

# Transportation NEWS

June 1997 Volume 22 Number 10

## Student art adorns aviation stamps

Texas winners also place in national contest, advance to international competition

The country of Aeromania boasts some of the best-looking stamps in the world. But don't try to mail a letter from the country — it doesn't actually exist.

A postage stamp for the fictional country was the subject of the 1997 International Aviation Art Contest. More than 2,400 Texas children submitted designs for an aviation/space-themed stamp.

The National Aeronautic Association, National Association of State Aviation Officials and Federal Aviation Administration, in cooperation with the Federation Aeronau-

tique Internationale (FAI), sponsored the art contest to motivate and encourage young people of FAI-member nations to become more familiar with and participate in aeronautics, engineering and science.

The guidelines were simple: The stamp's design must have an aviation/space motif and include the name of the imaginary country (Aeromania) and the monetary value of the stamp (10 units). Students could use crayons, watercolors, acrylic or oil painting, indelible markers, felt-tip pens, soft ball-point pens, indelible ink and similar indelible media.

Winners, judged in three age groups, were selected based on creativity, presentation, technical ability and appropriateness to the theme of the art contest. Each state's first-place winner advanced to the national competition in Washington, D.C. The national first-place winner and two national runner-up winners from each age group advance to the international competition at FAI headquarters in Switzerland.

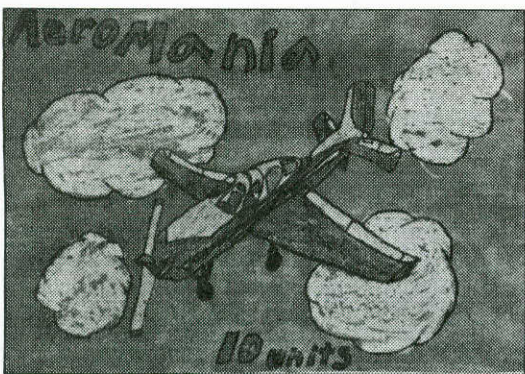
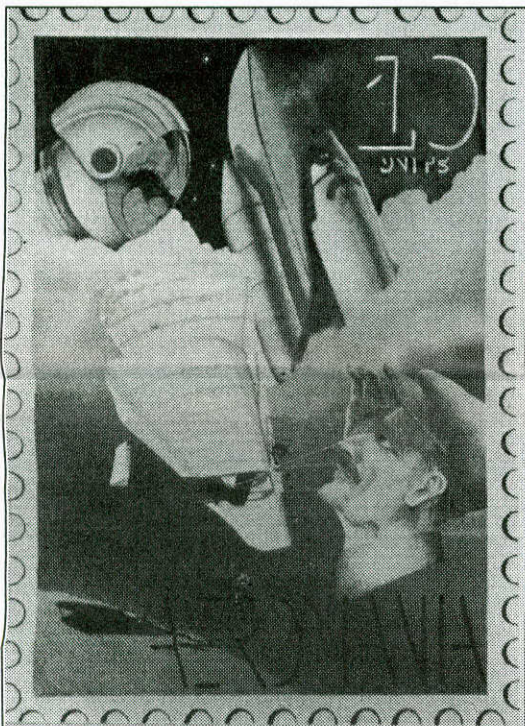
TxDOT's Aviation Division coordinated the art contest in Texas.

Yolanda S. Alvarez, information specialist in the Aviation Division, said the contest makes children, as well as their teachers and parents, more aware of the role aviation plays in their lives.

"The art contest is a way of getting to the children and getting them interested in aviation," she said. "It also gets their teachers involved. They might take the kids out to an air field or airport to see what things, like a plane or a runway, look like."

In the 6- to 9-year-old category, Jonathon Johnson of Lampasas finished first. Ten-year-old Alan Nguyen of Katy placed first in

the 10- to 13-year-old category and Catherine Choi, a 17-year-old Friendswood resident, won the 14- to 17-years-old category. In the national category, Choi placed second in her age category and Nguyen won third place in his. Both students and their families were invited to the national awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., where they received a certificate, ribbon, framed photograph of their entries and a professional work of art from the American Society of Aviation Artists. ★ *Contributed by the Aviation Division*



**Student artwork by Catherine Choi, top, and Jonathon Johnson took first place in their age groups in competition at the state level for the 1997 International Aviation Art Contest. Both went to national competition, where Choi took second place and Johnson third. The two will advance to international competition in Switzerland. TxDOT's Aviation Division coordinated the art contest in Texas.**

### Airport Operators Conference a success

The 15th annual Texas Airport Operators Conference, sponsored by TxDOT's Aviation Division and the Texas Association of Airport Executives (TAAE), provided presentations and workshops designed for airport sponsors and operators of general aviation airports.

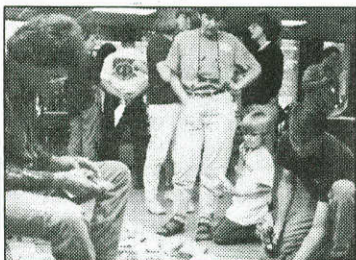
Workshops covered airport safety and environmental issues. Vane Hugo, director of aviation for Wal-Mart, Inc., provided a business perspective on the importance of general aviation.

David Fulton, Aviation Division director, and Otis Welch, manager of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Texas Airport Development Office, conducted a session on how TxDOT and FAA can better serve them.

Texas Aviation Advisory Committee Chairman George Mitchell presented TxDOT's Career Contribution to Aviation Award to Leland Snow, president of Air Tractor Inc. The Career Contribution to Aviation Award is presented by TxDOT to individuals whose contribution to aviation in Texas has been exceptional.

Other achievement awards presented at the conference include the 1997 Outstanding Airport of the Year Award, which went to Lufkin's Angelina County Airport. Doyle Dobbins of Grayson County Airport (Sherman-Denison), was named 1997 Airport Manager of the Year and an award for Most Improved Airport went to Dimmit County Airport. A new award this year for Personal Achievement was presented to Ray Davis, airport coordinator of Jacksonville's Cherokee County Airport. ★

### Inside



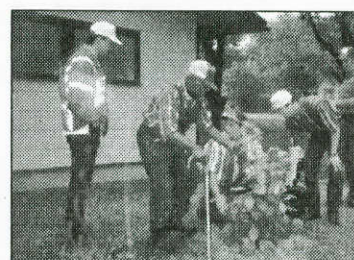
Thousands of years of Texas history was on display when ENV's Archaeology Branch held an open house. **Page 4**



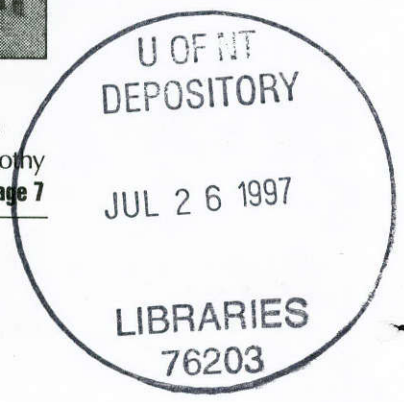
Former president George Bush was on hand for the dedication of the Presidential Corridor in April. **Page 5**



After April floods damaged local roads, YKM crews pitched in to pick up the pieces. **Page 5**



Madisonville maintenance employees planted a tree to honor fallen co-worker Dorothy Upton. **Page 7**



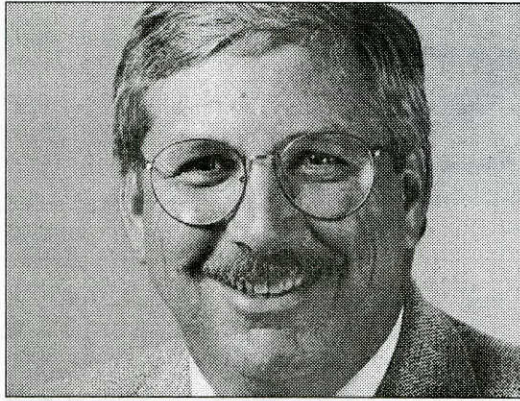


**Q** Recently, the state adopted a policy of not giving promotion raises in the same pay group. I know of a few employees that this policy has hurt, myself included. A fellow employee and I work for special jobs in Amarillo. Mr. Sorrels operates the laydown machine and I operate the milling machine. These two pieces of equipment are the two most expensive machines this district has to date. Mr. Sorrells has run the laydown machine for two years, and I have been running our Milling machine, and the one we share with the Lubbock District, for seven years. We also do our own maintenance and service on this equipment.

Mr. Sorrells has been with the department for 10 years, and I've been with the department for 16 years, but still neither one of us are at the top of our pay group. And because of the state's policy of not giving promotional raises in the same pay group, it will be a few years before we will reach the top of our pay group. My question is "Is not giving promotions in the same pay group department policy or legislative mandate?"

**Jimmy Harris**  
Amarillo District

**A** Thank you for your question regarding promotional raises. Prior to September 1994, hourly employees were not assigned a classified salary group and did receive what you refer to as promotions or salary adjust-



**Bill Burnett**

## Ask Bill

ments within the same pay group. In an effort to stabilize pay practices for hourly and classified employees, the department restructured wage scales for maintenance and marine positions to include them in the classified pay structure in September 1994.

The definition of a promotion as stated in Article IX of the General Appropriations Act is "change in duty assignment of an employee from a position in one classification to a position in another classification in a higher salary group requiring higher qualifications such as greater skill or longer experience, and involving a higher level of responsibility." An increase of pay within the same salary group is referred to as a merit raise.

Classified and hourly employees are eligible for merit raises if they have been employed for at least six continuous months and at least 12 months must have elapsed since the employee's last promotion, demotion, or merit salary increase. The employee must have a good performance evaluation, and, of course, the granting of any merit raise is contingent on availability of adequate funds. The policy regarding the frequency with which merits can be granted is contained in Article IX of the General Appropriations Act.

To answer your specific question about whether decisions were driven by department policy or legislative mandate, it's a little bit of both. The department's goal was to standardize the pay system for all of our employees, so all hourly employees were incorporated within the classified pay schedule. However, it is the state legislature which directs the policy on merit raises and promotions for positions within the classified pay schedule. ★

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*Do you have a question you would like to ask the big guy? Send it to "Ask Bill," in care of the Public Information Office, M.O., or GroupWise it to MWHITTEN. Be sure to include your name and work phone number. Your name will be withheld at your request, but Bill won't even consider answering anonymous questions.*

## T-News gets new staff members

Big changes are afoot in the Public Information Office beginning this month that will affect Transportation News.

Jeff Carmack, long-time Transportation News editor and designer, is moving from the Organizational Communications Section (OCS) of PIO to the Community Relations Section (CRS).

Swapping their CRS duties to move to OCS are graphic artist Susan Hodgson and Public Information Officer Linda Ribble.

And taking the reins of OCS is former Waco District Public Information Officer Helen Havelka. Havelka, who officially comes aboard July 1, takes the place of Roger Polson, who has moved to the private sector.

Carmack has been with PIO since March 1989. His duties have included writing, editing and photography, as well as laying out the employee newsletter every month. Carmack's redesign of T-News won recognition in the International Association of Business Communicators' (IABC) Best of Austin competition this year.

Havelka joined the department in 1987 as Waco's first full-time public information officer. As spokesperson, she provided informa-

tion to news media and the public about transportation projects and activities in the district's eight counties.

Havelka is a native of the Georgetown area and a graduate of Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos.

Before coming to TxDOT, Havelka was a sports writer at the Waco Tribune-Herald, associate sports information director at SWTSU and sports editor for a weekly newspaper in New Braunfels.

Hodgson started with TxDOT in April 1993. She has designed print material for PIO as well as districts and divisions. Before starting with TxDOT, the San Antonio College graduate completed internships at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio and the Atkins Agency, a San Antonio ad firm.

Hodgson will take over T-News production duties and serve as a public information officer.

Hodgson recently won an Award of Excellence from IABC in the Best of Austin competition.

Ribble started with TxDOT in 1989 as a travel counselor and came to PIO in 1994. She is a graduate of Concordia University in Austin, with a degree in communications. ★

## Donations sought for tornado victims

The Public Information Office is coordinating a relief effort to help those affected by the recent tornadoes in the Austin area. The American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the Capitol Area Food Bank, as well as local news media, are also accepting donations.

You can help those in need by donating the following items: sunscreen; diapers and baby wipes; baby food; baby clothes; formula; trash bags; reinforced tape; soap; toothpaste; toothbrushes; shampoo, etc.; boxed juice drinks; dog or cat food; light summer clothes; blankets; pillows; bottled water, and non-perishable food;

Monetary donations may be made to the Salvation Army, earmarked "Tornado Relief," Salvation Army, P.O. Box 1000, Austin, Texas 78767, or to the American Red Cross, 2218 Pershing, Austin, Texas 78723.

The Austin District is helping with the maintenance and clean-up, and is working to tornado victims in Jarrell and Cedar Park.

Questions may be directed to Melissa Welch at (512) 463-8610 or Linda Ribble at (512) 463-8606.

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# Geography's where it's at for ISD's Collier

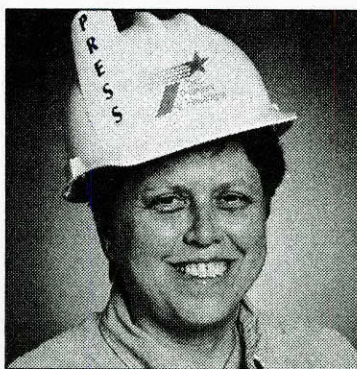
## Computerization, photogrammetry revolutionizing transportation, map-making

I read the other day in some newspaper that the lack of interest and knowledge in geography among American school-age children had grown to such levels that most kids couldn't tell you what states bordered Montana, much less that Hungary was a country in eastern Europe or that Mt. McKinley was located in Alaska.

