

Transportation NEWS

May 1998 Volume 23 Number 9

Summer no picnic for TxDOT

■ Be careful out there: Don't let their road trip send you to the ER...

Lisa Trow
Public Information Office

Summer may be vacation season for many Texans, but for TxDOT highway crews, May through August is no picnic.

With more motorists on the road, highway crews face more opportunities to become an accident statistic.

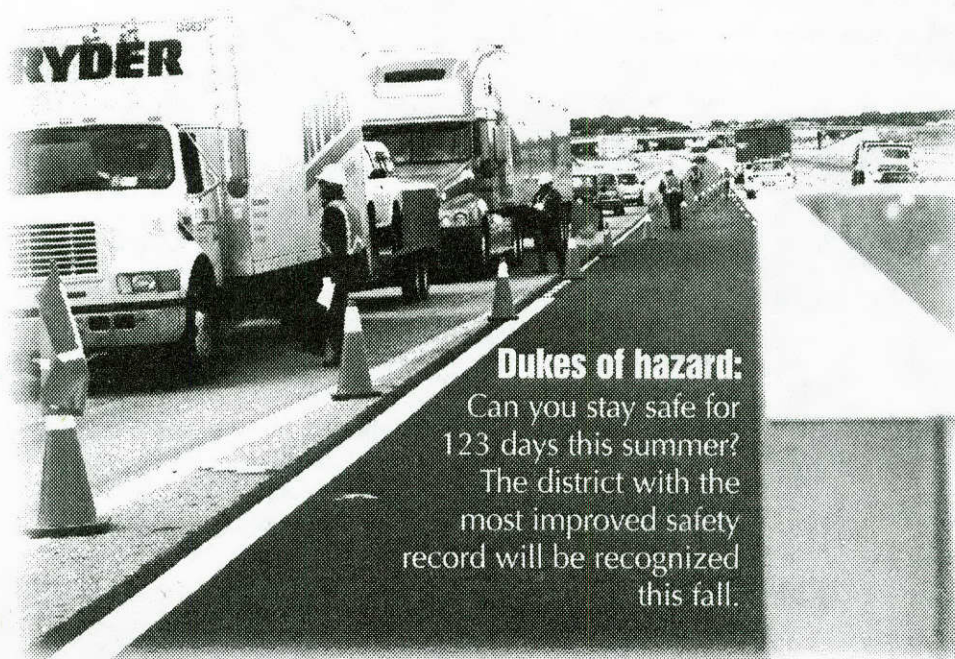
About 900 TxDOT employees were injured in on-the-job accidents last fiscal year. Although nobody was killed during fiscal year 1997 — a rare accomplishment for the department that hadn't been repeated since 1989 — an average of four TxDOT employees have been killed on the job each year since 1938.

Summer is the cruelest season for highway workers, according to statistics recorded by the Occupational Safety Division — seven of the last 10 employee deaths have occurred during the summer, when more TxDOT employees are working on highway construction projects right at the time when more motorists take to the road.

To raise awareness of the potential hazards of summer, TxDOT on May 1 kicked off its second annual "123 Safe Days of Summer" campaign, sponsored by OCC, in hopes of preventing injuries and fatalities during what is the peak season for accidents. During the campaign, TxDOT will be emphasizing proper safety measures, especially for road crew employees.

Any employee can be a statistic. Among the victims of some of TxDOT's recent deadly accidents were:

■ An employee flagging for a hot-mix operation on a farm-to-market road who was struck by a motorist and thrown 93



Dukes of hazard:
Can you stay safe for 123 days this summer? The district with the most improved safety record will be recognized this fall.

Road crew dangers

Annual TxDOT accidents	900
Annual TxDOT fatalities	4
Cost to Texas taxpayers	\$5.7 million
Annual accidents in United States	20,000
Annual cost to U.S. taxpayers	\$3 billion

Sources: Associated Press, TxDOT

feet;

■ An employee who was pinned under a pneumatic roller when it overturned;

■ An employee, part of a team inspecting guard rails, who was in a van that was hit by an 18-wheeler;

■ An employee who was trapped between her vehicle and a barrier during a third party collision after she stopped to inspect a striping job; and

■ An employee who was standing by a state vehicle parked in the grassy median after picking up cones when he was struck by a motorist.

The first TxDOT fatality in 1998 also should serve as a warning for employees.

Paris Hood, 45, a maintenance technician in the Amarillo District, was killed last March when he stopped on the side of Interstate 27 south of Amarillo to pick up debris in the roadway.

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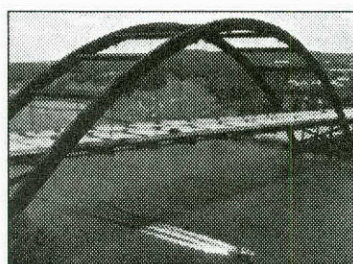
Mike Carpenter of the Bryan District plays dress up at work to amuse co-workers.

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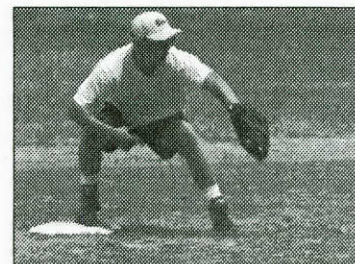
Amish horses and buggies are a new sight in the Brownwood District.

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Public works as works of art is a concept that has made a comeback in bridge design.

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Warm, sunny weather is the perfect time to join in the TxDOT tournament fun.

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Retirees have laid the foundation for TxDOT employees

I had a few free moments the other day, and believe me, I haven't had too many of those lately. I was wondering, "What have I gotten myself into as executive director of the Texas Department of Transportation?"

I started to think of the state highway engineers and executive directors who have come before me. I always had a lot of respect for these folks, and I can assure you I have even more respect for them now.

The work is the same — OK, not exactly. But I realized that this job is filled with



Wes Heald

Straight talk

office during my career with the department.

Then, I thought about the people they had assembled to help them carry out the work. I realized I am also surrounded by experienced, innovative and talented co-workers who take a lot of pride in what they do.

To do our jobs today, I think it is important for us to take advantage of our past. I strongly believe that we must learn from our successes and failures. We need to rely on experience to produce the best transportation system possible.

Our retirees are an important part of our TxDOT history and our TxDOT family. Our transportation foundation was shaped and formed by our predecessors. It is our responsibility to build on that foundation.

Whether we are in a district, division or office, we should stay in touch with the retirees. I know some of you do an excellent job of keeping up with your retirees.

The staff at *Transportation News* will also try to keep us informed about the retirees with a new column, "The Good Life." I encourage retirees to send information about their activities, projects or travels.

You may no longer report to work at TxDOT, but your "family" back at the office cares. You are important to us, and we appreciate your continued support of our department.

Wes Heald is executive director of the Texas Department of Transportation. ★

many of the same challenges and opportunities as my predecessors, plus a few they did not have. I thought about this group — Bill Burnett, Arnold Oliver, Raymond Stotzer, Mark Goode, Luther DeBerry, J.C. Dingwall and D.C. Greer — who have worked in this

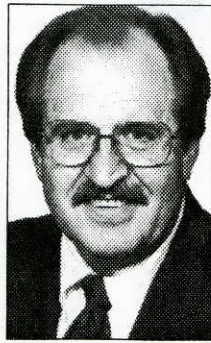
Four key positions filled

Executive Director Wes Heald filled four administrative positions from the district and division ranks last month.

Waco District Engineer Kirby W. Pickett, a 37-year TxDOT veteran, was chosen deputy executive director.

Mike W. Behrens from Yoakum was selected assistant director for engineering operations.

Heald also named two division direc-



Pickett

tors last month.

Thomas Bohuslav will head the new Construction Division, and Zane Webb will oversee the new Maintenance Division.

Pickett moved to Austin from Waco, where he was district engineer for 12 years.

"Kirby is experienced in engineering and administrative functions of the department. As deputy executive director, he will assist me in the day to day operations, working with districts, divisions and offices," Heald said.

Pickett joined the Paris District in

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Leaving sparks years of memories

My past 20 years at the Texas Department of Transportation have been filled with many professional and personal opportunities to grow and develop both as an engineer and a manager. As I depart for a new career in the private sector, I'd like to share some of my reminiscences with you.

Before I started here, my professional career already included jobs with two employers in other states. Upon completion of my graduate degree, I sought employment with the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation. The attraction was there because of the national respect this agency commands due the caliber of its transportation professionals and its record for delivering a quality transportation product.

It was a happy occasion when the department offered me a job. I soon discovered it would get better with time. My tour of duty began with the Dallas and Fort Worth districts' regional planning offices. I moved from there to the Transportation Planning Division and finally ended my career as a member of the senior management team.

From day one with the department, I realized the hallmark of the agency is its people. I immediately found the integrity and work ethic at the department at levels I had neither experienced nor expected. From one end of the pay scale to the other, everyone cared about getting the job done right.

That is a trait that reflects strong leadership. Mark Goode, Raymond Stotzer (even in writing this down, it seems more appropriate to call him Mr. Stotzer), Arnold Oliver, Bill Burnett and Wes Heald are the kind of strong leaders with whom I have been fortunate to work during my tenure. They espoused strong leadership values they car-

ried out in every thought, word and deed.

In fact, all the executive directors and commissioners with whom I have been associated made great efforts to carry out their responsibilities with honesty and integrity. The nearer one gets to these leaders, the more one appreciates the care and sense of duty they maintain in all their deliberations.

The department, I have observed, has evolved a lot in my 20 years with it. In name and function, the SDHPT has become a more inclusive agency as TxDOT. Processes have been adjusted to involve citizens, metropolitan planning organizations, environmental groups, the construction industry and consultants more fully in the delivery of the final product.

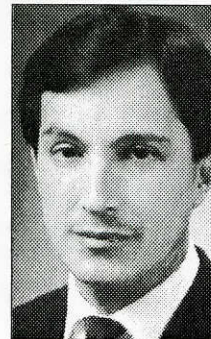
Procedures now include much more outsourcing of services and are much less rigid when it comes to federal and state funding options for projects. The impressive observation is that while all this flexibility makes the job more demanding on employees, they are always able to meet the aggressive lettings goals.

The citizens of Texas owe TxDOT employees, both past and present, a lot. I have always boasted, and will continue to do so, about having roots in TxDOT. I am a better person and professional because of my association with the department.

As I tackle the responsibilities of my new job, I will appreciate the similarities between the public and private sectors and try to learn to master the differences. While I know I will enjoy different challenges with my new employer, I will nevertheless feel deeply the sense of loss that comes with a move, a change.

Most of all, I will feel the absence of my TxDOT friends. But even though I am not part of TxDOT, I know there will be, and look forward to, many opportunities for us to work together. As we say in the business — let's do lunch! ★

— Bob Cuellar



Cuellar

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Publisher
Eloise Lundgren
Executive Editor
Helen Havelka
Editor
Jeff Carmack
Design and Production
Lisa Trow

Contributing PIOs
Phyllis Chandler
Mark Cross
Randall Dillard
Kerry Neely
Lori Rowe
Cheryl Williams

Other contributors
District, Division and Office employees
Staff Support
Amanda Flores
Shabrel Howard
Linda Ribble
Diana Ward

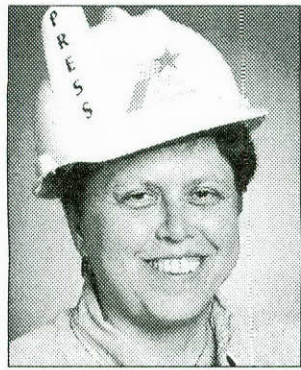
Travel Division Photographers
Michael Amador
Geoff Appold
Griff Smith
Kevin Stillman
Stan A. Williams
Photo Librarian
Anne Cook

Reflecting on 40 years of service

TransGuide Engineering Specialist Ted Ozuna is glad he followed alternate route

Forty has been a significant number throughout history. Noah had to build an ark because it would rain for 40 days and 40 nights. Ali Baba had 40 thieves. Turning 40 is a major event in a person's life.

For Ted Ozuna, an engineering specialist with the San Antonio District's TransGuide, 40 is a number that offers him the opportunity to take a moment and reflect. Forty is



Eloise Lundgren

A Day in the Life

the year 2000.

