and president-director of Sierra Industries, Inc. He holds a license for airline transport support, commercial pilot, private pilot in Mexico, certified flight instructor, flight engineer, A&P mechanic and is also certified for inspection authorization.

Schwab became airport manager of Mathis Field in 1995 after retiring from the Federal Aviation Administration. He holds licenses for commercial pilot, multi-engine and instrument, as well as a flight instructor certificate.

Schwab is past president of the Texas Association of Airport Executives, and serves on numerous boards and councils.

Both will serve on the committee through Aug. 31, 1999.

Texas law requires the Texas Transportation Commission to appoint a six-member committee to advise the commission and TxDOT on aviation matters. Each member

of the committee must have at least five years of successful experience as an aircraft pilot, an aircraft facilities manager or a fixed-base operator. TxDOT receives, disburses and administers federal and state funds for general aviation airports and is responsible for helping small communities build, maintain and upgrade airports.

Huffstutler and Schwab join George Mitchell Jr. of Beaumont, Loretta Scott of Grand Prairie, Blair Bisbey of Jasper County and Bill Knowles of Palestine, on the committee. \* *Contributed by the Aviation Division*

# \$600 'rut filler' pays for itself first time it's used

**Tonya Detten**  
Amarillo District

James Oles sat on an idea for about 15 years, so you can imagine his excitement when his supervisor said, "Sounds like a good idea. Build it."

Oles, a maintenance technician in the Amarillo District (AMA) Armstrong County Maintenance Office, just wanted to make his job easier. In his mind, he had designed a portable asphalt laydown machine a million times and he wanted the chance to try it. Parker Stewart, Armstrong County maintenance supervisor, gave him the chance. "James is a builder. He can design and build anything," said Stewart. "It sounded like a good idea, so I told him to do it."

The spreader box or rut filler, as Oles calls it, does not have a fancy name. It does not have any fancy parts, either. "We used mostly scrap metal," said Stewart. "Labor and materials for the box add up to about \$600. And it paid for itself the first time we used it."

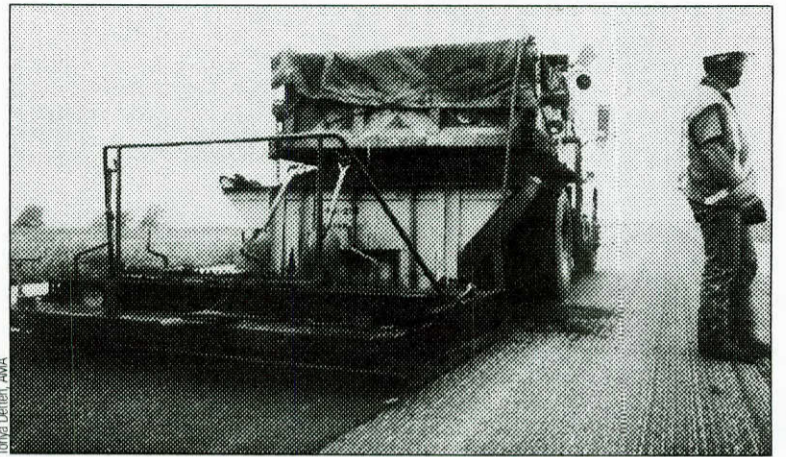
"The key is to have infinite control of your material," said Oles. "It's just like a laydown machine, just not as complicated." The portable laydown machine is 7 feet wide. It is hooked up to the back of a dump truck. Hot mix is poured into a modified

spreader box. The operators control the amount of material going onto the roadway by adjusting a slide on the spreader box. The truck drags the rut filler on its two skids, where more blades smooth the hot mix. "We've laid 11,000 or 12,000 tons of hot mix since last year with no maintenance except replacing the skids," said Oles.

Maintenance employees who use the device rave about it, too. "It wastes no material, the hot mix has no time to get cold and the box uses no fuel," said Lorenz Jaramillo, Armstrong County maintenance technician. Stewart is pleased the \$600 invention eliminates the need for at least one piece of heavy equipment at an overlay project site. "All we need is the box, our hot mix trucks and a roller," he said. "We've eliminated the need for a maintainer and we're still able to lay 120 to 200 tons of hot mix in an eight-hour day."

Oles is thankful Continuous Improvement was on his side. "Our supervisor gave us the freedom to try something different. It was a group effort. We have a real special group of guys here in the section that had a part in the invention," said Oles. "From the welding shop on down, everybody did their part."

Although the district owns a laydown machine, the Armstrong County office could



**The "rut filler," a portable laydown machine, was designed and built by the Amarillo District's James Oles, who conceived the idea for the machine more than a decade ago. Labor and materials cost about \$600.**

not always schedule it when it was needed and could not always get the funding of a maintenance contract for the work.

The portable box solved their problem. Oles says, "Nearly every section in the state has a road that it (the rut filler) could be used on. It works great on a road with ruts or potholes that needs a good temporary overlay."

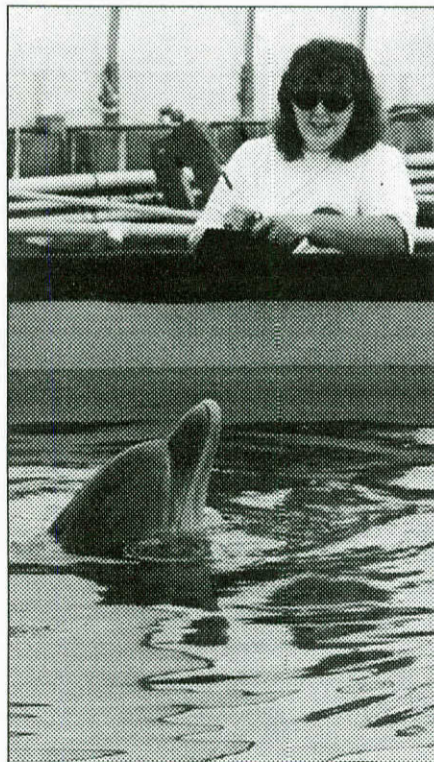
Detailed plans are available from the Armstrong County Maintenance Office. Contact Parker Stewart at (806) 226-2321 for more information. ★

# Houston volunteer has a porpoise in life

**Norm Wigington**  
Houston District

"The 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. shift is hell," said Tonya Keneda, assistant information resources administrator for the Houston District. "But the afternoon shift is horrible, too. Inside the fabric dome, the heat builds up like the greenhouse it was meant to be."

Although her day job provides air conditioning most of the time, Keneda's other occupation does not. Under that fabric dome at Fort Crockett in Galveston, temperatures can climb to 112 degrees, but the opportunity to fulfill a lifelong dream is worth the long hours and sweltering conditions.



**HOU's Tonya Keneda is a volunteer with the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network. Here she works with Mattie, a bottlenose dolphin who beached herself in Matagorda Bay.**

Keneda volunteers her spare time to the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network (TMMSN), a rescue organization for stranded marine mammals.

The facility has an above-ground swimming pool, which holds Mattie, a 6-foot, 230-pound steel-gray bottlenose dolphin. Above the pool hangs a sign warning visitors not to play with the dolphin. Nearby is a record of her feeding schedule and water temperature.

More than three months ago, fishermen found Mattie beached at Matagorda Bay. She was emaciated, heavily parasitized and suffered from a lung infection. Hundreds of volunteers and thousands of hours of effort in caring for her paid off; she is now a healthy animal.

Mattie, volunteers say, is unusual and exhibits an uncommon will. "She doesn't seem to adhere to order

and she takes risks and bucks the system. That may be why she was driven off. Dolphins have a highly organized social hierarchy-family structure," Keneda says.

Mattie, short for Matagorda, was found with deep tooth rakes—which are different from bites—along her body. Dolphin teeth are conical and apparently the other dolphins weren't going to tolerate her behavior so they kicked her out of the pod.

Mattie is probably only a year old, so her survival skills are not strong enough for her to survive in the open ocean. While it is TMMSN policy to return healthy animals to the Gulf, she could find herself defenseless against predators. So Mattie will not return to the Gulf; instead, once she is strong enough, she will reside at Sea World of Texas in San Antonio, which agreed to take her and pay for feeding her. She probably will be used for brood stock. Given her temperament, she is unlikely to become a performer. She is still a wild creature, unlike the domesticated dolphins born in captivity.

Mattie had been in captivity only 45 days when Keneda volunteered to watch her. She has been in the pool with Mattie many times and observed her feeding. Swimming with her allows the dolphin to groom herself, sloughing off the gritty layer of old skin and replacing it with slick new skin underneath.

"We are still learning a lot about marine mammals in general and about this particular animal in detail," Keneda said. "During one of my first shifts, she swam nonstop in a counterclockwise direction for hours and I learned that is when she sleeps."

Volunteers are pleased when she plays with two toys at a time. "We call that compound play. When she first came, she just pushed one toy at a time. Now she plays with two and three toys simultaneously. That's great improvement," said Keneda. Her toys are fluorescent blue and pink rings, knobby balls and orange and yellow boat guards.

Volunteers like Keneda must be trained for work in the pool. They may not ride her, but dolphins are extraordinarily social animals and need contact. After swimming, the volunteers must wash with an antiseptic to avoid transmitting diseases. With the return of her health, Mattie's strong personality has emerged as well. There is currently a battle of wills between Mattie and the caretakers, who have taken her toys until she finishes her dinner. This explains the sign over the pool, warning visitors not to throw her toys back into the water. ★ *This story originally appeared in Forum, the Houston District's newsletter.*

# 22 states share SHRP technologies

**Eloise Lundgren**  
Public Information Office

Mention the words research or technology, and many individuals respond with groans or by rolling their eyes.

Why? Probably because they think the topics are too dry and uninteresting, or more likely because the words mean change and they're afraid of that.

That certainly wasn't the case Sept. 18-19 in St. Louis, when representatives from 22 state transportation agencies, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the private sector gathered to share information on technology innovations.

Whenever new technologies are introduced, several state agencies will be ahead of the pack in adopting them. These leaders move ahead because the technology addresses a problem significant to their states, or these agencies and their contractors are particularly comfortable with the change. These states have either played a major role in developing the technology or they might have used the innovation for many years before it was even tried in other states.

Conference participants had filled this

"If we act now, not only will we reap the benefits, but our children as well as their children will enjoy significant improvements to their quality of life."

**Bob Templeton**  
Assistant Executive Director  
for Field Operations

leadership role and wanted to transfer their proficiency so learning periods for new users would be greatly shortened. The high-spirited group spent an intensive day and a half at the AASHTO Task Force on Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP) Lead State Conference so they could share their experiences from working with "high payoff technologies," increasing understanding and encouraging widespread practical application of these technologies.

Bob Templeton, TxDOT; Byron Lord, FHWA; and Joe Mickes, Missouri Department of Transportation, set the tone for the conference by sharing their vision for the lead state technology transfer initiative.

"These technologies are the only way we can meet the needs of the future," said

Mickes, who is also the chairman of the TRB/SHRP Committee. "Implementation of the SHRP technologies will return the investment a hundredfold, but the numbers show the big winners are our customers."