Now, come on, 'fess up. Many of us probably think the only thing geography's good for is to play "Trivial Pursuit." I'll get on my soapbox and argue that it's another sad commentary on modern life that we have come to think of geographic facts as "trivia."

Not so with Information Systems Division employee Chris Collier, an engineering systems unit supervisor who's been with the department for two years. Collier, who majored in geography and minored in computer science at Southwest Texas State University, got into the field because of the cartography, or mapping, aspect. And after spending the day with him, I obtained a whole new appreciation of geography's impact and how computerized geography is revolutionizing transportation.

"I worked for the Hays County Appraisal District for about a year on property ownership maps," Collier said. "Back then, the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was a brand new word." GIS, an intelligent data base supported by maps and developed in part to support the environmental and forestry industries, is one of Collier's primary areas of focus now.



Eloise Lundgren

### A Day in the Life

the Department of Defense's loss became TxDOT's gain when Collier was hired as a GIS supervisor. "GIS had not yet been implemented here, although ISD had been working on it for some time," he said. "Retooling identified GIS as something we needed because so much of TxDOT's data is related to something that can be depicted on a map.

"GIS is a convenient way to manage data," he continued, "and it does a lot of other things besides produce nice maps."

Collier now manages the Engineering/CADD/GIS Business Improvement Project of the Information Services Business Process Retooling. This project consists of four sub-projects — Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD), Global Positioning Systems (GPS) for collection of GIS data, Engineering Document Management and GIS/Videologging. Each sub-project has its own team leader and core team. Collier serves as the GIS team leader and the overall project leader. In all the project involves 10 employees full time and several more on an as needed basis.

"GPS has become an important tool for collecting data for GIS," he said. "The correlation between the two is so great, we didn't want to separate them. We're running just to keep up with all the changes in software and hardware in both of these technologies.

"A lack of manpower forced us to put Engineering Document Management on the back burner," Collier continued, "but it is just as important and ties in with the other three projects, too."

CADD, according to Collier, has been used by TxDOT for years, so "we're not implementing a new technology. What we're doing with CADD is fundamentally changing it, remolding it, if you will, to take advantage of the capabilities of the new software."

Collier's objective is to be able to show districts, as soon as possible, how GIS will be an invaluable tool for them. "They've collected the data but they haven't had a good way of displaying or visually analyzing it," he said. "They haven't been able to display easily pavement management data, for example, of their district on a map. We want to give the districts convenient access to information they've never had before, and most of them seem extremely interested."

Although they're not ready on a lot of levels, Collier said, there are some ways districts can use the information at hand.

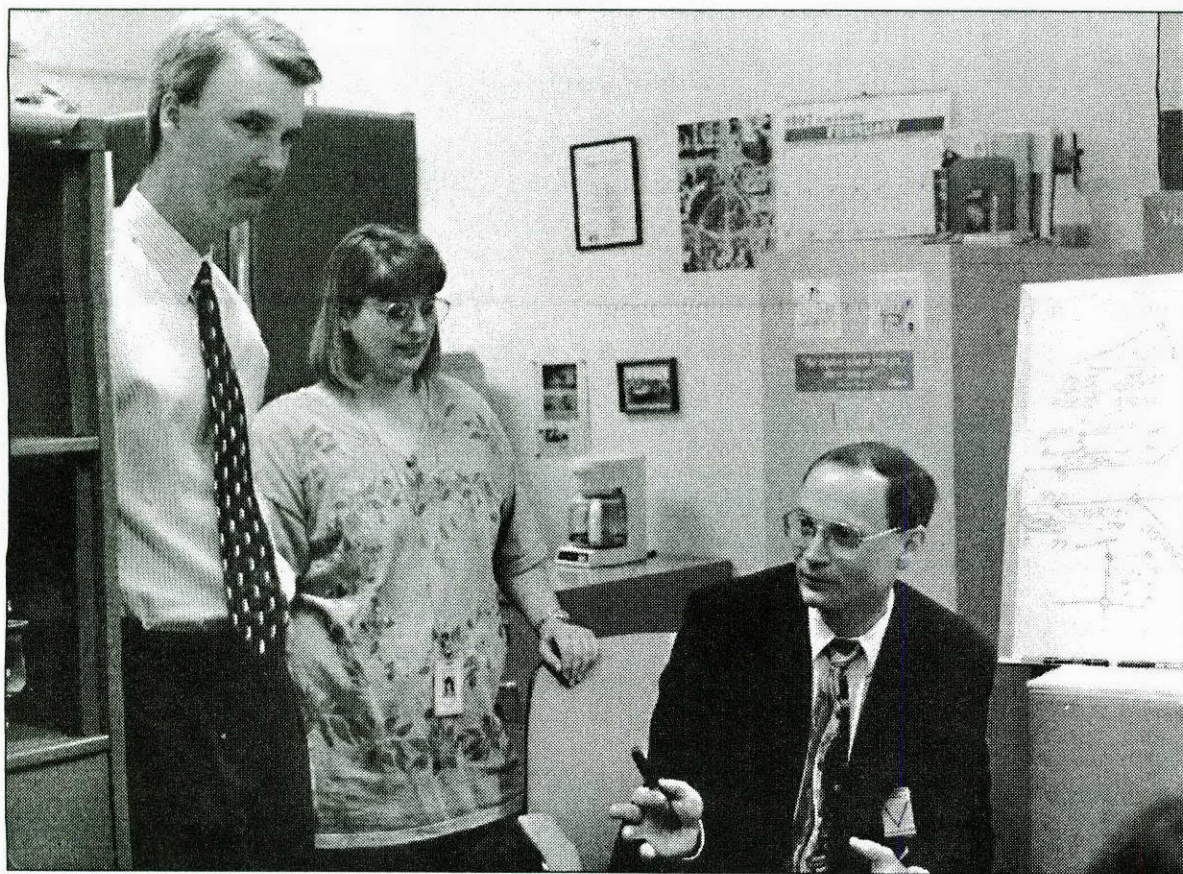
"For example, the El Paso District was conducting a feasibility study," he said. "By utilizing GIS, they were able to compare several corridor alternatives through an area of environmental, historical and cultural significance to determine which is the most feasible."

The contractor for the El Paso study told Collier that by using GIS they probably shaved six months off the development time of the project.

"GIS is not a perfect science," Collier said, "because you have to make some assumptions, but it allows for faster results because we don't have to tabulate data manually.

"Eventually," he continued, "we'll be able to produce traffic models, route vehicles, track materials and hundreds of other things besides just make maps. There are some real cost benefits out there."

Please see Collier, page 13



Chris Collier, left, and Amber Allardyce listen as Al Butler, right, of GIS/Trans Ltd., discusses GIS architecture issues. Allardyce is a member of the GIS unit and the Tech 3 Team under Collier's direction.

After that experience, Collier took a job with the Defense Mapping Agency in St. Louis, Mo., for the next seven years, working on high-level projects, many of which would be implemented departmentwide. With photogrammetric equipment, Collier used imagery to produce maps, very similar, he said, to what is done now at ISD in the photogrammetry section.

"At the Defense Mapping Agency, we produced one product that ended up being used in flight simulators," he explained. "And another product I worked on was a digital map for the M-1 Abrams Main Battle Tank." (Pretty impressive stuff, folks. I saw the Abrams digital map in action during my public affairs stint at Fort Hood where the tank was fielded for the entire U.S. Army.)

During Desert Storm, Collier and his colleagues worked 10-hour days with no days off. "I was a systems manager, which involves keeping the computer systems running and cleaning up the digital data," he said. "It was an excellent training ground for what I'm doing now."

But the Collier family (wife Tina and son Hunter, who's now four) missed Texas and "really wanted to get back," so Missouri and



# ENV holds archeology open house

**Jim Dobbins**  
Environmental Affairs Division

Ten thousand years of Texas history and prehistory were recently on display at TxDOT's Riverside Annex cafeteria in Austin. The event, an open house of the Archeology Branch of the Environmental Affairs Division (ENV), was held April 17 as part of the statewide observance of Texas Archeology Awareness Month. An estimated 500 people attended this three-hour event.



Greg Quinn, ENV

**ENV prehistoric archeologist Glenn Goode demonstrates flint-knapping, the process by which prehistoric peoples made tools from stone, during an open house in April.**

A variety of artifacts were available for inspection, and photographs, drawings, videos and demonstrations brought to life the work of TxDOT's archeology staff. Finds highlighted were: the Wilson-Leonard Site, La Salle's La Belle shipwreck, Freedman's Cemetery, Old San Antonio Road and the North MoPac (Loop 1) Expressway extension project.

In addition, a hands-on exhibit invited attendees to sift shovel

samples through screens in search of artifacts, as is done at archeological excavations. Not all the items found were artifacts.

"One girl found a worm," said ENV prehistoric archeologist Robert Perales.

ENV prehistoric archeologist Glenn Goode was the center of attention as he conducted a flint-knapping demonstration - using the same techniques that Native Americans used to make stone tools and weapons.

"I started flint-knapping in 1971 when I first went to work for the department," Goode said. "Two former TxDOT archeologists, Frank Weir and Phil Bandy, were into flint-knapping and helped me with it. These days, I usually conduct two or three demonstrations a year for students and archeological groups. I thought the open house was a good forum to show flint-knapping and educate the public and TxDOT employees about archeology."

ENV's archeology staff was pleased with the turnout.

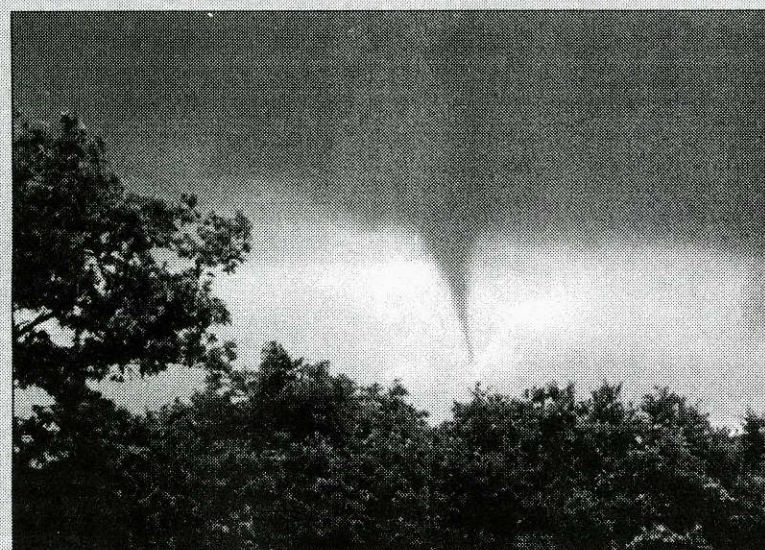
"I thought the open house was informative and gave TxDOT employees and the public a good understanding of what we do (archeology). The hands-on activities were particularly effective," Perales said.

According to ENV historic archeologist John Clark, "The event was much better attended than I expected. People showed a lot of interest, and

the demonstrations were effective. I was impressed at the level of interest shown by TxDOT staff. The open house was a good way of getting the word out about TxDOT archeology."

If you missed this event, don't fret. Plans are under way to hold an archeology open house in 1998. ★

## Twister captured



**Joanne Walsh, director of Management Services Office, snapped this photo of one of the tornados that struck Central Texas May 27 from her home in Cedar Park. The twister was part of a series of storms that flattened buildings and took at least 30 lives. TxDOT employees statewide responded quickly with relief efforts, including donations of money, food and clothing, as well as helping with cleanup.**

## Ninth annual TxDOT softball tournament slated for July 26-27

The ninth annual TxDOT Championship Softball Tournament will be played July 26-27 at Austin's Pleasant Valley Sportsplex.

This year's format features two divisions: co-rec and men's recreational.

To enter the tournament, send your entry form (one per team) and \$130 to Pleasant Valley Sportsplex, 1225 S. Pleasant Valley Rd., Austin, Texas 78741, ATTN: John Farnsley.

Make checks payable to PVS. Your entry must be postmarked by July 18.

For last week entries, call (512) 445-7595 to register. All phone entries must provide a Visa/Mastercard number to guarantee entry. The deadline for all entries is Tuesday, July 22 at 5 p.m.

Brackets will not be mailed in advance of the tournament. To find out your start times, call Pleasant Valley at the above number between 3 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Thursday, July 24. The tournament begins Saturday, July 26 at 9 a.m. ★



# Former pres unveils new highway designation

**Denise Fischer**  
Bryan District

A new highway designation between the state's two presidential libraries was launched with presidential fanfare at an April 11 ceremony held at the outskirts of Bryan.

Former President George Bush unveiled the first highway sign designating the Presidential Corridor, linking the Johnson Presidential Library in Austin and the Bush Presidential Library, which will open next fall in College Station.

Bush, accompanied by former first lady Barbara Bush, said he was honored by the highway designation. "I love the concept of a corridor that will facilitate the movement, particularly of young people, to come and see and learn from the history that's written in both of these institutions," he said.

Remarking further on the association of the two libraries and his personal recollections of his Democratic predecessor, Bush said that Lyndon Johnson was very pleasant to him during Bush's freshman and sophomore terms in Congress. "In a way, I'm glad he's not here today because I wouldn't get a word in edgewise," he quipped.

Bush entertained with several humorous remarks, including a gibe at himself regarding his recent skydiving trip, saying "I haven't been in a freefall like that since the election of 1992."