"To see the evolution of traffic engineering in something like TransGuide is amazing, but to play an active role in all of this is not only rewarding but something I can't pass up," he ended quietly.

Born and raised in San Antonio, Ozuna took engineering drafting at Fox Tech High School with the intention of majoring in civil engineering in college, but as life has a way of doing, things didn't quite turn out that way.

It seems Ozuna met a young lady named Sylvia at a high school Easter party. They talked a lot that night, as he remembered, so he got her phone number because he wanted to talk to her some more.

"I started calling her," he said, "and the next thing I knew, we were going out. And then the next thing I knew we were engaged. And then the next thing we were married."

So Ozuna joined the Army Reserves and was sent to Fort Gordon, Ga., for training as a military policeman. It was an assignment that would change his life because military police work exposed Ozuna to traffic engineering.

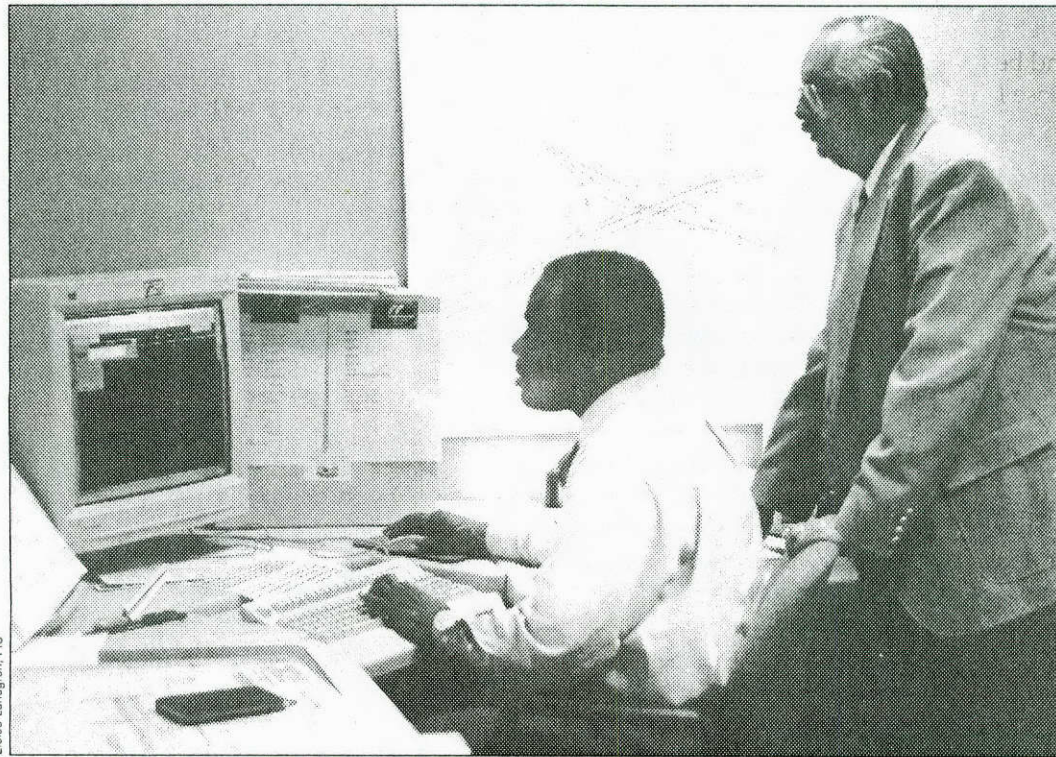
Upon returning home, he applied for employment in the city of San Antonio's traffic engineering department. While waiting to hear about the job, Ozuna was doing some reserve time at Fort Sam Houston one night when he met a major in his reserve unit named Carl Braunig.

"He recognized my handwriting and asked me if I was a draftsman," Ozuna said. "He gave me his card, which identified him as the traffic engineer for the Texas Highway Department, and told me to see him at his office the next morning.

"I did and he hired me to work on signing and signal design," Ozuna said. "And then the city contacted me with a job offer, but I decided I didn't want to work in downtown San Antonio, so I stayed where I

how many years Ozuna's worked for the Texas Department of Transportation.

"Forty is half of the 80 years the Texas Department of Transportation has existed," he said. "I'm not stopping with 40 years; my goal is to work for the department until I'm 62, and that's not until



Ted Ozuna looks over the shoulder of engineering technician Bill Harvey as he works on plans for a signal project.

was for the next 40 years — in traffic operations."

Ozuna has worked in traffic engineering for his entire TxDOT career except for the 1962-63 period when he was assigned to the traffic construction and maintenance section. "We got so far ahead in design," he explained, "so I went out for two years and built systems."

Traffic engineering was located at the district office until 1994 when it moved to the TransGuide building. There Ozuna and his staff of three produce all plans for signing, pavement marking and traffic engineering projects.

"We design highway signs all the way from the big green Interstate signs down to the little mile marker signs," he said. "We also review any consultant plans for our area."

Ozuna, who has picked up two years of civil engineering at San Antonio College and additional training through traffic engineering courses at Texas A&M, has no regrets about not being an engineer.

"Of course, my goal was to be a civil engineer, but as a technician, I am doing grass roots engineering," he explained. "Lots of engineers would love to do what we're doing," he said. "I love what I'm doing; it's hands-on engineering.

"As a technician, I assist the traffic engineer," he said. "I make recommendations and he approves them. The final decisions are his."

Ozuna and his staff work on projects ranging from the simple to the extremely complex that involve constant coordination. Over the years, he's seen lots of changes.

"Everything moves fast in traffic engineering," he said. "Everything — technology, new tools — is constantly changing.

"I can remember when fixed time signals were state of the art," he reminisced. "And now we've got high-tech actuated equipment like sensors in the pavement and video imaging vehicle detection systems."

In the early days, according to Ozuna, pavement markings were built into the roads, "like asphalt poured into concrete. Then along came reflective paint, thermoplastics and pre-fab plastic," he continued. "And we've got reflective sheeting on our signs. You don't even need lighting on signs anymore because the sheeting is so good."

Ozuna believes the modern traffic signs command motorists' respect because they always look clean. "They also have a longer life and are easier to maintain and repair," he said. "With the old stuff, we almost had to replace the entire sign which would have to be contracted out on a large scale. Now we can do it all quickly in-house."

Ozuna is pleased that transportation engineers realized the importance of traffic engineering with respect to construction sites. "In the old days, we had little foldup signs that would alert the public to construction work and that all posted speeds were 30 miles an hour," he said. "You didn't see all the attention to traffic like we see now so that drivers can travel through construction projects a lot safer and faster today.

"And I think some of the safest innovations to come along on construction sites are portable concrete barrier walls and orange-and-white reflective devices," he ended.

One of the toughest things about his job, Ozuna confided, was dealing with an often angry public. "We get all kinds of complaints — drivers aren't paying attention to traffic signs, people are talking on cell phones and driving at the same time," he said. "When you're talking to an irate person, you have to learn how to let him say what he has to say.

"You listen and then you try to reason with him," he continued, "and don't try to quote from some manual because they don't like to hear that."

If he could change anything, Ozuna would like to see the department do two things: train employees so that they are pre-

See Ozuna, Page 12

Master of Disguise

Bryan District environmental coordinator provides comic relief

Paul Sturrock
Bryan District

A little more than a year ago, on Valentine's Day to be precise, a young man rushing his brother to school in Bryan rear-ended another vehicle. To the offending driver's surprise, his victim emerged unscathed and sporting a wig of gleaming, golden curls, along with white tights and wings. This would-be Cupid not only kept his cool as rush-hour travelers gawked, he wound up taking the boys to school.

No one acquainted with TxDOT's Mike Carpenter, a.k.a. Cupid, is surprised by the kindness he showed under, shall we say, unusual circumstances. As for wearing the guise of a Greek demigod in a highly public setting, that's vintage Carpenter. Other occasions have seen the Bryan District's environmental coordinator mimic a leprechaun, a mummy and Monty Hall of "Let's Make a Deal" fame. When President Clinton was elected in 1992, Carpenter came to work wearing his clothes reversed to be ready "for whichever way the country went."

Anything to bring a smile to hard-working colleagues is Carpenter's motive for silly dressing

"I don't mind looking ridiculous to make others laugh and enjoy themselves at work for a couple of hours," said the TxDOT veteran of 21 years, attributing his laid-back style to being a single parent who raised two children, Lucie, 22, and Eric, 18.

Carpenter, 49, will soon be moving to a cabin near Bryan with sweeping views of the Brazos River. There he'll have plenty of space for his horse, dog and two cats. The new residence should suit his numerous pastimes, which include photography, drawing and relaxing walks in the woods. Carpenter has always loved drawing and admits he gets so wrapped up in it that, "... suddenly you realize it's two or three o'clock in the morning."

Carpenter's family moved from Ohio to the Rio Grande Valley when he was in his early teens. Years later, an uncle working for TxDOT wangled a summer job for the young Ohioan, giving him his first taste of TxDOT.

After high school, Carpenter enlisted in the U.S. Army — mainly to pay for college — and studied to be a construction draftsman. The year was 1966, and a war was raging in a place called Vietnam.

"I didn't think they'd need draftsmen in a war zone," he recalled. But after two years of uneventful service in Germany, young Car-

penter found himself at Long Binh, just south of Saigon, where the U.S. Army had its Vietnam headquarters. He helped with the building of bunkers, barracks, bridges and other structures needed for waging war. His was a relatively safe assignment in a post where more traditional Army values survived.

"We were probably the only troops in Vietnam required to have spit-shined boots for guard duty," he said.

After his discharge in 1969, Carpenter enrolled at Texas A&M University and earned a degree in environmental design.

"It was a little bit radical for A&M at the time," Carpenter said. "A&M was still ultraconservative — then they suddenly had this liberal-thinking college on campus."

He left TxDOT off and on over the following years to attend school full time, sometimes working in the Pharr District, sometimes in the Bryan District. Carpenter has worked steadily in the Bryan District since 1987, and eventually became the district's PC graphics guru, teaching the subject districtwide.

Carpenter puts his environmental skills to good use at TxDOT, delighting in protecting Mother Nature while ensuring projects aren't stymied by at-risk species habitats.

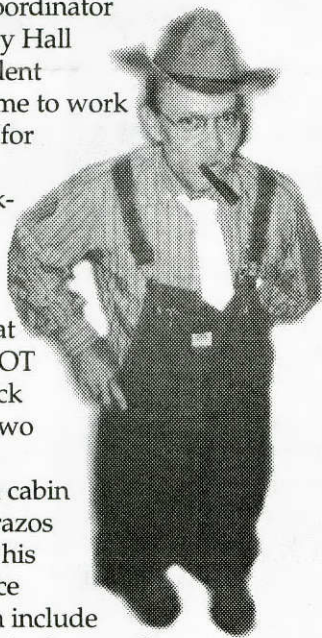
"When I see that one of our projects has changed its alignment to lessen the impact on something, it's nice to know I helped with that awareness," he said. "It's also nice to clear a project so it can be let as scheduled. I don't bleed green, but I can see where there needs to be respect on both sides of environmental issues. I don't believe in destroying the human environment just so the natural environment can survive, and vice versa. There need to be compromises."

Carpenter doesn't mind that most folks are blissfully unaware of changes influenced by his findings. For one thing, the less attention drawn

to endangered species sites, the less likely humans are to disturb them. The way Carpenter figures it, "if we can make the changes and it doesn't add significantly to the cost, why not?"

Meanwhile, Carpenter will continue his environmental work for TxDOT, occasionally taking a college course to keep abreast of his field. And unless he undergoes a major personality transplant, Carpenter will likely persist in donning outlandish costumes.

So if an enormous walking spud shows up on National Potato Day, don't be surprised or alarmed; odds are it's either a harmless mutant tuber, or Mike Carpenter — probably the latter. ✱



"I don't mind looking ridiculous to make others laugh and enjoy themselves at work for a couple of hours."

Mike Carpenter
Bryan District

ETHICAL QUESTIONS

Innocent transactions can be conflicts

(Editor's Note: This is the first of two columns by Jennifer Soldano, associate general counsel in the Office of General Counsel, on ethical issues facing TxDOT employees.)

