

# Transportation NEWS

August 1996 Volume 21 Number 12

## SAT gets aggressive on ozone District, partners take steps to maintain air-quality compliance

**Mary T. Richards**  
San Antonio District

The San Antonio District (SAT) has taken an aggressive approach to maintain San Antonio's air quality by taking actions that will help prevent the formation of ground-level ozone.

This proactive stance started about two years ago when the city of San Antonio appointed members to the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Air Quality Task Force. SAT District Engineer John Kelly asked to have a TxDOT representative on that task force. Kelly wanted TxDOT to take an active role since the

department's business is transportation and its actions can contribute to the formation of ozone. He also wanted the department to be aware that it is watched by the public and that citizens may have the opinion that "if TxDOT isn't doing anything, then why should I?"

In 1995, the committee became the city's Air Quality Task Force, and SAT's Environmental Engineer was appointed to a two-year term. The same year she was also appointed chair of the subcommittee responsible for public education and public relations on ozone awareness.

Working with the Texas Natural Resource

conservation Commission (TNRCC), SAT has created both voluntary and mandatory guidelines for employees and made special provisions for contractors to reduce emissions on days when high ozone levels are expected. The district was the first business in the city to voluntarily use cleaner-burning reformulated gasoline. In addition to using the cleaner-burning gas, district offices in San Antonio, New Braunfels and Floresville each have a liquefied petroleum gas refueling station for alternative-fuel vehicles. District personnel are not allowed to refuel vehicles until noon on Ozone Action Days. Employees also are asked to delay refueling personal vehicles until late afternoon. And, on Ozone Action Days, employees are asked to postpone trips, including lunch-hour trips, and to carpool or use public transportation when possible.

Contractors are also compelled to help improve air quality. Mowing at Bexar County TxDOT offices is banned on Ozone Action Days, and highway mowing contractors are not allowed to mow or use small gasoline engines inside Loop 1604 until after noon. And, construction and maintenance contractors are not allowed to close main lanes on Ozone Action Days if these closures could cause congestion.

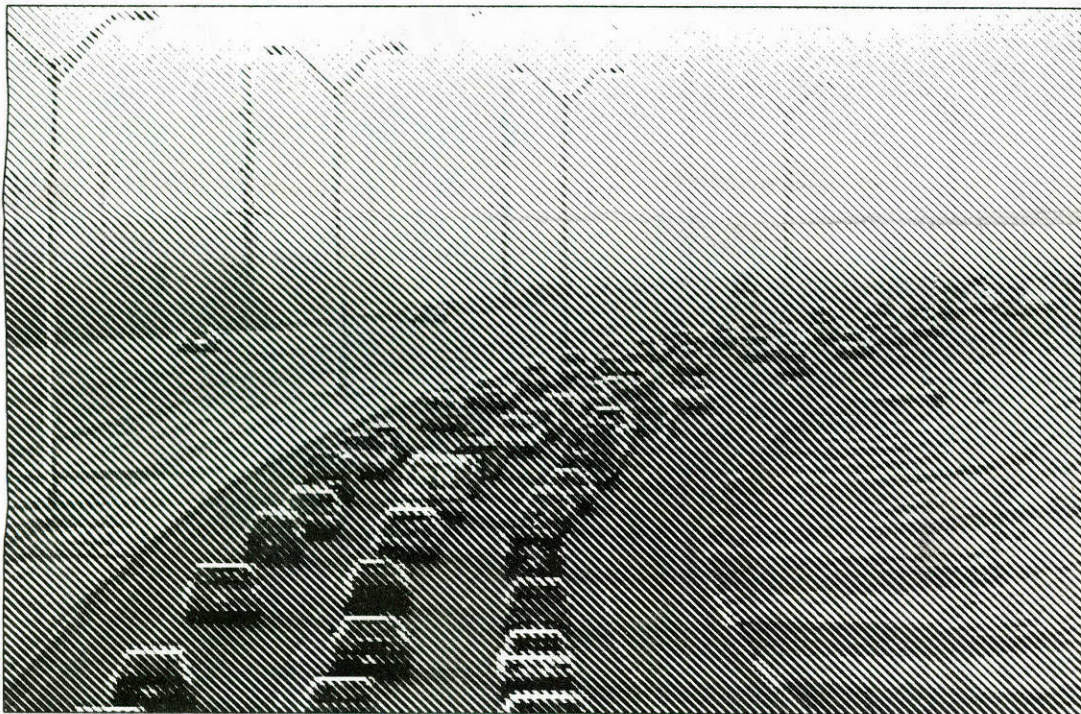
In addition to using the district's new TransGuide system to inform drivers of Ozone Action days, TxDOT has produced several public service announcements about ozone formation and what can be done to help keep San Antonio's air clean.

TxDOT is funding a research project by the University of Texas Center for Transportation Research to study the effects of traffic congestion on air quality. and SAT has proposed a research project to study the effects of congestion along the Loop 410 corridor and the Loop 410-Interstate 10 interchange during lane closures.

SAT also employs a general note in plans disallowing lane closures that could increase traffic congestion. It also restricts the use of cut-back asphalts and solvent-based paints. This note has been mainly used on projects on the north side of San Antonio where congestion is greatest.

Local contractors have cooperative in helping to maintain San Antonio's clean air

Please see Ozone, page 14

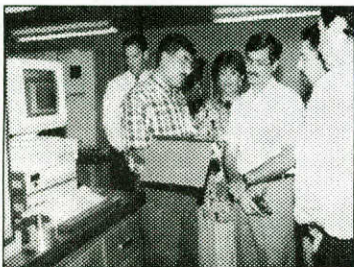


San Antonio, like Austin (pictured here), currently meets federal air quality standards, including those for ozone. Aggressive measures implemented by SAT will help make sure the area continues to do so. San Antonio is the largest city in the United States to meet federal ozone standards.

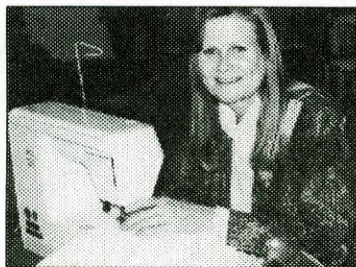
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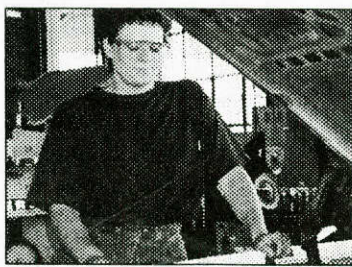
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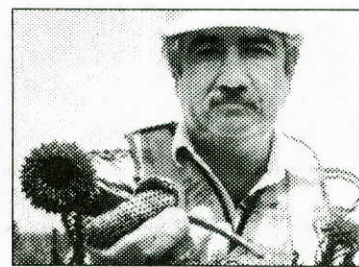
Coordination, cooperation and innovation give a boost to transportation in the border area. **Page 5**



Linda Sissel's friends and co-workers in the Abilene District know she's a talented sew-and-sew. **Page 8**



Dinah Huse is the first — and only — female mechanic in the Waco District. **Page 9**



Instead of pesticides, the Lubbock District is using weevils to fight the milk thistle. **Page 10**

**Q** I read with interest the story in June's Transportation News ("Trash-Off gets trash off state's roadsides"). However, I was very disappointed when I read the sign in the picture accompanying the article. I'm referring to the Adopt-a-Highway sign that identified the Travel and Information Division as being part of the Highway Department.

It appears to me to be a serious lack of sensitivity on the part of those who prepared the article to those of us who worked for other agencies before September 1991, and the fact that we are all part of TxDOT now. I do not mean to belittle anyone's prior service in the Highway Department or the Department of Highways and Public Transportation. I am certainly proud of my previous service with the Texas Aeronautics Commission and the Department of Aviation.

This situation does appear to give at least unofficial TxDOT approval for continuing a public image as the Highway Department and makes me question the commitment of TxDOT's Senior Management Team to us becoming a true department of transportation.

I am curious to know what steps are being taken in this regard.

**Alan Schmidt**  
Aviation Division

**A** Alan, thank you for your e-mail concerning the Adopt-a-Highway program, highway departments, and departments of transportation.

I believe all of us are serious and sensitive to the issue of this agency being a true department of transportation. I also believe

## Dallas Courtesy Patrol driver dies following accident

Johnny Banks, a Dallas Courtesy Patrol driver, died July 7 from injuries sustained in an on-the-job accident.

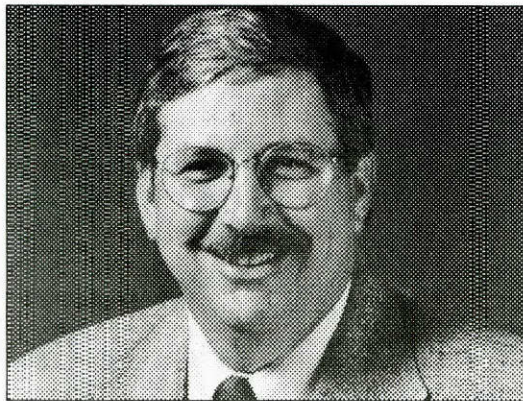
Banks and fellow Courtesy Patrol member Eddie Walker were struck by a truck while parked on the shoulder of Interstate 30 in Dallas after assisting a motorist.

Banks was taken to Methodist Hospital in Dallas. He died two days later. Walker, who has been with TxDOT for four years, received minor injuries.

Both Banks and Walker were recognized for three years of accident- and violation-free records at the Dallas District's Safe Operators Banquet this year.

Banks is survived by his fiancée, Mary, and three children: Marcus, 14; Shundra, 10; and Levander, 4.

Cards or contributions to Banks' family should be sent to Freeway Management Projects Office, attention Steve Poole, P.O. Box 3067, Dallas, 75221-3067. ★



Bill Burnett

## Ask Bill

each member of the Senior Management Team is sensitive to the way that we present the department to the public, and to ourselves.

In the photo you mention, Travel and Information Division employees are pictured at the stretch of highway near Austin that they have been cleaning for years. When they adopted this piece of highway, we were still the Highway Department and the sign has been in place since that time. To keep costs down, the department changes signs only as needed. I am sure this is why the sign still refers to us as the Highway Department.

I thank you for sharing your concerns with me, and promise that all the SMT is dedicated to delivering the true complete transportation message.

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**Q** Why don't we use the state emblem on our letterhead and cards like some of the other state agencies? I am proud of being a state employee and like the emblem that is recognized by people of the state of Texas. The new TxDOT logo could have been used in conjunction with the state emblem to show we are still state employees. Now people think we are federal employees.

Secondly, when the department replaces a freeway guide sign, would it be possible to add the local "pet" name to the "official" freeway name? The pet name is usually the one used by traffic reporters.

**Sharon Johnson**  
Houston District

**A** To answer your first question, we don't use the state emblem in conjunction with the department logo for a couple of reasons. When we adopted our new logo, we wanted a simple, uncluttered look. To that end, we decided that it would be used alone. As far as your contention that people think we are a federal agency, this has never been identified as a problem.

To answer the second part of your question, according to the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (TMUTCD) roadways can only be signed by highway number or official name. TxDOT assigns the route number, and the official name general-

ly comes from the city or county (whoever has jurisdiction), which then names the street and, in conjunction with the post office, assigns the street address numbers. TxDOT is prohibited by state law from naming any part of the state highway system (this would include Interstates and U.S. highways, too) for any person, place or event. Therefore, TxDOT cannot place alternative or "what-everybody-calls-it" street names or designations on signs until the local jurisdiction so decrees it.

Once the highway is outside of the city limits, TxDOT cannot assign any designation except the official highway number.

As for those highways such as the Lloyd Bentsen Highway, Vietnam Veterans Highway, 10th Mountain Division Highway, etc., those highway names were granted by the Texas Legislature and TxDOT was directed to erect signs at appropriate intervals.