The corridor route, which follows Texas 21 and U.S. 290 between the two cities, was legislated by a bill sponsored by Rep. Dan Kubiak in the 1995 legislative session. Four Presidential Corridor signs now mark the route, and the signs include the official logo of the

corridor, designed by the Presidential Corridor Association. Each community along the corridor route may also install two smaller logo signs to participate in the designation.

Dignitaries including U.S. Reps. Kevin Brady and Joe Barton, State Rep. Dan Kubiak and Texas A&M President Ray Bowen also attended.

The ceremony, dampened by rainy skies, was held at the Texas



Former president George Bush, center, unveiled the first highway sign designating the Presidential Corridor, which links the Johnson Presidential Library in Austin and the Bush Presidential Library, which will open next fall in College Station.

A&M Riverside Campus at the intersection of Texas 21 and Texas 47, near the location where the first corridor sign was to be installed. Following the ceremony, the sign was removed from its ceremonial placement at the Riverside Campus and mounted at its permanent location on the designated route. Three additional signs along the route have also been installed on the route within the Austin District. ★

# YKM teams pitch in to repair flood damage

**Pearlie Bushong**  
Yoakum District

When it began raining around 9 p.m. Thursday, April 10 in DeWitt and Lavaca counties, no one expected the total rainfall to exceed eight inches in about six hours. But that is exactly what happened. There were even reports of 13 inches of rainfall in some areas of the counties.

By 10:45 p.m., some 30 TxDOT employees from the two maintenance sections and the district shops were patrolling roads and setting barricades. Ninety-one locations on state highways were submerged. Several of these locations had never been underwater before.

As the flood waters moved downstream, additional barricading and flagging were needed to ensure traffic safety not only in DeWitt and Lavaca counties, but also in northern Victoria and Jackson counties. Employees from the Yoakum Area Office, District Shop, and District Office found themselves with vests and flags warning motorists of water over the road Friday. Some of these employees with commercial driver's licenses were used to haul materials to the damaged roadway sections.

When the flood waters began receding Friday morning, 14 locations in DeWitt and Lavaca counties were quickly identified with moderate to severe pavement damage.

Four roadways were closed and repair work began by removing debris including



U.S. 77A over Mustang Creek in Lavaca County shows the results of flood damage sustained in April.

dead cows, repairing the base, asphalt pavement, guardrail, and front slope erosion. The cost of materials to repair the roadways was \$4,000 in DeWitt County and \$30,000 in Lavaca County.

All roads were reopened by 8 p.m. Friday.

"The teamwork displayed in this emergency among the maintenance, engineering, district shop, and district office employees, resulted in repairs being completed within 12 hours," said District Engineer Michael Behrens. "With the help and cooperation of

these employees, motorists were alerted to the dangers of the floodwaters; and repairs were made in a timely manner. Events such as this remind us of the experienced, dedicated and flexible workforce in TxDOT. Everyone pitches in to do what is needed." ★



## Screen helps recover gravel for use on roads

**Pearlie Bushong**  
Yoakum District

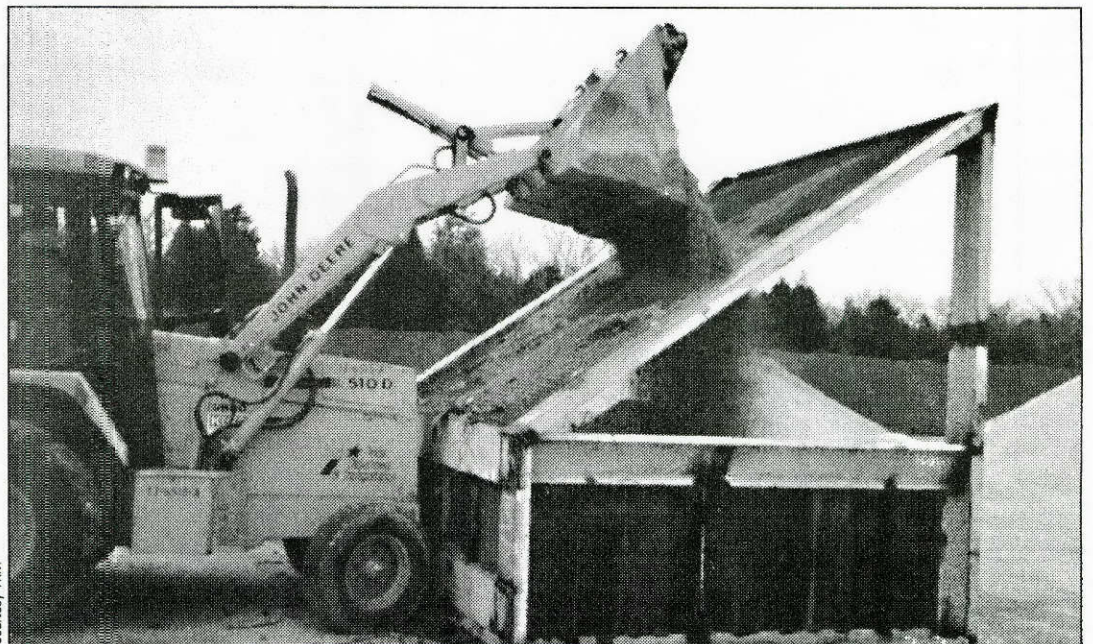
Ever wonder what happens to all that ice rock after an ice storm is over? In La Grange at the Fayette County Maintenance Office, they sweep it up and recycle it.

Maintenance Supervisor Otto Kocian came up with an idea for a screen to sift the used ice rock and clean all the debris out of it — rubber, cans, paper, glass and even chrome left from wrecks during the ice storm. With the help of employees Steven Matula, Roger Bauer and David Stastny, Kocian's idea became a reality.

The screen is made from about 40 pounds of welding rods, scrap bridge rail and used gravel screen acquired from a gravel pit. The screen is set at about a 45 degree angle to allow the debris to slide off. The total cost of the materials to build the screen was less than \$100.

One person on a front-end loader can sift 30 cubic yards of ice rock in about 30 minutes.

"We put out about 300 cubic yards of ice rock in the last ice storm, and with this device we recovered about 80 percent of it,"



**A strainer made of welding rods, scrap bridge rail and gravel screen is used to separate used ice rock from road debris so the rock can be used again.**

said Kocian.

Kocian explained that after an ice storm the ice rock is swept up, loaded into dump trucks and dumped at nearby stockpile sites

Whenever he has dump trucks working from one of these stockpiles, he has them return to the yard at the end of the day with a load of the used ice rock.

"We're using the ice rock for treating bleeding roads, oil spills and ice storms," Kocian said. ★

## SEIP recognizes 22 for outstanding suggestions

The department's State Employee Incentive Program (SEIP) held a recognition ceremony on April 22 in Austin. The ceremony honored the 22 employees whose outstanding suggestions have been implemented and awarded through the program.

The suggestors and their awards were: Mark Anthony, HOU, \$2,233; Joan Littleton, HRD, certificate; Travis Bartlow, DAL, certificate; David Marshall, HOU, certificate; John Barton, WFS, certificate; Teresa Martinez, WFS, certificate; Bill Caffey, ISD, certificate; Gustavus Morgan, ELP, \$5,000; Wayne Clampitt, TPP, certificate; Carl Porath, DAL, \$50; John Clark, IRM, \$1,436; Raymond Posival, BUD, \$2,617; Kent Corbello, BMT, certificate; John Sitton, TPP, \$258; Charles George, SAT, \$319; James Sommerfield, ISD, \$425; John Gilbert, MVD, \$53; Robert Stone, DES, \$1,436; Robert Hidalgo, TYL, \$235; Frank Watling, HOU, \$407; Jay Kelley, BMT, certificate; and Ronald Womack, FTW, \$2,496.

The suggestors have saved the department more than \$326,689

and have increased the efficiency and safety of TxDOT operations.

The department review committee, BUD staff, supervisors of the suggestors, incentive coordinators and division directors and district engineers were recognized for their support of SEIP.

Elaine Powell, executive director of the Texas Incentive and Productivity Commission, highlighted the achievements of the SEIP over the past year, including the recent Excellence Awards, which honor the state agency with the best management and coordination of an agency's SEIP. This year, TxDOT won Excellence Awards for Excellence in the Administration of the SEIP, Outstanding SEIP Coordinator (Kimberli Hall, HRD), Best Suggestor Team (Jay Kelley and Kent Corbello, BMT) and highest number of cash awards. She also noted that the department's SEIP program submitted more approved suggestions than any other agency and two of the seven finalists for the Governor's Awards were TxDOT employees. One of those finalists, Gus Morgan, was the \$2,000 award winner. ★

## DES's James Hall honored with Boy Scouts' Silver Beaver Award

James Hall, assistant director of Project Services in the Design Division, has been honored by the Boy Scouts of America with the Silver Beaver Award.

Hall, who is Capitol Area Council's Boy Scout Training Chairman and assistant Scoutmaster for Austin's Troop 511, received the award in February.

The Silver Beaver Award is given by the National Court of Honor for distinguished service to youth, and is the highest award given to adult Scout leaders.

Hall, a 14-year TxDOT veteran, said he has been a scout since he was a kid, and if all goes according to plan, he will be in scouting the rest of his life.

He said the best thing scouting did for him as a youngster was to instill a sense of responsibility. "It taught me how to take on jobs I thought I couldn't do," he said, "and get them done. It taught me self-reliance."

As an adult, he wants to help others attain that same level of self-reliance.

"To me, that's one of the main goals of the scouting program," he said. "You take the youth and get them into that mode of 'I can do it, I can be self-reliant.'"

"As an adult, I enjoy watching the youth grow into responsible scouts. When they start out, most of them are unsure of their abilities," he said. "and as they progress through the scouting ranks, they become

more responsible scouts. I see some of my scouting experiences in them."

Hall, who was born in Waco, said he got started in scouting as a second grader in Jasper. And apart from his college years, has been involved in scouting ever since.

"I remembered how much the program helped me as a youth, so I decided to get back into it and see what I could contribute," he said.

Hall's wife Becky, who is the Austin District's graphics coordinator, is involved in Campfire Boys and Girls. They have a 2-year-old daughter, Jessica, and another child on the way. ★ Jeff Carmack, Public Information Office



# Tree-planting commemorates fallen comrade

**Michelle Releford**  
Bryan District

Madisonville maintenance employees will never forget Dorothy Upton, a crew member who was killed while picking up cones on Interstate 45 Aug. 19. They will never forget what she meant to them as a friend and co-worker, or as a symbol of how quickly life can change.

That morning last August she joked and teased as usual. She buttoned Maintenance Supervisor James Brown's button-down collar for him saying, "Sweetie, you have to be presentable for us today." And when she returned from a dental appointment that morning, she asked to join her crew at the crack seal job, instead of going to the assigned job. At the end of the day, as the crew was picking up cones, a car skidded across rain-slickened I-45 colliding with the front of the crew's two-ton pickup parked on the shoulder, knocking it back 15 feet. In an instant, the motorist's car spun away from the truck, hitting Upton as she was reaching for the pickup passenger door. She flew 109 feet upon impact. She was 42 years old.

A counselor provided by the Employee Assistance Program met with the section after the accident. Brown said he discovered that he, like his employees, had many unacknowledged and unresolved feelings. "You can't just sit around and ask, 'Why, why, why...It can't be changed.'"

"Our crew is really closely knit and when this happened, when we had the talks, a counselor came over (from EAP) and we gathered around and talked to get our feelings out. One of the things that came out of that session was we felt like we as an organization wanted to do something in memory of Dot. We thought planting a tree at the office would be best, so that when the crew is leaving to go out on the road for the day, they can see it and remember her," Brown said.

On April 11, Madisonville maintenance employees planted a tulip tree in Upton's memory and placed in front of it a marble marker inscribed with Upton's name, her date of birth and the date she died.



Madisonville maintenance workers plant a tulip tree in memory of Dorothy Upton, who was killed while working on Interstate 45 in August. Pictured are, from left, Clay Plunkett, Jimmie Levels of Levels Nursery, Chuck Heath, DPS officer Jeff Pirtle and Billy Jean Easterling.

Her family, including her mother and father, Mabel and Edwin Flinn; daughter and son-in-law, Linda and Kent Lake; daughter Nina Upton and son Donrie Upton, attended the intimate dedication ceremony in which Bryan District Engineer Lonny Traweek presented her mother with a resolution signed by the Texas Transportation Commission. Afterwards, in the custom of close communities, several maintenance employees provided homemade refreshments at the office in an effort to embrace the grieving families; both the family of workers, and Upton's children and parents.

Upton was a popular employee who liberally sprinkled endearments such as "honey" and "sweetie" throughout a conversation. "She was really outgoing...always had a smile and something good to say" Brown said.

"(The memorial) is a reminder that each day there is no guarantee that we will make it home, so we should be safe," Brown said. ★

## Transportation Conference will again feature Innovation Showcase

The Innovation Showcase will once again be a part of the annual Transportation Conference and interested parties are invited to submit exhibit ideas.