I have always wanted a greenhouse. Just a little one so I can bake fresh rosemary bread in the winter, maybe to always have homegrown salsa and pesto on hand. So, being a shrewd TxDOT employee, I notice that a shed needs to be moved to accommodate the acquisition of right of way. Is it ethical for me to purchase the shed from TxDOT, replace the metal roof with one that is clear, and have my dream greenhouse?

No, and for good reason. No matter how pure your motives (maybe you were going to raise food in your backyard for the homeless), and even if you paid more than market value for the shed, the deal appears questionable because you are a TxDOT employee.

What seems like an innocent transaction is really a conflict of interest: By virtue of being an employee, you have access to more knowledge about the transaction than the public does. This is the same public that could perceive that you used your position to influence TxDOT's decision. TxDOT's policy is that an employee cannot purchase anything that once was owned by TxDOT. It

just doesn't look good if you buy a TxDOT truck at state auction because it is possible that you possessed knowledge that this particular truck was in good condition. Or even worse, that you could have encouraged another employee to declare the truck surplus property when you both knew it did not meet surplus property criteria.

TxDOT's standards of conduct are found in the Human Resource Manual. The standards inform employees that they are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is a credit to the agency and the state. After all, the public, through payment of taxes, pays our salaries and expects cer-

See Ethics, Page 7

Spreader box modifications prevent injuries

Pearlie Bushong
Yoakum District

After an accident involving a dump truck with a tailgate spreader box, former Yoakum District Engineer Michael W. Behrens issued a challenge to all supervisors to find a way to prevent any more such accidents.

Not only did an employee come up with a way to help prevent injuries to the operator, his modification of an existing spreader also saves money by reducing the amount of aggregate needed in an application.

Jackson County maintenance section employee Andrew Brzozowski spent \$500 in materials and three days during one week to modify the tailgate spreader.

"My primary concern was putting the operator in a position that could be seen by the truck driver," Brzozowski said, "because the accident in LaGrange wouldn't have happened if the operator had been in sight."

He accomplished this by moving the operator's platform from the rear of the truck to the left side.

"I designed the platform to fold flat against the side of the truck when not in use," Brzozowski explained. "That way, it doesn't stick out and hit something when the spreader box is not in use."

He also lowered the platform and the spreader box height from 48 inches to 18 inches above the ground in the raised position.

"I had to make it easier for the operator to get on and off the platform," he said. "If the truck is involved in an accident, the operator can easily step off the platform and away from the truck."

Also, lowering the spreader box keeps the aggregate from bouncing and rolling in the asphalt.



Andrew Brzozowski in the Yoakum District's Jackson County office modified the tailgate spreader to make it safer for the operator.

"Once coated with asphalt, the rock won't stick to the road surface well, and we wind up having to apply more aggregate to get a good surface."

With the 18-inch height, the aggregate sets instead of rolling, and less rock is used in each project.

"Another benefit is fewer complaints from motorists about chipped windshields and asphalt on vehicles," Brzozowski said. ★

Safety

Continued from Page 1

Hood followed safety rules — he parked on the shoulder of the road and waited by his truck for an approaching motorist to pass before stepping into the roadway. But the motorist swerved, hit the pickup Hood had been driving and the vehicle caught Hood, killing him.

Safety officers urge employees to go beyond minimum safety considerations when working on the roadway.

In addition, staying alert to the hazards of the job — such as unsafe third-party motorists — is essential in preventing accidents, safety officers said.

TxDOT spends hours of staff time training employees to follow safety procedures, which are spelled out as they apply to a variety of working conditions. The task is even greater and more imperative during the summer when TxDOT employs additional temporary crews to work on highway construction projects.

"Because of their inexperience, these employees are at a greater risk for accidents and injuries than their counterparts," said Ed Sims, OCC director.

It is the responsibility of supervisors to make sure new employees, especially summer hires, get adequate instruction in safety procedures through a safety orientation. That orientation process includes not only providing the employee with the protective equipment appropriate for his job, but also the completion of Form 1746, the Driver's Orientation and Evaluation Certification. Regular — perhaps morning — safety meetings are also recommended, especially during the summer.

These safety meetings should focus on dangerous work areas, previous accidents

and accident prevention.

Also part of the "123 Safe Days of Summer" campaign are weekly safety bulletins; a safety poster contest (the winning slogan will appear on posters to be distributed to all TxDOT facilities); a monthly Occupational Safety News letter from May to August; an accident reduction contest in which every district will have an accident reduction goal between May and August. Each district that meets its goal in one or more categories will be recognized at a conference in November. There will be a special award for the district with the greatest percent reduction from its previous three-year average rate for each category.

There are other incentives to prevent accidents.

Death and injury not only take a devastating emotional toll on TxDOT employees, their families and their co-workers, they are also costly to taxpayers. The state shelled out \$5.74 million in worker's compensation benefits last fiscal year. Injuries from accidents also cost the department in lost production. Of the approximately 900 accidents TxDOT reported last fiscal year, 341 involved lost employee time of at least one day.

TxDOT is counting on supervisors to emphasize safety concerns and employees to follow safety procedures to keep themselves and their co-workers safe.

All the preventative policy the department implements mean nothing, however, if employees get complacent about the risks of working on the highway, safety officers said.

"Don't get comfortable just because you're on the shoulder or behind the cone," safety officer Chris Clark said. "You shouldn't count on that guy going 70 driving in a straight line." ★

Pharr employees honored at banquet for safe operations

Mary Bolado
Pharr District

HARLINGEN — Jose A. Flores of the Rio Grande City Maintenance Section was honored at the Pharr District's 45th annual safety awards banquet in March for his 32 years as a safe operator with TxDOT.

Harlingen was host to approximately 350 Pharr District employees who attended the district's banquet March 25.

A total of 199 employees received Safe Operator Awards. A total of 227 employees received Safe Operator/No Injury Awards. Harry Kiehn, district warehouse supervisor, received one for 35 years of no-injury service.

Santos Zavala, of the Cameron, Kenedy, and Willacy counties area office, the dean of service time for the district, was recognized for his 40 years of safe service.

Fourteen sections received No Lost Time Awards.

The following maintenance sections were recognized: Mission Section, which won the Overall Appearance Award; Raymondville Section, Art of Crack Pouring; Rio Grande City Section, Art of Pavement Patching; Rio Grande City Section, Equipment Preventative Maintenance; and Hebronville Section, Accounting.

Humorist and retired Department of Public Safety Capt. Randall Gilmore entertained the audience with jokes and harmonica playing. ★

Horse Power

Brownwood District erects warning signs for new Amish neighbors

Lisa Trow
Public Information Office

Even with its quaint antique stores, Cisco, Texas, will never be confused with Pennsylvania Dutch country.

Nevertheless, the Peterscheims and their horse and buggy fit right in with the other residents of this historic oilfield town of about 3,800 in the northern section of the Brownwood District.

The Amish family, which owns 2,000 acres of land in the area, moved to the rolling hills of Stephens County because their traditional home in Pennsylvania Dutch country had become too crowded.

But their relocation to the Brownwood area last year has not been without challenges, said Sam Swan, district maintenance and traffic engineer for the Brownwood District.

Their customs quickly put them at odds with their neighbors in one area — on the highway, where an open buggy is no match for a dump truck.

Of particular concern to Swan was a shoulderless stretch of FM 1853 along Lake Cisco.

"I didn't want them to get hit by a car going 70," Swan said. "My job is to protect the travelers of Texas. They might not buy motor fuel, but they're citizens of Texas, too, and they need to be protected."

After some close calls and several phone calls, Swan told the Peterscheims he would find a way to make their trips to Cisco safer.

Swan had to go out of state for the answer: warning signs to protect the Amish.

TxDOT has never erected warning signs for the Amish, so Swan's district contacted the Traffic Operations Division in Austin for help. TRF consulted the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for information about the signs.

Penn DOT faxed copies of the signs to Brownwood, which generated copies by computer. The signs, which are embossed with a graphic of a horse pulling an Amish buggy or "people carrier," cost \$200 each to make. Four signs were erected along FM 1853 and Texas 6 in April.

Before the signs were made, Swan visited his new Amish neighbors, the extended family Peterscheim, which includes the elder Peterscheims, their in-laws, their adult children, Matthew and Sadie, and Matthew and Sadie's school-aged children.

Dressed in the plain garb traditional of the Old Order Amish, the Peterscheims ride the 15 miles from their farm into Cisco by horse-drawn buggy to purchase provisions



Eastland County employees Clyde Braddock, left, and Willie Williams put up warning signs for the Amish, a first for the area.

"One of the rewarding things about my job duties is that I get to meet a whole array of people, but this was a first. I treated them with respect and they did the same."

Sam Swan
Brownwood District

such as kerosene and lumber.

"They also like to go to the Sonic," Swan said. "They draw a crowd there with the horse and buggy."

Swan said he was surprised to discover that the Amish — a sect of Christians who live simply and apart from society — had moved to the Brownwood area.

Swan said he knew nothing about the presence of the Amish until calls were made to the district one Friday — "when all the pranks are pulled." But the calls were no prank.

"Lo and behold, we had Amish" residents, Swan said. "I was very surprised that they were there."

Swan said he knew little about the Amish — "Yeah, I saw 'Witness' and that was about it" — but he did his homework

before he met the Peterscheims, searching the Internet for sites about the Amish and their customs.

"One of the rewarding things about my job duties is that I get to meet a whole array of people, but this was a first," Swan said. "I treated them with respect and they did the same."

Although the Peterscheims dress traditionally, school their children at home, and observe other typical Old Order customs, Swan found them to be a little more technologically savvy than he expected.

Although their house has no electricity and Sadie works on a treadle sewing machine "like your grandma used," the Peterscheims have a natural gas-powered stove and refrigerator, and a telephone, which was hooked up in the barn, where electrical service also had been connected, Swan said.

The family was not surprised or even mystified when Swan told them there were several sites devoted to the Amish on the World Wide Web.

"They knew what the Web was," Swan said.

The Peterscheims, though very private, have been friendly, even humorous company when Swan has visited them, and they have been open to questions Swan had about their culture.

Swan said he asked Matthew why he was not permitted to grow a mustache to go with the beard he, as a married man, is expected to wear. "He told me, 'I've always wondered that myself.'"

Swan's research indicated the Amish prohibition on mustaches was left over from a period in which mustaches were associated with military service. The Amish, like other Pacifist sects, are prohibited from serving in the military or carrying arms.

While visiting the Peterscheims, Swan admired some of their crafts, which include "quillows," lap-sized quilts that folded into pillows. A collector of quilts, Swan bought five quillows Sadie made, one to give to his parents for an anniversary gift.

Matthew's handiwork and horse trading also bring in money to support the family. A sign by the family's mailbox advertises his tack wares.

Residents in Eastland and Stephens counties have begun buying crafts from the Peterscheims, whose privacy they want to protect. The Peterscheims, in return, have earned the reputation of being responsible and caring neighbors, Swan said.

"They're good people. They're a lot of fun," Swan said of his new neighbors. "I wouldn't say they're out of place." ★

Positions

Continued from Page 2

Mount Vernon after earning a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Texas at Austin in 1961. He later served as resident engineer in Sulphur Springs and as district engineer and assistant district engineer in Paris. He became district engineer in Waco in 1986.

Pickett, a native of Kempner in Lampasas County, is a licensed pilot and a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. His wife, Gerry, and his son, John, also are pilots.

Joe Nelson has been selected interim Waco District engineer.

Behrens will leave his position as Yoakum District engineer, a post he has occupied for six years, to become assistant director for engineering operations. "His 27 years of service with TxDOT in a variety of engineering capacities provides a strong basis for him to handles these new duties," Heald said.

Behrens joined the Yoakum District in 1971 after graduating with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M. He became district traffic engineer in 1975; resident engineer in Victoria in 1978; and supervising engineer in La Grange in 1984. Behrens was appointed district engineer in 1987.

A native of Giddings, Behrens and his wife, Kathy, have two sons, Keith and Kevin, and a daughter, Shara.

Bruce Bayless, currently director of transportation planning and development in Yoakum, will serve as interim district engineer.

As director the Construction Division, Bohuslav will oversee a reorganized division that assumed the functions of the Materials



Behrens



Bohuslav

and Tests Division, Research and Technology Transfer Office and operations of the Business Opportunities Programs Office.