"The 'lead state' concept is a new paradigm in technology transfer," Lord said as he emphasized state leadership, developing partnerships and supporting innovations all as part of the lead state conference vision.

Templeton, task force chairman, reminded participants that being farsighted and proactive had far-reaching effects. "We don't want to leave unsolved problems for future generations," he said. "If we act now, not only will we reap the benefits, but our children as well as their children will enjoy significant improvements to their quality of life."

With the conference's vision firmly established, participants divided into seven SHRP technology lead state teams. Their objective was to establish a mission, goals, strategies and action steps that could be used to facilitate the exchange of information vital to the successful implementation of SHRP technologies by others.

Other TxDOT participants included Mary Lou Ralls, Design Division; Maghsoud Tamoressi, Materials and Tests Division; and Thomas Bohuslav, Abilene District. ★

## Former commission member Charles Fred Hawn dies at 89

Charles Fred Hawn, a former Texas Highway Commission member, died in his native Athens Oct. 9. He was 89.

Appointed by Gov. Price Daniel, Hawn served on the commission from May 1957 to April 1963, and was instrumental in clearing the way for Interstate highways in Dallas. In recognition of his efforts and contributions to the state's transportation system, state officials named a 16-mile stretch of U.S. 175 southeast of downtown Dallas after him—the C.F. Hawn Freeway.

He served as a pilot trainer in the U.S. Navy Air Corps during World War II. A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, Hawn played center on the football team and was inducted into the Longhorn Hall of Honor.

Hawn is survived by his wife, Ollie Joh Hawn; a son, Charles Arthur Hawn; and a daughter, Jo Anne Hawn McElroy.

Memorial contributions can be made in his name to:  
First United Methodist Church of Athens Building Fund  
P.O. Box 911

Athens, TX 75751

or

Clint W. Murchison Memorial Library  
121 S. Prairieville  
Athens, TX 75751

## Motorists are reminded to drive with care when winter weather strikes

Snow hit the Panhandle before Halloween this year, giving motorists a pre-winter reminder of how treacherous driving conditions can be during inclement weather. And, with more hazardous driving conditions sure to come—as well as the holidays just around the corner—motorists should follow these tips for safe driving, according to Texas Department of Safety spokesman Mike Cox.

- Don't drink and drive. Half of traffic fatalities are the result of DWI collisions.
- Stay within the speed limits.
- Wear your safety belt.

"If you do these three things, chances are you'll make it to grandma's house or wherever you're going during the holiday season," Cox said.

Also, stay well-rested and alert. Take a break from driving. Sleep if needed. Call DPS' toll-free number, (800) 525-5555, to report stranded motorists or suspected drunken drivers. ★

## Business Opportunity Programs Office holds DBE/HUB conference

**Berdell Collins**  
Business Opportunity Programs Office

The Business Opportunity Programs Office (BOP) sponsored its first TxDOT DBE/HUB conference Sept. 5-6 at the Austin Convention Center.

In support of the theme, "Bringing Opportunities to People," 125 TxDOT employees and approximately 300 representatives from disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs) and historically underutilized businesses (HUBs) attended the two-day conference. Participants came from all areas of Federal Highway Region 6, which includes Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas and New Mexico.

The conference sought to establish a working relationship with BOP's customers: DBEs, HUBs, small businesses, prime contractors,

transportation agencies and organizations, and department employees. Attendees received information on the contracting process and financial resources. A statewide liaison committee was established to serve as a resource to TxDOT on DBE/HUB issues.

Participants attended workshops and seminars covering issues such as contracting opportunities, business development, information exchange and affirmative action program.

These workshops provided an inside view of the department's operations and TxDOT's role in working with DBEs and HUBs. This information directly affects DBEs and HUBs' competitiveness when bidding on various contracting opportunities with TxDOT.

"The success of our conference can be directly attributed to the

Please see BOP, page 15

## 1996 Transportation Conference

# Award ceremony conference highlight

Teamwork, cooperation, hard work common thread uniting Big Six winners

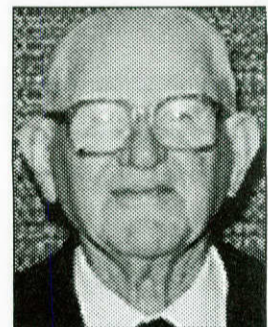
### Linda Levitt

Travel and Information Division

A sense of teamwork pervaded the 1996 Transportation Conference Professional Awards Banquet, as award recipients thanked their co-workers and employees for their cooperation and hard work.

### Russell H. Perry Award

The Russell H. Perry Award was presented to Pittsburg Mayor Dave H. Abernathy for his support of transportation in Texas. During his 42 years as mayor, Abernathy has maintained an interest in transportation.



**Abernathy**

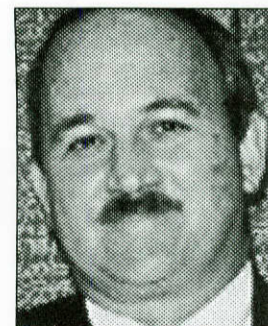
In 1967, Abernathy was instrumental in creating the East Texas-Gulf Coast Highway Association. He has appeared before the Texas Transportation Commission representing the association, which promoted improvements to U.S. 271—the Green Carpet Route—stretching from the Red River to the Gulf of Mexico. His leadership resulted in a four-lane divided highway for much of the route's length.

His advocacy of transportation also has benefitted Pittsburg. Loop 179 relieves congestion downtown and provides continuous route access for emergency vehicles.

Abernathy has promoted the upgrade of Texas 11 throughout Camp County, and in 1990 secured right of way for its improvement in Pittsburg.

### Raymond E. Stotzer Award

Landscape architect Paul Northcutt was honored with the Raymond E. Stotzer Award, which is presented to a nonengineering TxDOT employee.



**Northcutt**

Northcutt has taken the lead in TxDOT's revegetation efforts following construction. He wrote, designed and published a manual that explains how to establish adequate ground cover. Northcutt also created a training course on revegetation activities and has made the course available to all districts. In three years, he has trained more than 400 people in nine districts.

Northcutt has also designed, coordinated, published and distributed information about several new landscape programs. Primary among them is the statewide Landscape Cost Sharing Program, which allows cities, civic associations and private developers to partner with TxDOT on joint landscape projects.

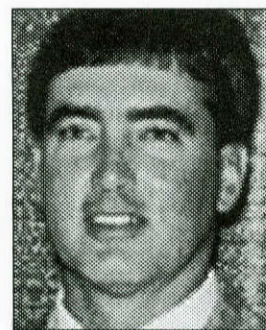
In 1989, he helped secure support and funding for the TxDOT/Texas Transporta-

tion Institute Hydraulics and Erosion Control Laboratory.

The lab is beginning to receive international attention, and the Northcutt's data is distributed to all state DOTs and allied agencies. Many states now use TxDOT's specs and approval process as a model.

### Luther DeBerry Award

Partnership and foresight have been the keys to success for Bill Hale, the Luther DeBerry Award honoree. His work with Dallas Area Rapid Transit created a unique contraflow high-occupancy-vehicle lane on Interstate 30. The HOV lane, built by TxDOT, is operated and maintained by DART. Hale was project manager of the venture, which saves money and facilitates traffic flow on I-30.



**Hale**

Hale's partnering skills were put to use again on the Fair Park Bridge. The mile-long bridge is in the middle of the I-30 HOV lane, at the hub of Dallas social and cultural happenings. The situation became more urgent when Dallas hosted the World Cup in 1994. Working closely with the contractor, DART, the State Fair of Texas and World Cup officials, Hale kept the HOV lane operating, critical exit and entrance ramps open, and the project on schedule.

When the Dallas Grand Prix and the Phantom of the Opera both came to town, he worked with officials from these events to make sure visitors were not affected by construction. Thanks to him, the project did not incur any delays.

### Dewitt C. Greer Award

The Dewitt C. Greer Award was presented to Terry Sams, Director of Traffic Operations in the Dallas District (DAL). She oversees the district's Courtesy Patrol.



**Sams**

Two-person crews help stranded motorists and clear accidents. Under her guidance, the Courtesy Patrol has more than doubled in strength. And, she has developed strong working relationships with local law enforcement agencies. Cooperation helps clear accidents more quickly, keeps traffic moving, and enhances motorist safety.

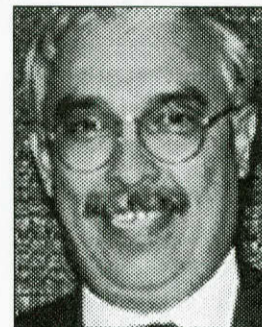
Sams has also been instrumental in the use and construction of electronic, changeable message signs in the district. The overhead signs display messages about lane closures due to accidents or construction. Motorists are able to take alternate routes, improving traffic flow.

Sams is overseeing the development and construction of a traffic satellite center that

will allow TxDOT to monitor traffic throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Plans call for surveillance cameras, vehicle detection systems, and 100 changeable electronic message boards.

### Gibb Gilchrist Award

In 1994, the Laredo District became the first TxDOT district created in more than 60 years. Salvador Mercado, the Gibb Gilchrist



**Mercado**

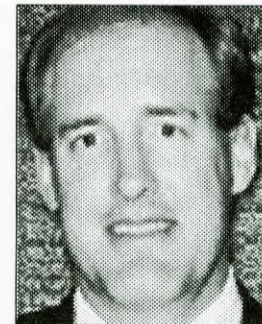
Award winner, put his experience and ingenuity to work to ease the transition. As director of operations, he pulled together construction, materials, traffic and maintenance functions from three other districts into one new program under the Laredo District.

His work with the district's Traffic Section led to a strategy for traffic management which uses video imaging and radio waves to improve traffic flow along I-35.

He has worked in design and construction on projects throughout the Valley, where he developed concrete and hot mix designs. He oversaw construction of the Veleno and Burro bridges in Zapata. At the Laredo Area Office, he was construction engineer for the U.S. 83 project, which received honors for its innovative design. As area engineer in Hebronville, he was honored by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for his efforts to preserve the habitat affected by the construction of U.S. 281 in Brooks County.

### Journey Toward Excellence

Journey Toward Excellence awards recognize TxDOT employees for participation and leadership in the department's Continuous



**Barton**

Improvement (CI) initiative. John Barton, an area engineer in the Wichita Falls District (WFS), was recognized for developing a computer program, QCQAR. The program performs all calculations, analysis and paperwork required by the hot mix asphalt Quality Control/Quality Assurance (QC/QA) specification.

In 1993, the department began using a process to test the asphaltic concrete mixtures for Texas roads. QC/QA tests are performed by TxDOT and contractors and the results are compared. Before Barton created QCQAR, TxDOT project managers and contractors were frustrated with the number of time-consuming calculations required to compare the two sets of results.

Using the CI process, Barton developed QCQAR with constant input from both

Please see Awards, page 10

## 1996 Transportation Conference

# Heroic efforts earn five Extra Mile honors

**Meredith Whitten**  
Editor

Five department employees received the Extra Mile Award for risking their lives to save another. In keeping with tradition, the awards were presented at the end of Transportation Conference's opening session.