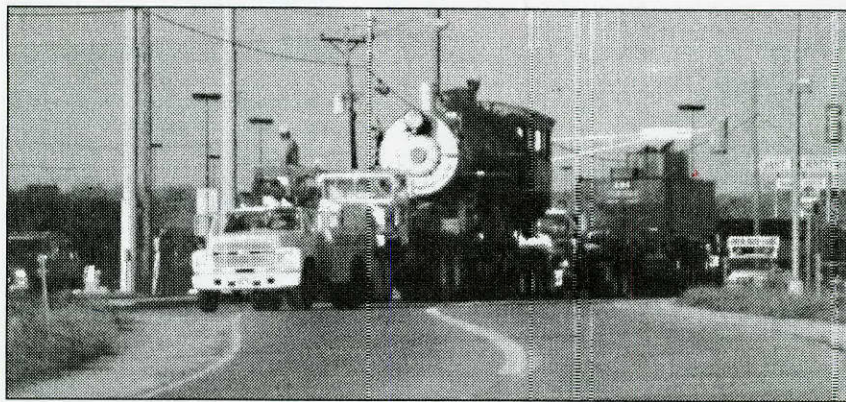
The showcase is an opportunity for the department to highlight groundbreaking projects, techniques and processes in a trade show type setting. Since its inception two years ago, it has proved to be a valuable addition to the annual Transportation Conference.

This year's conference theme is "80 years of Service the TxDOT Way!" The deadline for showcase submissions is July 15. Those interested in exhibiting should provide a brief written description of the project and describe how it is innovative.

Send submissions to the Innovation Showcase coordinator Dorn Smith at Room 505, Main Office, or, by GroupWise to DSMITH1. Please provide a contact name and phone number.

All submissions are welcome and will be considered, but floor space for the showcase is limited. Projects that have not previously been showcased will be given preference. Projects that have been displayed before must demonstrate significant progress to be showcased again.

Questions may be directed to Smith at 512-305-9503. ★



Engine 304 is moved from a Wichita Falls park to its new home downtown. The old Fort Worth and Denver steam locomotive will be restored by the Wichita Falls Rotary Club.

## TxDOT lends hand to move locomotive

**Dale Terry**  
Wichita Falls District

It was a request that took some thought, coordination and cooperation: moving the 91-year-old Fort Worth and Denver steam engine from a park in southwestern Wichita Falls to the railroad museum in the downtown area.

Engine 304 was retired in 1955 and donated to the Wichita Falls Rotary Club. Members of the Club members paid to have the old engine moved to the park where it remained until a few weeks ago. Railroad enthusiasts started an effort about four years ago to raise money to get the engine moved to their downtown museum where it could be repaired and restored.

The dream became reality as two large cranes lifted the 173,000-pound relic onto huge trailers for the five mile trip to Depot Square. The Wichita Falls District's traffic, signals, and maintenance sections got involved because most of the move was

routed on Kell Boulevard, also known as US 82.

The snail-paced procession drew a large crowd as it inched along the service road east to the downtown area with police and TxDOT vehicles leading the entourage of workers.

No problems were encountered that couldn't be quickly solved and the engine was lifted off the trailers and onto tracks, and rolled to the area outside the railroad museum where railroad cars and other equipment are displayed.

District Engineer David Peoples said "This was truly a team effort of many entities, including our people. We were proud to be a part of it. It isn't every day that we are called upon for assistance, as in this historic case. We're proud to have had a part in gaffing this historic example of transportation back to where it belongs." ★



# Dewitt C. Greer leaves indelible mark

## First months tough as young chief exec establishes authority, set policies

*As his last assignment, Travel and Information Division staffer Hilton Hagan wrote a history of the Texas Department of Transportation. This is the third excerpt from that work.*

**Hilton Hagan**  
Travel and Information Division

Gilchrist was offered the job of dean of engineering at Texas A&M in 1937. He accepted it. In 1944, he became president of the college, the first chancellor of the Texas A&M College System in 1948, and chancellor emeritus in 1953. He died in 1972.

He had summoned Dewitt Greer to Austin late in 1936 to become the department's chief engineer of highway design and construction. At that time, Greer was the youngest division head the department

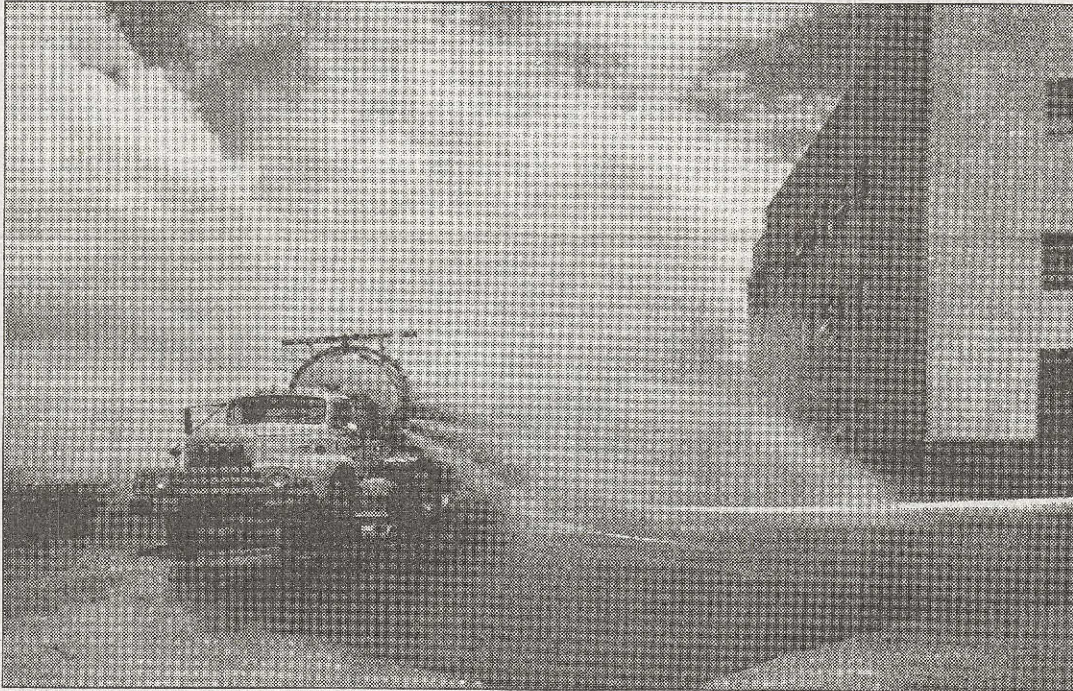
tract engineer, wanting to inspect the job.

"I don't care if you're Jesus Christ," the man said. "I let a man who said he was Cone Johnson go ahead yesterday and the foreman almost fired me."

The real Cone Johnson was a friend of the Greer family. Greer recalled, "We used to sit on the Smith County courthouse lawn and talk highways. Through him, I got to know Gilchrist. And Gilchrist was probably the guiding light of my life."

Many people credited Greer with setting high standards for the department for integrity and professionalism. Greer, on the other hand, said Gilchrist "is the man who set the pattern of honesty, integrity and hard work that molded the department."

In a farewell speech to his fellow Rotarians in Tyler, Greer said, "this division stands out over any division in the state, and none of the credit should go to me. The reason



This 1967 photo shows the Baytown/LaPorte tunnel between (you guessed it) Baytown and LaPorte, as well as the sprayer truck that was used to clean the walls of the tunnel.

had ever had. He had seven years' experience as division, or district, engineer at Tyler. Actually, his youth, and youthful appearance, had kept him saddled with the title of acting division engineer for a long time in Tyler.

Greer delighted in telling a story of his early days as the top man in Tyler. He went out to inspect work where it had been necessary to station a driver and a team of mules to pull motorists across a mud hole. The day before, the mule skinner was told that Cone Johnson, the Tyler attorney who was a member of the highway commission, was back in the queue of waiting motorists. The driver ushered "Mr. Johnson" to the head of the line and saw him speedily across the soft spot. Later, the foreman found that "Mr. Johnson" was really a fast-talking snuff drummer. He was furious. So, the teamster was in no mood for wise guys when a "kid" drove up and introduced himself as the dis-

trict engineer, wanting to inspect the job. "I don't care if you're Jesus Christ," the man said. "I let a man who said he was Cone Johnson go ahead yesterday and the foreman almost fired me."

The admiration between Greer and Gilchrist was mutual. When Gilchrist left for A&M in 1937, he wrote Greer a personal letter: "I remember about 13 years ago, your father wrote me a rather insistent letter, to the effect that the state of Texas was losing something by not having you in our service. I was impressed by the letter to the extent I remember it yet, although I haven't seen it for 13 years.

"Your work here in Austin has been outstanding and will continue to be so if you are permitted to operate. I hope that the future holds much for you. It should."

Greer undoubtedly had seen a new challenge in the job at Austin headquarters. For one thing, he took a cut in pay — from \$408 per month as district engineer to \$333.33 as an Austin division head.

The torch of leadership didn't pass directly from Gilchrist to Greer. Julian Montgomery was chosen to occupy the state

highway engineer's office after Gilchrist. Montgomery had several strikes against him when he moved in. He was from outside the department, and was a reclamation engineer from the Lower Rio Grande Valley, not a highway engineer. Besides, Gilchrist would have been a tough act for anyone to follow and many of "his" people never really accepted Montgomery as the boss. After three years, Montgomery resigned.

Ironically, Greer already had turned down the opportunity to become chief executive of a state highway department. Shortly after moving to Austin, he was approached by an East Texas banker friend, Tucker Royall, who had been asked by J.H. Alpin, chairman of the Arkansas Highway Commission, to see if he could persuade Greer to become head of the Arkansas Highway Department. The salary offer was \$6,500 year, about \$2,000 more than he was making at the time.

"I am still of the opinion that, in spite of the attractive features of your proposition, Texas offers me the best opportunities in my chosen profession," Greer replied.

Greer was minding his own division on July 1, 1940, when he was summoned to appear before the highway commission. In 27 more days he would turn 38. After a brief interview, Chairman Brady Gentry, an old friend from Tyler and a former Smith County judge, told Greer, "All right, you're it, then. I have one word of advice for you: If you keep everything clean, apply yourself and work real hard, you can expect to hold this job eight or 10 years."

Greer, in fact, held the job for more than 27 years, then came back for an encore of 12 years' service on the highway commission. And it was no secret that his successors — Dingwall, DeBerry, Goode and Stotzer — often consulted Greer, almost up until his death in November 1986.

Greer's first few months were tough as the young chief executive officer established his authority and policies. Because of the distances involved and the diversity of regions of the state, the districts were the pivotal units in the highway department. Greer and Gilchrist spoke of putting the maximum authority on the shoulders of the district engineers as good policy, but the fact of the matter is that distances were so great, communication so poor (and expensive), and local conditions and needs so different, that decentralization of authority was absolutely necessary to efficient operation.

Greer himself often spoke of "the 25 highway departments of Texas." And there was more than one district engineer who, secretly or not, thought of himself as Mr. Highways in his own little kingdom. The home office was far away when the roads were poor, commercial air travel almost unknown and most long-distance travelers went by train.

Greer was faced with a formidable job asserting his dominion over these monarchs. Richard Morehead, in his 1983 biography of Greer, said the November 1940 DEs meeting resembled "a herd of old mules looking at new gate."

"They fought him on the first day," recalled an old-timer, "and they fought him on the second. But by the time the meeting was over on the third day, there was no doubt in anybody's mind about who was



# Work on nascent highway department

the boss."

Greer's first crusade was economy. "I thought there was a lot of money being wasted, so I went on an economy binge." Greer often joked about his Scottish ancestry and an inherited tendency to be frugal.

Just about the time that Greer felt he was getting more highway for the money, World War II broke out. "After that," Greer said, "it was a matter of expeditious extravagance."

Hallmarks of Greer's approach to managing the department were economy and decentralization. "If we are not careful," he warned in 1967, "departmental procedures will become centralized in Austin. Only policy guidance must come from Austin. We must keep the initiative in the field."

Economy to Greer meant putting the money "under the rubber" — into roads, bridges and other facilities for the safe, efficient and convenient movement of motor vehicles.

Management gurus might marvel at how Greer managed an organization the size and scope of the highway department. He had assistants, but they were just that, assistants. Most of the time, all 25 district engineers and as many as 20 division heads reported directly to him without intervening layers of hierarchy. Period.

Greer operated on what he called the one rebuttal system: "If I order something done and the man thinks I'm wrong, he is entitled to one rebuttal. Not only is it his privilege, but if he has objections, I consider him derelict in his duty if he doesn't tell me. This is vital to any organization. I don't want any



Courtesy TRV

El Capitan in the Guadalupe Mountains in West Texas looms over the construction of U.S. 180 in June 1958.

programs as part of the defense effort. But shortly after Pearl Harbor, the highway system was declared expendable.

Greer offered to send whole construction units to the military from department ranks, once even offering to go himself as commander of a battalion of Seabees made up of department people. Gen. Richard Donovan, the top army commander in the Southwest, wrote Greer thanking him for his offers and suggesting he could best serve the war effort where he was. Donovan sent copies of his letter to many other military headquarters. "That squashed any other efforts I might have made," Greer said. Greer continued to support highway employees

who joined up.

With them, as they turned in resignations and left the department, went not only Greer's good wishes, but the explicit promise that when they returned a job paying an equal or better salary would be ready.

Early in the war, Greer noted that the department was operating with 32 percent fewer men than before Pearl Harbor, "but I am not trying to hold them back. I'm trying to get them where they can be of the most help."

He had personal as well as patriotic reasons. Greer's younger brother, Capt. Robert Greer, was on Corregidor when the Japanese attacked. He was captured in 1942, and died in a prisoner of war camp in Japan in 1945. Morehead, in his biography of Greer, said that Greer, always cordial when highway builders from around the world came to visit Texas, nevertheless was cool to visitors

from Japan.

Aside from construction of war highways to military posts and defense plants, the department went into a "don't-fix-it-until-it's-broke" mode. Many road-building materials were on the war effort priority lists anyway.

Greer and the commission cannily put surplus revenue rolling in from gas taxes and registrations into government bonds. The wheels already were turning in Greer's mind, shaping a postwar highway program.