County roads sometime appear to have "cute" or "pet" names, but that is the official name. These unusual names were typically granted at the request of the adjoining landowner(s) since sometimes they were the only people living on that road, or the road was named for pioneers, geographic locations or events.

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**Q** Safety vests worn by many public service agencies have their name in reflective material on the back (i.e. EMS, POLICE). Would it be possible for the districts to also obtain vests with TxDOT on the back? This would make TxDOT workers easily identifiable at accident and construction sites (especially at night) and would also let the public know that our employees pitch in on all types of occasions, from debris pickup after natural disasters to traffic control following automobile mishaps.

**John Hurt**  
Austin District

**A** Yes, it would be possible for districts to obtain safety vests with TxDOT on the back. However, in the examples you have mentioned, employees are already required to wear hardhats which identify them as TxDOT workers. During the day, reflective material would not make them any more identifiable or visible. This leaves us with those who work nights. We have investigated the cost for this add-on option and determined that we could expect to pay approximately \$50,000 per year, based on an additional cost of approximately \$2.50 per vest. The department is always interested in employee safety but I do not believe the extra cost is justified for the smaller percentage of workers who would use the vests.

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Got a question for Bill? Write to him in care of the Public Information Office, Dewitt C. Greer Building. Although we will withhold identification upon request, all queries must include your name, work address and phone number. ★

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# Captain likes his waterbound life

Jim Turner calls pilot house on Galveston-Port Bolivar ferry 'best office in town'

Sea captains have always had a certain allure for me. From real-life naval heroes and swashbucklers like John Paul Jones and Captain Kidd to reel-life seafaring heroes like Clark Gable and Errol Flynn, the folks who sail the bounding main evoke in me romantic daydreams of faraway tropical isles at sunset, salt water stinging one's face and hearty sailors braving violent storms, prehistoric sea monsters and hordes of pirates.

So you'd think I'd work for the Navy and not the Texas Department of Transportation, right?

Not necessarily. So I took my cue from Dorothy in the "Wizard of Oz," who said, "The next time I go looking for happiness I won't go any farther than my own backyard," and I found my dashing sea captain at the Galveston-Port Bolivar Ferry Operation, which is, believe it or not, a big part of TxDOT's backyard.

Jim Turner is one of 13 master pilots who, as a ferryboat captain, is responsible for transporting people and goods to and from Galveston Island and Port Bolivar toll free 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. With his subtle Virginia accent, courteous but shy demeanor and quiet command presence, Turner cut an impressive figure as he walked me through the daily pace of being responsible for crew, passengers and cargo on a ferry.

"I've got the best office in town," he told me as we took a look around the pilot house. "The view always changes, the weather always changes and while I'm piloting this ferry, I'm in my own world. This is really a low-stress job," he continued, "if you enjoy being on the water and running a boat."

"Now, I'm not saying there aren't situations where it's stressful, like when you're having navigational problems because there are 20 shrimp boats in your ferry route or two passengers have just gotten into it because one of them bumped the other one's car," he laughed. "But I like to think of this kind of stress as good stress."

Turner's typical day begins at 0310 hours (that's 3:10 a.m. for you civilians) when his alarm clock goes off. At 0400, he's on his way, by bicycle (he's a true multimodal believer), to his "office" where he showers and changes into his uniform. At 0500, Turner is on the vessel, making sure he has a crew in place and that everything is squared away. At 0530, he leaves on his first crossing, which takes about 14 minutes one way.

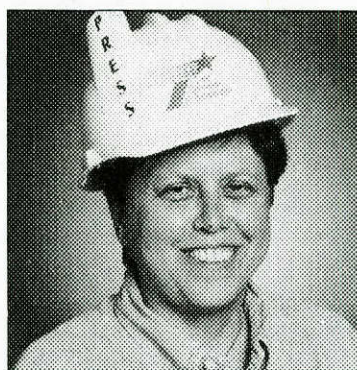
Turner and his crew of six work a Friday-Tuesday schedule. "We always think of ourselves as a team," he said, "because regardless of whether you're the captain or a deckhand, the job doesn't get done without everyone's performance."

"As the captain, I'm the team leader, so I get the ball rolling," he continued. "My team makes me look good, or bad, based on their performance, and I'm the guy who has to answer for that performance."

They all work for D.K. "Danny" Daniel, ferry operations manager, until the ferry leaves the dock. "When we leave the dock," Turner said, "we accept responsibility for the entire ferry — passengers, cargo, everything. On the water, we answer to the Coast Guard. It's a shared responsibility."

In addition to the captain, a position which requires a master's license, Turner's crew consists of a mate, or first deckhand, an unlicensed position; second deckhand, or apprentice, who possesses an able seaman ticket; third deckhand, an unlicensed position; chief engineer, also licensed; and an oiler, an unlicensed crew member who assists the engineer. All crewmembers hold merchant marine documents while many deckhands hold mate's or master's licenses, but it isn't a requirement.

How do you get to be a crewmember? Turner received most of his training with the Coast Guard; other ferry operations personnel served in the U.S. Navy. Private industry offers training as do many colleges and universities. Although there are no academic requirements to recertify, Turner must take radar refresher courses every five years. There is also a requirement, as part of the master's license, to attend firefighting school.



Eloise Lundgren

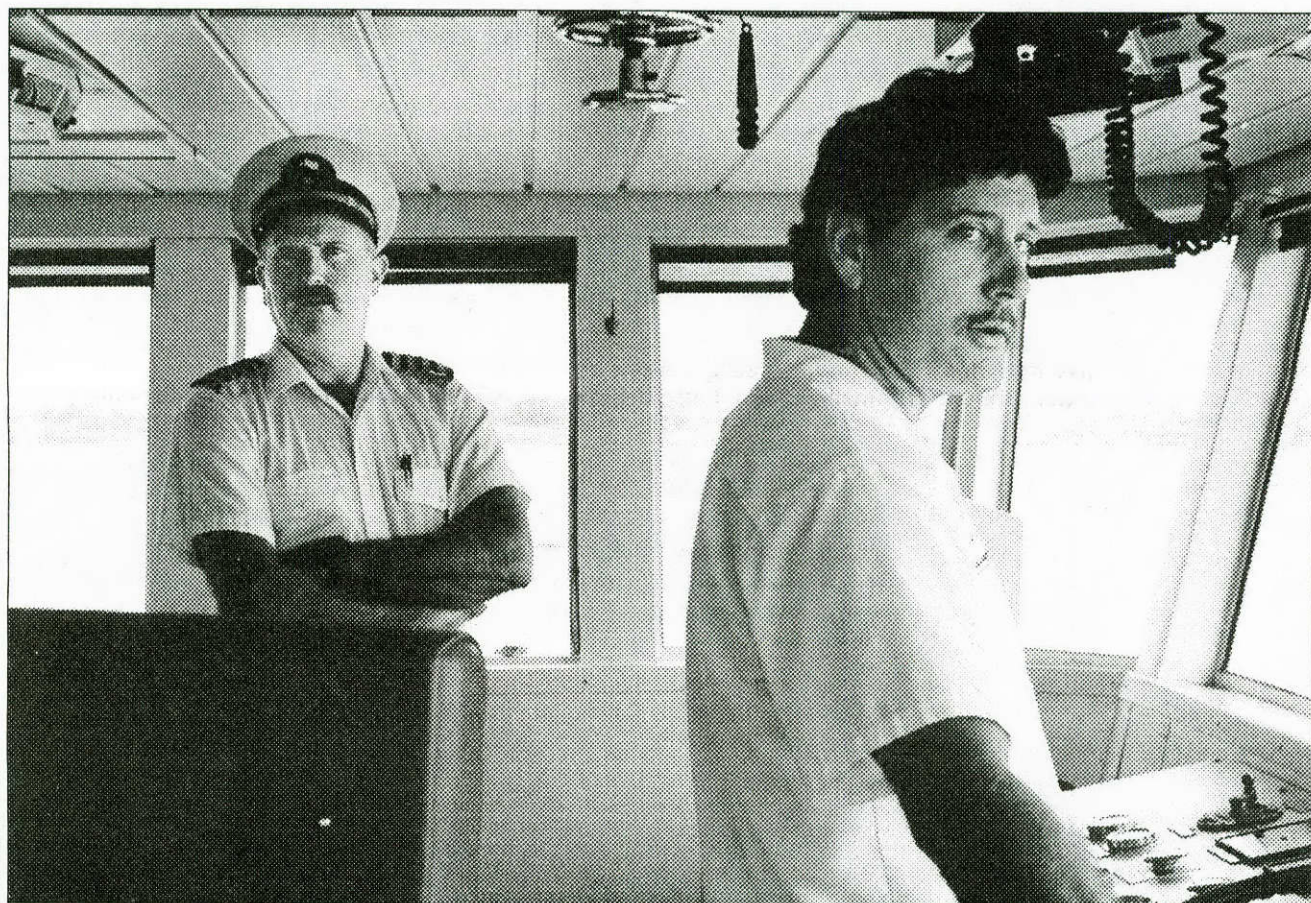
## A Day in the Life

When the ferries "Robert C. Lanier" and "DeWitt C. Greer" were commissioned, Turner underwent 16 hours of hands-on training so he'd be able to pilot these vessels' new propulsion systems, which do not use propellers or rudders like traditional systems.

"The new vessels employ a propulsion system," Turner explained. "Thrust is obtained from two vertical cycloidal propulsors, one at each end of the vessel, which can immediately direct thrust in any direction."

"The single saving grace of this system," he continued, "is that a ferry can make a 360-degree turn or move sideways without requiring any headway, or forward motion."

The new system works in theory, according to Turner, much like



Ferry captains Jim Turner, left, and Jim Rippard, discuss the events of the day before changing shifts.

a helicopter. "The blades are sticking down vertically in the water, spinning like an eggbeater," he said, "whereas in the traditional system, water is forced across the rudder and then the rudder moves the vessel in the opposite direction."

The vertical/cycloidal propulsion system has been around in Europe and other parts of the world since the 1930s, Turner said, "it's just new to North America."

Traditional systems require a lot more training, Turner told me. "With this user-friendly system," he teased me, "I'll bet I could have you driving this Voith-Schneider vessel with about eight hours training."

The newer vessels are much safer, too, with better ventilation systems and more comfortable crew sections. The three other ferries, "Ross Shaw Sterling," "Eli H. Thornton Jr.," and "Gibb Gilchrist," are still traditional ferries. The "Sterling" will be replaced by the \$8.5 million "Ray Stoker Jr." and it is anticipated that a replacement vessel for the "Thornton" will be funded in fiscal year '97.

The crews aren't assigned to a particular ferry; they rotate, and each boat is unique. "You could build two vessels side by side," Turner said, "and they'd handle differently."

Please see Turner, page 15

# Mayfield pursues songwriting dream

Jobs have ranged from secretary to laborer, but love of music remains constant

**Jeff Carmack**  
Public Information Office

Janet Mayfield, who describes herself as "a girl from Ohio who wound up in a ranching family and working across the street from the Texas Capitol," is an administrative secretary in the Civil Rights Division by profession. But her heart belongs to her music.

By day, Mayfield's responsibilities include paperwork related to complaints to the division, upkeep of the division's library and other tasks.

She's been in Texas "on and off for 20 years," and with the department for four years. But through all her travels (and travails), one constant has been music.

"I've been playing flute 35 years. I've had 21 years of private lessons," Mayfield said. "I can play any woodwind instrument — oboe, saxophone. I play piano a little bit, and I have a pretty good alto voice," she said.

She said she always carries her flute with her, even at work. "When other people go on coffee break, I go out and play my flute," she said. When Austin's main office building was evacuated in June following a bomb threat, Mayfield played her flute while other employees chatted, smoked or snuck off for another cup of coffee.