As Corpus Christi District Warehouse manager Art Maldonado commuted to work Feb. 21, he came upon a three-vehicle



**Maldonado**

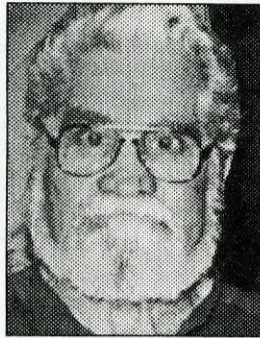
accident near Robstown. With traffic slowed to a standstill, Maldonado stopped to offer assistance.

Although passersby had pulled the drivers from their wrecked autos, Maldonado recognized that they remained perilously close to the fiery wreckage. Without hesitation, he moved them further from the accident site. Soon after, the cars exploded.

Maldonado said he gave no thought to his own safety as he moved the victims — he just didn't want them to get burned. It wasn't until later, he said, that he realized the risk he had taken. A Department of Public Safety (DPS) officer told Maldonado DPS considered him a hero for his actions.

Two days later, Houston District Construction Inspector Roy Johnson and Engineering Technician Bill Stasny were inspecting a project in Conroe when they noticed smoke billowing from a nearby apartment

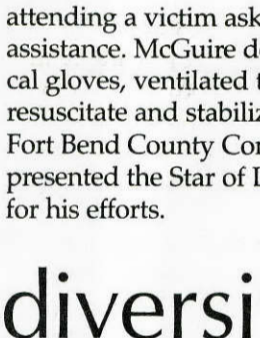
complex. The pair rushed to help, knocking on doors and banging on windows to make sure all residents were evacuated. Despite



**Stasny**

the hot ash, smoke and embers spewing from the fire, they stayed to help.

When firefighters arrived, Stasny and Johnson assisted by rolling out equipment and hoses. They also provided support requested by firefighters. Thanks in part to Stasny and Johnson, no one was injured.



**McGuire**

On March 6, Houston District Maintenance Contract Inspector Mike McGuire assisted with traffic control at an accident. McGuire noticed fluid leaking from the car and inspected the site to ensure that the victims and paramedics were not in danger from potentially flammable materials. Then, an EMS technician attending a victim asked McGuire for his assistance. McGuire donned a pair of surgical gloves, ventilated the victim, and helped resuscitate and stabilize him. On May 28, the Fort Bend County Commissioners Court presented the Star of Life Award to McGuire for his efforts.

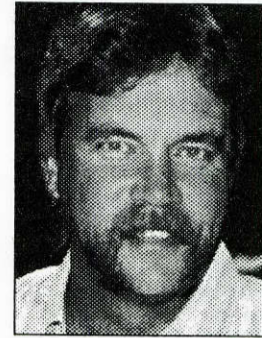
complex. The pair rushed to help, knocking on doors and banging on windows to make sure all residents were evacuated. Despite the hot ash, smoke and embers spewing from the fire, they stayed to help. When firefighters arrived, Stasny and Johnson assisted by rolling out equipment and hoses. They also provided support requested by firefighters. Thanks in part to Stasny and Johnson, no one was injured.

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Other accomplishments noted by Bernsen included improved relations with other agencies, consultants and environmentalists, innovative financing and being more open to citizens.

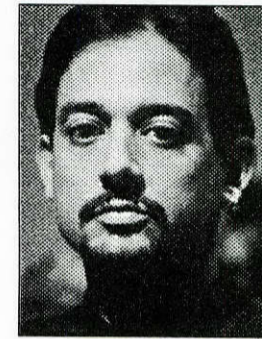
Transportation Commissioner David Laney praised the work Bernsen has done for the department. "Transportation has benefited from your watch on the commission," Laney said.

Calling transportation "the backbone of opportunity for Texas," Laney challenged



**Johnson**

met with open flames. Afraid the fire would destroy the historic building, Rosado grabbed a fire extinguisher and sprayed the flames. Four times, Rosado thought he had the fire extinguished, only to have it roar



**Rosado**

back to life. Others told Rosado to quit fighting and leave the building, but he continued battling the blaze. Finally, after using four fire extinguishers, he became overwhelmed by the smoke. Firefighters arrived, eventually putting out the flames. The building suffered minor damage, mostly in the cafeteria. But Rosado's actions minimized this damage and ensured that the department's 64-year-old home survived.

The Extra Mile Awards were initiated in 1984 to recognize employees who put themselves at risk to save a life. Since then, 92 employees have received the award. ★

## High quality, diversity keys to successes

**Randall Dillard**  
Public Information Office

Developing a highly qualified, diverse work force and increasing efficiencies were the major themes sounded by Texas Transportation Commission members at the 1996 Transportation Conference general session.

All three commission members addressed the near-capacity crowd at the Rudder Conference Center Auditorium.

David Bernsen, whose term on the commission expires in February, reviewed department accomplishments over the last five years. Bernsen said the department has succeeded because it has not been afraid to change.

"TxDOT today does not look like it did in 1991, and that is the way it should be," said Bernsen. He said jobs should be given on the basis of qualification, and people who are qualified should not be excluded because of race or gender. We must go forward to the next century with the best team on the field to tackle the business at hand, building the best transportation system in the world for the people of Texas."

Bernsen said the commission often has been criticized for increasing spending in the Rio Grande Valley and along the border, but

the increases are justified to develop trade corridors.

"If the corridor is blocked anywhere along the line, it impedes or hinders the flow of trade or commerce," said Bernsen. "Trade from Mexico could not get to Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Texarkana, the Midwest and Northeast, unless we had the bridges, connectors at the border and roads leading to those various communities."

Bernsen said another accomplishment of the commission has been the funding of hurricane evacuation routes. "Hurricane Andrew revealed that we, as a state, are not able or ready to handle evacuation of our citizens from the coast. We must continue to build the roads necessary to take everyone to safety and out of harm's way."

Other accomplishments noted by Bernsen included improved relations with other agencies, consultants and environmentalists, innovative financing and being more open to citizens.

Transportation Commissioner David Laney praised the work Bernsen has done for the department. "Transportation has benefited from your watch on the commission," Laney said.

Calling transportation "the backbone of opportunity for Texas," Laney challenged

employees to continue striving for quality in the work they do. Laney said that competition can improve efficiencies and, while TxDOT will not abandon internal capabilities, there will more competition in some department operations.

While the department faces many future challenges, Laney said "none of our challenges are insurmountable."

Commission member Anne Wynne said funding will continue to be a challenge for the department. She encouraged employees to spend money as if it were their own. "Try to do things better, faster and cheaper. Do anything you can to maximize the budget." She said TxDOT needs to "raise the level of what we do ourselves — we cannot count on new funds."

Also at the general session, astronaut Mike Mullane discussed characteristics of successful teams. Training, communication, trust and ownership of responsibilities are among the essentials that Mullane said any team should have.

The explosion of space shuttle Challenger, in which seven astronauts were killed, occurred because NASA, as a whole, had a breakdown on team fundamentals, according to Mullane, who flew three shuttle missions. ★



## 1996 Transportation Conference

# Exhibits showcase employee innovations

**Roger Polson**  
Public Information Office

Transportation News readers visiting the 1996 Transportation Conference's Innovation Showcase might have found familiarity in some of the exhibits. Many of the innovations spotlighted have been featured in previous issues of T-News. But the many new ideas being conceived and developed by TxDOT employees and partners take on new life when demonstrated in person. And the chance to talk with the developers helps the innovations spread to other districts and divisions statewide.

This interaction is the genesis of the Transportation Conference, which began 70 years ago as Short Course. Communication was much different in 1926, and Short Course was designed as a chance for personnel from across Texas to collaborate on the building of Texas' infrastructure. They gathered to share techniques, tools and tales of the highway department's efforts to get the farmers out of the mud. Though phones, faxes, e-mail and the Internet have shrunk the world through advances in communication, there's still nothing quite like hands-on experience. That's what the innovation showcase is.

This year, 20 exhibits featured the work of a dozen divisions, a half dozen districts, the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) and the Federal Highway Administration. New ideas and the custom application of emerging technology dominated the showcase. But there were also some "people" exhibits, like the Employee Advisory Committee booth and representatives from the Texas Quality Initiative, both efforts to promote new ideas and employee involvement in change. Retooling efforts were highlighted in booths showing changes made by the retooling process in the Right of Way and Information Services divisions.

On the technical side, advances in geographic information sys-

tems and new uses in environmental affairs, surveying, video logging, herbicide applications, robotics, snow and ice control, cathodic bridge protection and LED signal light replacement fixtures were represented. The TxDOT CompuServe bulletin board, an intranet technology demonstration and an educational light show from the Tyler District (see below) were featured. Exhibits also showed the

wide array of Texas license plates and recent achievements of TxDOT's aggressive recycling program.

One booth showed off some of the beauty of today's Texas highway construction in the form of texture and color alternatives for paved surfaces and retaining walls. The booth was sponsored by TxDOT's Design Division.

Landscape architect Barrie Cogburn was enthusiastic about the experience. "I'm just thrilled with the results," she said. "I thought everybody already knew about these things but I could tell

from the questions we received that it was a good thing to be in the showcase. We spoke with many consultants and district designers who were really interested in this subject."

Jamshid Jahangiri, Odessa District design and pavement engineer and manager of the the video logging system currently in use in his district, said, "I know that T-News had a story about our video logging system very recently, but being able to talk to other districts first-hand was a very valuable experience. We were able to explore further uses of the system and possible applications in pavement management, Texas Reference Marker System, right of way, environmental and travel information. This was a good experience for us. I think other districts will be implementing this system as a result and that's good for the entire state."

The innovation showcase, in its third year at the conference, proved to be a popular spot again this year during breaks and between technical sessions. ★

**Several of the exhibits at this year's Innovation Showcase have been highlighted in Transportation News. For further information, refer to the following issues.**

<b>Recycling</b>	<b>July '95, Nov. '95</b>
<b>GIS for ENV</b>	<b>Oct. '96</b>
<b>ROWIS</b>	<b>March '95</b>
<b>Video Logging</b>	<b>Aug. '96</b>
<b>Texas Quality Initiative</b>	<b>May '96</b>
<b>Snow and Ice control</b>	<b>Oct. '95</b>
<b>Robo-Tech</b>	<b>May '96</b>
<b>Employee's Advisory Committee</b>	<b>July '95</b>
<b>LED Signals</b>	<b>Aug. '96</b>

## Mysteries of the traffic signal explained

**Pearlie Bushong**  
Yoakum District

One exhibit at the Innovative Showcase at the 1996 Transportation Conference featured the educational light show used in presentations by Tyler District (TYL) Traffic Safety Specialist Luke Chisenhall and Signal Technician Danny Park.

Park put together the light show about a year ago after trying to explain traffic signals to his grandson's Cub Scout troop. Seeing the interest displayed by the youngsters, Park decided a display with intersections, lights, railroad tracks and pedestrian lights was needed to explain just how signals work. Using damaged equipment or equipment that otherwise would have gone to the scrap pile, Park put the display together.