Previously director of the Construction and Maintenance Division, Bohuslav began his TxDOT career in 1976 as a summer employee in the Brownwood District, where he worked as a sealcoat inspector and lab technician. In 1983 he worked full time in the Brownwood District's Brown County Residency Office. He became area engineer in the Lampasas Area Office in 1987 and director of operations in the Abilene District in 1993.

Bohuslav and his wife, Katy, have a son, Michael.

A 16-year veteran with TxDOT, Webb served the past three and a half years as the director of maintenance in the Waco District. In his new position, he will work closely with the districts, providing support and guidance for maintaining our state's 77,000-mile highway system. This new division will also oversee the architectural services section.

Webb joined the department in the Tyler District in 1982. He worked as a designer, project engineer and assistant resident engineer in the Athens Residency. In 1988, he became the area engineer in Jacksonville.

He and his wife, Carolyn, have two children, Vernon and Wendy. ★

Three announce TxDOT retirement

Three TxDOT executives announced their retirements in April.

Bobbie Templeton, Jim Bisson and Tom Griebel ended their TxDOT careers at the end of April.

Bobbie Templeton, who retired as Assistant executive director for field operations, joined TxDOT in 1961 as an engineering assistant. He became a professional engineer in 1965, and between that time and 1973 served as both an office and field engineer for the Construction Division, serving the Lufkin, Brownwood, Atlanta and San Angelo districts.

From 1973 to 1978, he was engineer of construction operations, managing the Office Engineering Section and supervising bid opening for construction contracts.

He became construction administrative engineer in 1978, and 1986, was named Construction and Contract Administration director. He was TxDOT's liaison for construction issues with the Federal Highway Administration and served on the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (WASHTO) subcommittees and on AASHTO task forces.

He became an assistant executive director in October 1993.

Bisson retired from his position as assistant executive director for Motorist Services, an office he assumed Oct. 1, 1993.

He began his TxDOT career as an accounting clerk in the Motor Vehicle Titles and Registration Division in 1969. He

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Ethics

Continued from Page 4

tain conduct in return. In this vein, we must not only conduct ourselves properly, but avoid the appearance of impropriety. In short, we have to act not only with courtesy and fairness, but we have to act so that no one can interpret our behavior as being other than proper.

Acquisition of rights of way produces another possible conflict.

An employee cannot directly or indirectly have a financial or personal interest in any real property acquired for a TxDOT project, unless the interest is disclosed to TxDOT and the employee has not participated in the acquisition.

The good news is that this does not mean you have to sell your home if TxDOT plans to expand the road in front of your house. The bad news is that this does not save your house either. You just have to tell TxDOT that you own the property, and then you do not have to participate in the actual condemnation. At least that way you can swear to your family that you had nothing to do with it.

Other conflicts arise from outside activities. Although TxDOT expects 100 percent

loyalty in TxDOT duties, TxDOT recognizes that, for some people, there may be more to life. Employees may participate in a paying activity as long as it does not conflict with TxDOT duties. If you build fences in your spare time, that is OK as long as you don't build them on TxDOT land. Go ahead and play in a rock band, paint landscapes, or raise cattle. TxDOT only asks you to remember that if you become rich and famous, TxDOT can accept gifts.

TxDOT also encourages employees to be active in the community and even allows employees to be elected to public office in non-partisan elections. The catch is the work cannot interfere or conflict with your TxDOT work.

So go ahead and give 100 percent as Scout leader or choir singer. However, be careful about serving on commissions and boards, or in public office because conflicts are more likely to arise in these activities. High-level executives have to be especially careful because their actions may affect more people since the scope of their authority is greater. For example, a district engineer can not serve on a zoning commission, because he or she may have the ultimate responsibility for traffic signals, stop signs, and placement of driveways. An engineer in the Materials and Tests section does not have

this conflict.

Serving on the chamber of commerce may be approved if you are serving as a TxDOT representative and you have non-voting status. In that case, you are really serving an informational purpose.

I once knew the mayor of a small, four-family town located far from the state highway system. Serving in that nonpartisan mayoral office would not have been a conflict for a TxDOT employee.

On the other hand, the mayor of Houston is also a nonpartisan office, but every TxDOT employee in that area would have a conflict. Not to mention the two full-time jobs problem.

If you are serving or want to serve on a board or commission, or in public office, please contact the Office of General Counsel. We will look at the ethical situation and then forward your request for approval to the executive director.

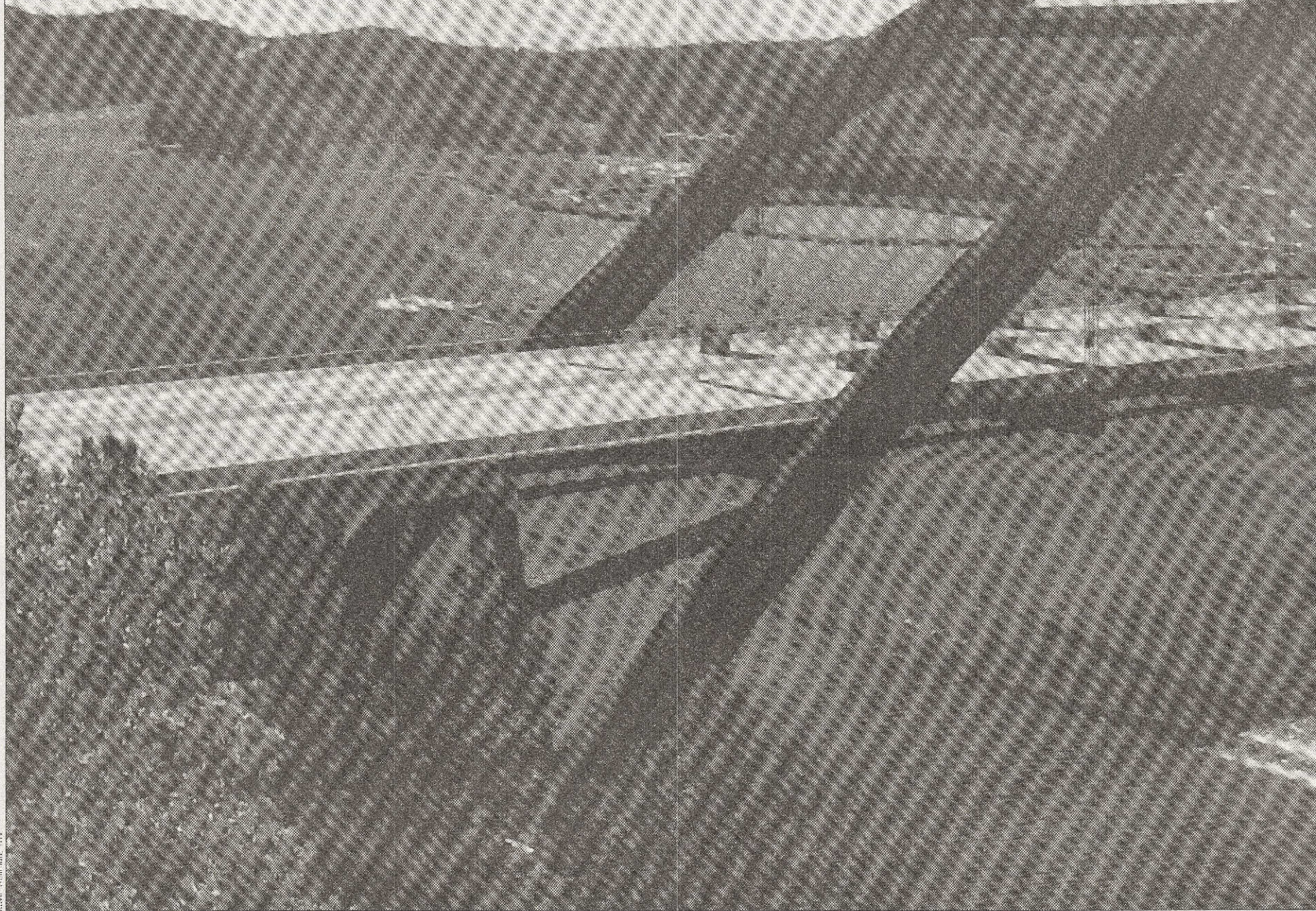
Conflicts are subject to immediate disciplinary action. So if you have any question about whether an activity is a conflict of interest, please contact OGC so that we can help you avoid the conflict. ★

The final column in this two-part series will address employees or their families having an interest in contracts with TxDOT.

Designing bridges with a

Absolutely fabulous:

TxDOT's Bridge Section designs bridges that are pleasing to the eye without detracting from the environment — and without adding a lot to the project's bottom line.



Kevin Sullivan, TNY

Jeff Carmack
Public Information Office

If you were going to put a fence around your yard, and you knew it was going to cost a lot of money, and you knew it was something you and your neighbors and passers-by were going to have to look at every day for the next who-knows-how-long, you'd want it to be as attractive as possible.

And, all other things being equal, if the price of a really great-looking redwood fence wasn't too much higher than a just-OK chain-link fence, you'd probably go for the more attractive of the two.

That's the philosophy that drives the bridge designers in the Design Division. For years, they have been guided by the belief that bridges are art and that if they can be made attractive as well as functional, without driving the cost too high, then they should be made attractive.

Mark Bloschock, a bridge design engineer, said, "Bridges are works of public art, whether you want them to be or not, by virtue of their very size."

When a bridge should be more than functional

Not every bridge has to be a work of art, Bloschock said. In fact, very few of them do.

"Texas has close to 50,000 bridges" on the state system, he said, "and in most cases, an ordinary bridge is fine — no one is going to see them except maybe a couple of armadillos." The bridges that deserve to be statements are usually located in busy urban centers, in a high-profile location.

Richard Wilkison, who heads the bridge section, agreed. "If it's somewhere that people will see it, you need to consider spending a little more money to make it look nice, to enhance a view rather than detract from it."

As an illustration, Bloschock mentioned the bridge over Palo Duro Canyon in West Texas. You don't want the bridge to detract from the spectacle that is the canyon.

"So you paint the traffic rail (along the top of the retaining wall) red to complement the colors in the canyon, and let it go at that," Bloschock said.

At the other end of the spectrum is the Loop 375 in the El Paso District. This structure, on the north side of El Paso, is seen by thousands daily. The design of the bridge itself,

"We build massive structures that are a powerful statement about the city. We want people to see them. And if we can make them a part of the experience and not such a backdrop, we think we've achieved something."

combined with its color and texture, is a powerful statement about the city. "The El Paso District is being designed by architect Richard Mason, who is a bold user of color," Bloschock said. "The bridge, with the Hispanic culture, was designed with a palette of bright, vibrant colors.

By contrast, Bloschock said, the Loop 375 put more emphasis on texture and a muted color palette. The look

n aesthetic touch



The Loop 360 bridge in the Austin District, built in the early 1980s, illustrates that a bridge designed with aesthetics in mind can be a positive statement about a community. The bridge is one of Austin's most-photographed landmarks.

ures which hundreds of thousands can make that a more pleasing a harsh, industrial environment, I e kind of success."

Dean Van Landuyt
Senior Design Engineer

dsaping, combine to make community and its culture. influenced by (landscape s very talented and a very aid. "And that fits in well ch historically has used lots

ther areas along the border ut employ a much more nd feel of bridges in the vari-

ing with Lubbock District. They are trying to establish a theme that will say 'Lubbock' when you drive into town."

Building a bridge that is pleasing to the eye may be a worthy aspiration, but designers know that they must also keep an eye on costs. "We look at 10 or 15 percent over the cost of a standard bridge as not being out of line," Blosscock said. He uses tipping at a restaurant as an illustration. "If 15 percent is the right amount to tip for good service," he asks, "is 15 percent a not-unreasonable price to pay for a bridge that's more attractive? We don't want to double

ous districts can vary as widely as do the climate and culture across the state. In Dallas, Blosscock said, "you will find slightly more modern architecture. They're willing to be bold but they don't do it with color — they do it with shape. Austin also does a lot with shape and texture," Blosscock said.

Some of the other districts are trying to define a style or a theme. "Waco is at that point now," Blosscock said, "and they're asking us for assistance. We are also work-

the price of a bridge, but 15 percent for a nicer bridge is not out of line."

Blosscock defined two kinds of bridges. "The first is site-specific," he said. "You look at the surroundings, the architecture of the buildings in the area and take inspiration from those. You try to make the bridge blend in, borrowing details from local architecture and other surroundings." The second kind is the complete antithesis of the first. "It is completely new," he said. "It leaps out of nowhere, is not driven by anything and borrows nothing from its immediate surroundings."