The Ohio native was a music education major at Ohio Wesleyan. But the sheepskin eluded her. "Twenty years ago this month, I took off on a tour; it was the last term of my senior year," Mayfield said. "I toured the United States for about four years — I worked at Jimmy Carter's national election headquarters for two months as a secretary — then continued to travel until I came to work for TxDOT."

Her first trip to Austin was eventful but not exactly what she had in mind. "I had worked highway construction in Ohio," she recalls. "I was a truck driver, a laborer; I shoveled asphalt, and I wore steel-toed boots and a hard hat. I came to Austin on a bus in 1976 to work as a laborer." She ended up getting her flute stolen, and two days later she left town for Los Angeles to be a musician.

Once there, "I worked as a musician, did some session work, some backup singing," she said, "just little gigs."

When her second child was born she took some time off from the performing side of being a musician. "I 'retired' when my children were growing up, for about 16 years, but now I'm interested in being known as a musician again," she said.

To this end, she's trying to get back into writing and performing. She took part in a

## Enhancement meeting set Aug. 28

The Texas Transportation Commission will hold a special meeting at 1 p.m. Aug. 28 in the Dewitt C. Greer Building to select enhancement projects for the third call. One person per project will be allowed to address the commission for three minutes. If the meeting doesn't end Wednesday, it will be continued the next day. ★

global songwriters conference in Austin last year, and did a brief guest set at Threadgill's in Austin in mid-July.

Mayfield would like other artists to record her music. "I've tried selling some songs to a couple of local artists," she said. "I told Kelly Willis about a song I'd written

"I have a lot of hope in my songwriting. A copyright's good for 100 years, so even if I don't see any good out of it, maybe my grandkids will."

Janet Mayfield

and she said she'd like to hear it."

She comes by her musical nature honestly. "I'm from a really musical family," she said. "My mom was a musician, and my grandfather started a group in Mansfield, Ohio, that is now the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra Chorus," she said. "He was a welder by day and a musician by night." Mayfield's maternal great-great-grandmother was an opera singer in France, she said.

While she pursues her muse, she still hangs on to her day job. "I've always tried to be in business for myself," she said, "but there's nothing like a paycheck from the state, and days off, and benefits."

She has yet to sell any of her songs, although "I've been recognized by my peers." Through it all, she remains upbeat. "I know a lot of musicians and almost all of them have full-time jobs. It's the Austin way," she said. "It's accepted to be an artist or a musician — not making a lot of money at it but maintaining a love of art and music."

Mayfield believes Austin is the perfect place for her right now. "I like the Austin music scene. It's really geared to the individual. There's a lot of support for songwriters, and there's lots of venues to play," she said.

Her family is partly responsible for her positive outlook. "They're supportive of my career, but they're tired of me not making any money," she laughs.

Mayfield has been married 16 years. "I married into a ranching family," she said, "and my mother-in-law's family owns a 16,000-acre ranch in Val Verde County. She sometimes uses these wide-open spaces for a practice studio. "I've had deer hunters tell me they could hear my flute all the way across the pasture," she said.

Though they may not realize it, her family has more than one reason to be supportive of her songwriting. "I have a lot of hope in my songwriting," she said. "A copyright's good for 100 years, so even if I don't see any good out of it, maybe my grandkids will." ★

## AVN helps host 14th annual airport operators' conference

More than 400 people, including airport managers, sponsors, consultants, speakers, TxDOT district staff and Aviation Division staff, attended the 14th Annual Texas Airport Operators Conference April 24-26 in Austin.

The conference kicked off with a record number of 49 companies exhibiting their latest products and services for the aviation industry.

Conference and workshop topics included record retention requirements, construction safety, an overview of the new Routine Airport Maintenance Program, the value of general aviation airports to a community, an update on the Texas State Block Grant Program, an overview of small airport master planning, a session on the business perspective on the importance of general aviation, and a presentation on the plans for expansion in the Mexico market with the anticipated NAFTA-generated business.

David Fulton, TxDOT's Director of Aviation, and Otis Welch, manager of FAA's Texas Airport Development Office, held a listening session, fielding questions and accepting suggestions from conference attendees on how TxDOT and FAA can better serve them.

Edward J. Swearingen, chairman of Sino Swearingen Aircraft Company of San

Antonio, was awarded TxDOT's 1996 Career Achievement Award for his lifetime contribution to aviation. Swearingen is a leader in the market identification, design, development and manufacture of precedent-setting aircraft and aircraft modification programs.

Other awards presented at the conference were Airport of the Year to Odessa Schlemeyer Field; Airport Manager of the Year to L.A. Miller of Quanah Municipal; Most Improved Airport to Gainesville Municipal; and Airport Community Involvement of the Year Award to Cotulla Municipal.

Lloyd Shoppa, president of Bell Helicopter Textron Inc., was the keynote speaker at the awards banquet. Shoppa expedited the V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft through its assembly, functional checkout, and first flight. Tiltrotors can take off and land vertically like helicopters. By tilting their rotor systems forward, they can fly like an airplane at a cruise speed of 300 mph. Because the aircraft does not require a runway for take-off, it will be particularly useful in highly congested metropolitan areas.

The Texas Association of Airport Executives co-sponsors this conference each year with TxDOT. ★ *Contributed by the Aviation Division*

## Border Technology Exchange Program

# Better transportation through cooperation

**Vic Garcia**

International Relations Office

Since September 1994, TxDOT has administered a unique technology and information exchange program with Mexico. The Border Technology Exchange Program (BTEP), a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) sponsored program, also fulfills a fundamental objective envisioned by the U.S.-Mexican Joint Working Committee on Transportation Planning (JWC): improving transportation systems in the border region through coordination, cooperation and innovation.

The JWC, formed soon after passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, comprises key federal transportation officials and representatives from the 10 U.S.-Mexican border states. Its mission is to develop a binational transportation planning and programming process. BTEP is an important part of that mission.

BTEP began with \$25,000 from the FHWA to each Southwest U.S. border state for transportation technology and information exchange activities with the six Mexican border states. These funds, along with additional allocations in 1995, have sparked the beginning of a regular exchange of planning information, expertise and technology in all fields of transportation infrastructure.

Through this program, Texas carries out a number of activities with its four Mexican border states, including official visits, planning meetings, technical exchanges, training courses, conferences and Value Engineering activities. Moreover, as the U.S. cochair for the Technology Exchange Subcommittee of the JWC, International Relations Office (IRO) Director Henry Nevares coordinates activities involving all 10 U.S.-Mexican border states. Although IRO officially administers BTEP, other TxDOT divisions and districts including Design, Transportation Planning and Programming, Materials and Tests, and the border districts of El Paso, Odessa, Laredo and Pharr have been co-sponsors and participants in many BTEP activities. Binational training and Value Engineering (V.E.) are two of the program's focuses which have proven especially successful.

### Value Engineering

VE seeks to maximize the value of transportation infrastructure projects. It usually involves a study of a proposed project by a multidisciplinary team to identify function-cost-worth principles. TxDOT's Design Division (DES) and IRO jointly sponsored two VE workshops in June 1995 to introduce TxDOT's Mexican counterparts and border district personnel to the basic principles of VE.

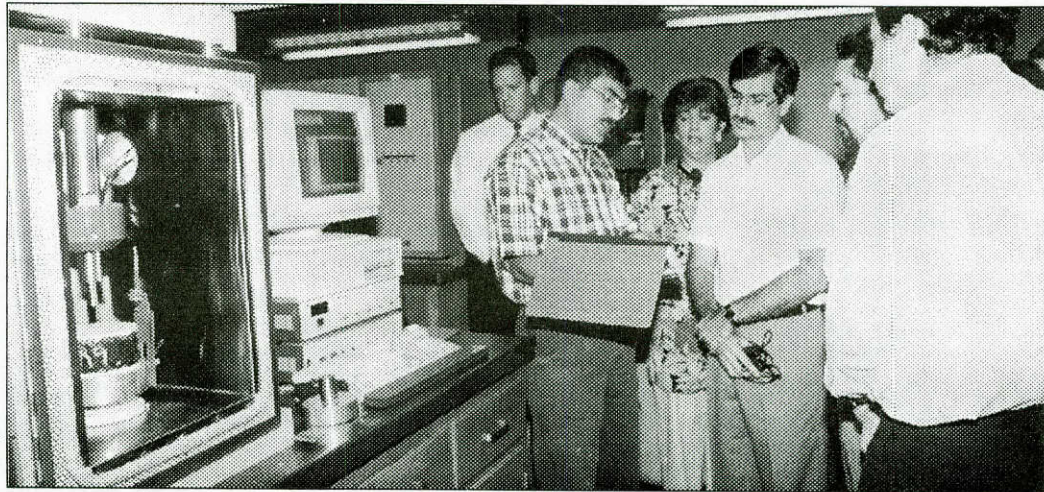
Engineers from all 10 U.S.-Mexican border states were invited to attend these workshops in El Paso and Laredo. DES and IRO also held four-day VE courses in El Paso and Laredo in November 1995 to offer a more in-depth study of the process. During the Laredo course, a combined team of TxDOT and Mexican engineers performed study on a proposed bridge between Coahuila and Texas. They recommended improvements and cost savings of more than \$500,000.

In January, TxDOT carried out a VE study of the U.S. 77/83 interchange in the Pharr District. This included, for the first time, the participation of Mexican engineers as observers of a full-blown study. The study resulted in recommendations of \$7 million in savings on a \$42 million project. The results led the states of Chihuahua and Tamaulipas to request TxDOT's assistance in organizing studies in their states with combined teams of TxDOT and Mexican engineers.

The first of these ground-breaking studies held in Mexico combined a team of TxDOT and Mexican engineers April 15-19, 1996, to evaluate a proposed 33-kilometer toll highway around Chihuahua City. The 16-member multidisciplinary team was directed by VE consultant Clyde Slemmer. Five TxDOT engineers and one FHWA engineer representing roadway design, pavement design, traffic operations and bridge design traveled to Chihuahua to participate. From Chihuahua, 10 experts from the fields of roadway design, structures, traffic operations, pavement design, geotechnics and financing also participated on the VE team.

Luis Herrera Gonzalez, director of Communications and Public Works for Chihuahua, said the study's recommendations exceeded his expectations. Overall, the VE team made recommendations resulting in 28 million pesos (about \$3.78 million) in estimated construction cost savings on a 167 million peso (about \$22.57 million) project. Herrera was also impressed by the spirit of cooperation and teamwork shown by the binational VE team, as well as by the results produced in such a short time.

TxDOT hopes eventually to sponsor joint VE studies with its Mexican counterparts in each of the other three Mexican border states as well. VE represents one of the most persuasive arguments for technology exchange due to the immediate and tangible results. Greater project management efficiency is achieved through increased foresight and cooperation. Some projects' development cycles can be greatly reduced, and constructability, affordability and functionality are issues that can be translated into improvements and decreased costs in the field.



**The two-way exchange of information and technology benefits TxDOT and its Mexican counterparts. Since May 1995, the International Relations Office has coordinated 12 binational courses with Mexican and U.S. engineers from the border area participating.**

Although it may appear on the surface that the Mexican states are the primary beneficiaries of VE, TxDOT personnel have also benefited from their Mexican counterparts. In particular, TxDOT engineers are learning to maximize resources and funds for projects; cooperating in project planning along the border; developing working relationships with Mexican counterparts; and gaining a stronger understanding of transportation issues along the border and in Mexico.

### Binational training

Since May 1995, IRO has coordinated 12 binational courses with Mexican and U.S. engineers from the border area. These courses have been taught in Mexico and on the border by instructors from the FHWA, the National Highway Institute (NHI), the Pan American Institute of Highways, the Texas Engineering Extension Service and private industry. Some courses have been taught in English with simultaneous interpretation, while other courses have been taught and materials provided entirely in Spanish.