Chisenhall developed the three educational programs that use the signal equipment: an elementary program, a beginning driver's program and an older driver's program.

Pete Martinez of the district sign shop helped with the graphics used to demonstrate the intersection layout with phase numbering and made 12-inch road signs for better understanding of the program.

"A lot of people do not understand how signal detection works until we explain it," Park said. "Many people believe that blinking their automobile headlights, honking the horn or pulling past the stop bar will activate the green light."

Chisenhall said using the light show helps people better understand how signals work.

"Explaining the mysteries of how signals 'know' when to change to allow an approaching train the right of way or cars to pass through an intersection seemed easier to do with visual aids," said Chisenhall.

Park and Chisenhall have used the display in more than 40 presentations to school children, school bus drivers, emergency medical service personnel and law enforcement officers.

"We get some very good questions," Park said, "but the only person who has ever questioned us about what happens to the loop detectors when we tear up the road or resurface it was an 8-year-old boy. I guess it just hasn't occurred to the adults to ask about that."

The display board was designed and built for hands-on activities. A five-section signal and pedestrian signal are used as visual aids.

"I feel our audiences really understand the workings of signals a lot better after they see this display in action," Chisenhall said. "Not only do they see how cars trigger the loop detectors, but they see how a pedestrian crosswalk operates in relation to the intersection."

The police, EMS personnel and school bus drivers appreciate knowing what will occur as they approach an intersection or railroad crossing. "Special interest has been given to school districts that have school bus routes that cross railroad tracks. They need to know what to expect when the railroad crossing is activated and how the crossing works in relation to a signalized highway intersection," Chisenhall said.

The educational light show has been successful in teaching current and future drivers about signal lights. The program has been used alone and in conjunction with other safety programs in school districts in Tyler.

The district is preparing a video to show how the board explains the mysteries of traffic signals. The video will be distributed to traffic safety specialists statewide for use in school presentations. ★

## 1996 Transportation Conference

# PIO presents Communication Awards

The Public Information Office (PIO) presented the 1996 Communication Awards during the PIO business meeting at Transportation Conference.

Betty Taylor, public information officer in the San Antonio District, received the Award of Excellence for coordinating the grand opening of TransGuide. All eyes were on San Antonio as the depart-



Winners of the 1996 Communication Award include, from left in back, Pearlie Bushong, Don Lewis, Keith Davis, Betty Taylor, and Geoff Appold; front row, Becky Kureska, Rebecca Davio, Tammy Stidham and Melissa Welch.

ment unveiled TransGuide, which received substantial news coverage before its unveiling and established TxDOT as a leader in transportation management systems.

The grand opening was a national affair, with local, state and federal representatives attending. Taylor coordinated with TxDOT employees, state and federal legislators, local transportation agencies and other transportation partners. When the day arrived, more than 400 people attended the grand opening, including Transportation Secretary Federico Peña, who, with the click of a mouse, turned on TransGuide.

The Travel and Information Division received the Achievement in Audio-Visual Award for the video "A Bridge of Vision." The video takes the viewer on a journey as it chronicles the construction of Houston's Fred Hartman Bridge from start to finish. Ten years in the making, the video uses strong visuals and highlights obstacles over-

come by TxDOT and its contractors.

A local civic organization asked Yoakum District Public Information Officer Pearlie Bushong to explain a major TxDOT-funded project in the area to the group. In the speech that she wrote, Bushong focused on a birding trail and how the project will enhance the local economy. The speech stimulated a discussion on birding as well as TxDOT's role in the project. For her efforts, Bushong received the Achievement in Writing Award.

The winning entry of the Achievement in Publication Award affected every TxDOT employee. Employees in the General Services Division's (GSD) Recycling and Recycled Products Program wanted to change employee behavior. So they sent out pledge cards, asking employees to promise to generate less waste. Nearly one-third of all TxDOT employees responded. They then developed posters to remind employees of their pledge.

Competition for the Achievement in Media/Community Relations Award was tight this year—so tight, in fact, that there was a tie.

With almost half of its fleet running on alternative fuels, TxDOT has become a leader in alternative fuel vehicles. But convincing automobile manufacturers to build more of these vehicles posed a challenge. So, GSD's Alternative Fuels Group embarked on an aggressive effort. Employees held presentations and exhibits, wrote articles for local and national publications, and conducted research. The campaign paid off. With elected officials, transportation industry representatives and the news media watching, Ford Motor Co. delivered more than 400 propane-powered vehicles to TxDOT. This was the largest single purchase of propane powered pickups ever.

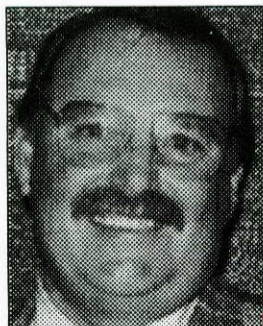
The other winner in this category, Tyler District Public Information Officer Tammy Stidham, put together a first for the Tyler District—a TxDOT open house. The event brought the community, news media, legislators, and department employees and retirees together. It also enhanced the public's understanding of what TxDOT does. Participants were treated to tours of TxDOT facilities, panel discussions, a workshop and information about the department's operations. The day ended with dinner and live music. This event helped build relationships and strengthen ties in the community and with the news media.

Recognition also went to Corpus Christi District Public Information Officer Becky Kureska and PIO Community Relations Specialist Melissa Welch. Both received the Director's Choice Award from PIO Director Eloise Lundgren for exceptional service during the past year. ★ *Public Information Office*

## Awards

Continued from page 7

internal and external customers. The result is a program that is easy to use, easy to maintain, and extremely cost-effective to bring on line. In February, when the Materials and Tests Division recommended QCQAR be implemented statewide, the Technical Expert's Review praised the program as "a



Utley

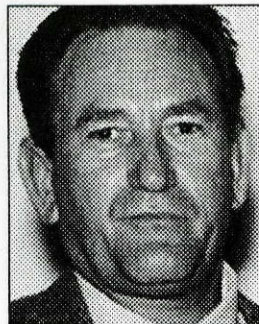
very useful tool that will not only save time and money but ... will also increase the quality of work by reducing possible errors." The Lubbock District received a Journey Toward Excellence award for its CI process. Embracing a quality philosophy means listening to its customers, and the first customers are the employees themselves. The district has adopted an open-door, open communication policy. Employees are empowered to do their jobs, to make decisions, and to have a sense of pride and own-

ership for the work they do. This level of empowerment has improved morale, improved productivity and helped the entire district deliver a quality product to all of its customers.

The district has learned that talking and listening to its customers bears positive results. An example is the widening of Texas 114 in Lubbock, which was initially opposed by residents. The district held a series of public meetings to tell residents and business owners about the need for the project, the plans and expected completion dates.

### High Flyer Award

The 1996 High Flyer Award recognizes the innovation of Ed Hampson and Lee Taylor of the San Antonio District (SAT), who created a lifting device for testing concrete samples. The device minimizes the risk of back injury for laboratory personnel

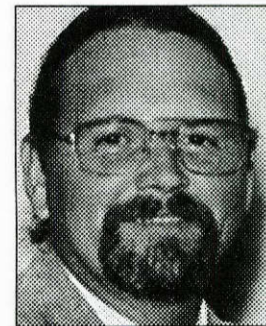


Hampson

testing concrete samples, which has traditionally done by hand, lifting the samples

into and out of the water bath tank.

Hampson, an SAT lab tech, wanted a better way for lab personnel to move the concrete samples, without the risk of injury. Hampson contacted Taylor, a welder in the district, and they began working to create an innovative solution.



Taylor

The device was designed to retrieve concrete samples from the water bath tank. Samples are placed in baskets and an electric winch lifts the baskets out of the curing tank.

The winch can be stationed directly above the basket, which helps balance the load and reduces strain on the winch. The specimens can be carried to a testing device or slid onto a hydraulic cart to transport them for testing. With this hydraulic system, there is no need for lab personnel to bend over the tank's edge to retrieve the specimen. ★

# Morgan's artwork now graces rest stop

Marc Shepherd  
Beaumont District

Italy had its Di Vinci, Spain its Picasso and France its Monet. Now, the Beaumont District (BMT) has its Morgan—June Morgan.

While the Orange Area Office engineering tech admits she probably won't ever rank with the art world's elite, Morgan has made a name for herself. Walk into her living room and you'll find all kinds of drawings and paintings done with her own hand. Morgan has a knack for taking a scene or a face and putting it on paper and canvas. Art is just something in her blood.

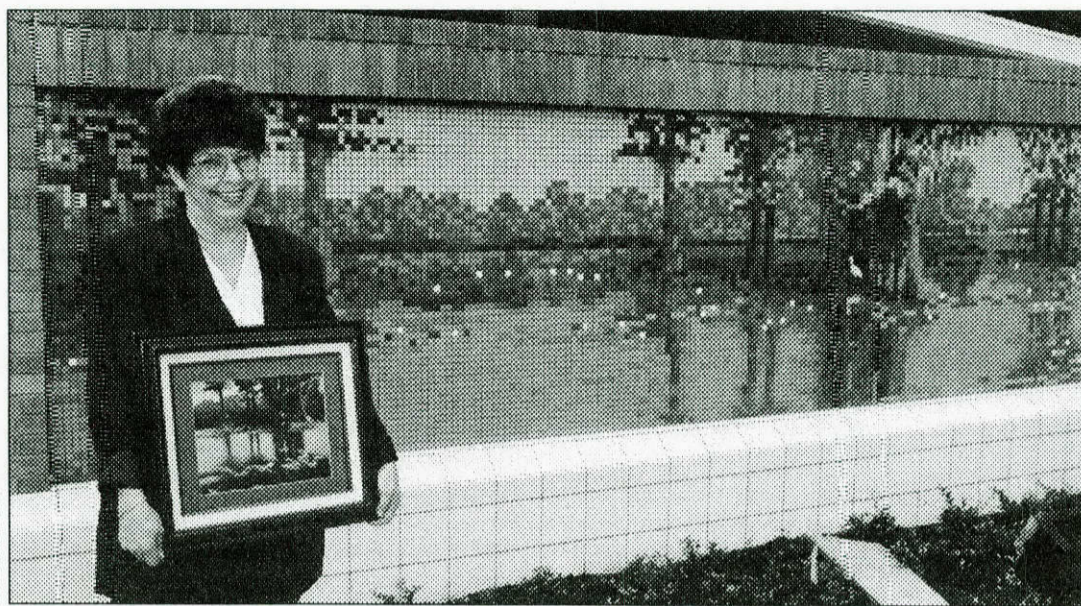
"It's fun. I think if I dabbed some linseed oil behind my ear it's better than Chanel No. 5," Morgan said.

Most of her work is just to please herself, family and friends. But that recently changed. Morgan's work is now the talk of truck drivers and housewives, tourists and traveling salesmen. It's being seen by thousands of motorists every day.

"Our director of maintenance asked me if I would turn in some of my work for a project they had at one of the rest stops. I had no idea they would pick it," Morgan said.