An example of the second type can be found on U.S. 183 in Austin. Concrete columns carry the highway up and over Interstate 35. The tallest loom 80 feet in the air, the height of an eight-story building, yet small touches keep them from completely overwhelming the observer.

Dean Van Landuyt, a senior design engineer and the one responsible for the look of the columns, said, "The columns have some classical overtones — they have a base, a shaft

See Bridges, Page 10

Don't mess with EnviroMedia

Agency wins \$5 million anti-litter advertising campaign

Tuerff-Davis EnviroMedia, a year-old Austin ad firm beat out eight local and national advertising firms to win TxDOT's \$5 million "Don't Mess with Texas" litter-prevention account.

EnviroMedia specializes in environmental advertising and public relations. Last year the agency was the national organizer of the first America Recycles Day, which was celebrated at 3,000 events nationwide.

The firm was selected by a five-member panel comprising members from both inside and outside TxDOT.

Doris Howdeshell, Travel Division director, said she did not participate in the panel's decision, but did see the presentations. The Travel Division administers the 13-year-old program.

"I was thoroughly impressed with their plan for 'recycling' the spots we already have," Howdeshell said. The manner in which they will be used is top secret, but she said that by reusing the spots, EnviroMedia will save the department money — and lots of it.

"We did a new commercial every year," Howdeshell said, "and in the earlier years (of the campaign) we did two per year. And each spot cost between \$80,000 and \$120,000.

"So EnviroMedia has a plan to reuse them and get more bang for the buck."

Howdeshell said she was also impressed with EnviroMedia's plans for research.

"There were three areas of research we were interested in," Howdeshell said, "and they touched on two of the three."

The first, she said, concerned the age of the campaign's target audience. "When the campaign started, our target audience was males between the ages of 18 and 34. Well, that target was set 12 years ago. Since then, Texas has experienced a shift in population and we wondered if that was still our target audience."

The second area was awareness research. Howdeshell said that EnviroMedia presented a video they had produced, "a sort of man-in-the-street thing," in which they asked a number of people what "Don't Mess with Texas" meant to them.

What they found out, Howdeshell said, was that the slogan enjoyed extremely high awareness — approximately 96 percent of those interviewed had heard of it. However, not everyone knew it referred to TxDOT's litter-prevention program.

"Lots more thought it was more of a Texas pride thing," Howdeshell said. "I like their plans for the slogan," to reconnect it with TxDOT's litter-prevention program.

Howdeshell said the firm will also be more aggressive in acquiring corporate sponsorship for DMWT. She said they have already gotten two large corporations to sign on. ★

— Jeff Carmack

New specialty plate urges Texans to do the right thing

Motorists can now do more than ever to help keep the Lone Star State litter-free by buying a new Keep Texas Beautiful specialty license plates.

These specialty plates feature the "Don't Mess With Texas" slogan and the words, "Keep Texas Beautiful."

The plates cost \$50 annually, in addition to the regular registration fee. Five dollars from the sale of each set of plates helps cover administrative costs. TxDOT will use the remaining \$45 to support litter prevention and community beautification programs. Personalizing the specialty plates costs an additional \$40 annually.

House Bill 2681, passed by the 75th Legislature, created the Keep Texas Beautiful



license plate and 11 other specialty plates. There are now 79 specialty license plates available to the public. In some cases, applicants for special plates must meet certain qualifications as specified by law.

Applications are available at county tax assessor-collector offices statewide. ★

Houston Civil Rights moves to new digs

The Civil Rights Division recently moved its Houston field office from a mall in north Houston to an annex in the district office complex.

The Office of Civil Rights Houston Field Office moved from its FM 1960 location to the second floor of the Houston District Annex on Feb. 21, 1998.

Complaints Supervisor Dan Fulghum said, "We had been in Willowbrook Mall in north Houston since the division was creat-

ed, but we moved recently to give clients better access.

"Lots of employees didn't know how to find us if they needed us," he said. The move to the district office complex was intended to remedy this situation.

The Houston Field Office conducts applicant, discrimination and non-discrimination complaint investigations in the Houston, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, Bryan, Laredo, Pharr, Lufkin and Yoakum districts. ★

Bridges

Continued from Page 9

and a capital. But the capitals have a kind of delicate flourish at the top."

The structure of the columns is based on sound engineering principles, "but the shaping was done to be creative and pleasing to the eye," he said. The structures are obviously influenced by the classical architecture found in the State Capitol and the University of Texas campus.

Bloschock said there are two areas in which designers can play with the looks of a bridge. The first encompasses the shape, texture and color of the bridge. The second includes in the materials used, either concrete or steel.

One technique designers use, in all kinds of giant structures from skyscrapers to overpasses, is incorporating human-scale elements.

"In spite of the fact you're building huge bridges hundreds of feet across and elevated structures a mile long with columns 80 feet into the air," Van Landuyt said, "you can still use smaller component elements that are smaller — like putting a base on a column that's 80 feet tall. You have an element all of a sudden that's three, four feet tall, and that diminishes the apparent mass of the structure."

The three-fold aspect of design

Bloschock and Van Landuyt refer to the three-fold aspect of bridge design. A bridge has to be functional, Van Landuyt said.

"We need to create a plane in space that can support an 18-wheeler and allow for a nice, smooth ride. That's our function. Secondly, as stewards of public money, we need to do it economically. And, finally, it needs to have some aesthetic quality so it creates a sense of well-being for drivers and neighbors."

He said that since its inception, the department has focused on the first two and done a world-class job. But for the past few years, public sentiment has evolved to the point that people don't want bridges to be just efficient and economical — they also want them to be attractive.

"People are starting to look around a bit and thinking, 'What's the good of building all this stuff if it detracts from our environment?'" Van Landuyt said. This attitude influences, or at least mirrors, the way designers look at their jobs.

"We build massive structures which hundreds of thousands of people see," Van Landuyt said. "And if we can make that a more pleasing experience and not such a harsh, industrial environment, I think we've achieved some kind of success."

The Bridge Section's work has not gone unnoticed or unappreciated. Their work on the Liberty-Laurel overpass in the Beaumont District won the Precast Concrete Institute's first-place award for bridge design. The bridge and the columns supporting it have classical overtones. "The district wanted something more traditional, with a classic flair," Van Landuyt said. "We came up with three ideas and presented them. They liked the one and we went with it."

Public works as works of art

The idea that public works can and should be attractive is not exclusive to

See Bridges, next page

Bridges

Continued from Page 10

TxDOT, nor is it a new concept.

"Where did the philosophy come from? The Romans, the Egyptians?" Blosscock said. "We got away from the idea during World War II and the post-war period," but the pendulum has swung back, he said.

There is a question, explicit or implicit, in the design of a bridge. "What is it you want to say about your community?"

Blosscock said survey after survey shows taxpayers are willing, up to a point, to pay more for a bridge that makes a positive statement about their community.

Acknowledgment of the value of their work comes in the form of requests from literally around the world, asking the Bridge Section's designers to share their knowledge and vision.

"Dean (Van Landuyt) lectures nationally on aesthetics," Blosscock said. "His work on 183 has been covered internationally, not just the engineering aspects but the aesthetic component as well. Myself, I've lectured to the American Society of Civil Engineers. Bridge aesthetics is a big deal."

Wilkison echoed Blosscock's sentiment that, given the choice, the public would rather have structures that add something to their communities rather than structures that merely do the job, and they don't mind spending the extra money.

Proof of this, he said, came about after the passage of federal highway funding legislation, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA).

"When ISTEA mandated that metropolitan planning organizations get involved in the planning stages of transportation projects," he said, "people started demanding that certain projects be made more attractive and not just functional.

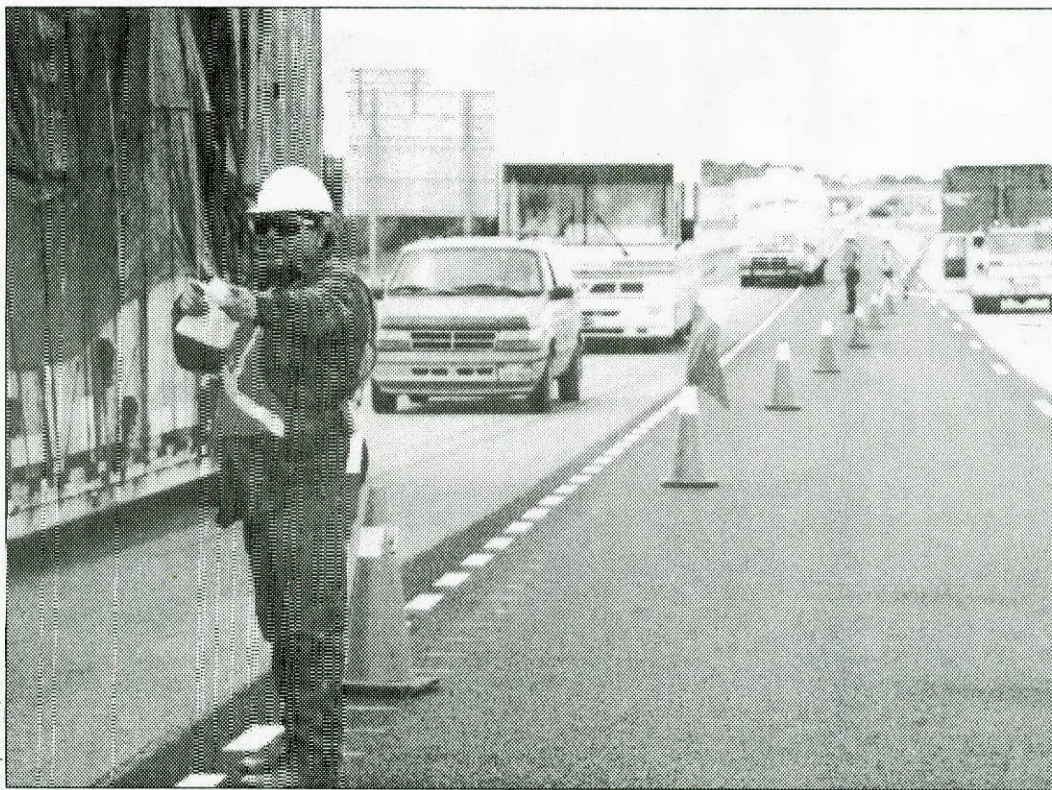
"The more public involvement you have, the more you have people asking, 'Why can't you make this prettier?' Or 'What's it going to look like?' Or, 'Can you give us something that fits in to our historic downtown?'" he said.

Wilkison said designers have never been forced to defend this philosophy, but that defending it would be pretty simple.

"I would ask someone, 'Do you have bare walls at home, or do you have paintings? Does your wife use makeup? Do you plant flowers in your yard?' If so, you're spending money for aesthetics; it's all for beauty's sake."

This desire to be surrounded by beautiful objects is innate, he said.

"Mankind has a need for beauty — that's why people take pictures of sunsets, or pictures of their kids sitting in the bluebonnets. It's this desire for a bit of beauty captured. And that desire spills over into the public arena. There's an innate desire in mankind to bring beauty into life, a desire to create beauty around us." ★



Frank Gandar of the Sonora Area Office was among TxDOT employees who assisted motorists after I-10 spills.

SJT crews assist motorists with detours after I-10 spills

Patsy Maddux
San Angelo District

"Customer service" may have a new meaning for TxDOT employees in the San Angelo District.

For a week in February, maintenance crews from Sonora and Junction assisted motorists on Interstate 10 after two major spills necessitated detours.