A recent binational course, sponsored by TxDOT's Office of Continuing Professional Development, was an NHI course titled, "Construction of Portland Cement Concrete Pavements." This course, attended by 21 Mexicans, 13 TxDOT personnel and one FHWA employee, was taught in the Laredo District June 10-12, 1996, by American Concrete Pavement Association instructors contracted by NHI. The course was taught in English with simultaneous interpretation provided by two professional interpreters.

Classes on bridge maintenance, highway design and quality control of materials are among the planned binational courses.

### Binational cooperation pays dividends

Cooperation is becoming increasingly important in Texas and Mexico as state and federal transportation budgets get tighter. Texas and Mexico face the same crisis of needs outstripping revenues. TxDOT can now fund only about 44 percent of the necessary road construction and maintenance in Texas each year. This situation is even graver in the four Mexican border states.

Binational training and Value Engineering activities as parts of TxDOT's technology exchange program with Mexico are proving to be very important tools in this process. We are hopeful the technical expertise we share with our Mexican counterparts will contribute to improved binational transportation planning and programming as envisioned by the JWC. Improved transportation systems in Mexico translate into a better overall North American system, ultimately benefitting TxDOT and Texas in the form of smoother flowing transportation and trade. ★

# New Braunfels tries one-way frontage roads

**Betty Taylor**  
San Antonio District

The New Braunfels Area Office is headed down a one-way street — and that's just the way they like it.

In a town rich in tradition and old habits, the New Braunfels Area Office recently made some major changes by converting the two-way frontage roads along Interstate 35 into one-way frontage roads.

New Braunfels Area Assistant Engineer Greg Malatek told the New Braunfels media that for the most part, calls have been positive.

"A few people felt like they have been inconvenienced," he said, but "... the majority of people are happy with it."

The one-way conversion of the frontage roads stretches between Loop 337 on the south side of town to Business 35 on the north side.

New Braunfels Area Engineer David Kopp said the conversion was necessary for several reasons.

"One-way frontage roads are safer than two-way frontage roads," he said. This is especially true, he said, under higher traffic volumes. "When the frontage roads were built, the low volumes of traffic allowed these roads to function adequately. In recent years, they have become increasingly dangerous in direct correlation with the number of cars that travel on them."

Kopp also said that the high number of tourists visiting New Braunfels practically forced the change.

"There are more than 2 million tourists visiting New Braunfels each year. These tourists come from cities such as San Antonio, Dallas and Houston that do not have two-way frontage roads. They were unfamiliar with our system and this created problems," he said.

The concern for safety doesn't stop there. The New Braunfels Area Office has contracted to supply courtesy patrols on two projects south of town. The two projects detour traffic between two rows of concrete barrier, and it's necessary to keep the corridors cleared of stalled vehicles to ensure smooth traffic flow.

The contractors furnish the trucks, and the vehicles are outfitted in a fashion similar to that of the San Antonio Courtesy Patrol vehicles. Off-duty Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) personnel operate the trucks on evenings, holidays and weekends. Stranded motorists helped by the patrol receive cards that identify the partners in the venture and provide phone numbers for more information.

The benefits are many and can even be surprising. Kopp said the courtesy patrol idea was used on a project north of New Braunfels. While helping with traffic management, DPS officers also assisted in catching a two people wanted for armed robbery.

While assisting two stranded motorists with a flat tire, the officers realized the duo matched the description of two armed robbery suspects they had heard on the police scanner.

"[The officers] convinced the suspects to allow them to follow them to a New Braunfels gas station. While en route to the gas station, the DPS officers notified New Braunfels police of the situation. The NBPD met them at the gas station and apprehended the men who did turn out to be the robbers," Kopp said.

DPS is also helping with another safety issue — vehicles crossing the median to exit or enter frontage roads and avoid slower traffic. While signs are displayed two miles prior to I-35 construction, motorists still drive across the median instead of using the proper exit and entrance ramps.

"This creates sight distance problems and extremely hazardous driving conditions," Kopp said. Off-duty officers currently patrol the median on the two projects to the south. They average 80 tickets at \$86.50 each a day when patrolling the median. During one of their first days patrolling the median, they issued \$11,000 in tickets. The monetary amount can be translated to possible lives saved.

If New Braunfels is headed in a one-way direction, it's the right direction. ✱ *This article originally appeared in Communication Lines, the San Antonio District newsletter*

## FTW's Ronnie Tate named top 'Litter Gitter'

**Linda Levitt**  
Travel and Information Division

Maintenance contract inspector Ronnie Tate walks the talk. As manager of the Adopt-a-Highway (AAH) program for the Fort Worth District's Stephenville-Erath County maintenance office, Tate not only works closely with the 18 AAH groups in his section, he also can be found picking up litter on a stretch of road adopted by his church.

Tate received the 1996 Litter Gitter Award at the Keep Texas Beautiful annual convention in Irving July 11. The awards recognize the state's outstanding AAH volunteer group and the outstanding TxDOT maintenance employee working with the groups.

On his own time, Tate speaks to civic groups at evening meetings, spreading the work about the value of the Adopt-a-Highway program and encouraging the groups to join. He also sends information to the local newspaper and radio stations to publicize the program and the groups' hard work.

"We have a lot of good Adopt-a-Highway people working at the Fort Worth District, but Ronnie Tate stands alone when it comes to true dedication to this department and to the public," said Lisa Breed, Fort Worth District Adopt-a-Highway Coordinator.

George Acosta of the San Antonio District's Bexar County



Metro South Maintenance Section received an honorable mention for his work with AAH. Thirteen new groups have joined since Acosta took over the program — eight of them during 1995 alone.

Litter Gitter honors for the best Adopt-a-Highway group went to the Cameron/Willacy Counties Restitution Center in Brownsville. Volunteers from the center pick up litter on eight miles of FM 1847 as part of their community service. The group tallied 3,120 volunteer hours on litter pickup during 1995.

Texas Department of Criminal Justice—Stevenson Unit was also recognized with an honorable mention. TDCJ has adopted three miles of FM 766 in Cuero. In addition to litter pickup, this group mows, trims trees and cleans grass from under the fence line.

Jim Bisson, assistant executive director for Motorist Services, joined Keep Texas Beautiful for the presentation of the 1996 Governor's Community Achievement Awards. Sponsored by TxDOT since 1985, the awards recognize communities in nine population categories for out-

standing litter prevention and beautification efforts. The winning communities that will share \$700,000 in TxDOT landscape incentives are: Quintana, Farmersville, Whitehouse, Dickinson, Pearland, Lufkin, Abilene, Plano and Austin. ✱

# Friends plant tree in memory of Roy Lopez

**Jeff Carmack**

Public Information Office

When Motor Carrier Division employee Roy Lopez died in January, his co-workers wanted to do something to commemorate the man who always had a smile for everyone he met.

They decided a tree was a fitting memorial, and one evening in April they held a tree-planting ceremony at Austin's Bull Creek Annex.

MCD's Monty Chamberlain, the division's administrative manager and Lopez's immediate supervisor, said he was at work when he learned of Lopez's death.

"It was a real sudden thing," Chamberlain said. "He was here on a Thursday, and the next day, he had a severe asthma attack at home and didn't recover."

He learned of his friend's passing from Lopez's daughter. "She called me that afternoon and told me the news," he said. "I was shocked and saddened." After the reality had soaked in, he and another manager announced the news to the rest of the division.

He said the news of Lopez's death stunned his co-workers. "Roy was really well-liked," he said.

Lopez was many things to the division, Chamberlain said. "He provided a variety of support to the division — he was our supply and stock clerk, handled all the mail operations for the division."

But Lopez was much more than just a nice guy to have around.

"He was the one person in the division who absolutely anyone could talk to; he was just that kind of person," Chamberlain said. "He always had a joke and a smile ready. He was just an all-around helpful person; that was his nature. He was someone anyone could go to with a question. And Roy never had a problem with helping anyone — he had absolutely not an enemy in the world."

"Roy always had a joke and a smile ready; that was his nature. And he never had a problem with helping anyone — he had absolutely not an enemy in the world."

Monty Chamberlain  
Motor Carrier Division

Lopez had been with the division and its predecessor, the Central Permit Office, for about 10 years. He was a 20-year veteran of TxDOT.

"We had stayed in close contact with Roy's wife, Minerva, because they had always been a big part of division activities. In fact, we still get letters from her," Chamberlain said.

"In April, we planted a tree in his memory," Chamberlain said.

"We wanted to do something, so we collected money from division employees and planted the tree. We thought a tree would be a long-lasting thing, something we could always see and remind us of Roy."

When the tree was purchased, a planting ceremony was scheduled for late April.

"We had a ceremony one evening after work," Chamberlain said. "His wife and family came, and lots of division employees and other people who had known Roy. It was neat; everyone who wanted to have a role had the chance to take part in digging the hole or shoveling the dirt back in," he said. ★

## Traffic safety efforts snare five awards

TxDOT was recently chosen as a co-winner in the public service announcement category for a 1996 Buckle Up America! Award, sponsored by the American Coalition for Traffic Safety (ACTS), Inc.

The winning entry, a TV PSA titled "Bugs," is aimed at male drivers ages 18-34. The spot attempts to get these drivers to think about the consequences of not using safety belts.

The message is illustrated by 30 seconds of bugs hitting the windshield of a fast-moving, mysterious black car. Voice-overs recite various reasons for not using seat belts.

In 1994, the target group comprised 19 percent of all licensed drivers, but was involved as drivers in 29 percent of all traffic accidents in Texas.

In 1995, 1,300 Texas drivers who were not wearing seat belts were killed in traffic accidents in the state.

The PSA was produced in cooperation with GSD&M, an Austin advertising firm, and was launched in targeted areas across Texas in May 1995.

Awards were presented at an awards luncheon in Washington, D.C. May 20.

The Traffic Safety Section of the Traffic Operations Division also won two awards from the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) for the Public Affairs and Consumer Education (PACE) Competition in Region II.

One award was for the section's newsletter, Driveline, which is provided to about 2,500 readers monthly.

The second award was for a radio public-service announcement called "Wake Up," produced in cooperation with GSD&M for spring break '95 to raise awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving.

Texas was also recognized with two other awards for the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for programs developed with traffic safety grant funding. The programs are "Cyclevision," a motorcycle safety campaign directed at other motorists, and four bicycle safety posters, which are a component of a comprehensive Texas bicycle safety program. ★ *Contributed by the Traffic Operations Office*

## High-performance concrete symposium set for October '97

Researchers, designers and others working with high performance concrete are encouraged to submit case histories and research papers for the International Symposium on High Performance Concrete, co-sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute (PCI). Under the theme "Advanced Concrete Solutions for Bridges and Transportation Structures," the event will be held Oct. 20-22, 1997, in New Orleans.

Authors should send a one-page abstract of their proposed paper, along with a short career history, to PCI by Sept. 15, 1996. Authors will be notified of their acceptance by Oct. 31, 1996. Written papers must be submitted by Feb. 28, 1997.

For more information, contact Gary Munstermann at PCI Headquarters, 175 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60604; (312) 786-0300, or fax inquiries to (312) 786-0353. Questions also can be sent to PCI via the Internet at: info@pci.org. ★

## Commission acts on FM speed limits during July meeting

The Texas Transportation Commission in its July meeting approved speed limits lower than the state maximum of 70 mph on about half of the state's 40,748-mile farm-to-market road system.

The commission action completed the fourth and final phase of work by TxDOT to determine appropriate speed limits on 77,000 miles of roadway on the state system as a result of the repeal of the national maximum speed limit. In Texas, the state system includes Interstates, U.S. highways, state highways and the farm-to-market system.

Speed limits on nearly 21,000 FM miles will be the automatic state maximum of 70 mph. About 8,900 FM miles will be 60 or 65 mph.