They did, and now everyone traveling Interstate 10 between Orange and Vidor gets a chance to check it out. Just outside of Orange, two rest stops show off Morgan's artistic talents. In front of each stop stands a mural of a swamp scene; a replica of a painting by Morgan she gave to her daughter. Using a digital process, workers took the swamp scene, transformed it onto one-inch square tiles and mounted it for all to see.

"I think it's great. It's kind of nice," Morgan said. Not bad for a person who was told



Marc Shepherd, BMT

**A painting by June Morgan of the Beaumont District has been interpreted in tile for a mural at an I-10 rest stop outside Orange.**

she had no real talent for art.

In elementary school, a teacher told Morgan she shouldn't even be in art class. For the longest time, Morgan didn't even bother picking up a paintbrush. But that changed when, later in life, her daughter asked for some help on a school project.

"She came home from school one day and asked me to help her draw a hand. I did it, and boy, was it fun. I told myself 'I really like doing this,'" Morgan said.

From that time on, it's been paintings, pen and ink drawings, and watercolors. So far, working with oils has proved to be her favorite. But one of the biggest thrills was the chance to practice with George Farrer, a well-known Beaumont artist.

"I wanted to give myself a birthday pre-

sent. So I took some lessons from George. I'm still learning a lot from him. It's what I call my therapy," Morgan said.

When it comes to ideas, nothing is off limits. Trees, nature scenes, even portraits wind up on her canvas. "Whatever strikes my fancy," she said.

What's next? Morgan's working on another nature scene. When completed, it will depict a forest floor covered with leaves. "I'm focusing on the lichen around the bottom trees. I'll have a lot of detail so it will take some time to complete."

Now that her artwork is out there for all to see, Morgan isn't letting it go to her head. Her talent gives way to something perhaps even greater—her modesty. "I'm not really that good. In fact, the more I paint the more I realize I need to learn a lot more," she said. "Art is a humbler—there's always new things to learn." ★

# FTW's Elliott likes life at the old ball game

Jodi Hodges  
Fort Worth District

*"Take me out to the ball game;  
Take me out with the crowd.  
Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack.  
I don't care if I never get back..."*

Many Texas Rangers fans sang this song as the team clinched their first-ever American League West Division title and entered the first round of playoffs this year. As the Rangers soared to new heights this season, Fort Worth District Maintenance Engineer Glenn Elliott watched 70 of 82 home games while serving up some good ol' "peanuts and Cracker Jack." Glenn and his family sold concessions at The Ballpark in Arlington.

"It's a blast out there," Elliott said. "It's fun to be out there with the bigger crowds when they're happy."

Seven years ago, Elliott, his wife, Lisa, and his sons, Brent and Brian, started selling concessions with other parents and kids to raise money for their Boy Scout troop. In five years' time, the troop earned enough money to buy a new 40-passenger school bus, top-of-the-line camping equipment, camping trips to Mexico and Colorado, and \$20,000 in the troop's account.

When the troop had saved enough money and volunteers were getting harder to find, the troop gave up its spot at the ballpark. As a result, the park's concession company was short of help and asked

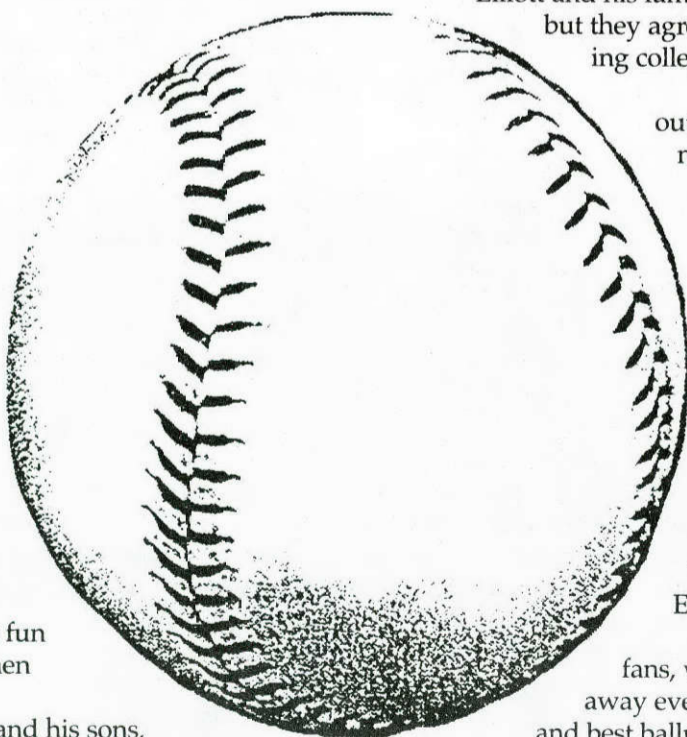
Elliott and his family if they could stay. It was hard work, but they agreed because they would soon be paying college tuition for their sons.

"It's like a free, three-hour workout," Elliott said. "The first couple of nights of the season, things start hurting—your knees and your back. But it is a great way for me to get into shape for the two two-week camping trips I take each summer."

Elliott has always been a big baseball fan. Although he grew up a fan of the St. Louis Cardinals—who were in the National League playoffs this year—he has slowly come around to liking the American League. He admits that he has become a Texas Rangers fan. As a bonus, their winning seasons make Elliott's job easier and more fun.

"I always get to talk to a lot of the fans, which is fun, and it takes my breath away every time I walk into the most beautiful and best ballpark in baseball," he said. "We enjoy doing this together as a family."

Elliott witnessed one of Nolan Ryan's historic no-hitters. But, one of the greatest moments happened this summer when Elliott's wife met Molly, star of the Texas Rangers baseball commercials, and sold her a Lemon Chill. ★ *This story originally appeared in the Trailblazer, the Fort Worth District's newsletter*



# TxDOT helps in shipwreck excavation

## Remains of 17th-century French ship La Belle rising from Matagorda Bay

**Jim Dobbins**

Environmental Affairs Division

Seventeenth-century Texas history has been uncovered from the seabed with the help of TxDOT.

The Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP) provided the Texas Historical Commission (THC) with \$580,016 for its successful search and recovery of La Belle, one of French explorer Rene Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle's ships. The ship sank during a January 1686 storm in Matagorda Bay while crew members were busy enjoying the ship's selection of wines.

La Salle is probably best known for exploring from 1671 to 1681 the Great Lakes and Midwest regions of what became the United States.

La Salle departed France on Aug. 1, 1684, with 300 soldiers and settlers aboard the ships L'Aimable, Le Joly, Saint-Francois and La Belle. Spanish pirates captured Saint-Francois around Sept. 24, 1684, near present-day Dominican Republic. The three remaining vessels made landfall on the Texas coast on Jan. 1, 1685. L'Aimable ran aground and was lost on Feb. 20, 1685, somewhere on the Texas coast. Le Joly returned to France on March 12, 1685. This left La Belle as La Salle's last link with France, a link which was severed when the vessel sank the following January. The colony of Fort St. Louis on Garcitas Creek at the head of Lavaca Bay was established in April 1685.

THC located the wreck of the wooden 50-60 ton sailing vessel, a gift to La Salle by King Louis XIV, in July 1995 with the help of \$44,750 from TxDOT's STEP.

Gene Smith, a program manager in the Design Division (DES), oversaw handling of the second transportation enhancement grant, which will contribute \$535,266 towards the La Belle project. The funding was approved by the Texas Transportation Commission on Aug. 28.

"TxDOT has the opportunity to help fund this significant archeological excavation through the use of Federal Highway Administration funds—truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Smith said.

The recovery of La Belle will cost an estimated \$4 million. This sum has been contributed by a variety of public and private entities.

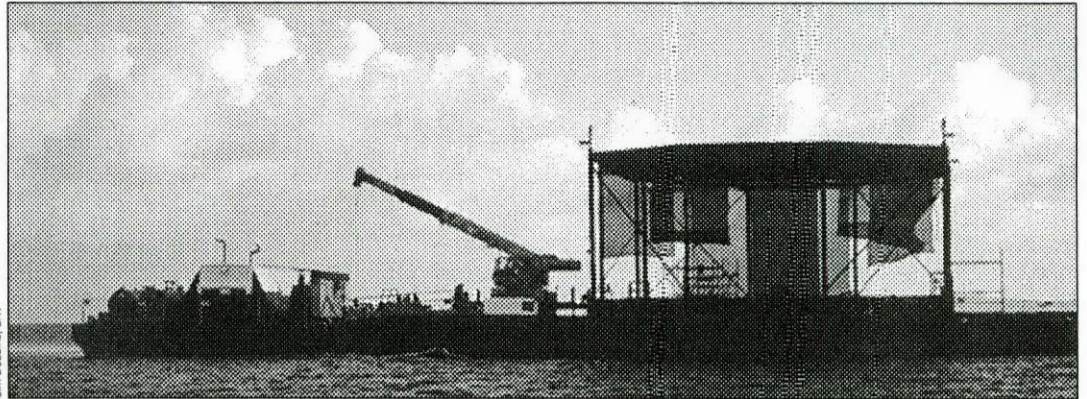
"The latest funding from TxDOT will be used for the conservation of artifacts from La Belle," said J. "Coz" Cozzi, THC assistant project director.

The conservation of artifacts from the shipwreck is expected to take between two and five years to complete. These artifacts will eventually become a major traveling museum exhibition.

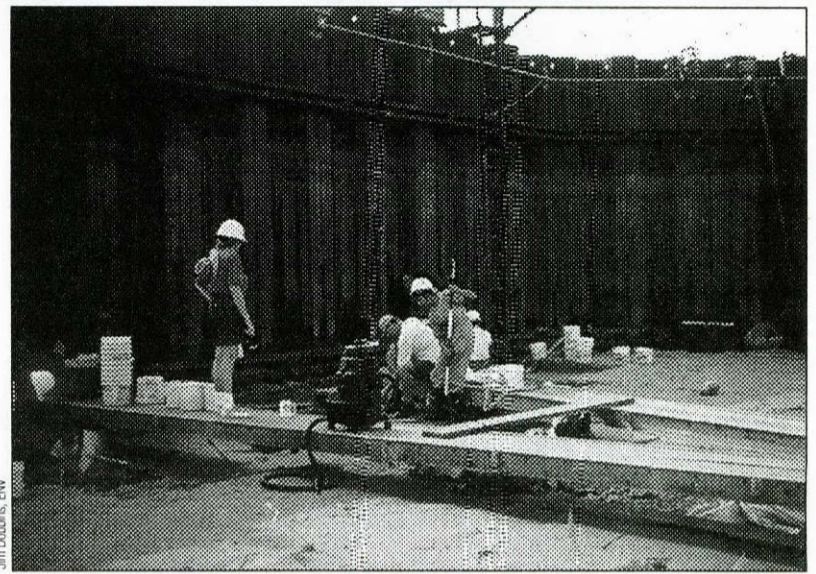
Contemporary Spanish accounts described the wreck of La Belle as four leagues (10.4 miles) from the mouth of San Bernardo (now Matagorda) Bay, aground "a musket shot's distance off the coast" (Matagorda Peninsula), with the distinctive French fleur de lis visible on the vessel's stern. Spain had particular interest in La Salle's activities in Texas, as Spain claimed the area as part of its North American territory.