Coincidentally, Brady Gentry, Greer's old friend from Tyler, was serving as president of the American Association of State Highway Officials in 1943 when AASHO presented Congress a package to encourage postwar planning, to be followed by a massive highway construction program once the war was over.

Early in 1944, Greer and other Texans went to Washington to testify to congressional committees. Greer told a Senate committee that providing modern highways would take three-quarters of a billion dollars in Texas alone. Congress did pass a Federal-Aid Highway Act that year, describing a "National System of Interstate Highways" limited to 40,000 miles, but located "as to connect by routes as direct as practicable, the principal metropolitan areas, cities and industrial centers, to serve the national defense and to connect at suitable border points with routes of continental importance." That act reinforced a similar statute, passed in 1939, calling for the construction of a network of "superhighways" serving the United States. Neither, however, provided any real means of financing, and it wasn't until the 1956 act that Congress appropriated money over a long period for the construction of the Interstate system — \$25 billion from 1957 through 1968, a figure later to be considerably revised.

One of the programs Greer pressed for when he testified before Congress in 1944 was a program of construction of "interregional" highways. Later, this became the Interstate system. Greer's early vision of the new system is memorialized in the name Austin gave I-35 — "Interregional."

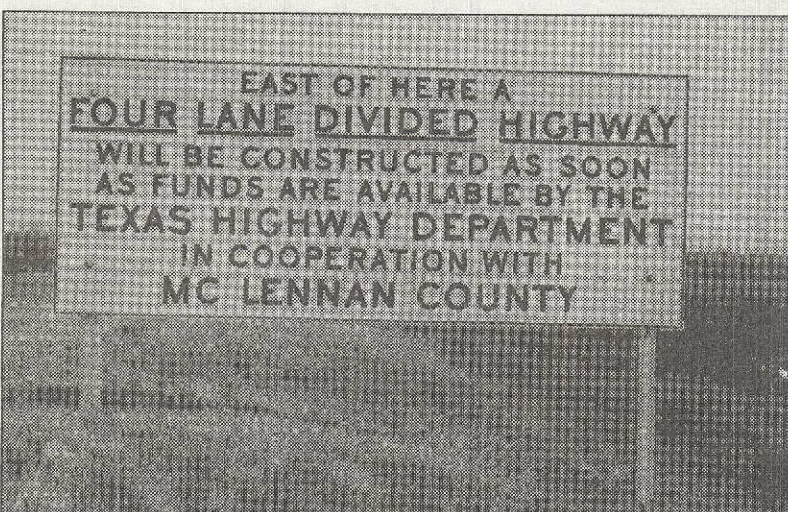
Before the end of the war, Congress did pass a highway program setting in motion planning for after the war. The 1944 Federal-Aid Highway Act provided \$1.7 billion, to be matched 50-50 by the states. The law provided federal aid for three types of highways: An Interstate network, a system of major arterials and federal assistance in building land-service roads — dubbed farm-and-ranch-to-market roads in Texas.

Texas hit the ground running. One of the earliest was the Gulf Freeway, along the route of U.S. 75 leading from Houston to Galveston. Built and rebuilt since the early 1950s, the completed parts of the freeway were taken into the Interstate system at the onset, as were several other sections of early day freeways in Texas.

Between 1945 and 1950, motor vehicle registrations increased from 1.7 million to 3.1 million. Engineers recognized that many of these cars were caught in chronic traffic jams in urban areas and that "expressways" were needed.

In 1945, Greer created special expressway

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Courtesy TRV

Then, as now, funding for highway projects wasn't always easy to come by.

yes-men. But there is only one rebuttal; then the responsibility is mine."

Many of the decisions early in Greer's tenure involved "preparedness." Even though the U.S. was not in the war in 1940, defense plants and military training facilities were springing up all over the state. Federal defense officials designated 6,375 miles of highway, about a third of the system and more than any other state, as of prime military importance.

In 1940, the army held huge war games. Old soldiers still talk about the "Louisiana Maneuvers," but trucks and tanks and armored cars were familiar sights along highways on both sides of the Sabine that summer. The maneuvers tore up highways in both states, and also pointed up dramatically the poor state of the highway network. Groups such as Texas Good Roads Association stumped for highway improvement



# First meeting leaves lasting impression

## More than 50 years later, engineer recalls encounter with Munson

**James E. Grayson, P.E.**  
Houston District

I first met George Munson when I was going to public school in Bogota, Red River County, Texas, around 1937. George was an assistant resident engineer and later resident engineer working out of the Paris Division, and living in Mount Vernon. During this period, his salary was \$175 a month, and he was constructing Texas 37 between Mount Vernon and Bogota.

Munson was born in East Columbia, Texas, Nov. 13, 1907 and attended school there from 1913 through 1924. He enrolled at Texas A&M College and graduated with a civil engineering degree in 1928. He married Eula Dee German July 28, 1930. To this union were born two daughters, Ruth and Sarah. Eula died in 1971, and his second wife, Ethel Burkholder died in 1995.

Greg Taylor was working for George as an expert concrete and laboratory man and he had a room in Bogota where I passed by his house often and would see him in the yard after working hours.

Richard Milner, who was a caterpillar tractor operator for the contractor on the Texas 37 project, had a room at my best friend, Ben Grogan's house in Bogota. In our spare time, the three of us ran around together because he had a car and he liked teaching us to drive. After I had a close call passing a car coming back from Clarksville, Richard decided to buy Ben and

me a cheap Model-T Ford to drive around on country roads so we could get some practice handling a car. We wound up on Munson's newly graded road. I am afraid we cut a few new trenches in their roadbed and side slopes they did not want.

Greg Taylor was known for staying late on the job after all the other workers had gone home. One day he saw us cutting up their roadbed and notified Munson. The next day we were back getting some more practice and we were confronted by Munson and Taylor. They asked in a nice way that we do our practicing somewhere else. From the looks of all the tracks, I don't think we were the only ones cutting up their road.

Munson, a captain in the reserves, was called to report for active duty Oct. 28, 1941 for one year. However, less than two months

later, World War II was declared.

During his tour in Europe during WW II Munson went on active duty as a captain and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. He was assigned to the 843rd Engineer Construction Battalion.

Little did I suspect that I would run into these two highway hands some nine years later when I, too, became a highway hand.

When I was discharged from the Navy after WW II, P.T. Lipscomb, district maintenance engineer, hired me as a semi-skilled draftsman in the Houston District 12 office. I was working with resident engineer B.W. Cooper and we shared the front part of the district laboratory with Taylor, who was then head of the district lab. I was by the front window of the lab on the same seven-foot drafting table I now have in my office after 51 years, except instead of drafting instruments I now have a computer and printer on it.

Taylor recognized me as the kid from Bogota and told me that Munson was resident engineer in Fort Bend County with an office in Richmond. Munson came into the district one day on his way to an Army Reserve meeting wearing his uniform and I am sure he didn't recognize me after the short meeting we had on the Texas 37 project. In fact, I did not tell him I was one of the ones cutting new ruts in his newly graded road until about a month ago when I called him for some information about his Army tour during the Korean War.

He suspected I was up to something by the questions I was asking, so I came clean and admitted I was one of many who was tearing up his roadway on Texas 37, and that I was writing an article about him. He said he did not recognize me from our brief meeting during construction of the Mount Vernon to Bogota highway.

In 1947, while Cooper and I were locating the first survey point on a project laying out the system of drives at the Prairie View A&M campus, Cooper was assigned the resident engineer position in the Bellville office. That left me and Martin Brown, two green hands, to handle the project.

Lipscomb made several trips to the campus to see how we were doing. On one trip he observed us making a turn with the instrument. He went over to the rodman and asked where his turning point was and he pointed to a rock he had placed the rod on. Lipscomb kicked the rock away and told him to get a more permanent point to turn on, so we had to start that turn over. Lesson one learned.

In 1950, my immediate supervisor, Lipscomb, attained the mandatory retirement age of 65 and went on modified service for another year. George P. Munson Jr. was promoted to take Lipscomb's position as district



James E. Grayson

## First Person

Munson was given a large force of about 8,000 men to combat the Russian movements. They were about to cross a bridge going toward Munich with the Americans on one side and Russians on the other. Munson had one soldier in his unit who could speak Russian so he sent him to the other end of the bridge to tell the Russians "if one Russian tries to cross the bridge he will be a dead Russian." They never advanced.

On June 1, 1953, Brig. Gen. Ernest A. Bixby wrote a letter to D.C. Greer that Munson was returning to the United States to resume civilian duties with the highway department. In view of the outstanding job he and his unit has done for the armed forces in Germany and France, he was forwarding a copy of a letter of commendation to be filed in his service record. In part, "Colonel Munson, 20th Engineer Brigade, contributed materially to the improvement of facilities of base section communication zone. During this time the troops under his command have constructed two large permanent camps; numerous repair shops; commissaries; schools; warehouses; gasoline service stations; new roads and hardstands; rail beds; winterizing of tent camps; and the rehabilitations of existing roads at all U.S. Army installations within the command covering an area of some 125,000 square miles in southern France."

Mr. Greer's response to Gen. Bixby was, in part, "it was nice indeed that you would take the time to write to us concerning Col. Munson. Knowing George as we do, we have no doubt whatsoever of the sincerity not only of your commendation of George, but also of your letter to us. He is an able engineer and a worthwhile citizen. We are proud indeed to have him back in our service, even though it may deprive you of a man who can take responsibility and get a job done."

With the exception of the period Munson was called back to active duty during the Korean War, I worked for him from 1950 until I transferred to design in 1959. As long as I was with him he never failed to prepare a paper for Short Course and it was my job to supply all of the drawings and slides he wanted to go along with his talks.

In 1966, Munson again became my

Please see Munson, next page



Maj. Gen. George Munson

Courtesy George Munson



## History

Continued from page 9

project offices, aside from the regular district organizations, in San Antonio, Houston, Dallas and Fort Worth. It was a whole new game for the highway department. The department had first "entered" the cities in 1943, as a result of wartime needs. Until then, state design, construction and maintenance ended at the city limits. The department still builds and maintains a fraction of urban roadways. Yet, that share of the total mileage includes most of the freeways and handles about three-fourths of all urban travel.

The postwar era was the beginning of a golden age for rural road building. The first feeble efforts at providing high-type rural roads for the then-40 percent of Texans who lived outside of town was important.

The program got its major impetus in 1949, when the Legislature passed the Colson-Briscoe Act. Briscoe went on to become governor and told biographer Morehead: "No one knew it publicly at the time, but Dewitt wrote the legislation. Anyone who reads that legislation carefully will be aware how skillfully it was written. Dewitt took no credit then, nor has he since, but he is the man who deserves the full credit for it."

Basically, the Colson-Briscoe Act set aside at least \$15 million a year for construction of farm-to-market roads. The counties or cities were to provide the right of way free and the state would provide for construction and maintenance.

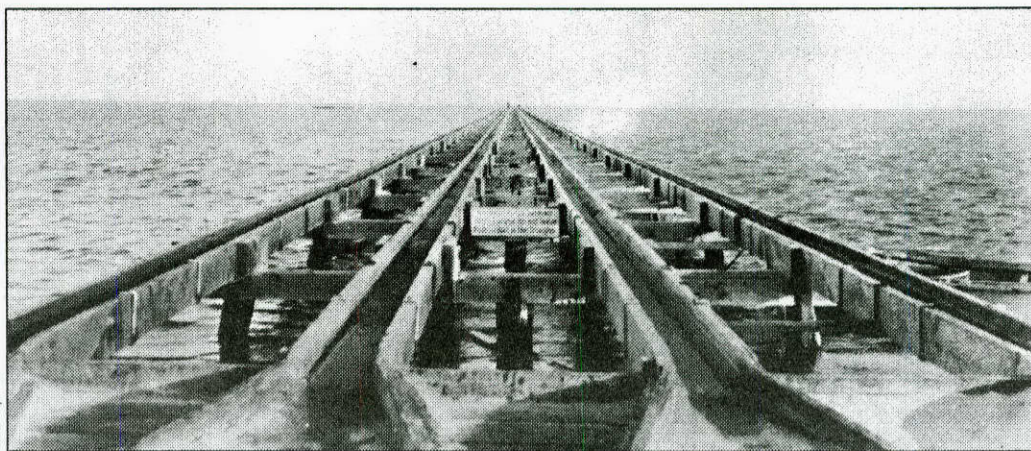
The uninitiated often ask highway people about the difference between farm-to-market and ranch-to-market roads. There really is no difference. Standards and specifications are the same and routes are selected in the same way no matter what the signs say. The rule of thumb is: If people living along the route think of themselves as farmers, then it's an FM road; if they think they are ranchers, then the ranch road signs go up.

Also after World War II, steps were taken to safeguard revenues dedicated to highways. A "good roads amendment" was passed through the efforts of the Texas Good Roads Association. TGRA undertook a statewide campaign to make the dedication constitutional rather than statutory. It's harder to alter the Constitution. The head of the TGRA at the time was Charles E. Simons, later a distinguished member and chairman of the highway commission.

Simons credited Greer with helping to maintain high standards of integrity and professionalism in the department. Greer carefully selected his chief subordinates and, in the rare occasions when it was necessary, administered discipline with surgical sureness. Greer once fired a district engineer, a friend of his, because the man's wife had invested in a firm doing business with the department, a conflict of interest in Greer's eyes.

"Greer burns his own smoke," another old-time highway employee once said. Employees quickly and quietly closed ranks after someone was discharged. It is interesting to speculate how Greer would have dealt with today's myriad of regulations and procedures, working under the ten-fold increase in day-to-day scrutiny by the news media.