About 10,600 FM miles will be 55 mph or lower.

"In other words, about three-fourths of the FM system will have speed limits higher than 55 mph, which means an increase in the existing 55-mph speed limit previously mandated by federal regulations," said Bill Burnett, TxDOT executive director. "While speed limits will go up on many roads, the commission actually lowered speed limits from the automatic state maximum of 70 on about half of the FM roadways," Burnett said. "We believe our traffic and engineering work will result in a roadway system that is both safe and efficient and in posted speed limits that drivers can respect and obey." ★

# Hobby keeps ABL's Sissel in stitches

Mary Beth Kilgore  
Abilene District

Some display their artistic talent on canvas, others perform on television and stage, but Linda Sissel's extraordinary abilities can be viewed and admired each day. She wears them.

Sissel is a seamstress. But not your ordinary, run-of-the-mill type who cuts out a pattern and sews it up. Each of her patterns are but a canvas on which she weaves her magic.

"When I look at a pattern or a piece of cloth, I envision what details I can add to enhance the look. Sometimes I do get carried away, like last month when I spent five hours machine embroidering flowers on the yoke of a new blouse," Sissel said.

Unlike many who have mastered the art of sewing, Sissel, a certified public accountant and the Abilene District's internal review analyst and budget coordinator, didn't learn to sew from her mother, grandmother or even a teacher in a home economics class. As a matter of fact, she never picked up a needle until about eight years ago.

A fast study, she began winning awards at the West Texas Fair and Rodeo in 1989 and picked up overall high-point awards and best of show ribbons in 1993, 1994 and 1995. The overall high point awards garnered her a \$300 gift certificate each year.

Sissel first entered the Fair and Rodeo competition in 1989. She said as a child she would enter candy in the fair. "Having been around fairs and rodeos my entire life, it was just a natural thing to do once I began sewing," she said.

She was encouraged to continue entering when she came in second overall in clothing in 1989. She was told that, had she entered more categories, she might have taken top prize, which was a new sewing machine or a serger.

Sissel got serious and entered pieces in 20 categories in 1990, taking high-point honors and the serger.

It looked like her string of firsts was going to end there, as fair rules stated participants could only win high-point award (top prize) once. After that, they could enter but only receive ribbons and premiums. However, in 1993, new rules prevailed and competition was opened to everyone, former winners included. Now, three years later, Sissel holds all the honors.

After winning in 1995, Sissel said she was no longer going to compete. However, giving up the title was not that simple. "The ladies at the fair asked me to enter again this year, so I guess I will."

In the past three years, Sissel has taken home a total of 90 ribbons including three best of show rosettes, 49 first places, 17 seconds, 12 thirds, four fourths, four fifths and one sixth place.

One day Sissel came to work in a neat denim jacket. Did she buy the denim and whip up the jacket one night? No, she bought a pair of jeans for a dollar at a garage sale, cut it apart, used the legs for the sleeves, used the top for the back and front, added a colorful yoke, lined it and, voila, a jacket that sells for \$150 in stores.

In addition to making clothes for herself, Sissel makes children's outfits for her nieces,

crafts such as tree skirts for holiday gifts, album covers for wedding gifts, cross stitching and even an occasional stage costume.

"Last year Mike Taylor's, our Snyder area engineer, son was selected for a part in his school play and needed a Renaissance costume. I really don't sew for anyone outside the family, but this sounded interesting, so I took it on," she said.

By the time it was completed, the costume included a lined cape, hat, doublet, breeches and a medallion.

According to Taylor, "It was the best costume in the play."

Sissel can't stop sewing once she starts a project. Calling herself obsessed, she is known to sew through the wee hours of the morning. Fortunately, her husband, Phil, has learned to take it in stride.

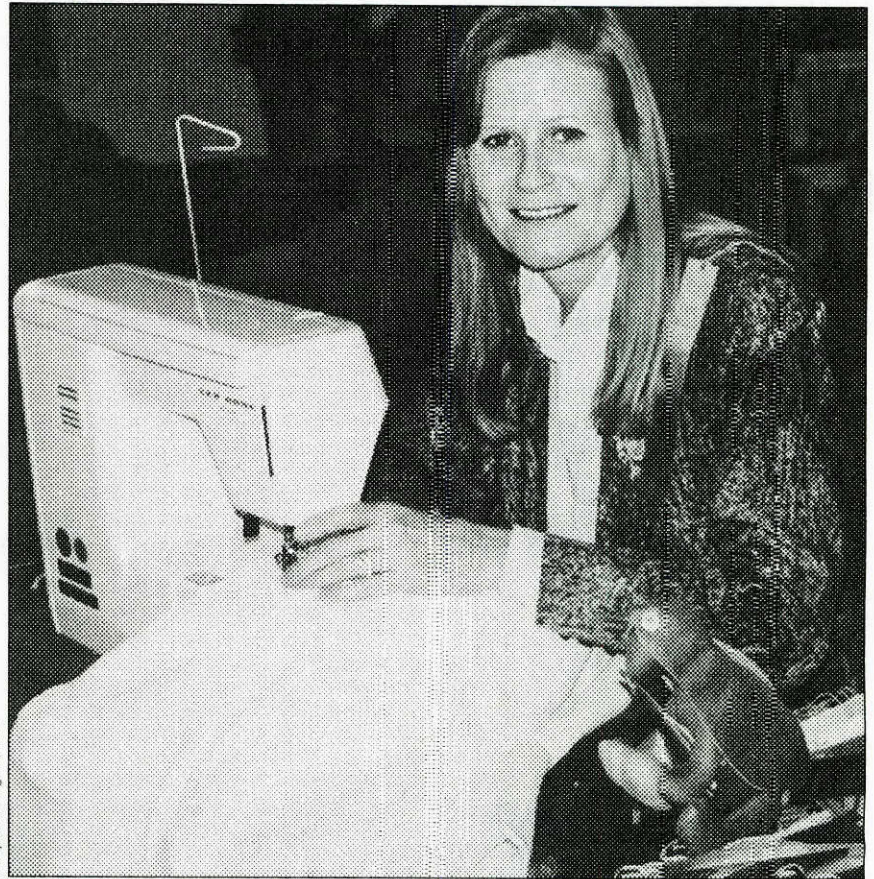
"Once Phil realized how much money I could save making my clothes, he stopped complaining about the hum of the machine and the burning of the night oil," she said.

"Now, after dinner, we head for the family

room where he turns on the television and I plug in the sewing machine."

Saving money on clothing is not the only reason Sissel took to sewing. "I like everything to be finished. By that I mean lined, surged, double sewed, French seamed, tailored — things you don't find in the typical outfit off the rack," she said. "And, it is so simple to do."

Sissel, a Texas high school track star and



Mary Beth Kilgore, ABL

**In the past three years, Linda Sissel, Abilene District internal review analyst and budget coordinator, has brought home 90 awards, including three overall high point awards and three best of show ribbons.**

Summa Cum Laude graduate of Abilene Christian University, doesn't

spend all of her free time sewing. She has another hobby — weight lifting. ★

## Covey classes make management debut

Stephen R. Covey is a familiar name these days. His Covey Leadership Center is renowned worldwide for leadership development. Through a cooperative effort between the Continuous Improvement Office (CIO) and the Human Resources Division (HRD), two key Covey classes are now being delivered to the department management. These classes are part of a new management development training curriculum.

One of the new courses is First Things First, a time management system. It is a core component of HRD's Management Skills for Success (MSS) course offered through the Training Center. The differentiating factor in this time-management process is its emphasis on a shift in thinking. Instead of always being influenced by a clock, this system promotes determining and accomplishing things that are important, not just what is urgent.

Seven Habits of Highly Effective People is the second course being introduced this year as part of the new management development curriculum. The Seven

Habits course is coordinated and administered through CIO with the assistance of certified instructors from around the department.

The training is known for enhancing effective leadership skills. The Seven Habits curriculum encompasses four levels of leadership: personal, interpersonal, managerial and organizational. The habits are considered a natural complement to a quality initiative — they provide a map that demonstrates to employees as well as friends and family members, how to interact with each other.

"As we continue our quality journey, Seven Habits will enrich TxDOT's goal in creating a team-oriented culture based on values and principles," said Julie Larrimer, CIO director.

The partnership between the Human Resources Division and the Continuous Improvement Office is an investment in the ongoing organizational development of the department. As the training unfolds, look for future highlights. ★ Kim Vencill, Continuous Improvement Office



# Huse Waco's first — and only — female mechanic

**Meredith Whitten**  
Editor

When someone brings a vehicle into the Waco District's auto shop, there's a good chance Dinah Huse will be the one to crawl under the hood.

One of eight mechanics in Waco, she is the district's first — and only — female mechanic.

On any given day, Huse — a recent graduate of Texas State Technical College's automotive program — can be found doing all phases of repair work, diagnosing problems, working on air conditioners, rebuilding engines or doing tune-ups.

Although the field is dominated by men, Huse has had no trouble adjusting to life in the district's shop.

"I did have to prove myself here in this shop, but that's like with any new employee," she said. "Once I show them I can do it, there's not ever a problem. A lot of them (her co-workers) have more experience than I have right now, but they've been in the field longer."

She said her co-workers have supported her from the beginning and are quick to offer guidance if she needs it.

"If there's something I don't know or I need help, the guys out here have been good with making suggestions," she said. "They give me a lot of different points of view. I don't get treated any differently."

Huse said she felt like she had to prove herself more while she was in school at TSTC, where there was only one other female in the automotive program at the time.

"We have quite a few women who start the program, but not many completers," said Dennis Meyers, department chairman for automotive at TSTC. "Dinah was a hard worker. She didn't mind a bit if she had to sweat a little or get a little dirty. I wish we had more students like her — male or female."

Huse's supervisor, Waco District Equipment Superintendent Clarence Johnson, said any reservations he had about hiring Huse evaporated soon after she started.

"I was kind of skeptical about hiring a woman mechanic, especially in this place. I didn't know how the men would react," Johnson said. "But as soon as she got here, everybody just fell in love with her. She's worked out real well."

"If Dinah runs into a problem, then we get one of the other mechanics to help her. Everybody out there is more than willing to help her with anything she runs across, but it's very seldom that she runs into a problem," he said.

Johnson added that Huse works on the same projects as the other mechanics.

"She does all phases of repair work. She's excellent with small engines and air conditioners. She's working on diesel engines now, too," he said. "We don't pick certain jobs for her. Whatever comes up, that's what she works on. And she'll get greasy with the rest of them. She's a very good mechanic. I wish I had two or three more just like her."

Huse said she doesn't really have a typical day. Johnson agreed, saying that the mechanics' workdays vary greatly.