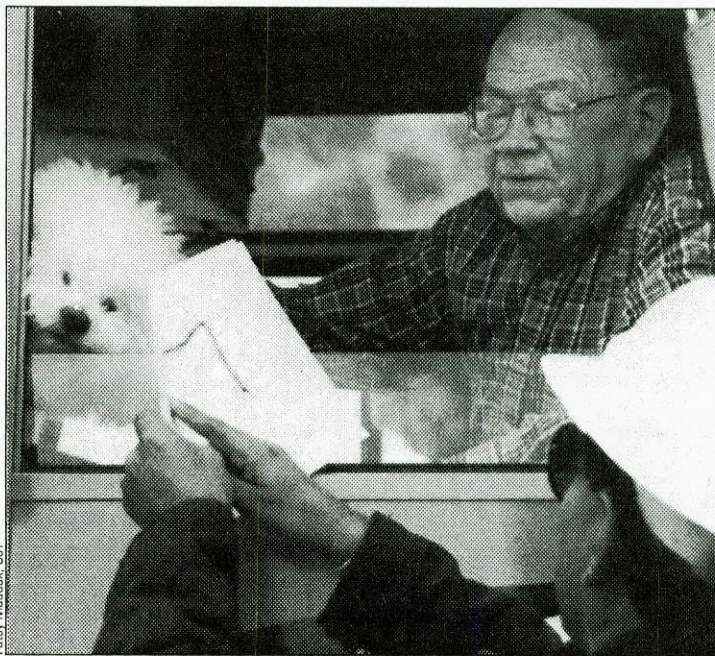
Crews from Sonora were called out Feb. 9 after a tractor-trailer rig hauling hydrogen fluoride overturned on I-10 about 30 miles east of Sonora. Traffic on the interstate was detoured 42 miles to bypass the spill, and crews were on hand to distribute maps to motorists and explain the need for the detour.

Crews from Junction, Sonora, Eden, Menard and Ozona worked 12- to 18-hour days distributing more than 11,000 maps.

Ken Harrison, Sonora Maintenance Supervisor, said most motorists took the detour in stride after crews explained the need to bypass the spill.

Many residents and businesses in Sonora helped crews by donating food to workers who had to work through their usual meal breaks, Harrison said.

The interstate was reopened to traffic at 9



Jesse Solis of the Sonora Area Office gives directions to a motorist.

p.m. Feb. 13 — but not for long. Only two hours after I-10 was reopened, Sonora Area Engineer Paul Chevalier got a call informing him of another spill on the highway.

This time, a tractor-trailer rig hit a bridge 12 miles west of Sonora, spilling its cargo of polyolefin pelletized polymers.

The spill necessitated the closing of the westbound lanes of I-10 and detouring traffic until 11:30 a.m. Monday. ★

Play with us!

Hispanic Awareness golf tournament set May 23 in SE Austin

The Hispanic Awareness Committee (HAC) will sponsor a golf tournament May 23 to benefit the HAC Scholarship Fund.

The tournament will be held at the Jimmy Clay Golf Course in Southeast Austin. The \$40 registration fee includes green fees, a cart, food, and refreshments. The tournament format will be a blind draw for teams at the end of the tournament. Prizes will be awarded for first- and second-place teams, closest to the pin, and longest drive. Registration deadline is May 15.

HAC scholarships are awarded annually to the children of TxDOT employees. Scholarship application packets will be available in mid-May. In 1997, HAC awarded five scholarships at the annual Diez y Seis celebration. In addition to raising funds for the scholarship program, the committee hopes that this event will facilitate the organization of HAC chapters statewide.

For information, please contact Victor Garcia, (512) 416-2485; Rudy Gomez, (512) 416-2052; or Hector Marquez, (512) 465-7966. For more information about HAC, call (512) 302-2072.

Now in its fifth year, HAC is a non-profit, fraternal organization open for membership to all TxDOT employees. The goals of the HAC are providing networking opportunities for TxDOT employees, increasing cultural diversity within the department, and emphasizing civic involvement. ★



A member of a TxDOT co-rec team heads for the base during a previous tournament.

Annual softball tourney Aug. 15-16

The 10th annual TxDOT Championship Softball Tournament is slated Aug. 15-16 at Austin's Pleasant Valley Sportsplex. This year's tournament will once again feature men's and co-rec division competition.

Entry forms will be sent to district and division offices the first week of June. To enter the tournament, send a completed entry form (one per team) and \$130 to Pleasant Valley Sportsplex, 1225 S. Pleasant Valley Road, Austin, Texas 78741, attention Donnie Jones. Checks should be made payable to Pleasant Valley Sport-

plex. Entries must be postmarked no later than Aug. 7.

For late entries (after Aug. 7), call (512) 445-7595 to register. All phone entries must be guaranteed with a credit card. Deadline for all entries is 5 p.m. Aug. 11.

Brackets will not be mailed before the tournament. To find out start times, call Pleasant Valley between 3-10 p.m. on Aug. 13. The tournament begins at 8 a.m. Aug. 15.

For further information or comments call Ed Collins of the Austin District at (512) 832-7041. ★

Ozuna

Continued from Page 3

pared early to accept leadership roles and educate them on the importance of preparing for their careers and retirement.

"I feel very fortunate that I served in the Army Reserves" (he retired as a master sergeant with 27 years), he said, "because the Army did a fantastic job of training us. We were always teaching each other and I think that's a good business philosophy.

"I try to do that here," Ozuna said. "When I go to the field, I always take one of my employees so he knows what's going on. It's imperative that we pass on our knowledge."

He believes most people don't think about retirement until it's too late. "I'd really like to see the department start educating employees early about retiring and not wait until they're actually ready to jump off the retirement board," he emphasized.

It's obvious that Ozuna isn't worrying about what he'll do when he retires. He plans to travel with his wife, and they've got four chil-

dren and one grandson who already occupy their time.

"One of my trophies is this picture of my family," he said as he showed me an early photo of his wife, two daughters and two sons. "We're all in uniform — my older daughter was a Girl Scout; my younger daughter was a Brownie; one son is a Boy Scout and the other is a Cub Scout; my wife is in her den mother uniform and I'm in my Army Class As.

"Now these Girl Scouts are Longhorn graduates and the Boy Scouts are Aggie graduates," he said proudly. (Ozuna told me he diplomatically avoids rooting for either school whenever they play each other.)

Ozuna continues to operate with an innate sense of pride, accomplishment and purpose.

"Traffic engineering by-products are going to save lives or improve them," he said, "so we try to change and respond to change as fast as we can. As soon as a new concept becomes available, we introduce it in hopes that we can make a contribution to the quality of life of all motorists."

And that's a great legacy to leave behind for others to carry on. ★

Pharr District celebrates new office in San Benito

Mary Bolado
Pharr District

SAN BENITO — More than 200 federal, state, county and city officials joined TxDOT employees in ribbon-cutting ceremonies March 25 at the Pharr District's new Cameron, Kenedy, Willacy counties area office here.

The new facility will provide engineering and maintenance support for the three counties.

Area and maintenance personnel provided a tour of the facility, displayed project models and were on hand to answer questions. Construction of the building started in April 1997, and was completed in February at a cost of \$494,000. The 5,227-square-foot will house 40 TxDOT employees.

Among those addressing the crowd was Texas Sen. Eddie Lucio, who said, "This building is a very practical building, one that will house these very dedicated and hard-working state employees who will continue to work as public servants in the community."

Representing U.S. Sen. Solomon Ortiz was Denise Blanchard, district director for Ortiz's Brownsville office. She said, "This dedication could not come at a more appropriate time." She also told the crowd South Texas would receive \$32 million in federal funds for transportation and infrastructure.

Pharr District Engineer Amadeo Saenz addressed the group, saying, "This facility will give us the opportunity to better improve the efficiency of our operations.

"Our mission is to create an environmentally safe transportation system and this state-of-the-art facility and equipment will help us do just that." ★



Do your part to curb pollution on TxDOT's Ozone Action Day

Jim Dobbins

Environmental Affairs Division

The staff of the Environmental Affairs Division (ENV) has pledged to take a step towards cleaner air with an Ozone Action Day awareness campaign.

The campaign is aimed at TxDOT employees in nine urban districts located in areas that participate in the Ozone Action Day program. Austin-based divisions and offices are also invited to participate in this pledge campaign.

Ozone Action Days are declared when atmospheric conditions are favorable for the accumulation of dangerous levels of ground-level ozone B, the main ingredient in smog. Hot, still days from April through October are usually prime candidates for this designation. Air quality standards have recently been tightened by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to reflect new medical evidence linking ozone pollution to a variety of respiratory ailments. To ensure corrective action, a variety of federally imposed sanctions, including the loss of federal highway funds, can be imposed on states not taking sufficient action.

"As the transportation leader in Texas, I believe it is imperative that TxDOT take a leadership role in dealing with the ground-level ozone problem," said Dianna Noble, Environmental Affairs Division director.

Employees in participating districts, divisions and offices will receive a pledge form on which they will be asked to commit to take a step on Ozone Action Days to limit vehicle emissions B the prime ingredient in ground-level ozone pollution.

The top of the form contains a list of 10 beneficial actions employees can take on Ozone Action Days. Employees are asked to pledge to do at least one of the items on Ozone Action Days. The pledge sheet will then be returned to an Ozone Action Day coordinator, who will, in return, send a TxDOT-produced magnet bearing the "I Curb Ground-Level Ozone" logo to the pledger. All respondents also become eligible for a drawing for caps emblazoned with the same logo.

Richard Goldsmith, an information specialist in ENV's Communications Section, designed the logo. "I illustrated the elements that are prevalent when high levels of ground-level ozone are found," Goldsmith said.

1997 was a busy year for Ozone Action Days. Austin had 24; Beaumont-Port Arthur, 23; Corpus Christi, 5; Dallas-Fort Worth, 27; El Paso, 20; Houston, 66; San Antonio, 26; and Tyler-Longview-Marshall, 31. With a lower tolerance for ozone pollution in place for 1998, look for these numbers to increase. ★

Texas Aviation Conference set for June 3-5 in Austin

Marie Peinado
Aviation Division

The annual Texas Airport Operators Conference has a new name — the Texas Aviation Conference — but the focus remains the same: the concerns and interests of the state's aviation community.

The conference, June 3-5 at Austin's DoubleTree Hotel, is sponsored by TxDOT and the Association of Airport Executives.

Conference participants will be presented with a wide range of topics, workshops, round-table discussions and speakers. Representatives from the regional airlines serving Texas, such as Austin Express, Inc., AMR Eagle and Continental, will discuss what the future could bring to Texas.

Jerry Hooper, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association southwest regional representative, will address challenges and changes ahead for general aviation. Additionally, Bob Warner, executive vice president of the Experimental Aircraft Association, will provide a presentation on the marketing of general aviation, as well as

an overview of the Young Eagles Program.

The conference will bring together about 400 participants, including airport managers, airport owners, airport board members, consulting engineers, fixed-based operators, and others interested in aviation.

More than 40 exhibitors have registered for this conference to provide the information on product innovations in the aviation field.

To open the conference, exhibitors will host a reception in the exhibit area 5:30-7 p.m. June 3.

A hangar party is scheduled at Georgetown Municipal Airport 5:30-8:30 p.m. June 4. Transportation will be provided.

The highlight of the conference will be an awards banquet June 5. Awards to be presented are Airport of the Year, Airport Manager of the Year, Most Improved Airport of the Year and the Reliever of the Year. Awards will be presented at the luncheon banquet June 5.

For registration forms, contact Yolanda Alvarez at 800-68-PILOT. ★

Laredo host to 350 employees at Maintenance Conference

Cristina Guevara
Laredo District

LAREDO — More than 350 employees from district, area and maintenance offices around the state came together to attend the 1998 Regional Maintenance Conference hosted by the Laredo District March 17-18.

Laredo District Engineer Luis A. Ramirez opened the general session by welcoming guests to Laredo, "the largest, most efficient port of entry on the U.S./Mexico border."

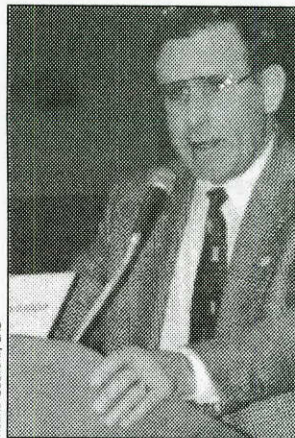
Executive Director Wes Heald also addressed the group. "You know, if you really want to look at TxDOT and what we are all about, you are it. You are the backbone of TxDOT," Heald said.

Heald also touched on the recent reorganization, including the creation of a Maintenance Division.

"We lost focus on maintenance because we didn't have a maintenance division. Now we are going to have one because maintenance is one of our core functions.

"We're supposed to design, build, maintain and operate the Texas Highway System. We have 77,000 miles of highways that need to be maintained."