On the other hand, working in Greer's highway department was



Ocean Beach Drive causeway crosses Laguna Madre with Padre Island on the horizon, circa 1930. The sign in the middle of the road reads "No charge for fishing, but please do not leave fish and bait in the trough."

a different experience from a run-of-the-mill state job. There was a kind of quiet esprit de corps among employees who knew they worked for a good outfit.

Greer built on Gilchrist's success in getting the hiring of employees out of politics and patronage. People learned that a person could build a career with the department, that promotions most often came from within, and that the agency was respected by the public and regarded as a top-notch organization.

Greer's jackrabbit start on postwar highway building attracted national and worldwide attention. Thanks to the foresight of having the funds banked away and having a head start in planning, the department, by mid-1947, accounted for one-fourth of all the highway work under contract in the United States.

Greer became a powerful force in national highway matters, serving as president of AASHO in 1949-50, and remaining in the organization's inner circle throughout the rest of his career. It gave him its highest honors. On receiving the highest AASHO Award, the George S. Bartlett Award, Greer brought down the house with the comment, "I accept this with all the humility a Texan can muster."

Greer was sought out by other countries for advice, and traveled under the auspices of international organizations to South America, Scandinavia and Australia. He was not without honor in his own country. He enjoyed the confidence and respect of every Texas Governor from W. Lee O'Daniel to Bill Clements. He gathered in an honorary doctorate from Texas Christian University, and his alma mater, A&M, named him a distinguished graduate, one of the first named after the university began the program. After his retirement, he was given a chair in Highway Engineering at UT and taught graduate seminars there for several years.

Just before Greer retired as state highway engineer, Weldon Hart, then head of the Texas Good Roads Association, was called upon to speak at the opening of the annual Highway Short Course. Greer was being honored with the establishment of an award in his name, to go annually to an outstanding department engineer.

Greer's aplomb in embarrassing situations was legendary. Once in the 1950s, he and the commission went to El Campo to participate

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## Munson

Continued from previous page

boss. This time as assistant district engineer. The most memorable project I worked on with Munson was in 1957, while we were in maintenance. A bank had placed a lien on the state covering the period from 1943 to 1957 because we failed to purchase the riparian rights to the water in front of the ferry landing. Our engineer purchasing the land did not think it necessary to have to buy the water in the bay. As a result of this suit, the Galveston-Bolivar ferry was forced to stop operations for several months until the case could be settled.

Munson instructed me to get an old map showing Galveston Island that was close to the time when President Sam Houston deeded the east half of the island plus 150 varas into the gulf and bay to Michael B. Menard. I secured an 1845 map and conducted a survey to determine the location of the present ferry landing to the shore line on the bay side plus the 150 varas into the

water. We determined that our present landing was beyond the original 150 vara line. Our state lawyer went to court with our findings and we lost the case.

With the results of hurricanes, dredging operations and the construction of the jetties they had gained considerable land compared to the 1845 map. At that time there were two islands separated approximately where Texas 87 is now located. The easterly island was mostly a marsh and during dredging operations the area where Texas 87 is now was filled enough to build a road on it, and the excess dredged material spilled over into the marsh.

After losing the case we decided to bypass Galveston and build another ferry landing off the Texas City dike, which was a shorter run to Bolivar than from Galveston. When the city fathers found out what we had in mind they persuaded the bank to cancel their demands and open the Galveston ferry again to traffic.

Munson spent 43 years with the state, including two wars. In November 1972, he

too fell into the trap of the 65-year mandatory retirement age.

He rounded out his Army career as a two-star general. In 1957, he was promoted to construction engineer and in 1966 he was appointed assistant district engineer to Wiley E. Carmichael.

I have been very lucky my whole career to be assigned to the best group of highway engineers you could find.

As a tribute to all the old Texas Highway Department employees who have gone on before to build one of the finest transportation departments in the world, I always say I work for the highway department. This is our roots. As Greer said after they renamed the department the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation: "I don't care what new name they give us, to me we will always be the highway department." With the new push to represent all transportation modes we now take care of several modes as TxDOT. ★ James Grayson is a program engineer in the Houston District. George Munson lives in Houston



# TxDOT crews clean up Gilchrist damage

Encroaching Gulf of Mexico waters make long-term prospects for this Bolivar Peninsula community gloomy

**Victor Tsai**  
Houston District

As far as natural disasters go, this one was pretty quiet. There were no tidal waves or earthquakes or booming voices from the heavens. The ocean simply claimed another victory in its eternal war with dry land – a small victory, but enough to cause a ton of headaches in the little town of Gilchrist on the Bolivar Peninsula.

A walk on the beach is one of the main

the supervision of John Pavlock, and employees from the Galveston Maintenance Office under supervisor Robert Moss, spent almost two months working to clear the debris. Eventually, 10 home sites had to be either demolished or cleaned up.

"Our guys have been working 12-hour shifts under some pretty tough conditions, dealing with the cold, the rain and the sand, and they've done a terrific job," said Charles Burks, assistant district maintenance manager. "They deserve a big pat on the back."

Unfortunately, instead of accolades, a few affected homeowners in this community would probably rather see them get a swift kick out of town. Under the Texas Open Beaches Act, the public must have free and clear access to the beach from the vegetation line to the water. Because of the high tide, several homes that before had been on private property now legally encroached on the public beach. Those that were severely damaged had to be demolished and hauled away. Others that remain intact must be moved to another location at the

**TxDOT crews clean up in Gilchrist after high tides from Hurricane Josephine undermined several beachfront homes.**

homeowner's expense. A few homeowners have refused to sign a release to authorize demolition, preferring to take their chances in court.

The threat of lawsuits and the animosity has made a tough job even more difficult. Over the years, some unscrupulous property owners have taken steps to slow down beach erosion. State law prohibits any dumping of concrete or other aggregate on the beach, but during the cleanup, the crews have uncovered a few concrete bulkheads secretly buried in the sand, making their job even more hazardous. Along with housing foundations, a swimming pool and other rip-rap, TxDOT crews have had to move more than 18,000 cubic yards of concrete.

"Whenever you're dealing with such a tremendous amount of material, with its weight, you're talking about an extremely

hazardous operation," Burks said. "It damages our equipment, and if you drop it on somebody, there's a serious risk of injury."

Dealing with hidden obstacles has been matched with the difficulty of dealing with the people. DPS point man Clay Kennelly, the regional liaison officer of DPS's Emergency Management Service, has taken the lead in this regard, doing his best to keep people informed and protecting TxDOT employees from harassment. It is Kennelly's job to deal with bizarre requests, like one elderly woman from Vidor whose pink beach house wound up being half on, half off the public area of the beach. "We call it the 'stately Vidorian mansion,'" says Kennelly. "She wanted us to cut the house in half and nail plywood over the open side so she could move in. I told her we didn't split houses."

Kennelly also has to keep an eye out for people trying to drag TxDOT employees into the courtroom. Several times TxDOT employees have been approached by homeowners trying to elicit a negative opinion on the cleanup operation. The employees have been instructed to refer them to Kennelly.

"It's not an uncommon reaction during a disaster or emergency situation," Kennelly said. "Whatever our opinions of the situation are, we have to be professionals and remember that we are down here doing our jobs. It's something we have to be very careful about. Even if you were doing something as simple as patching a pothole, you have to be careful about who you talk to."

Added to the present situation is the gloomy long-term prospects for this beachfront community. Even though Galveston County has shored up the beachfront with large bales of hay, nothing short of a major infrastructure investment will stop the eventual erosion of the peninsula. In some areas, the water is less than 100 yards from Texas 87. The highway was rebuilt after Hurricane Alicia in 1983, but in 1989 Hurricane Jerry washed out 16 miles between High Island and Sabine Pass. It is only a matter of time before another major hurricane makes landfall on the upper Gulf Coast. When it happens, more houses could be lost, and possibly another section of the highway could be washed out. But for now, all the residents of Bolivar Peninsula can do is hope that something can be done to permanently shore up and protect the coastline before Mother Nature makes her next move into dry land. ★ *This feature originally appeared in Forum, the Houston District newsletter.*



Courtesy HDU

attractions in this small community on Texas 87. Since the city of Galveston banned alcohol on its beaches several years ago, the area has become even more popular. So when unusually high tides from Hurricane Josephine last October moved the beach inland between 20 and 80 feet along a five-mile stretch, the event did not pass unnoticed.

Homeowners looked out their windows to see waves crashing on sand that had previously been part of their backyards. Some unfortunate houses were practically falling into the surf, as the ocean had eroded the land under the house's support pillars, causing the houses to collapse. The once-open public beach overnight had become a minefield of damaged houses, broken pipes, shattered windows and splintered wood debris. The tides affected not only Gilchrist, but also homes in the Caplen Beach area and even parts of Galveston Island.

Gov. George W. Bush declared a state of disaster and directed TxDOT, the Department of Public Safety and the General Land Office to clear the beaches in the interest of public safety. The Special Jobs Office, under

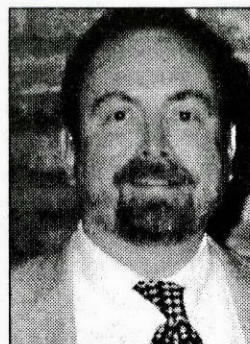
## El Paso landscape architect receives national recognition

Richard C. Mason, landscape architect in the El Paso District, was honored by the American Society of Landscape Architects at the organization's annual meeting in Austin April 26.

Mason received an "Honor" Award from ASLA for his efforts on the Interstate 10 landscape improvements in downtown El Paso. The project was cited for its use of fiber-optics.

"I want to share this award with the many other TxDOT employees who have joined me in seeking to further develop aesthetic components of transportation engineering design values for the people of Texas," Mason said.

Mason received one of three awards given. Mason said he was particularly impressed that the department's efforts were recognized because the competition included international projects.



Richard Mason

The I-10 project has already been recognized in the community and across the nation. It is on the cover of the local 1996-'97 phone book. The American Automobile Association also used the project on its publications.

Mason also serves as chairman of the district aesthetics committee, which works with local communities to gather citizen input into the design and construction of local projects. The I-10 landscape improvements resulted from this process. ★



## History

Continued from page 11

in an event honoring former State Sen. Kulp Krueger. The event was scheduled outdoors, but when the time came, a heavy downpour sent local sponsors and visitors scurrying. Not many of the crowd followed the official ceremonies into the local movie house, given the bad storm raging outside. Commissioner Herb Petry surveyed the pitifully small audience remaining and leaned over to needle Greer: "Dewitt, couldn't you gather up some highway people to swell the crowd?"

"Who do you think these are?" Greer countered.

Greer could be as thrifty with words as he was with a dollar. Proposals sent to him by staff divisions might be approved with a crisp "OK—DCG." If the idea needed further study the comment might be "See me," or "Let's talk about this."

His economy with words could be devastating. In the late 1960s, the commission decided to go ahead with the construction of the Trans-Mountain Loop in El Paso. The loop long had been a dream of local people. It would cross the Franklin Mountains to link the eastern leg and the western leg of the U-shaped city of El Paso.

Greer told his public information minions that he wanted a good story on the project when the commission approved it. The Travel and Information Division swung into action, talking with the district and highway design people. In time, they developed a lengthy story with great detail about the construction of the project. The story went through several versions and, since this was before the advent of word processors, each version had to be retyped in its entirety. All concerned — the writer, the editor, the section chief and the division head, plus all the secretaries who retyped the article — got so they almost knew the text by heart.

In fact, they had seen it so many times that, in the final version, not one of six or seven pairs of eyes who read it before submitting it to Greer, saw that it said the job would require removal of "4.5 cubic yards of rock," instead of "4.5 million cubic yards."

Greer noticed. Back came the draft with a note in the margin: "4.5 yards would make a pile about as big as my desk."

Needless to say, the article was rapidly corrected. The incident illustrates Greer's firm but low-key style in dealing with people. Greer early on mastered the art of dealing with a commission that might not share identical viewpoints. Quietly, he boasted at the end of his career as state highway engineer that in all his 27 years on that job, there had never been a "two-signature" minute approved by the commission. In all, 15 men served on the commission with Greer as the chief executive. Although it takes only two signatures to pass a minute order, Greer always sought to postpone consideration of those that did not seem to have the support of all three. He would suggest quietly that the order be held back for a month or two so that all concerned could have time to think about it.

The teamwork paid off. When Greer began as chief administrative officer in 1940, there were some 22,000 miles in the state highway system, not all of them paved. Greer saw an all-paved, connected highway network in the 1950s. Meanwhile, priorities had shifted to land service roads — Texas' FM system. Greer was one of the earliest and most active supporters of the Interstate system, respected by all federal highway authorities he worked with in nearly three decades of leadership. Yet, he sometimes differed philosophically with them and with his colleagues in other states about highway issues.

Interstate highways and other freeways in Texas have more points of access than those of most other states because Greer felt

local folks had as much right to use them, maybe more, than the long-haul, through traffic. And Texas provided more frontage roads for local use, another legacy from Greer's vision. He also liked the idea of paved shoulders, common in Texas, but not in the rest of the nation.