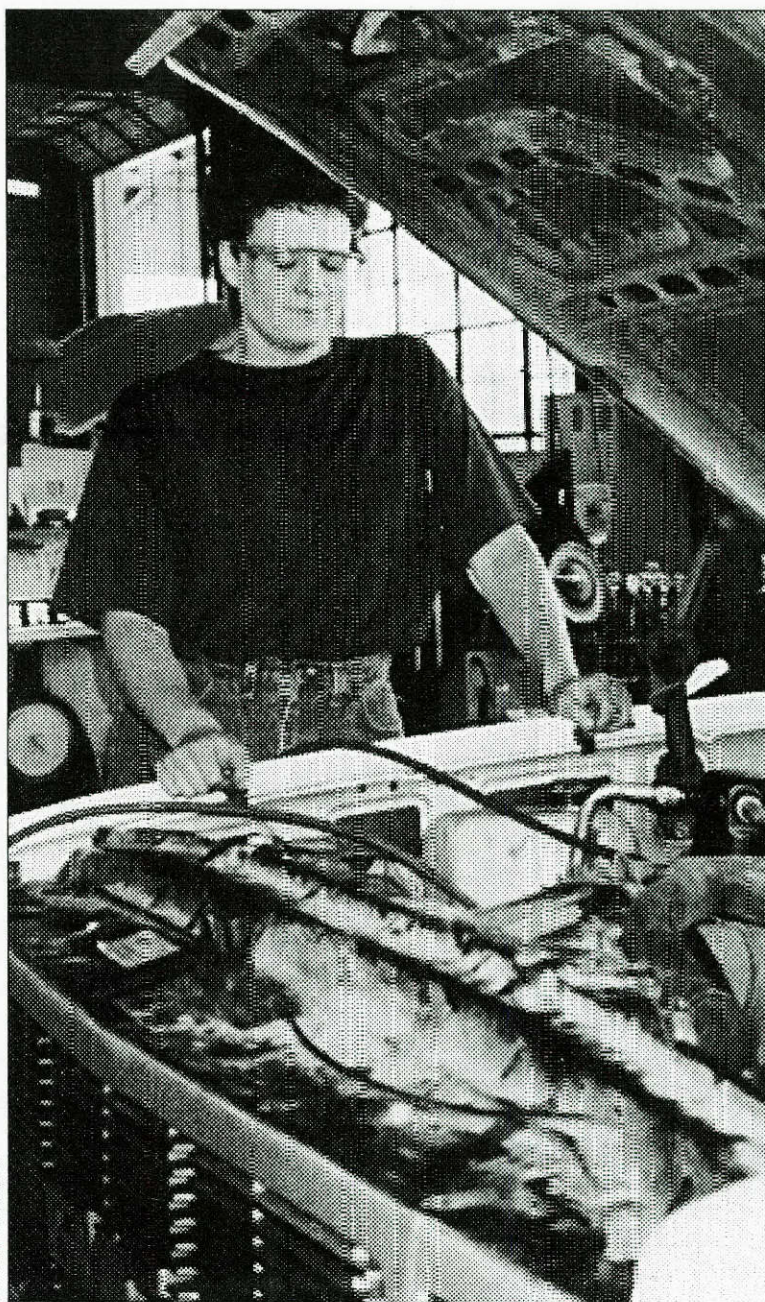
"Yesterday she had to put a radiator, an air conditioning compressor and an accumulator on this vehicle because the air conditioner went out. But then, you cure one problem and you discover something else. So she worked on that truck maybe three hours. As soon as she finished that one, well, there was another job for her. And she may be working on as many as three jobs at one time," he said.

Huse started with the department two years ago as a summer employee through a TSTC co-op program. When the summer ended, Johnson hired her part time; about a year later, after earning her associate's degree in applied science, she became a full-time TxDOT employee.

Huse hails from Leroy and grew up around mechanics.

"She's worked on tractors and things most of her life," Johnson said. "She was baling hay and stuff like that on the farm, so she's been around equipment."

Her interest in mechanics intensified after



Meredith Whitten, PIO

**Dinah Huse, a maintenance mechanic in the Waco District, does all phases of repair work, rebuilds engines, works on air conditioners and more.**

she took a shop class in high school in West.

"We rebuilt small engines in that class and I wanted to open a lawnmower shop," Huse said. That led her to the automotive program at TSTC, and then to TxDOT.

Huse is outdoors-oriented and a "people" person, so she enjoys having an open-air "office" where co-workers and others can wander in and out. She also likes to stay busy.

Away from work, she likes to fish, hunt and play softball. She and her husband have a farm and raise cattle.

As for the future, Huse plans to stay in her field.

"Having the degree will help because it's a broad field. You can go into anything, like run a parts store. You don't have to do just the mechanic work. But that's years down the road," she said. "As far as right now, I'm pretty content where I am. I like what I'm doing." ★

## Sick leave pool at 11,419 hours, but donations urged

No one plans for catastrophic illnesses. But by donating to the department's Sick Leave Pool, employees can help their co-workers who have suffered just such a condition.

So far this fiscal year, more than 450 employees have contributed almost 37,000 hours to the pool. These hours, combined with hours from the previous fiscal year, enabled the Human Resources Division (HRD) to give more than 47,000 hours to

employees who suffered illnesses such as strokes, heart attacks, kidney failure and cancer. Currently, there are 11,419 hours in the pool.

HRD thanks those who have contributed, but stresses that more donations are needed.

For more information about contributing to the Sick Leave Pool, contact your human resources officer. ★

## Paris District LED signal lamps make honey of a deal for state

Phyllis Chandler  
Paris District

Stopped at your favorite intersection, waiting for the all-clear sign, you start to notice them around town. That all-too-familiar traffic signal you've counted on to help guide you through traffic has suddenly become unfamiliar. It still does its job, but there's a subtle change to it. Still the same shape, still the standard colors. Green for go, yellow for floor it — at least that's what some folks think — and red for ... that's it. That red lamp has taken on a distinctive shape of honey cones. An odd choice, but TxDOT is betting that the new lamps will make a honey of a deal in cost savings.

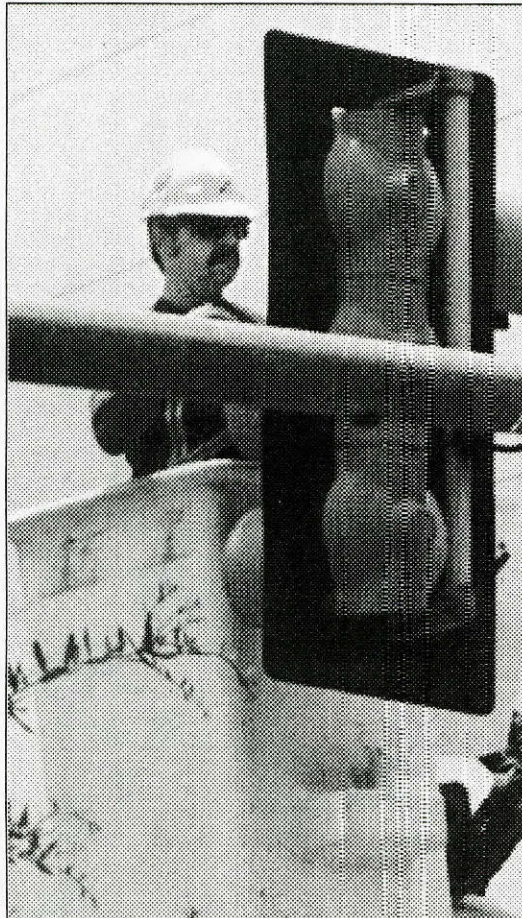
Called light-emitting diodes, or LEDs, the new light fixtures are going up at signalized intersections around the Paris District. While motorists notice a definite change in the signals' appearance, they may not notice the real difference, what the department says is the reason for the change.

"We'll probably save about \$72,000 a year throughout the district with these lamps and these days, with most state agencies having to do more with less, this really helps," said Tommie Cox, district traffic signal supervisor. Cox said the savings come from the simple idea of energy conservation.

"With the LEDs, we use less power, probably 30 to 40 percent less. It works the same way at your homes. The less electricity you use, the less you pay," he said. LED fixtures consume only 20 watts of power, compared to the 135 watts incandescent lamps normally use.

The new fixtures are also expected to last longer than conventional lamps. Cox said they are warranted for five years, but could last as long as nine years.

"The longer they last, the less likely it is that we'll have to make a service call to replace a burned-out lamp," Cox said. Every



Michael Johnson, Paris District signal technician, installs a new LED lamp in Paris. After a test run, LED signals may be used statewide.

year, district signal crews replace an average of 300 red lamps, but with the new apparatuses in place, service calls should drastically be reduced.

The Paris District is the test market for this new concept, and if the savings occur as anticipated, LEDs may become the norm across the state in the near future.

Some 1,200 LEDs will be installed throughout the Paris District in the coming months. ★

## New program will enhance Texas driving experience

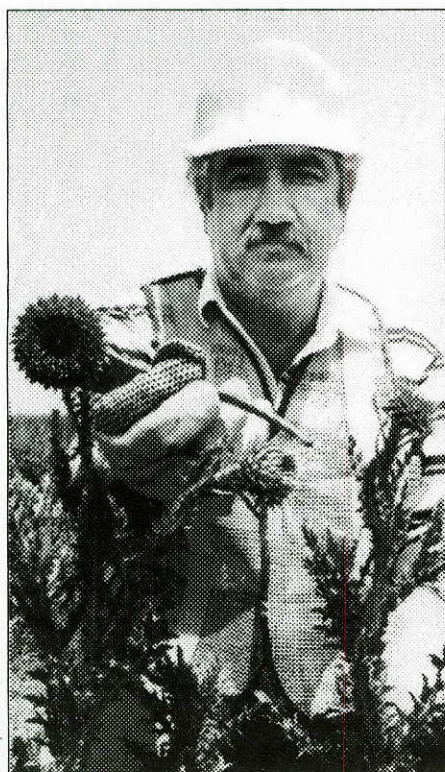
Motorists may one day have an opportunity to drive along scenic byways throughout the state, thanks to a grass roots program being studied by TxDOT.

The Texas Scenic Byways Program, if adopted, would consist of a system of byways that reflect the best of the state's roadways both culturally and geographically. "We still have a lot of work to do," said Al Luedecke, director of the Transportation Planning and Programming Division, "but we're interested in what impact a scenic byways program could have in protecting and capitalizing on the state's natural and cultural resources."

As the program is envisioned, scenic byways would have outstanding scenic, natural, historical, archeological, cultural or recreational features. Local groups and communities could plan, develop and sponsor byways and apply to TxDOT for official designation.

Proposed byways need to be existing routes and have substantial local support committed to the continued operation of the byway.

TxDOT is sponsoring public meetings on the Program. Times and locations are: Edinburg, Aug. 1, 7 p.m., Hidalgo County Historical Museum, 121 E. McIntyre; Houston, Aug. 5, 7 p.m., Holiday Inn Select, 2712 S.W. Freeway; Lufkin, Aug. 6, 7 p.m., Lufkin Chamber of Commerce, 1615 S. Chestnut; Arlington, Aug. 7, 7 p.m., North Central Texas Council of Governments, 616 Six Flags Drive, Suite 200; Austin, Aug. 8, 7 p.m., Wyndham South, Interstate 35 at Ben White Boulevard. For information, call (800) 8-SCENIC. ★



Bovina Maintenance Technician Frank Galvan Jr. shows a musk thistle.

## LBB using weevil to battle thistle

There will always be another bug. But, this time, the bug is on our side.

TxDOT employees in the Lubbock District's Parmer County are fighting the invasion of a plant called musk thistle, and they are doing it by introducing its natural enemy — the *Rhinocyllus conicus*, commonly known as a weevil.

It's not a boll weevil, just a common, ordinary weevil that happens to like the musk thistle.

This little bug lays its larvae on the heads of the thistle. They destroy new seeds and prevent the plant from reproducing. The insect also feeds on the plant.

The thistle can be controlled with herbicides, but this is costly and has a greater negative effect on the environment. The bugs are the natural enemy of the thistle. They are inexpensive, and they pose no threat to nontarget organisms.

TxDOT employees are working with the city of Friona to control the noxious weed which takes over rangelands, pastures, croplands and rights of way.

TxDOT acquired the bugs from the Agricultural Research Service in Temple. The insects were released at the Friona sewer plant.

"It takes several years for the bugs to get established," explained Mike Wilson, maintenance construction supervisor. "So, we released them at the sewer plant where they wouldn't be disturbed."

Wilson added that when the bugs are established, they will be harvested and placed on the department's rights of way to kill the aggressive thistle plant.

"Rights of way have to be mowed," he said, "and the bugs wouldn't have a chance to take hold."

The first weevils were released in 1987 around Kerrville. Since then, the insect has dispersed at least 1.5 miles from the release site. According to research, the weevils have reduced the thistle population in some states as much as 95 percent. ★ Penny Mason, Lubbock District

This story originally appeared in Vision, the Lubbock District's newsletter.