Laredo Mayor Elizabeth G. Flores addressed the luncheon, which concluded



TxDOT Executive Director Wes Heald addresses employees during the annual Regional Maintenance Conference last month, which was sponsored by the Laredo District.

the general session.

"We spend a lot of money and a lot of effort planning and building our highways but our challenge is maintaining the highway system so it is safe for the traveling public," she said.

After the luncheon, attendees broke up into groups for management and supervisors sessions and special breakouts concerning the state use program and contracts.

Agenda items included maintenance management, maintenance operations, contingency planning for emergencies and disasters and traffic operations and services. ★

Service Awards

Abilene District

25 years
James W. Milliner
Jack L. Wallace
Robert A. Young
20 years
Johnnie L. Ballard
10 years
Elmer Green Jr.
Richard C. Parkhill

Amarillo District

20 years
Judy H. Jones
15 years
Joe B. Chappell
Eddie Esparza
Edward J. Haney
10 years
Don T. Eldridge
Billie R. Perry
5 years
Ray A. Harrison
Daniel B. Hinson
Daniel C. McFaul
Charles D. Strange

Atlanta District

35 years
Robert G. Agan
30 years
Robert W. Cowley
Jimmy C. Spicer
20 years
James E. Fields
15 years
Miles R. Garrison
Henry L. Murray Jr.
10 years
Jimmy D. Smithson

Austin District

20 years
Sammie K. Swain
15 years
Edmond L. Bisland III
Lowell D. Choate
David C. Havins
Enoch N. Needham
10 years
John P. Munoz
Randall D. Smith
5 years
Jimmy W. Holland
Valdee L. Weems II

Beaumont District

30 years
Alva D. Clark
20 years
Robert G. Baker
Russell K. Corbello
John W. Martin
Lennis Scott
15 years
Edward Jackson
Janet C. Long
Wallace E. Roberts
10 years
Marjorie L. Roberts

Brownwood District

25 years
Johnny B. Hill
David C. Hinds
15 years
Raymond D. Blackwell
Arthur K. Moseley
Bryan A. Wood
10 years
Lester D. Brown
Marge B. Poe
Keith B. Sliger
5 years
Darril L. Wright Sr.

Bryan District

35 years
Allan N. Pritchard
25 years
Garland Hux
Delmar L. Smith
15 years
Alonzo V. Butler
William C. Gibson
5 years
Don C. Plunkett
Sonia L. Vernon

Childress District

25 years
Robert D. Gollihare
Charlie D. Whitten
20 years
Douglas N. Campbell
Bobby G. Crabtree
15 years
Martin R. Smith
5 years
John D. Bennett
Fernando C. Garcia

Corpus Christi District

35 years
Patrick U. Norrell
30 years
Laurino Vega
25 years
Santiago Alvarez Jr.
Jose R. Pena
Glen R. Sullivan
20 years
Paublo Bustos
15 years
Luis R. Esquivel

Dallas District

30 years
Alvin A. Barton
25 years
Chaleb M. Sunna
15 years
William L. Hale
Sally M. Richmond
Royce F. Trojacek
10 years
Christophe G. Bruner
Julian J. Budny
Charles G. Myers
Jimmy C. Raines Jr.
5 years
Lloyd I. Alexander
Craig M. Burgan
Katandy W. Decker
Mahmud R. Rahman

El Paso District

25 years
Alex Harrison III
15 years
Jose L. Sierra
10 years
Sandra Barron
Raul Perez
5 years
Javier Bustos
Mario C. Gomez
Robert Martinez Jr.
Gloria Y. Niemeier
Gilbert P. Tovar
Ronald N. Webb

Fort Worth District

30 years
Harvey G. Oppermann
Zach Sessions
25 years
Peggy C. Cooper
Edna M. Phillips
20 years
Timothy R. Mann
15 years
Lewis D. Hooks
10 years
William H. Herndon Jr.
Janet M. McGlothlin
Charles M. Smith
Joe M. Woodard
5 years
Ronny L. Lehmann
Domingo G. Martinez
James S. Whisker

Houston District

30 years
Bobby C. Hartman
Lenert A. Kurtz
25 years
James R. Conway
20 years
James G. Darden III
Richard A. Martinez
15 years
Karen G. Baker
Edward A. Decker
Martin H. Kobs
Gregory A. Ranft
10 years
Glenna J. Goodrum
Alice E. Huang
Wanda L. Johnson
Lillian M. Phillips
Daniel J. Sheranko Jr.
5 years
Joe B. Bouse
David D. Parsley
Jody D. Sobnosky
Julie M. Unger
David C. Yuan

Laredo District

20 years
Juan M. Gallegos
5 years
Rogelio P. Benavides
Antonio Sarmiento Jr.

Lubbock District

30 years
Phillip A. Taylor
25 years
Claude C. Kneisley
20 years
William T. Nichols
15 years
Gary H. Burney
Gary D. Newton
10 years
Jimmy F. Harris

Lufkin District

40 years
Weldon E. Rudd
20 years
John S. Evans
Robert E. Neel
Sandra H. Tyler
15 years
Sylvester L. Beason
Joe R. Warr
5 years
Rhonda H. Barton
Terry H. Parker

Odessa District

20 years
Rosario Montejano
15 years
Hipolito G. Rascon Jr.
10 years
Lenora W. Fisher
Victor M. Mondragon
5 years
David J. Alvarez
James C. Kindred
Manuel Mendoza

Paris District

20 years
Rickey W. Chennault
Stephen D. Shedd
Ronnie J. Yarbrough
15 years
Charles K. Harris
James L. Sisson
10 years
Robert G. Connell
Ricky G. McDaniel
Khamavanh Sansavath

Pharr District

30 years
Victor M. Martinez
5 years
Evodio Cortina Jr.
Richard Zamora

San Angelo District

30 years
Clyde L. Lawler
20 years
Bobby B. Chenault
15 years
Michael A. Sepeda
5 years
Michael C. Barry
Wayne A. Halimann

San Antonio District

35 years
George W. Lane
William G. Peschke
25 years
Frank L. Fischer
Richard Salinas
20 years
Robert A. Bohlen
Stuart I. Vance Jr.

Tyler District

35 years
Jerry L. Williams
30 years
William H. Blackmon
25 years
Henry A. Kesinger
20 years
Everett T. Jackson
Larry B. Walker
Nathan L. Wynn
15 years
David P. Frick
Sam E. Willis
10 years
Roy E. Bailey
Dale T. Booth
Gary W. McClure
5 years
Luke J. Chisenhall
Cynthia J. Jeanes
Danny R. Padilla
Joe T. Sartain

Waco District

30 years
Billy F. Lucas
25 years
Michael J. Boehme
Ramon C. Tagle
20 years
Jack B. Cox
David L. Kirkland
15 years
Jessie R. Henry
Cecil D. Huneycutt
10 years
Phil G. Murphy
5 years
Jennifer C. Fouke

Wichita Falls District

30 years
Robert T. Garner
25 years
Ermon C. Moore
20 years
Ricky J. Velez
15 years
Dennis P. Sims
10 years
David W. Brooking
Perry C. Kunkel
Allan R. Moore
Rebecca G. Raska
Russell L. Rivers

Yoakum District

25 years
Gus J. Pilcik Jr.
20 years
Joe L. Enriquez
Mark H. Enriquez
Jay P. Kasper
15 years
Toby J. Frederick Jr.
5 years
Angela M. Herchek
Rhonda L. Moorman

Administration

5 years
Dianne R. Friesenhahn

Finance Division

20 years
Janie A. Lehman
Duane K. Sullivan
10 years
James M. Bass
5 years
Lois L. Bible
Deborah M. King

Business Opportunity Programs

25 years
Cynthia F. Gonzales

General Services Division

30 years
Lawrence J. Zatopek
20 years
Mark A. Craig
Jerry D. Thigpen
Steven J. Ward
10 years
Linda C. Carter
Ulysses Flores
5 years
Mary L. Price
Robert W. Smith

Construction and Maintenance Divisions

30 years
Joseph R. Matesic
20 years
Wanda B. Ealey
Joe S. Graff

Design Division

25 years
David W. McDonnold
20 years
Mark S. Mathews
Mary D. Velasquez

Environmental Affairs Division

5 years
Patricia A. Gonzalez
Sterling H. Hays
David H. Vangorder

General Counsel Office

10 years
Joanne R. Wright

Human Resources Division

5 years
Karin M. Faltynek

Information Systems Division

30 years
Karen S. Jordahl
15 years
Gary R. Love
Barry L. Six
10 years
Stephen E. Anderson
5 years
Jeffrey M. Sweetland

Management Services Section

15 years
Artie V. Elliott Jr.

Materials and Tests Section

25 years
Thomas E. Witt
20 years
Rebecca L. Jares
15 years
Gerald D. Lankes
10 years
Vennie A. Gardner
Daniel R. Geary
Brian L. Lawrence

Right of Way Division

30 years
Patricia D. Gustafson

Texas Turnpike Authority

15 years
David C. Kopp

Traffic Operations Division

15 years
Ricky Collins
10 years
Roland B. Merz Jr.
5 years
Francisco J. Carrizales

Transportation Planning and Programming Division

25 years
Brenda D. Reda
15 years
Jimmie D. Neidigh
Dale W. Spitz
10 years
Paul K. George
Amanda V. Wood

Travel Division

25 years
Melissa A. Heard
5 years
Leslie K. Dennard

Vehicle Titles and Registration Division

20 years
Kelly W. Dailey
James J. Gardner
Griselda C. Pilhoefter
5 years
Irene M. Hill
Patricia A. Thames

In Memoriam

Abilene District

Edward E. Foree, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1979, died Jan. 27, 1998.

Atlanta District

Clarence W. Whittington, Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1984, died Feb. 16, 1998.

Austin District

Jose Montelongo, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1980, died Jan. 22, 1998.

Beaumont District

Wilbur L. Dean, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1983, died Jan. 14, 1998.

Norman H. Hooks, Maintenance

Technician II, retired in 1975, died Feb. 13, 1998.

Walter M. Williams, Maintenance

Technician II, retired in 1973, died Feb. 18, 1998.

Childress District

J. E. Meadows, Maintenance Construction Supervisor II, retired in 1983, died Jan. 13, 1998.

Fort Worth District

Thomas Mandoni, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1982, died Jan. 6, 1998.

Robert L. Stalcup, Maintenance

Construction Foreman III, retired in 1972, died Feb. 22, 1998.

Lubbock District

Julian F. Smith, Engineer II, retired in 1982, died Jan. 4, 1998.

Lufkin District

Henry H. Melton, Maintenance Construction Superintendent, retired in 1971, died Feb. 28, 1998.

Odessa District

Thomas C. Hamilton, Engineering Technician IV, retired in 1997, died Jan. 30, 1998.

Mary H. Shultz, Administrative

Technician III, retired in 1983, died Feb. 7, 1998.

San Angelo District

Robert W. Harris, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1987, died Oct. 5, 1997.

San Antonio District

Ernest Barrientos, Engineering Technician IV, retired in 1995, died Jan. 17, 1998.

Arthur A. Creech, Assistant Foreman,

retired in 1987, died Feb. 7, 1998.

Donald J. Frye, Engineer IV, retired in

1977, died Jan. 23, 1998.

Tyler District

David Bledsoe, Engineering Technician IV, retired in 1982, died Jan. 7, 1998.

Waco District

Marvin D. Hammons, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1993, died Jan. 31, 1998.

Wichita Falls District

Moody E. Clinton, Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1993, died Jan. 9, 1998.

Lloyd E. Walters, Maintenance

Technician III, retired in 1986, died Jan. 7, 1998.

Yoakum District

Fred Lerma, Jr., Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1985, died Apr. 4, 1998.

Jerome F. Polansky, Motor Vehicle Mechanic III, retired in 1993, died Mar. 17, 1998.

Letters

I just wanted to tell **Ron Taylor** thanks again for coming to Garden City and having a successful program. Just about a week ago, one of my classmates rolled her family Suburban. Thanks to Taylor, she started wearing her seat belt about a week before the accident. Wearing her seat belt was the only thing that kept her alive. She told us that the program changed her mind about not wearing her seat belt after she saw how quickly the dummies flew out. Now your program is highly thought of at school and in our community after what has recently happened. Thanks again.

Michelle Fuchs
Garden City

Ron Taylor is the San Angelo District traffic safety specialist.