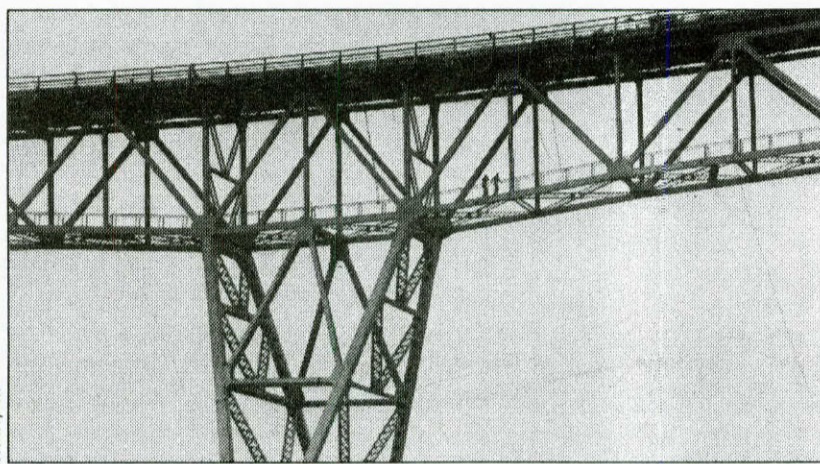
Greer lost some battles, too. He did not see any point in building expensive full freeways with strict control of access in sparsely settled areas. He felt that, in some cases, at-grade crossings would be tolerable where traffic was light. But the federals prevailed in that difference of opinion and Greer quietly endured later criticism for building "overpasses for jackrabbits" on lonely stretches of West Texas roads.

He also didn't like the idea of the federal government setting nationwide speed limits as it did in 1973. He thought states were best able to determine the safest speeds for specific local conditions.

Greer liked the idea of stage construction, with the understanding that the alignment and right of way were adequate at the beginning. It was all right to build two lanes or the frontage roads at first, he held, as long as the overall geometries of the roadway were correct for an expanded facility.

Greer fostered the idea of breaking big projects up into small segments. This spread the money around and helped develop a healthy Texas contracting industry.

The smaller the job, the more likely smaller local operators would be able to bid on the work. More contractors meant more bidding on each job. Competition spawned lower prices, Greer, ever aware of costs, figured.



The scale of Port Arthur's Rainbow Bridge is illustrated by the two figures walking along the superstructure at right of center.

Texas grew its own crop of expertise. Department people took the lead in research and development of materials and techniques for highway building and upkeep. Employees under Greer's administration became world-class experts in things like the best kinds of paint for highway striping. When computers came along, Texas engineers and other professionals were already finding applications for them, and again took the lead in the field of computer-aided highway design. Greer supported the strong transportation-related research institutes at the state's two major universities, and Texas became a world leader in transportation technologies of all kinds.

When Greer vacated the northeast corner office on the second floor at 11th and Brazos in 1965, he left behind a highway system that had grown threefold, from 22,000 miles, not all paved, in 1940, to more than 68,000 miles, all paved, and including the state's major freeways.

But most of all, he had hand-crafted an organization in his own image. His personal standards and methods of dealing with people became the standards and methods of scores of young engineers and managers hired on during his tenure. His influence remained strong through his terms on the commission, which ended in 1981. Indeed, it remains strong today. ★

## Collier

Continued from page 3

According to Collier, reactions from the El Paso district were positive. "We've helped each other out," he said. "The lessons learned and the data from their effort will definitely help the development of our project."

This positive feedback is a welcome turnaround from the first response Collier's group got from TxDOT employees. "When we first surveyed employees," he said, "we asked them if they could use GIS. The answer was, for the most part, no."

"Then, we turned around and asked them what they wanted to be able to do," he said. "When they told us, we were able to

show them that GIS could do a lot of what they wanted."

Collier has also been using GIS applications on some environmental mitigation bank issues. "It's kind of a unique way to use GIS," he said, "because it's not a traditional transportation application."

Attending meetings, answering e-mail and keeping distractions from his employees so they can turn their attention on projects take up most of Collier's time. "I travel both in and out of state approximately six times a year," he said, "but once we get our projects developed, I may have to visit the districts more often to train employees."

But even when he's not in his office, Collier is working on his laptop at home. "I'm very busy here and often I stay too late," he

admitted. "My wife pointed that out to me and I've promised to make more time for my family."

If he finds the time, Collier would like to hunt and fish and play tennis and golf. "I'm not very good at any of these sports any more," he said, "but if I can find the time, I'll spend it fishing on my boat."

"I'm really looking forward to the day my son's old enough to go fishing with me," he said.

Born in Dallas, Collier grew up in a small town near Houston called Boling. "There were only 65 people in my high school senior class," he chuckled. "Boling is the kind of town you can't wait to move from but wish you could raise your kids in."

Is that a geographic paradox? ★



# Service Awards

## June

### Arlington

**20 years**  
Merrie T. Rogge  
**15 years**  
David A. Hall  
Gary W. Teichelman  
**10 years**  
Tommie J. Brown  
Norman J. Herridge  
Cindy R. Sparks  
**5 years**  
Jesus Cisneros  
Darden L. Stokes  
Imogene H. Watkins  
Terri M. Wolaver

### Amarillo

**25 years**  
Peggy B. Vinson  
**20 years**  
Roger G. Kendrick  
James A. Meaker  
**10 years**  
Bonnie K. Bass  
Billy R. Hester  
**5 years**  
Joe D. Abeyta  
Bryan C. Carl  
Robin E. Douglas

### Atlanta

**15 years**  
Ricky L. Bogan  
Robert A. Jones  
Grady D. Steelman  
**10 years**  
Clarence Evans  
Walter H. Felkins  
Larry D. Whitworth

### Austin

**25 years**  
Amado F. Sanchez  
**15 years**  
Sharon A. Barta  
Ernie C. Goerlitz  
**10 years**  
Thomas B. Brown  
Michael B. Camus  
Johnny L. Eddleton  
Louis C. Hernandez  
William H. Johnson  
Mary C. McDaniels  
Elba J. Nail  
Robert E. Parker  
Dale W. Turner Jr.  
**5 years**  
Gerald W. Barrett  
James P. Deleon  
Elisa G. Garcia  
Joe S. Hennig  
Mark E. Jones

### Beaumont

**20 years**  
Darrel G. White  
**15 years**  
Donna H. Lewis  
**10 years**  
Lloyd E. Pierce

### Brownwood

**10 years**  
Earla B. Pallette  
Jack E. Thomas  
**5 years**  
Linda P. Zepeda

### Bryan

**30 years**  
David L. McCannon  
James B. McCormick  
**20 years**  
Jerry R. Waters  
**15 years**  
Henry A. Ondrasek  
**10 years**  
Joe E. Pingleton  
**5 years**  
Jonathan R. Dubcak  
Gregory P. Joseph  
Neal R. Riddle

### Childress

**35 years**  
James H. Lawrence  
**5 years**  
Rickey L. Gonzales

### Corpus Christi

**10 years**  
Zenon R. Canales  
Wayne L. Carpenter  
Israel Gonzalez  
**5 years**  
Kenneth C. Brown  
Humberto V. Ruiz

### Dallas

**25 years**  
Leatha M. Allen  
**15 years**  
Donald E. Rush  
Majid Sadjadpour  
**10 years**  
Greg P. Austin  
Terry W. Bruce  
Joseph R. Clay  
James E. Hill  
Susan K. Leverette  
Charles W. Wilson  
**5 years**  
Kenneth W. Garrett  
Carlos E. Scott  
Kenneth J. Shirley  
Patrick A. Walker

### El Paso

**20 years**  
Gilbert Jordan  
**15 years**  
Peggy A. Birkner  
Craig S. Warren  
**10 years**  
Guillermo Garcia  
Gerardo Leos  
**5 years**  
Mary G. Deleon  
Rolando E. Hernandez  
Carlos C. Mendoza Jr.  
Armida Sagaribay

### Fort Worth

**20 years**  
Bobby J. Barbee  
Gary J. Gossage  
Harvey L. Mantooth  
**10 years**  
John S. Gibbs  
Michael E. Webb  
**5 years**  
Charles D. Copeland  
Patricia S. Cridle  
Paula G. Gwaltney  
Timothy S. Shuler

### Houston

**40 years**  
Carol J. Letz  
**25 years**  
Robert C. Faircloth  
Jerry L. Huggins  
Travis K. Turner  
**20 years**  
James C. Wolf  
**15 years**  
Michael M. Bahm  
Marietta F. Francisco  
Willie J. Hubbard  
David N. Rodgers  
Charles R. Tompkins  
**10 years**  
Paul R. Bartholomew  
Teresa K. Beavers  
William J. Duffield Jr.  
James W. Koch  
James L. Parnell  
William J. Schill  
**5 years**  
Verna K. Hall  
Pius S. Tomdio

### Laredo

**5 years**  
Cristina F. Guevara

### Lubbock

**25 years**  
Ronald G. Davis  
**15 years**  
Julian G. Lopez  
Ernie L. Mead  
Dennis W. Morgan  
**10 years**  
Robert G. Davis  
Tracey D. Spradling  
**5 years**  
Charles E. Frater

### Lufkin

**30 years**  
Weldon L. Thomas  
**10 years**  
Hughie Burrell  
Donald E. Fancett  
Albert J. Harris  
Garry M. Harrison  
Willie J. Wright

### Odessa

**15 years**  
James L. Moore  
**10 years**  
Danny G. Webb

### Paris

**20 years**  
Van A. Cato  
Bobby D. Cornelius  
**10 years**  
Leisha L. Hopkins  
Larry D. Smith

### Pharr

**15 years**  
Leonel Barrera  
Fernando A. Chapa  
Steven A. Whybrew  
**10 years**  
Alejandro A. Munguia

### San Angelo

**25 years**  
Patricia P. Jackson  
**20 years**  
Johnny S. Guadarrama  
William K. Wiley  
**10 years**  
Ricky M. Ross  
Frank E. Sparks

### San Antonio

**30 years**  
Jessie H. Bohnert  
Eugene M. Culak  
Thomas E. Ortmann  
**15 years**  
James P. Anderson  
Bradley A. Eubank  
Juan V. Gomez  
Dee B. Smith  
**10 years**  
Kelly J. Kenner  
Daniel J. Reigut  
Tomas A. Romero  
Myles S. Theis

### Tyler

**25 years**  
Jackie L. Hopmann  
**20 years**  
William R. Gill  
**10 years**  
Kerry D. Bushue  
Marlin L. Cooper  
Lonnie S. Kincaid  
Ann G. Marrs  
O. C. Morris  
Jeffrey L. Myers  
John R. Sigler  
Walter H. Smith  
Dennis P. Smith  
David Swinson III  
Sandra R. Weaver  
**5 years**  
Bobby D. Hutson  
James B. Thom

### Waco

**25 years**  
Richard A. Smith  
**20 years**  
Marrion E. Land  
**15 years**  
Duane A. Schwarz  
**10 years**  
Rodney D. Karasek  
**5 years**  
Uvaldo E. Hernandez  
Janice S. Jackson  
Randy N. Roddy

### Wichita Falls

**35 years**  
Judith L. Hess  
**15 years**  
Kenneth W. Bozarth  
**5 years**  
Bobby J. Pettigrew  
Linda G. Tamplin

### Yoakum

**30 years**  
Fred E. Bamard  
**5 years**  
Aaron D. Porter

### Administrative Services

**25 years**  
Charlotte M. Campbell

### Aviation

**5 years**  
David S. Fulton

### Budget and Finance

**10 years**  
William F. Campbell

### Construction and Maintenance

**5 years**  
Michael V. Batuzich  
George E. Lantz

### Design

**20 years**  
Sheila A. Crawley  
**15 years**  
Deborah B. Fischer  
**10 years**  
Robert L. Graham  
**5 years**  
Walter M. Black  
Mark C. Brown  
Michael D. Finger  
Amy J. Ronnfeldt

### Environmental Affairs

**15 years**  
Melissa A. Neeley

### General Services

**15 years**  
John M. Cauley  
**10 years**  
John T. Pickard  
Sandra Rodriguez  
Joe L. Serrano  
**5 years**  
Raul Martinez

### Information Systems

**30 years**  
William G. Wier

### Materials and Tests

**15 years**  
Charles M. Peters  
**10 years**  
David B. Belser  
Mary C. Fitzpatrick  
John E. Lane  
Denise V. Maldonado  
William M. Pecht  
Gabriel G. Perez  
Steven D. Smith  
**5 years**  
James M. Barton

### Motor Carrier

**5 years**  
Eledina M. Contreras  
Katherine T. Rodriguez

### Motor Vehicle

**20 years**  
Timothy W. Bargsley  
**15 years**  
Joseph R. Shrawder

### Public Information

**5 years**  
Mark E. Cross

### Right of Way

**10 years**  
John S. Breed

### Traffic Operations

**5 years**  
Cynthia L. Flores

### Transportation Planning and Programming

**25 years**  
Bob L. Jurak  
**20 years**  
Randy L. Gattis  
**15 years**  
Andrea C. Titus  
**10 years**  
Rodney L. Grimes  
**5 years**  
Manuela L. Castro  
Derrick E. Pavelka

### Travel and Information

**10 years**  
Benard T. Stafford

### Vehicle Titles and Registration

**30 years**  
Alice Y. Erdmann  
Rebecca B. McKay  
**25 years**  
Stephen W. Gary  
**15 years**  
Dawn P. Jarosz  
**10 years**  
David O. Jaso

## Calendar

### June

**2-8** Spring Research Management Committee Meeting, Arlington, RTT  
**9-13** 13th Annual TxDOT Internal Audit Conference, Austin, AUD  
**19** Emancipation Day (holiday)  
**23-27** TP&D Conference, Austin, TPD  
**24-27** Keep Texas Beautiful Annual Convention, San Antonio, TRV  
**28** Commission Meeting, Austin  
**28-27** Traffic Safety Planning & FY 98 Benchmark Report Review Meeting, Austin, TRF  
**30** Management Team Employment Law Seminar, Austin, CIV (through July 2)

### July

**4** Independence Day (holiday)  
**14-16** Radio System Specialist Workshop, Corpus Christi, TRF  
**31** Commission Meeting, Harlingen

### August

**27** LBJ's Birthday (holiday)  
**28** Commission Meeting, Austin

### September

**1** Labor Day (holiday)  
**3-5** Texas/Mexico Border Conference on Border Safety, South Padre Island, PHR  
**10-12** NIGP Professional Development Class, Austin, GSD  
**25** Commission Meeting, Austin

### October

**13-15** Transportation Conference, College Station  
**15-17** NIGP Professional Development Class, Austin, GSD  
**30** Commission Meeting, Austin

### November

**3-4** NIGP Professional Development Class, Austin, GSD  
**3-7** Research Management Committee Meeting, Austin, RTT  
**4-7** Human Resources Management Conference, Austin, HRM  
**5-7** NIGP Professional Development Class, Austin, GSD  
**28** Commission Meeting, Austin  
**27** Thanksgiving (holiday)  
**28** Holiday

### December

**10** Commission Meeting, Austin  
**25** Christmas Day (holiday)



## Letters

This is a letter of gratitude and appreciation for the efforts of **Manuel Ortiz** and **Turk Gonzales** of Iraan. On April 10 at 2:30 p.m. they both stopped to help us on I-10 east of Van Horn between mile post markers 291 and 292.