# Run-in with lion makes lasting impression

## ENV biologist Jeff Casbeer keeps his cool as Fort Worth feline tries him for lunch

**Richard Goldsmith**

Environmental Affairs Division

The primal fear of being devoured alive by a wild animal, such as a shark or land beast, won't be hard to imagine for one Environmental Affairs Division biologist in the Natural Resources Management Section (NRM).

Jeff Casbeer, the biologist in question, now bears the scars of deep puncture wounds on his right hand as a permanent reminder of his rather one-sided encounter with a full-grown female lion on March 30.

Casbeer, 27, is the kind of guy who likes animals. He came to ENV Jan. 1 after five years with the Houston District's environmental staff. He has also been involved at the Houston Zoo as a volunteer for about five years and continues to work one weekend a month there. "I got started because I like animals and I stayed because of the friends I have there," he said.

Volunteering at the zoo for Casbeer involves putting on puppet shows and making presentations about reptiles. Because he volunteers at the Houston Zoo, Casbeer was able to go on a trip to tour the Texas Exotic Feline Foundation's facility near Fort Worth. That's where he met Shauna.

The private, nonprofit organization takes in exotic animals that need a home. Casbeer says the animals are "pets" that owners found they could no longer handle after they grew up, animals that have been confiscated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department or by police as part of a drug bust. Some drug dealers apparently use such animals to intimidate buyers.

When Casbeer was there, the foundation had 59 cats, including bobcats, mountain lions, tigers, jaguars, a lynx, a snow leopard, a rare Reed cat and, of course, lions such as Shauna.

The foundation keeps the cats for life in zoo-like enclosures.

"They can't go to zoos because they're too closely associated with people. They couldn't interact with their own species properly," Casbeer says.

Because the animals at the foundation are used to contact with people, visitors are allowed to touch them, although that permission comes with a warning.

Near the end of the tour, the guide for Casbeer's group called Shauna to the front of her enclosure. Several members of the group were petting and scratching the lioness. Casbeer reached through the bars and began to scratch and pet Shauna between the shoulders.

"The next thing I knew, my hand was down her throat. I was just stunned," he said.

The lion had Casbeer's hand in her mouth and her paws around his forearm, pulling his arm straight out into the cage. "We were

both just kind of staring at each other," he said.

He remembers something being sprayed, vinegar, but it didn't bother the big cat a bit.

"About this time it dawned on me that a lion had my hand. I did real well. I didn't scream," he said. He remembers saying something like "Stop it."

Then the guide maced Shauna and she let go.



Jeff Casbeer

Before a trip to the emergency room in Fort Worth, the staff at the foundation immersed his hand in peroxide, but he says the pain didn't register until he was on his way to the hospital. An X-ray determined that the lion's teeth fortunately missed breaking any bones.

Casbeer showed up at work that Monday with a heavily bandaged hand and a whopper of a tale that his co-workers were reluctant to believe. It just happened to be April Fools' Day. The disbelief was quelled when the wound became infected and surgery was necessary April 2 to clean it out. But after Casbeer returned to work, a lot of good-natured ribbing resumed.

Unless Casbeer can top this one, he may have made his reputation for a long time to come as the guy who got lion bit. Looking back on it, he thinks the lion didn't mean to hurt him, but was just trying to play like its small cousin, the house cat. If there's a lesson to be learned, Casbeer says it's that you should never underestimate such animals. "They're very strong and they're still wild."

Casbeer, a Houston native, graduated from Texas A&M in May 1990 with a degree in biology that focused on wildlife and fishery sciences. He started with the Houston District's environmental section that August. In Houston, Casbeer worked on wetlands delineation, environmental document preparation, noise and air issues. He now is part of NRM's Water Quality Resources Management Branch and says he enjoys seeing how things function at the policy-making level. He also feels good about his job because it contributes to protecting habitat.

He plans to stay involved with the Houston Zoo where he says the job of volunteers is to "show people the wonder in the world around them and that we have to take special care to protect those animals and the habitat they live in."

Someday he says he may go back to visit Shauna. But he may skip petting her this time. ★

*This story originally appeared in ENVision, the Environmental Affairs Division's newsletter.*



First lady honors Abilene  
**Maribel P. Chavez, left, Abilene District Engineer, visits with Laura Bush, wife of Gov. George W. Bush, at a reception recognizing Abilene as one of the Governor's Achievement Award winners for the Keep Texas Beautiful program. The first lady made Abilene her first stop June 17 in a tour of cities winning Governor's Community Achievement Awards. Abilene won the prestigious award for the second time in four years for cities with populations between 75,001 and 150,000. Along with the award comes \$100,000 from TxDOT for landscaping projects along highway rights of way within the city limits.**

### Detten takes state BPW honors

Tonya DeHoyos Detten, public information officer in the Amarillo District, took state honors at the Business and Professional Women's Club (BPW) state convention in Houston June 20-23. More than 400 members attended the 76th annual convention of the Texas Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

Detten received first place honors in the statewide Young Careerist competition. Judges rated contestants on a point system in five areas: presubmitted application, personal interview, individual speech preparation, group interaction and sincerity in helping others achieve. Detten is a member of Center City BPW of Amarillo. ★

# Partnering, TQM boost job site culture

**William S. Spragins**  
Director, FMI Corp.

While some within the highway industry in Texas debate the merits and application of TQM to their businesses, Granite Construction Company (GCC) and TxDOT's Dallas District just went ahead and implemented the process on the Central Expressway U.S. 75 S-1 and S-2 projects.

Combined with partnering, not only has the process created a culture to tap ideas from all levels of the project organization, it has helped enhance the relationship between the organizations.

Although TxDOT is implementing its

months for S-2 and 64 months for S-1) requires a relationship that is focused on results. The complexities of these projects, combined with an excellent prior relationship between the key stakeholders, were factors in the decision to implement TQM.

TQM is a long-term behavioral modification strategy that takes a swipe at the traditional top-to-bottom management style pervasive in the construction industry. It emphasizes that a key to worker motivation is creating an environment where worker input is appreciated and recognized in an effort to continually improve how the project is built.

The hardest part is defining the culture and process of soliciting input, and training supervisors.

There are many managers in construction that claim they practice TQM, but few actually walk the talk. "It takes some nurturing," Mike Donnino, GCC area manager, said. TQM on the S-1 and S-2 projects did not happen

overnight. It happened through good old common sense: create a plan and then work the plan you created. Twelve TxDOT and GCC senior managers developed an action plan to implement TQM in conjunction with partnering on the S-2 project. That plan incorporated steps and core principles of TQM, including ensuring senior management commitment; getting training in TQM principles and culture; defining leadership strategies to gain total organization involvement; and recognizing participation.

A TQM steering committee composed of TxDOT and GCC project representatives was assigned to implement the plan and oversee ideas generated by team members. Supervisory personnel on the S-2 project were debriefed and the worker participation model was rolled out to all S-2 project staff.

When GCC won the S-1 project, additional partnering sessions were held to bring the new participants up to speed and to problem-solve. More than 120 S-1 and S-2 personnel were debriefed on TQM and partner-

ing, making this the single largest partnering workshop ever held on a TxDOT project.

The team meets biweekly to review ideas submitted by personnel at all levels. Each individual or team that submits an idea receives written feedback on the status of their idea and all ideas are monitored for implementation.

One key to success has been monthly meetings attended by representatives from TxDOT, GCC, Dallas Area Rapid Transit, the cities of Dallas, University Park and Highland Park, Southern Methodist University, the North Central Mobility Task Force and utility companies. Potential conflicts are discussed and solutions developed. As a result, construction conflicts have been minimized.

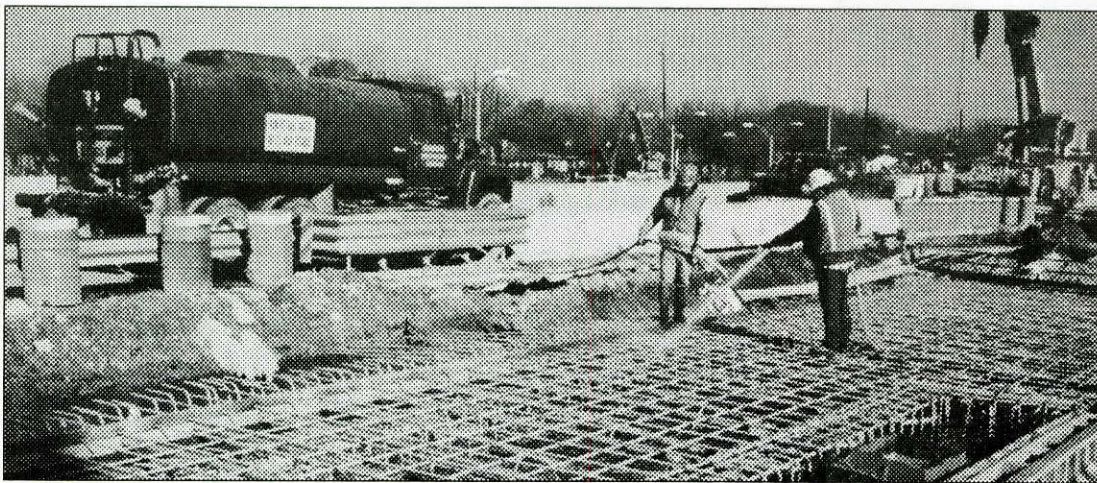
Through September 1995, the following had been accomplished:

- \$76 million in completed work in 24 months;
- 800,000 man-hours with just six lost-time accidents;
- 287,000 lineal feet of traffic barrier;
- 160,000 lineal feet of drill shafts;
- 140,000 yards of concrete poured;
- 100,000 tons of hot mix placed;
- 1.2 million yards of excavation;
- 185 ideas submitted;
- 55 percent of submitted ideas implemented (144 out of 252); and
- at least three barbecues and one picnic.

Zeke Zieschang, TxDOT project engineer, said "we had more people involved from the inspector level with input in the exchange of ideas. The recognition part of TQM reinforces the type of behavior in people where they will look for other things in other areas. It helps the relationship with the contractor even more because it focuses everyone on throwing out ideas. There's no scorekeeping on who said what; you're just trying to generate ideas."

The partnering effect on these projects has been significant, according to Pat Ellis, TxDOT area engineer. "We could not have survived this job without partnering," he said. TQM can be implemented on large and small projects, or within smaller organizations. However, it cannot be done effectively unless leaders are committed to the type of job-site culture being formulated, education in the principles of TQM occurs, a plan is developed and follow-through is monitored.

★ *This article originally appeared in Communicator, the CIO newsletter*



Courtesy CIO

**The Dallas District and Granite Construction Company used Total Quality Management techniques on two U.S. 75 projects. Both sides say TQM was essential in getting the complex projects done.**

Continuous Improvement program internally and a number of Texas contractors are implementing TQM within their organizations, the effort on the S-1 and S-2 projects represents the first attempt to jointly develop and implement the process for a specific TxDOT project.

The purpose of the projects is to rebuild a section of U.S. 75 (North Central Expressway) in Dallas, including removing a 4.4-mile section of the four-lane freeway and replacing it with a depressed, eight-lane freeway with cantilevered frontage roads. The projects also includes replacing 11 bridges and two 2- and 3-lane frontage roads. It requires construction of over 1 million square feet of retaining walls, as well as installation of underground utilities, and irrigation and landscaping systems.

To accomplish this in the time allotted (66

## Transportation News wraps up inaugural year 20 years ago

With the August 1976 issue, Transportation News wrapped its inaugural year.

Twenty years ago, T-News was covering some familiar subjects: highway construction, roadside beautification and public transportation.