Findings during the summer of 1995, including an 800-pound bronze cannon decorated with leaping dolphins and the crest of the Count of Vermandois, musket balls, pottery and bronze hawk bells led THC to undertake a more ambitious excavation of the shipwreck. In August, THC finished construction of a cofferdam, a watertight structure used to hold water out of the wreck area, which has been pumped dry, and began to exhume remains of La Belle. The cofferdam allows archeologists to use dry-land excavation techniques and to overcome Matagorda Bay's poor underwater visibility. The cofferdam is the first used in this hemisphere to excavate a shipwreck.

The cofferdam consists of two concentric, rectangular walls surrounding the shipwreck. The outer wall dimensions are 148 feet by 118 feet; the inner wall is 82 feet by 52 feet, and is covered with a roof to protect La Belle from the weather. The walls consist of inter-



**A cofferdam, above, keeps sea water at bay and allows crews, right, to use dry-land excavation techniques on the La Belle, now being uncovered in Matagorda Bay.**



locking 3/8-inch thick steel plates, 3 feet wide and 60 feet long. Each of the metal sheets was driven 41 feet into the bed of Matagorda Bay. Three pumps remove water that seeps into the enclosure. The area between the outer and inner walls was filled and a roadway built to allow a mobile crane to operate. A barge moored to the cofferdam contains an office and outdoor tables for sifting sand through a series of four increasingly finer mesh screens to locate small artifacts, and to sort and tag items found. The public can view the excavation from the southeast portion of the cofferdam.

The remains of La Belle are believed to cover an area approximately 15 feet by 50 feet. Much of the ship's hull is gone—a victim of bacteria, marine worms and storms. What remains of the ship appears to be the bottom or side of the vessel's hull that was buried in the sand and mud of Matagorda Bay.

Since the cofferdam's completion, finds at the La Belle site have included a sword handle; blue, amber and black beads intended for trade with the Indians; remnants of barrels that held the expedition's supplies; lead musket balls; a pewter candlestick holder; ballast; a piece of leather, possibly from clothing or a wineskin; an encrusted iron object that may contain either a buckle or chain links; and timbers from the ship's hull.

However, not all the finds at the excavation site are so intriguing. "While sifting through some sediment a few days into the project, I found a 1992 quarter," said THC archeologist Amy Mitchell.

"The estimated conclusion date of the excavation is expected to be sometime in November, as weather conditions normally deteriorate about then. The cofferdam itself is scheduled to be dismantled by January 1997," said THC project director J. Barto Arnold III.

What became of La Salle and Fort St. Louis? When La Salle left for Illinois by land on Jan. 12, 1687, to seek assistance for his settlement, he took 17 men with him, leaving only 20 people at the fort—disease and hostile natives having claimed the rest of the settlers. La Salle died at the hands of his own men on March 20, 1687, while still in present-day Texas. An Indian attack in January 1688 wiped out the settlement. A few children were taken captive and later rescued by the Spanish. A handful of survivors—including Henri Joutel, who chronicled the expedition—made it on foot to Canada. ★ *This story originally appeared in ENVision, the Environmental Affairs Division newsletter*

# Partnership brings Texas Project Awards to 15 Employees, contractors recognized for overcoming obstacles to finish projects

**Melissa Welch**  
Public Information Office

Fifteen TxDOT employees received Texas Project Awards for completing construction or design projects that had major construction or design obstacles. Contractors also received the honor. The award program, created by Engineer-Director Raymond Stotzer in 1987, recognizes partnerships between contractors and TxDOT.

The Association of General Contractors (AGC) hosted the ninth annual Texas Project Award luncheon on Sept. 4 at the Hyatt Regency on Town Lake in Austin.

## **Abilene District**

In the Abilene District two employees received the award. Project Inspector George Yost, who retired five months after the project began, and his replacement Project Manager Burt Spraberry, worked with Bay Maintenance Company Project Manager Robert Elkins to relocate a U.S. 83 ramp and reconstruct a congested intersection near Abilene Mall. They encountered problems with design grading and horizontal alignments that did not fit field conditions, but resolved the problem with minimum delays. Through teamwork and cooperation with local officials, TxDOT and Bay Maintenance Company completed the project before the Christmas shopping season.

## **Beaumont District**

Beaumont District Project Manager Charles Ratcliff and Superintendent Marion Gentry of Gilbert-Texas Construction joined efforts in widening an eight-mile stretch of U.S. 96 from a two-lane to a four-lane divided highway. They moved 900,000 cubic yards of sandy clay; laid 410,000 square yards of lime subgrade; placed 400,000 square yards of cement-stabilized base with a one-inch asphalt bond breaker; and topped the material with 350,000 square yards of a foot thick of concrete pavement. The highway serves as a major artery for transportation of timber products and as a hurricane evacuation route.

## **Dallas District**

The Dallas District received two project awards, both for Interstate 30. TxDOT Project Manager Willard Simmons and Hensel Phelps Construction Co. Superintendent Guy Mills oversaw the Fair Park Bridge rehabilitation. Located in the middle of many Dallas area attractions, the bridge was widened from four to five lanes in each direction with shoulders and adequate distances for access ramps.

The second award in the Dallas District went to Project Manager Gary D. Andrews and Granite Construction Co. Project Manager Jon Walker for widening a portion of I-30 in Rockwall County. To deal with high traffic volume and limited space in that area, Granite and TxDOT developed innovative methods to construct the Trinity River and Rowlett Creek bridges across Lake Ray Hubbard. Granite built a gantry crane that straddled the median between the existing eastbound and westbound bridges. The crane allowed materials to be moved without stopping traffic. TxDOT and Granite completed the project 26 days early.

## **Fort Worth District**

Fort Worth District Project Manager Doyle W. Chapman and Chief Inspector Hubert W. Harris teamed up with H.B. Zachry Project Manager Pete Guitierrez to reconstruct I-35 at its interchange with I-30 in downtown Fort Worth. The work consisted of widening I-35 and reconstructing the Vickery Boulevard and Missouri Pacific Railroad overpasses. Several field changes were made to move railroad tracks and to make a drain system. The partnering efforts of TxDOT and H.B. Zachry enabled the project to be coordinated with the railroad and another contractor, J.D. Abrams, who had crews working on drainage systems in that area. The project was completed 413 days ahead of schedule.

Fort Worth District Director of Transportation Planning and Development Rondell Fagan received the Texas Project Award in design for the reconstruction of I-20 from a four-lane to an eight-lane freeway. The new design provides direct-access ramps to two major city streets, which was built around the Santa Fe Railroad by separ-

rating the railroad and frontage roads, keeping both facilities above the water flow of a nearby creek. Several large underground utilities had to be adjusted, and traffic control and sequencing of the work were major factors in the design and construction of the intersection.

## **Houston District**

The Houston District also received two project awards. TxDOT engineer Gary Gehbauer and Boh Brothers Construction Co. Project Manager Wayne Doyle used innovative ideas when reconstructing the eastbound I-10 mainline bridge over the San Jacinto River. TxDOT and Boh Brothers worked to resolve problems with motorists over exit and entrance ramps, reassessed plans to place cofferdams 40 feet below the surface of the San Jacinto River, and redesigned and refabricated steel girders, completing the project 39 days in advance.

The second award for the Houston District went to TxDOT engineer Keith Carlton and Traylor Brothers Project Manager Richard Roth. They successfully transformed Loop 201 in Baytown into a thoroughfare connecting the Fred Hartman Bridge and the city of Leopard. Protecting the environment, Carlton and Roth built a rock causeway around a sensitive wetland area so they could build a frontage road bridge. Carlton and Roth also worked with Baytown officials to tie the frontage road into city streets, provide signal lights and permanent signing, and adjust storm sewer and paving grades. Roth and Carlton coordinated their efforts with Williams Brothers Construction, the Fred Hartman Bridge general contractor, to avoid construction conflicts.

Houston District Project Manager Seyed Alavi received the Texas Project Award for the design of a depressed section of road at the intersection of U.S. 290 and Farm-to-Market Road 1098. The proximity of a creek resulted in the construction of eight bridges. Equalizers were placed across the roadway to allow runoff to flow across the right of way. The project involved several experimental pavements. The Center for Transportation Research and the Texas Transportation Institute worked with Alavi to construct pavements with different aggregates, under different conditions and with different reinforcements for the project.

## **Pharr District**

In the Pharr District, Engineering Technician Evaristo Gonzales, and Project Manager Joe Ballenger of Ballenger Construction Co. received rave reviews for their work on Texas 100. It was a nonfreeway project, and the last of four projects that Ballenger Construction has done in the reconstruction of this major evacuation route from U.S. 77/83 Expressway to Port Isabel. The district seized an opportunity to rebuild wetlands that had been altered by road construction years before, turning six miles of TxDOT right of way into wetlands. Working quickly and efficiently, TxDOT and Ballenger Construction resolved a problem with embankment material and base test requirements and finished the project 83 days early.

## **San Antonio District**

San Antonio District Engineering Technician Russell Obregon and Engineer Carol Luschen and H.B. Zachry Project Manager Mike Ingram and Project Superintendent Robert Maldonado reconstructed a two-mile section of I-10, expanding it from a four-lane to a six-lane freeway. Complex traffic phasing and routing resulted in minimal disruption to the 91,000 vehicles per day traveling that section of I-10. They encountered a profile grade problem at an exit, deferred construction of a bridge and replanned the bridge in a different area, changing lane configurations throughout the project.