We had an awning on our RV that the severe winds were getting under and causing it to come unwound. Without their help we would have lost our awning completely.

Both men were so polite, courteous and so very helpful. You can be very proud of these two gentlemen for being so professional and kind to travelers of your great state.

**Eldon and Lorrene Davis**  
Mesa, Ariz.

*Manuel Ortiz is a Maintenance Tech II, and Arturo "Turk" Gonzales Jr. is Assistant Roadway Maintenance Supervisor and a Maintenance Tech IV. Both work in the Iraan Maintenance Section in the Odessa District.*

On April 21, **Chris A. Johnson** assisted me with a flat tire. It was about 2 p.m. And about 85 degrees outside. This was my first day on a new job and I was in a big pickle. Chris was so nice and helpful, he really saved the day for me. I would really appreciate it if some sort of praise or thanks would be given to Chris.

**Bart Wilson**  
Challenger Freight Systems Inc.  
Grapevine  
Chris Johnson is Roadway Maintenance

*Crew Chief in the Northside Maintenance Office in the Dallas District.*

I would like to bring to your attention the outpouring of gifts, cash, food, groceries and such concerns that words can't express from so many people from your district office and area office in Abilene as well as all of the offices in the Abilene District. My husband was ill for nearly 3 years with cancer. The people that worked with him were so good to him. They helped us in more ways than I can say. They went way above and beyond fellow employees. They were all friends and many were more like family. When Steve passed away on March 3, the response from them was immediate and constant for several weeks. We are so grateful for all that was done and for what will be done. It is overwhelming that such a large company can still have such a genuine concern and love for each other. We are truly blessed that Steve worked with so many kind, loving and generous people.

**Pam Goble**

*Steve Goble, an Engineering Tech/Materials and Processing Inspector, worked in the Abilene District laboratory for three years, one month.*

On May 13, we drove U.S. 287 south from near Amarillo to Decatur when we took U.S. 380 to head for Dallas.

We do not know when we have enjoyed a drive more than we did this one. The entire route was a glorious show of colors from wildflowers. We don't ever recall seeing so much Indian paintbrush. The mixture of colors ranging from white, yellow, red-orange, blue, pink as the various flowers blended just bombarded our senses. It is an experience we shan't forget.

Then following I-20 to Tyler, we marveled at the vivid and intense yellow of the coreopsis, from the palest of pinks to rich medium pink of the primrose. Near Tyler, the white to medium pink to near red of the phlox was truly lovely.

The next leg took us across Texas 31 to I-35 south to New Braunfels and here, too, we thrilled at Indian blanket and other wildflowers. We feel that our trip into Texas couldn't have come at a better time. We are

grateful that Texas doesn't cut during the flowering and seeding season. Hooray for Lady Bird Johnson!

This letter comes to express our thanks and appreciation to your department for not cutting or mowing the median and along the edges of the highway. What a tragedy it would have been to have missed all of that beauty. Thank you, thank you for not mowing.

**Art and Dottie Tillinghast**  
Boulder City, Nev.

I was returning to Fort Davis from a vacation when I blew one of the tires on the back of my motor home near Sheffield on Interstate 10. As I was surveying the situation, several Highway Department trucks on their way back to Iraan stopped and offered their assistance. In a very short time, thanks to their help, I was on my way. The men who stopped were **Manuel Ortiz, Clay Monroe, Rosalio Montejano** and **Turk Gonzalez**.

They would take nothing except a thank you for their help. Without their help I would have had to try to get road service out of Iraan or Fort Stockton and would have been a delayed a number of hours. Please let me once again thank these men.

**Larry C. Wingert**  
Fort Davis

*Manuel Ortiz, Maintenance Tech II, Clay Monroe, Maintenance Tech II, Rosalio Montejano, Maintenance Tech IV, and Turk Gonzalez, Maintenance Tech IV, work in the Iraan Maintenance Section, Odessa District.*

## Retirements

### March

**Brownwood**  
Robert B. Ray, Engineering Technician I, 11 years

### April

**Beaumont**  
Carl D. Aplin, Maintenance Technician III, 10 years

### Houston

Wayne Jones, Director III, 30 years

### Yoakum

Frank Torres, Maintenance Technician II, 30 years

### May

#### Abilene

William L. Wells Jr., Maintenance Technician V, 22 years

#### Houston

Augustine Mendoza, Maintenance Technician IV, 30 Years

#### San Antonio

Leroy T. Walther, Engineer III, 40 years

#### Information Systems

Vince Dungan, Program Administrator III, 29 years

#### Transportation Planning and Programming

Bobby F. Lester, Engineering Technician III, 10 years

## In Memoriam

**Tiburcio S. Aguilar**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Del Rio District in 1977, died March 13, 1997.

**Guillermo F. Cantu**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the San Antonio District in 1986, died Jan. 11, 1997.

**Gustavo Cavazos**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Pharr District in 1992, died March 2, 1997.

**Arvin R. Duke**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Atlanta District in 1975, died Feb. 17, 1997.

**Robert Gentry**, Engineering Technician IV, retired from the Yoakum District in 1975, died Feb. 10, 1997.

**Gilbert A. Gerstenberg**, Engineering Technician IV, retired from the Waco District in 1970, died March 10, 1997.

**Robert D. Gibson**, Maintenance Technician II, retired from the Atlanta District in 1983, died March 12, 1997.

**Betty J. Graber**, Environmental Quality Specialist, retired from the Houston District in 1995, died Feb. 14, 1997.

**Enrique Guerra**, Maintenance Technician II, retired from the Corpus Christi District in 1975, died Feb. 5, 1997.

**Robert L. Hardy**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Beaumont District in 1974, died March 25, 1997.

**Roberto Hernandez**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Odessa District in 1984, died Feb. 8, 1997.

**Betty M. Jankegi**, Key Entry Operator IV, retired from the Materials and Tests Division in 1987, died March 1, 1997.

**Demp Kearney**, Accounts Examiner III, retired from the Dallas District in 1971, died March 22, 1997.

**George H. Kypke**, Maintenance Construction Superintendent II, retired from the El Paso District in 1984, died April 17, 1997.

**Lois J. Marsh**, Accounts Examiner I, retired from the Budget and Finance Division in 1979, died Jan. 5, 1997.

**Victor W. Massey**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Austin District in 1976, died Jan. 27, 1997.

**Delton T. McClane**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Waco District in 1978, died Feb. 8, 1997.

**William J. Meyer**, Maintenance Technician II, retired from the Waco District in 1996, died Jan. 28, 1997.

**Albert R. Mikoska**, Engineering Technician V, retired from the Paris District in 1982, died May 13, 1997.

**Gordon R. Miller**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Beaumont District in 1987, died Feb. 12, 1997.

**Jose S. Molina**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Corpus Christi District in 1974, died Feb. 18, 1997.

**Albert S. Potts**, Engineering Technician IV, retired from the Lufkin District in 1972, died March 24, 1997.

**Samuel A. Rash**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Abilene District in 1989, died Jan. 24, 1997.

**Arthur J. Rootz**, Engineering Specialist I, retired from the Beaumont District in 1993, died Feb. 28, 1997.

**Jake W. Skaer**, Engineering Technician III, retired from the Dallas District in 1995, died Jan. 26, 1997.

**James W. Smith**, Engineering Technician V, retired from the Waco District in 1982, died March 1, 1997.

**Leland C. Sorrell**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Corpus Christi District in 1990, died Feb. 24, 1997.

**Henry W. Tieson**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the San Antonio District in 1975, died March 25, 1997.

**Derral L. Wall**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from the Brownwood District in 1982, died March 14, 1997.

**Thomas J. Walthall**, District Engineer, retired from the San Antonio District in 1987, died Nov. 25, 1996.



## Letters

I would strongly like to extend my appreciation for the employees of the state of Texas for making it possible for me to have the open-heart surgery. I've been needing this surgery for a while. But I had to wait until it was the right time to do it. And when I was told by doctors that it was time to do the surgery now, I didn't really know what to do, because I only has 56 hours of sick leave and 42 hours of vacation time. I told my supervisor and assistant supervisor I had to go in the hospital the next day for surgery. And they got the sick leave I needed to do the surgery. So, I would especially like to thank **Johnnie Moore**, maintenance supervisor, and **John Allred**, assistant supervisor, for pushing to get the hours I needed for surgery and recovery. Again, I want to thank all of the state employees for making this possible, and donating sick-leave hours.

**Claudie and Patsy Horn**  
Big Spring

*Johnnie Moore, Maintenance Supervisor, John Allred, Assistant Maintenance Supervisor, and Claudie Horn, Maintenance Technician, all work in the Big Spring Maintenance Office in the Abilene District.*

.....

I read your article "History in the Texas Highway Department" in the May 1997 issue of Transportation News. I enjoyed the article about workmen having to wear a badge to be recognized as an employee of the Texas Highway Department. This happened in 1930 - would you believe that is 67 years ago? These old badges must be lost and very few could be found - as a collector of sorts I have two of these old relics in my collections (as shown at the bottom of this letter). A bit of trivia for your information.

**Ben J. Lednicky**

*Ben Lednicky worked as a landscape architect for the former D-18, which is now the Traffic Operations Division. He retired in 1976.*

.....

I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate your staff. Two weeks ago my purse fell out onto the ferry boat. But I had no idea.

My friends and boyfriend and I went to Port Aransas for the weekend. Upon arriving to Port Aransas that Friday, we drove onto the ferry boat. We got out and were overlooking the boat. Meantime, my purse fell out of the car onto the boat.

When I realized my purse was missing, I thought I'd lost it somewhere in route, from Austin, during our stops along the way, or that it had been stolen.

My main concern was that I had all of my medication in my purse. I take thyroid medication and I have to have this medicine to live. I just can't tell you how much I appreciate the people in your group who took the time to locate me. I'm so thankful one of your staff turned it in. From what I understand, he was new, that says a lot to me. Forgive me if I misspell anyone's name, but I'd like to thank the following people: **Felix Trevino II, Tanacius Martinex, Pablo Rustos, and Ernesto Hinojosa.**

Kudos to everyone. God bless you all. Thank you for turning in my purse.

**Sherrie Hamblin**  
Austin

*Supervisor Felix Trevino II, Deckhand Atanacio Martiez, Captain Paublo Bustos and Ferry Manager Ernest Hinojosa work in the Port Aransas Ferry Office in the Corpus Christi District.*

.....

On Tuesday, April 29, I was on my way into town from my residence in Oakridge Terrace, Harker Heights, when I had a flat tire on Fuller Lane just short of the stop sign at Cedar Knob.

A gentleman driving a white pickup with Texas Highway Department logo stopped - directed traffic around me - and proceeded to change the tire for me. I have been unable to ascertain the gentleman's name.

I am an older citizen and am very appreciative of the help I received and wish I could thank this "Good Samaritan," personally.

I don't know whether you have any way of knowing who the gentleman was - if there is a department bulletin board or any other way to reach the person - but I did want you to know of the kindness and helpfulness of an individual connected with the department.

**Mack Taylor Jr.**  
Harker Heights

*This "Good Samaritan" was Tommy Brazzil, Maintenance Supervisor in the Waco District's Killeen Office.*

.....

I wish to commend **John Jaquez Jr.** and **Jan Snell** for their roadside assistance on April 13. On that day, my daughter and I were driving U.S. 385 south towards Odessa. Our car stopped, out of gas. Soon thereafter, Mr. Jaquez and Ms. Snell came by for assistance. They eased our anxiety, determined that we were OK otherwise and explained that they would bring us gas within a half hour. Mr. Jaquez came back with the gas as planned and followed our car to assure our safe arrive at the closes gas station.

Mr. Jaquez and Ms. Snell demonstrated a level of professionalism and courtesy of which your department can be very proud. We are appreciative of the assistance they provided.

**Sandra Epstein**  
Kensington, Md.

*John Jaquez Jr. is a Maintenance Tech IV and Jan Snell is a Maintenance Tech IV in the Andrews Maintenance Section, Odessa District.*

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We would like to thank all you people who work to keep the roadsides so beautiful this time of the year.

We make trips from Arlington to Possum Kingdom Lake frequently, and the flowers blooming along the highway are a lovely sight to behold!

We really appreciate your efforts to keep Texas roads decorated with these pretty wildflowers. Thanks a bunch!

**Graham and Polly Schadt**  
Arlington

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