.....

It is with gratitude and appreciation I write this letter of commendation for your employee **Jason Overmyer**, who works in your Texarkana office. Jason contacted me to inform me he had stumbled upon my driver's license and business cards along I-30's roadside during the course of his work duties. (My purse was stolen recently). He was very helpful and detailed with the information and location relayed over the phone. He also offered to be of personal assistance when I suggested I come out to I-30 hoping to find additional belongings. Later that morning Jason met with me and a friend off I-30 and was very cooperative in explaining exactly where the items had been located. He indicated he had walked a quarter mile up the road searching for more items earlier.

I want to commend Jason for being so helpful to me; he went beyond the call of duty to contact me and be of personal assistance so I could claim the much needed personal items found. He was very polite, informative and accommodating. You should be proud to have an employee like Jason representing your department! His efforts will be praised by me to fellow community members.

Barbara Johns
Texarkana

Jason Overmyer is an engineering technician in the Atlanta District's Texarkana Area Office.

.....

I would like to take the time to commend the superior job your **Hansford County employees** did keeping the roads open during the holidays last December. They made the residents and travelers of Hansford County their first priority, working around the clock and neglecting their own needs and physical comfort.

The people of Hansford County are truly blessed to have such diligent individuals working for our safety and in our interest. It was my experience the surrounding city, county, and state workers were not as diligent.

Sharon Sutton
Amarillo

Dwain Weller is the Hansford County maintenance supervisor in the Amarillo District.

.....

Last Tuesday, Feb. 2, while hunting for a route from Lakewood to the Knox-Henderson area, I had just crossed I-75 at McCommas (I think), when I noticed my thermometer moving steadily up to 100 degrees and over. I pulled to the curb, turned off my ignition, put on my hazards lights, wondering "What do I do now?" when I noticed a white truck had also pulled over. **Fred A. Johnson** was walking toward me.

Johnson inquired about my problem, opened the hood and ascertained that I was out of antifreeze coolant. Suggesting that I follow him, he led me to a service station nearby where I was able to purchase the fluid. After he showed me how and where to pour it, I was able to continue on my way without an expensive tow, damage to my car, and all the anxiety that accompanies such an experience.

Not only did Johnson keep traffic flowing on a busy street and help me out of a bad situation, but he was reassuring and professional, kind and knowledgeable without making me feel dumb and incapable.

It gives me great pleasure to commend you on having such an outstanding employee as Johnson and to recount his good deed. In my opinion, he is an excellent representative for the Texas Department of Transportation.

Martha Blewer
Dallas

Fred Johnson is a construction inspector in the Dallas Northeast Area Office.

.....

On March 11, an associate and I were traveling from Wichita Falls to Lubbock on business when I had a flat tire approximately three miles east of Dickens. As I was unloading the spare tire, a Texas Department of Transportation pickup driven by **Rick Gonzales** pulled up behind me. Without saying a word, Gonzales began unloading a jack and cross wrench to assist in changing the tire.

Gonzales crawled underneath my car attempting to find the best location to place the jack and suggested I move the car slightly so the jack would fit. Gently rocking the car, he was able to properly place the jack underneath and began changing the tire. In no time, Gonzales had changed the tire and suggested I stop and tighten the nuts at each town to prevent them from becoming loose.

Gonzales would not take any money in exchange for his help and was reluctant to tell me his name or provide the name of his supervisor so I might thank him for his assistance. It was refreshing to meet someone who offered his help without expecting anything in return.

Gonzales is a credit to the Department of Transportation and provides an example we all should follow: Take time to help others.

John C. Grimshaw
Lubbock

Ricky Gonzales is an engineering technician in the Munday Area Office, Childress District

.....

I would like to thank the department for the assistance of **Ray Martinez** on Feb. 23. I had a flat tire on the interstate and he was kind enough to stop and change my tire.

I wanted to pay him, but he would not accept any money. He was very polite, courteous, and helpful — not too many people like that nowadays.

Clara Imel
Pampa

Ray Martinez is a maintenance technician in the Amarillo Expressway maintenance office.

.....

We would like to say thanks for the prompt and thorough way the **Atlanta District** handled the traffic hazard (removing brush along the right of way and making repairs to the edge of the pavement) in the curve along FM 1844 between Seven Pines and East Mountain. There is no doubt that lives have been saved here.

FM 1844 has become a popular route for commuter traffic for cities and communities west of Longview to north Longview and the industrial districts of western Harrison County. Gas production in the area has increased heavy tank truck traffic to put salt water disposals and pipelines pump stations — with 40 to 50 percent driving over the speed limits.

We feel sure that everyone along this curve using the six open roads and the 10 private, business driveways will approve of any safety improvements made in this area.

Mr. and Mrs. Raymon L. Spicer
Seven Pines

Gary Don Gage supervises the maintenance office in the Atlanta District.

.....

We recently had an occasion to need the services of the Texas Department of Transportation concerning a problem. A gentleman, the construction manager for the Paris Area Office, named **Gerald W. Byas** helped to resolve the problem. My wife and I are truly grateful for his assistance and have told him that he is very much appreciated.

We were so impressed with Byas, his kindness and his personal attention that we feel we must express our appreciation to the Texas Department of Transportation, and we are not sure that we can find the right words to describe our appreciation. Byas was so kind, thoughtful, and helpful. His response to our request was nothing short of outstanding. The Texas Department of Transportation is fortunate to have this dedicated gentleman on staff.

Jim and Mary Ann Newman
Paris

Gerald W. Byas is construction manager for the Paris Area Office.

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Where are they now?

■ Pick up the June issue of *Transportation News* to find out what former co-workers are doing since their retirement from TxDOT. Helen Havelka will chronicle their travels and activities in a new *TNews* column on retirees, *The Good Life*.

Retirements

January

Childress District
Jack T. Leeper, Maintenance Supervisor III, 27 years
Kenneth W. Young, Transportation Maintenance Supervisor I, 40 years
Lufkin District
Randy G. Pierce, Maintenance Technician IV, 11 years

February

Childress District
Jesse V. Salinas, Engineering Technician III, 23 years
Houston District
Michael L. Kirkpatrick, Purchasing and Supply Technician, 30 years
James M. Pierce, Program Administrator V, 27 years
Tyler District
Lewis V. Allen, Jr., Accountant IV, 30 years

March

Austin District
Duncan A. McEachern, Maintenance Technician V, 25 years
El Paso District
Alfredo Aguilar, Engineering Technician III, 29 years
San Antonio District
Segundo S. Escobar, Engineering Technician I, 28 years
Waco District
Ramon C. Tagle, Engineering Technician III, 25 years
Laredo District
Martin Ramos, Engineering Technician III, 30 years

April

Abilene District
Bob McNeil, Engineering Technician III, 12 years
Beaumont District
D. B. Dean, Engineering Technician III, 30 years
Albert L. Morgan, Engineering Technician II, 30 years
Brownwood District
Wayne B. Jenkins, Maintenance Supervisor III, 39 years
Childress District
Jerry O. Ritchie, Engineering Technician III, 10 years
El Paso District
Curtis W. Gibson, Engineering Technician IV, 30 years
Ricardo N. Ramirez, Maintenance Supervisor III, 34 years
Sabino Talavera, Jr., Transportation Maintenance Supervisor I, 30 years
Fort Worth District
Lloyd H. Biggs, Construction Inspector V, 20 years
Yoakum District
Fred E. Ohnheiser, Jr., Engineering Technician III, 33 years
Administration
James J. Bisson, Assistant Executive Director, 29 years
Thomas A. Griebel, Assistant Executive Director, 14 years
Bobbie F. Templeton, Assistant Executive Director, 37 years
Vehicle Titles and Registration Division
Marie Janice Gaston, Administrative Technician III, 18 years

May

Childress District
James H. Lawrence, Engineering Specialist I, 36 years
Fort Worth District
Lonnie D. Windham, Maintenance Section Supervisor III, 30 years
Houston District
Sylvia Cougot, Executive Assistant, 14 years
James R. Conway, Engineering Technician IV, 25 years
Theodore R. Hamilton, Transportation Maintenance Technician II, 9 years
Paris District
Michael D. Griffith, Engineering Technician III, 30 years
William W. Robinson, Transportation Maintenance Supervisor, 30 years
San Angelo District
Jim Alves, Engineering Specialist II, 32 years
Michael L. Decker, Purchaser IV, 31 years
Administration
Russell Harding, Director VI, 23 years
Materials & Tests Section
Clifton E. Coward, Chemist V, 31 years
Public Transportation Division
Carolyn W. Blackmon, Planner I, 32 years
Travel Division
Patsy D. Lee, Human Resources Specialist III, 31 years
Vehicle Titles & Registration Division
Charles M. Craig, Director III, 28 years
Dorothy Doran, Staff Services Officer I, 34 years
Sylvia K. Rushing, Statistician II, 31 years

Three

Continued from Page 7

became officer manager and investigator at the division's regional office in Fort Worth in 1970. He moved to Wichita Falls as assistant regional office supervisor in 1974.

Bisson came to Austin in 1975 as an internal review analyst. He developed, implemented and conducted internal review for Motor Vehicle Titles and Registration, and monitored and analyzed legislative action for the division.

In 1981 and 1982, Bisson taught management for the Texas State Management Development Center in the Office of the Governor. Bisson also helped develop the statewide Manager of Managers Program.

In 1983, Bisson was a planner in the TxDOT Planning and Policy Division. He moved to the Maintenance and Operations Division in 1985 to develop TxDOT's Central Permit Office.

Bisson was a combat infantryman in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968. He joined the Texas Army National Guard in 1971 and is now a colonel and the commanding officer of a National Guard armored brigade. He is also a graduate of the U.S. Army War College.

Bisson said his immediate plans called for "doing some stuff around the house." He said he also hopes to do some consulting work in the field of transportation.

Thomas A. Griebel, assistant executive director for multimodal transportation, began his public service career in the Governor's Office, where he served from 1972 to 1984. He was the accounting director at the Texas Commission for the Blind in 1980-81 before rejoining the Governor's Office.

He joined TxDOT in 1985 as a planning and research analyst. Griebel was named director of the planning section in September 1985, director of the Planning and Policy Division in 1987, and assistant executive director in October 1993.

Griebel was vice chair of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Special Committee on Intermodal Issues and Domestic Freight Policy and a member of AASHTO's Rail Transportation and Water Transportation standing committees. He served on the Mobility 2000 steering group to advance intelligent vehicle/highway systems, predecessor to ITS America, and the National Cooperative Highway Research Program panel on the Impact of Urban Congestion on Business. He was a member of a policy committee for the Study on Transportation and a Sustainable Environment with the Transportation Research Board.

Griebel chaired TxDOT's Intelligent Transportation Committee and was vice chair of both TxDOT's Multimodal Planning Team and the Research and Development Committee. *

Calendar

MAY

12 Texas Turnpike Authority Board meeting, Weslaco
25 Memorial Day (holiday)
28 Commission Meeting, Austin

JUNE

2 How to Process and Evaluate Bids, Austin, GSD
3-5 Competitive Sealed Proposals/Competitive Negotiations, Austin, GSD
3-5 Texas Aviation Conference (formerly Texas Airport Operators Conference), Austin, AVN
8-12 14th Annual TxDOT Internal Audit Conference, Austin, AUD
16-19 1998 Transportation Planning Conference, San Antonio, TPP
19 Emancipation Day (holiday)
25 Commission Meeting, Austin

JULY

14-16 DE/DD/OD meeting
30 Commission Meeting, Sherman-Denison

AUGUST

11 Texas Turnpike Authority Board meeting, Austin
26 Commission Meeting, Austin
27 LBJ's birthday (holiday)

SEPTEMBER

7 Labor Day (holiday)
14-16 Public Purchasing Management, Austin, GSD
16-18 Public Information Conference, Killeen, PIO
17 Ethics for the Public Purchasing Professional, Austin, GSD
24 Commission Meeting, Austin

OCTOBER

5-6 Contract Administration, Austin, GSD
7-9 Competitive Sealed Proposals/Competitive Negotiations, Austin, GSD
12 Management Team meeting, College Station
12-14 Transportation Conference, College Station
29 Commission Meeting, Austin

NOVEMBER

10 Texas Turnpike Authority Board meeting, Austin
11 Veterans Day (holiday)

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