## **Wichita Falls District**

Wichita Falls District Project Manager Roy Wright and Austin Bridge and Road Project Manager Joe Clark replaced a bridge over the Red River and constructed short sections of road to tie into the new structure. Construction was smooth until the team discovered that the concrete beams of the bridge had less camber than predicted. Slight adjustments were made to the finished profile grade line, but they had to increase the slab thickness. Project personnel worked closely to resolve the issue to benefit both parties of the contract. ★

# Don't Mess with Texas

## Service Awards

### November

#### Abilene

**30 years**  
Jerry D. Black  
Elliott M. Perryman  
**10 years**  
James E. Washington

#### Amarillo

**30 years**  
Cecil D. Blevins  
Jimmie D. Simmons  
**25 years**  
Randal L. Patterson  
**20 years**  
Karan B. Fry  
**15 years**  
Kenneth R. Petr  
**10 years**  
Timothy L. Sorrells

#### Atlanta

**15 years**  
B. C. Carroll  
John E. Davis

#### Austin

**30 years**  
James M. Collins  
**25 years**  
Jefferson D. Logan Jr.  
**10 years**  
William M. Springfield

#### Beaumont

**15 years**  
Michael N. Deitrich  
Gilbert E. Gore  
Charles J. McLellan  
Sheila G. Randolph  
**10 years**  
Karen S. Davis  
Charlie C. Wallace

#### Brownwood

**15 years**  
Jimmy L. Smith  
**5 years**  
Michael L. Belvin

#### Bryan

**30 years**  
L. H. Becker  
**10 years**  
Ervin Lewis  
**5 years**  
James D. McDonald  
Elias H. Rmeili

#### Childress

**10 years**  
Monte L. Lumpkin

#### Corpus Christi

**25 years**  
Crescencian D. Falcon Jr.  
**15 years**  
Maria E. Trevino

#### Dallas

**30 years**  
Morris L. Whittle  
**25 years**  
Robert D. Victory  
**20 years**  
Christopher Speed  
**10 years**  
Donald L. Carmichael  
Fernando J. De La Garza  
David J. Jessup  
Carl D. McGehee  
Rhonda M. Perkins  
**5 years**  
Gregory D. Price

#### El Paso

**25 years**  
Jesus G. Quiroz  
**10 years**  
Joseph D. Lindsey  
Timothy F. Pierson

#### Fort Worth

**30 years**  
Glenn B. Liles  
**15 years**  
Juan L. Hall  
**10 years**  
Richard G. Schiller Jr.  
**5 years**  
Eric A. Johannessen  
Roy Rodriguez

### Houston

**30 years**  
Karl F. Kiencke Jr.  
**25 years**  
Charles S. Burks  
Alfonzo Denson Jr.  
Billie T. Dickson  
Billy R. Hodges  
Joseph A. Murello III  
**15 years**  
Severo Basquez Jr.  
James C. Blankenship  
Timothy S. Nicholes  
Clifford Walker  
**10 years**  
Anthony D. Landry  
Thomas E. Lev  
Darell W. Lindemann  
**5 years**  
Michael D. Bairrington  
Jeffrey E. Martinez  
Curtis D. White

### Lubbock

**15 years**  
James E. Wright  
**5 years**  
Kenneth D. Harris

### Lufkin

**20 years**  
James F. Jackson  
**15 years**  
Clark R. Slacum  
**10 years**  
John S. Miller

### Odessa

**25 years**  
Gilberto O. Sanchez  
**15 years**  
Gary L. Nation  
**10 years**  
Omar M. Flores

### Paris

**30 years**  
Clifford R. Crafton Sr.  
**10 years**  
Kerry Hansford

### Pharr

**30 years**  
Frank Miller Jr.

### San Angelo

**20 years**  
Charles O. Hall  
**15 years**  
Carla S. Baze

### San Antonio

**30 years**  
William A. Geigenmiller  
**20 years**  
John A. Saldana  
**15 years**  
Emma J. Cantu  
James L. Morris  
**10 years**  
Michael A. Coward  
Gilbert B. Hernandez  
Michael D. Jaeger  
Paul H. Neimeier Jr.  
Grazyna Z. Waclawiak  
Darryl L. Zercher

### Tyler

**30 years**  
Averil D. Douthitt  
**25 years**  
Don W. Lay

### Waco

**15 years**  
Sharon L. Rejcek  
**10 years**  
Roy D. Baker  
Jimmy W. Barton  
Richard L. Brown  
William W. Fague  
Michael B. Griffin  
Jerry D. Shelton

### Wichita Falls

**30 years**  
Glenn T. Payton  
**15 years**  
Sharon L. Rejcek  
**10 years**  
Roy D. Baker  
Jimmy W. Barton  
Richard L. Brown  
William W. Fague  
Michael B. Griffin  
Jerry D. Shelton

### Yoakum

**25 years**  
Delores V. Bittner  
**15 years**  
Roy J. Buenger  
**10 years**  
Andrew C. Brzozowski  
David J. Kallus

### Construction and Maintenance

**30 years**  
William T. Nelson Jr.

### Design

**30 years**  
Larry D. Smith  
**10 years**  
Gregg A. Freeby  
Michael F. Gesch  
**5 years**  
Barbara J. Struss

### General Services

**15 years**  
James E. Auchey  
**10 years**  
Johnny Burke  
Rudy Gomez

### Human Resources

**5 years**  
Carolyn D. Parker

### Information Systems

**5 years**  
David J. Smith

### Legislative Affairs

**10 years**  
Carolyn P. Icard

### Motor Carrier

**25 years**  
Robert D. Beck  
**10 years**  
Charles C. Bennett  
Denise K. Clarke  
**5 years**  
Marcelo Perez

### Public Transportation

**30 years**  
Carolyn W. Blackmon  
**10 years**  
Susan E. Hausmann

### Research and Technology

**Transfer**  
**30 years**  
Jon P. Underwood

### Senior Management Team

**15 years**  
Terri K. Peveto  
**5 years**  
David E. Bensen

### Traffic Operations

**10 years**  
Cesar J. Molina Jr.

### Transportation Planning and Programming

**10 years**  
Michael R. Hofferek

### Vehicle Titles and Registration

**20 years**  
Hortencia Gonzalez  
Priscilla G. Tijerina  
**10 years**  
Christopher T. Thomas  
**5 years**  
Bradley G. Beaty  
Frances E. Fisher  
Livia R. Hubbard  
Eloy Sanchez

## Calendar

### November

**11** Veteran's Day (holiday)  
**13-14** Accident Prevention Management Meeting, Austin, OCC  
**20-22** NHTSA Project Management Course, Corpus Christi, TRF  
**21** Commission Meeting, Austin  
**28** Thanksgiving Day (holiday)  
**29** Holiday

### December

**2-6** Fall Research Management Committee Meeting, Corpus Christi, RTT  
**19** Commission Meeting, Austin  
**24** Holiday  
**25** Christmas (holiday)  
**26** Holiday

### January

**1** New Year's Day (holiday)  
**14-16** Herbicide Training and Recertification, San Antonio, Laredo, CMD  
**20** Martin Luther King Jr. Day (holiday)  
**21-23** Herbicide Training and Recertification, Lufkin, CMD  
**21-24** Herbicide Training and Recertification, Houston, CMD  
**28-30** Herbicide Training and Recertification, Atlanta, Pharr, CMD

### February

**4-6** Herbicide Training and Recertification, Brownwood, CMD  
**11-12** 1997 Area Engineers Conference, Austin, FDO  
**11-13** Herbicide Training and Recertification, Paris, San Angelo, CMD  
**17** Washington's Birthday (holiday)  
**18-20** Herbicide Training and Recertification, Bryan, Amarillo, CMD  
**25-27** Herbicide Training and Recertification, Abilene, Beaumont, CMD

### March

**4-6** Herbicide Training and Recertification, Lubbock, Odessa, CMD  
**11-13** Herbicide Training and Recertification, Childress, Waco, CMD  
**18-20** Herbicide Training and Recertification, Tyler, Yoakum, CMD  
**25-28** Herbicide Training and Recertification, Corpus Christi, Wichita Falls, Fort Worth, CMD  
**28** Good Friday

### September

**3-5** Texas/Mexico Border Conference on Border Safety, South Padre Island, PHR

## In Memoriam

### Employees

**Leo G. "Bob" Calk**, Applications Programmer III, San Angelo District, died Sept. 21, 1996

### Retirees

**Roney P. Jensen**, Administrative Technician II, retired from Vehicle Titles and Registration Division in 1993, died Sept. 4, 1996.

**Russell A. Lasater**, Maintenance Technician II, retired from Paris District in 1994, died Oct. 16, 1996.

**James H. Loftin**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from Paris District in 1989, died Aug. 30, 1996.

**Jerry W. Maxton**, Roadway Maintenance Supervisor, retired from Paris District in 1993, died July 26, 1996.

**Bernard J. McMahon**, Engineering Technician IV, retired from Amarillo District in 1987, died July 12, 1996.

**Patrick C. McNamara**, Engineering Technician V, retired from El Paso District in 1977, died Aug. 12, 1996.

**Atticus J. Middlebrooks**, Engineering Aide III, retired from Fort Worth District in 1975, died Aug. 9, 1996.

**James M. Miller**, Maintenance Construction Supervisor, retired from Amarillo District in 1981, died July 29, 1996.

**Clifton S. Morris**, Maintenance Technician I, retired from Wichita Falls District in 1972, died Aug. 28, 1996.

**Nicholas Najar**, Semi-Skilled Laborer, retired from El Paso District in 1959, died Aug. 7, 1996.

**Charles T. Ryan**, Drafter III, retired from Fort Worth District in 1988, died July 29, 1996.

**John C. Smith**, Engineer VI, retired from Houston District in 1985, died Aug. 7, 1996.

**Raymond R. Smith**, Maintenance Technician V, retired from Abilene District in 1994, died July 26, 1996.

**Prachan Sthapitanonda**, Right of Way Utility Agent II, retired from Amarillo District in 1984, died July 21, 1996.

**Elmo F. Sturgeon**, Engineering Technician II, retired from Paris District in 1973, died Aug. 20, 1996.

**James T. Talley**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from Paris District in 1988, died July 27, 1996.

**Lee E. Thompson**, Engineering Aide IV, retired from Materials and Tests Division in 1982, died July 20, 1996.

**Wilbert O. Vaughan**, Right of Way Utility Agent II, retired from Corpus Christi District in 1986, died Aug. 6, 1996.

**W. C. Vick**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from Wichita Falls District in 1978, died Aug. 10, 1996.

**Reaugh L. Watson**, Shop Foreman IV, retired from Transportation Planning and Programming Division in 1976, died Aug. 14, 1996.

**Addie C. White**, Maintenance Technician II, retired from Tyler District in 1972, died July 21, 1996.

**Larrie E. Windham**, Maintenance Technician II, retired from Lufkin District in 1972, died Aug. 20, 1996.

## Retirements

### August

#### Houston

**Mario Gomez**, 22 years, Maintenance Technician V

**Franklin C. Watling**, 12 years, Marine Specialist for Motor Vessel II

### September

#### Austin

**Howard W. Chapman**, 34 years, Maintenance Technician IV

#### Dallas

**Junis E. Cook**, 37 years, Engineering Specialist II

**Jim Garrett**, 11 years, Right of Way Agent IV

**Freddy R. Shaw**, 31 years, Maintenance Technician IV

### October

#### Beaumont

**Billy B. Hart**, 28 years, Maintenance Technician III

#### Corpus Christi

**James G. Sexton**, 26 years, Motor Vehicle Mechanic III

#### Vehicle Titles and Registration

**Thomas P. Woods**, 30 years, Program Administrator I

## Sammons

Continued from page 3

airmen, but I don't order them around. But you never know when you're going to be the highest-ranking and in charge, so I always like to treat people, men and women alike, the way I like to be treated," she said.

In her spare time, Sammons likes to garden when it's warm and needlepoint when it's cold. "I take my needlework with me on UTAs (reserves unit training assembly)," she said. "When I have a break, I work on my needlepoint. I'm sure it's a funny sight—some one doing needlework in a military uniform."

And she also enjoys spending time with her two children, Alma, 24, who works for the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division, and Tim, 16.

The story of Laura Sammons is another example of TxDOT's partnering philosophy—this time, it's between the department and the U.S. Air Force Reserves. Gen. Omar Bradley said it best: "Battles are won by the infantry, the armor, the artillery and air teams, by the soldiers living in the rains and huddling in the snow. But wars are won by the great strength of a nation—the soldier and civilian working together."

Way to go, TxDOT Team! ★

## BOP

Continued from page 6

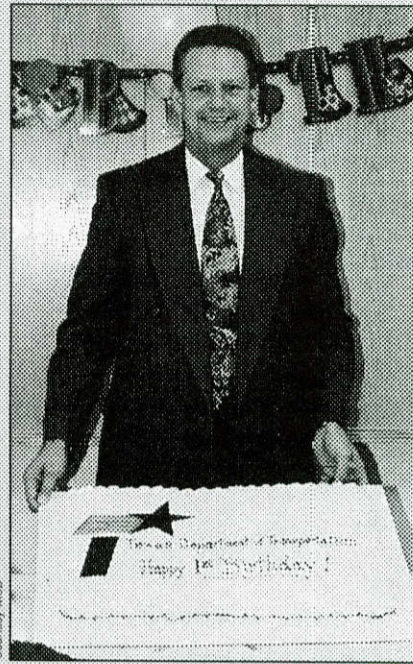
interest and participation of both our internal and external customers," said James Dossett, BOP director. "The conference was designed to provide our customers with information that would help them better understand the DBE/HUB program."

An awards banquet capped the first day of the conference. Ben Gomez of Gomez & Company and Mary Veazie of Frimpong and Veazie received the DBE/HUB Supportive Services Awards. Jesse Covarrubias of Structural Engineering Associates was named DBE/HUB Professional Services Consultant of the Year. Other awards included Contractor of the Year, (largest number of DBEs/HUBs employed), Bartell Zachry, H. B. Zachry Company; Contractor of the Year (largest dollar amount subcontracted to DBEs/HUBs) Albert Clark, Clark Construction Co. Inc.; Contractor of the Year (largest dollar amount committed to DBEs/HUBs on one project), J. D. Abrams, J. D. Abrams; DBE/HUB Contractor of the Year, Rudy and Roberto Breda, Breda Company; HUB of the Year - Goods and Services, Dorothea McClain, Barney's Auto Supply; and HUB of the Year - Goods and Services, Ismael Cuellar, Valley Volvo Truck Center Inc.

BOP also recognized TxDOT employees' efforts. The El Paso District was named District of the Year - Overall Highest Percentage Procurement from DBEs/HUBs. District Purchasing Section of the Year - Overall Highest DBE/HUB Dollar Amount Purchased resulted in a tie between the Pharr and Dallas districts.

Day two of the conference included an exhibit show and the Small Purchases Awards. Sil Romero of the General Services Division and the purchasing staff identified more than \$3,000,000 in purchases for upcoming contracting opportunities. They awarded DBEs and HUBs attending the conference just under \$6,000 in commodity and service purchase awards. These purchases included electrical, hauling, computers and temporary services. ★

## Happy birthday, MCD!



The Motor Carrier Division hosted an open house Sept. 27 to celebrate the division's one-year anniversary. More than 90 participants joined in the celebration, including division director Lawrence Smith, left. MCD was the result of Texas Senate Bill 3, which consolidated related transportation duties. MCD replaced the Central Permit Office and incorporated many duties of the Railroad Commission.

## Letters

The Annual "Hot Site" test of the Data Center Recovery Plan was conducted June 1-2. Of all the agencies participating in the statewide contract for contingency services, TxDOT is the only agency to successfully bring their system up at the Philadelphia site. We were able to demonstrate the ability to recover the network traffic allowing users to perform their mainframe functions without altering normal daily procedures. From the user's perspective, their processing was occurring at the central site data center in Austin, however, this processing was actually being handled at the "hot site" system in Philadelphia.

Please express our appreciation to Ms. **Phyllis Sticher**, Ms. **Cathy Williamson**, Mr. **Don Burnell**, Mr. **Ruben Gonzalez** and Mr. **Bill Pool** for their participation. Their commitment to this extremely important effort contributed to the overall success of the exercise. The users were critical in providing the maximum amount of realism without directly impacting daily processing on the mainframe.

*Phyllis Sticher is a staff services officer; Cathy Williamson, Don Burnell, Ruben Gonzalez and Bill Pool are program administrators. All work for VTR.*

....

I was stranded Thursday afternoon, March 21, when one of your employees stopped to help me. I know it is your job to stop and help, but I just can't forget the comfort I felt and I'm forever grateful. I know that God was watching out for me and I'm thankful He sent **Luis Herrera!**

You all do a great job and are such a blessing! I just wanted to you to know you are appreciated very much. Thanks again!

**Sandy Carson**

*Luis Herrera is a maintenance technician in the Lampasas Maintenance Office, Brownwood District.*

....

Recently in returning from San Antonio to my home in Yorba Linda, Calif., I experienced a fuel pump failure 30 miles west of Fort Stockton. Fortunately, the failure occurred near an area where one of your employees was working. As the weather was a very uncomfortable 105 degrees, and it was a very isolated area, Mr. **Sam Jackson** took it upon himself to drive me four miles to a telephone so I could call Triple A Auto Club. He returned me to my car where my companion waited; she had a sprained ankle and could not walk. He finished his job and assured us he would check on us on his return trip.

Two hours later, he did stop by, made sure we had water and waited a few more minutes until the tow truck arrived.

I would think Mr. Jackson is a conscientious and dedicated employee and should be commended for his extra effort for helping a stranded motorist in time of need.

**Frank O'Leary**

**Yorba Linda, Cal.**

*Samuel F. Jackson is a maintenance technician in the Iraan Maintenance Section, Odessa District.*

## Letters

The purpose of this letter is to express my gratitude for two of your employees, **Jimmy Drake** and **Tony Love**, helping my daughter in a moment of distress.

On Sept. 2, Labor Day, my daughter was on her way back to her home in Belton from our home in Round Rock when her car suddenly stopped running. She walked one and a half miles to a rest stop and called us. By this time, we were at Point Venture, over an hour from her. She was alone, afraid, crying a little and very uneasy, not to mention stranded. As we were talking, I heard a man ask her if that was her car on the highway a mile or two away. As you can imagine, I was wanting to crawl through the phone lines at that point. Then the gentleman, Mr. Drake, came on the phone and explained that he was with the Highway Department on courtesy patrol and that they would go back with my daughter and check her car.

Fortunately they were able to get it running and followed her until she was safe. I know these men were "just doing their job." However, being a custom home builder, I am also aware that there are varying levels of "doing your job." The level of concern, caring, dedication and efficiency these men showed towards my daughter that night was, and will remain, much appreciated.

Please consider this a heartfelt thank you from a very grateful father.

**Terry A. Williams**  
Round Rock

*Jimmy Drake is a traffic signal repair technician and Tony Love is a maintenance technician. Both work in the Waco District.*

.....

Early in the afternoon on Tuesday, Sept. 3, my husband and I were traveling on Interstate 10 on our way home to El Paso from visiting family in San Antonio. Just west of Comfort, we had a blow out on our Plymouth van. Before we could get the spare on, Mr. **David Hallenbeck**, TxDOT employee driving along I-10, stopped behind us to provide some defense from the oncoming traffic and to offer assistance. We put the spare tire on, however, the rim on the spare did not fit the car—part of the brake mechanism was rubbing the inside of the wheel. The only solution was to replace the blown tire using the wheel that came Mr. Hallenbeck took us to Comfort, making two stops before we found a tire store. There he waited while the tire was replaced, then drove us back to our car where he waited again until we were on our way.

Mr. Hallenbeck was polite and caring, and his assistance made what could have been a harrowing experience for us much more endurable. We thanked him when we parted, but we wanted to let you (and his supervisor) know that we appreciated his help and that he and others like him provide a great service. I jokingly told him I would never gripe about paying the road tax that is included in state license plate renewals again (since that tax was probably part of his salary and he is a valuable employee)!

**Donna & Gilbert Maxwell**  
El Paso

*David Hallenbeck is a maintenance technician in the San Antonio District.*

.....

Please convey my sincere thanks to **Charlie Deskin** and **Travis McDaniel** who provided needed gas for my stalled truck recently. They were a welcomed sight during rush hour traffic over Sunset on U.S. 281 on Sept. 19.

Being a woman with no mechanic knowledge of trucks, their help was especially appreciated. Please convey my appreciation to your staff.

**Bessie V. Mendez**  
San Antonio

*Charlie Deskin and Travis McDaniel work for the San Antonio District Courtesy Patrol.*

.....

On Aug. 14, The state of New Mexico Motor Vehicle Division, along with the New Mexico State Police, conducted a salvage yard inspection. Along with us was **Ruben Gonzalez** of the TxDOT Vehicle Titles and Registration Division. Mr. Gonzalez works out of the El Paso area. I would like to thank Mr. Gonzalez for the information and knowledge in which he assisted me in the above mentioned inspection.

Mr. Gonzales exhibited an enormous knowledge which was most valuable in reading and reviewing many Texas titles. Not only did Mr. Gonzalez assist in the inspection, Mr. Gonzalez gave me information about Texas titles that I will use many times in my job. I only hope that I did as good a job in my reciprocation of information.

Once again thanks to Mr. Ruben Gonzalez in his assistance in our salvage yard inspection.

**Richard L. Martinez**  
Office of Inspector General  
New Mexico

*Ruben Gonzalez is a program administrator for the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division, and works in El Paso.*

.....

I want to take this opportunity to commend activities and actions of your staff. Recently, the Municipal Court found itself in an awkward situation in that we were unable to obtain current owner information for vehicles. Part of our revenue and income stream was in jeopardy of being shut down—not a pleasant prospect.

We made contact with two of your employees, Mr. **Gary Bible** and Ms. **Judy Ward**. With a brief explanation of our predicament, they bolted into action and walked us through a sign-up, registration and setup processes so that in less than eight hours we had connectivity to your VTR system. Truly a remarkable response in our view! You and I both know that the way a department or division is organized can either facilitate or prevent exemplary customer service but even after the processes are in place, it requires committed and capable personnel to make it happen. You have both and I salute you for that.

Again I thank you and your staff for the responsive treatment we received.

**Ron Zimmerman**  
City of Austin

*Gary Bible is a program administrator and Judy Ward is a systems analyst. Both work for the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division.*

This is a letter to show our appreciation for the help that **Barbara Ward** provided.

The dealership has been trying for several months to get a title corrected in Austin at Customer Information Service with absolutely no success. I was given Ms. Ward's name in Longview and told she might could help our dealership. I phoned her to talk over the situation. Within a few days she had sent me the papers I needed and a letter to tell me how to handle the title.

I am now in the process of following through with her advice and for the first time in months at ease over the situation.

Ms. Ward has been a big help. She demonstrated the knowledge and skills of her profession, when no one else in Austin would help solve the problem. Ms. Ward was very friendly and courteous in every way.

Again, thank you very much for the assistance by your employee, Barabara Ward.

**J. Hayden Elder**  
Athens

*Barbara Ward is a program administrator for the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division.*

.....

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