The lead story dealt with the dedication of San Antonio's McAllister Freeway (U.S. 281). Construction of the freeway had been controversial, when plans for the road called for taking a portion of Brackenridge Park. Voters approved the plan in a resubmitted bond election in 1961, and despite a lawsuit to stop the project, the freeway was built. The San Antonio Light called the freeway "a memorial to the democratic process." Today, the freeway carries an average daily count of 187,000 vehicles.

The department received the Defensive Driving Course Training Achievement Award from the National Safety Council for participation in DDC training. The department trained 4,237 employees and their dependents in 1975.

Also in the news, six employees were named finalists in the Lady Bird Johnson Award for Highway Beautification.

In a column titled "Dropping the Other Shoe," State Engineer-Director Luther DeBerry presented the results of a McKinsey and Company study which addressed "the serious financial crisis in which the Department has found itself during the past year."

"The result of this two-pronged effort has been to produce a sound basis on which the Department can develop and maintain, within the changing environment, a viable highway program for Texas' future. We now have a realistic understanding of the gap we face between highway needs and available funds," DeBerry wrote. "With an improved revenue position and a means of planning highways with funding constraints, the Department should be able to provide Texas with the best possible highway system for the available dollar," he concluded. ★ *Public Information Office*

# Odessa District maps highway to future

**Glen Larum**  
Odessa District

Consider 17-year-old Joshua Aranda, a summer employee in the Odessa District's Traffic Operations' department and the prototype of the worker in TxDOT's 21st century work force.

Every day, he drives up and down a portion of 3,830 miles of highway in the 18,000 square mile Odessa District, carefully scrutinizing, measuring and inventorying all the signs along the highway.

He has a driver's license, but he doesn't need it. He never leaves his desk.

chronicles the development of geographic information systems, is featuring the district's pavement mapping technology pilot in its current issue.

The Odessa District's interest in geographic information systems, or GIS, stemmed from a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) directive a few years ago coupled with an in-house desire to reduce the manual mapping and planning operations.

Steve Smith, the district's director of construction and one of its agents for change, had seen the potential for GIS and he wanted the district to map the way to the future

added.

It was a tedious and time-consuming process.

So, the district hired Mandli Communications, a Wisconsin-based firm, to capture all that information in a digitized format. Using a specially-equipped van, Mandli employees drove the entire 3,830 miles of highway in the district with a specially-equipped digital camera and took digital photographs of the roadway and right-of-way.

The digital information images were transferred to computerized data and put on a set of computers in the district.

Now, when a pavement management specialist wants to find a particular section of roadway, he just points and clicks at a spot on a map. The highway pops up on the computer screen.

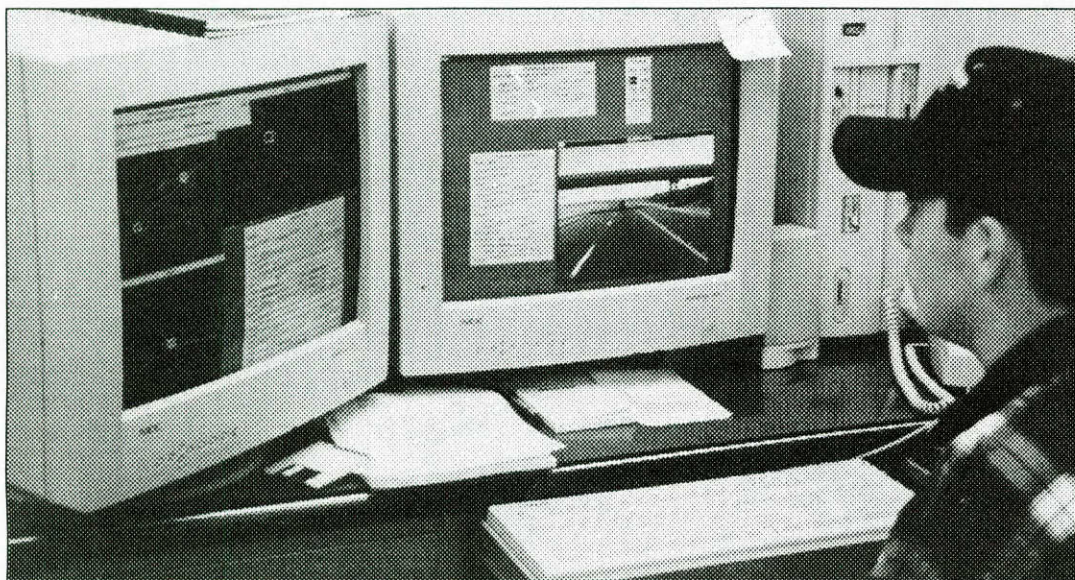
Within a few years, the technology could be the basis for TxDOT's entire statewide pavement management system. The district wants to exhibit its new highway video logging service in the Innovation Showcase at the annual Transportation Conference and engineer Jamshid "JJ" Jahangiri has filed a request to do just that.

"This district's expected use of this technology includes, but is not limited to, planning activities, public hearings, lowering the required travel time of district personnel, inventory of items (on the roadway), management of those items, and having a video record of the roadway and right-of-way conditions and geometry," said Jahangiri.

He points out that the information and process should be useful to several divisions.

"The images could be stored on servers within each district which are on Ethernet and could be accessed by anyone else on Ethernet," he said. "These are just a few ideas that come to mind. As this technology is put to use, I'm sure others will develop."

In the meantime, Aranda "drives" the roads in the Odessa District just as other TxDOT employees will drive them in the 21st century: He just points and clicks. ★



Glen Larum, ODA

Aranda does his department driving on the information superhighway, accessing an innovative computer video-logging technology that the district is beta-testing for TxDOT to view digitally-created images of the highway and everything along the highway right of way.

The technology has caught the imagination of the transportation industry nationwide, especially engineers who have been frustrated by existing manual processes and procedures used to create pavement management databases.

As an example of the attention the project has been getting, GIS World Magazine, a respected industry trade publication which

**Joshua Aranda of the Odessa District uses a computer screen to view a digital image of a section of highway.**

for TxDOT. The future, he is convinced, includes a computerized, GIS-based pavement management program.

"For years, the district used photo imaging to document existing pavement conditions," said Smith. "But the 35mm reels on which the images were stored were difficult to access.

"And, if an engineer wanted to look at a particular section of highway, he first had to find the reel on which it was located, put it on the viewer, and start scrolling," he

## TxDOT, TTI host ports, waterways conference

Meeting fosters cooperation, communication between maritime industry, transportation community

TxDOT, in conjunction with the Texas Transportation Institute Center for Ports and Waterways held its first Texas Ports and Waterways Conference in Galveston June 24-26.

Texas is one of the country's largest maritime states, with a dozen major seaports and more than 1,000 miles of inland waterways. Ports and waterways are critical to the Texas economy. The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), Texas' main artery for waterborne commerce, is the third busiest waterway in the nation.

Touting the theme, "Master Planning and Programming for Maritime Managers and Transportation Officials," the conference "facilitated cooperation, communication and understanding between the maritime industry and Texas' transportation community," said Tom Griebel, assistant executive director for Multimodal Transportation.

Representatives from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Texas Waterway Operators of America, the Texas Ports Association, metropolitan planning organizations, universities and consulting firms participated in panel discussions and presentations related to the Texas Seaport and Inland Waterway System; port development issues and outlook; maritime/marine industry updates; opportunities and challenges for

ports under ISTEA; data management and decision making for maritime managers; and the importance of rail service to port operations and rail mergers on maritime activities.

Dr. John Zirschky, principal deputy for the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, said conferences such as the Texas Ports and Waterways Conference helps the USACE identify and fulfill the needs of maritime transportation.

Presentations were also made by the Multimodal Operations Office, Environmental Affairs, Traffic Operations and the Transportation Planning and Programming divisions, and the Houston, Corpus Christi and Pharr districts regarding port-related projects.

Dr. Juan Jose Garcia of the state of Tamaulipas, Mexico, spoke on the status of the proposed Tamaulipas Canal and how extension of the GIWW into Mexico would benefit both the United States and Mexico.

"As TxDOT's evolution to a department of transportation continues, I believe that we will find ourselves working evermore closely with transportation stakeholders from areas outside the bounds of our traditional programs," said Griebel. ★ *Contributed by the Multimodal Operations Office*

## Service Awards

### August

#### Abilene

**15 years**  
Norman S. Massey

#### Amarillo

**25 years**  
Billye J. Lloyd  
**20 years**  
Tommie S. Anderson

#### 15 years

Amado Arellano  
James R. Garis  
Mary H. Watson  
**5 years**  
Derek S. Pope

#### Atlanta

**25 years**  
Debra E. Williams

#### Austin

**30 years**  
Jack D. Gindrup  
**5 years**  
Jamie D. Witten

#### Beaumont

**30 years**  
Michael R. Follmer  
Walter L. Pierson  
Ivey R. Shepherd  
**15 years**  
Mark S. Rutledge  
**5 years**  
Samuel Jackson  
Clifton C. Louviere Jr.

#### Brownwood

**10 years**  
Michael R. Smith  
**5 years**  
Laura J. Pierce

#### Bryan

**30 years**  
Bobby J. Paholek  
**15 years**  
Elaine D. Imhoff

#### Childress

**15 years**  
Jim L. Fox  
Robert M. Hosea

#### Corpus Christi

**30 years**  
Oscar Casanova  
Robert P. Haley Jr.  
**25 years**  
Norman Zamzow  
**15 years**  
Ricardo A. Padilla  
**10 years**  
John A. Hernandez  
Max A. Lopez

#### Dallas

**30 years**  
Robert P. McCormick  
Wallace B. Scalf  
Labron R. Walker  
**25 years**  
Billy R. Buchanan  
Adnan M. Turk  
**15 years**  
Mark A. Marino  
**10 years**  
Lina T. Ramey  
**5 years**  
Ariam Asmerom  
James M. Palmgren

#### El Paso

**10 years**  
Aurelio Saldana Jr.

#### Fort Worth

**25 years**  
Ronnie Brady  
David N. Oster  
**15 years**  
Jose H. Lagunas  
Glen J. Liles  
**10 years**  
Jessica N. Rodriguez Gomez  
Scot D. Smith

#### Houston

**35 years**  
James H. Salmeron  
**30 years**  
Jesus Guerra  
Gale R. Smith  
William H. Younts Jr.  
**25 years**  
Melba W. Barker  
Roy L. Bradley  
William A. Downs  
David Sloss  
**20 years**  
Tommie A. Bosley  
**15 years**  
Genevieve M. Comeaux  
James C. Howard Jr.  
Davis J. Ladet  
Mohammad Mosaffa  
Marion Noski  
Gregory A. Ofield  
**10 years**  
William R. Brudnick  
Michael J. Warnasch  
Sammie L. Wright  
**5 years**  
Michael O. Braun

#### Laredo

**25 years**  
Antonio F. Gonzalez  
Robert C. Parker  
**15 years**  
Alfredo M. Esquivel

#### Lubbock

**30 years**  
Coy M. Smith  
Kenneth R. Sylvester  
**15 years**  
J. R. Collins  
Wallace R. Posey  
**10 years**  
Dayne M. Golightly

#### Lufkin

**30 years**  
Billy E. Roberts  
Chester R. Still  
**10 years**  
Mohammad F. Farhoud  
Samuel V. Skrehot

#### Odessa

**20 years**  
Tommy M. Dominguez  
**15 years**

Steve W. Esparza

Jose E. Morales

Israel P. Rubio

**10 years**  
Arthur L. Waguespack

#### Paris

**40 years**  
Robert L. Carpenter  
**15 years**  
Kenneth W. Matthews  
Mickey F. Workman  
**10 years**  
Gary L. Wideman

#### Pharr

**30 years**  
Ricardo L. Guerra  
Eloy Juarez  
Santiago Ramirez  
**15 years**  
Sanjuan Galvan

#### San Angelo

**30 years**  
Jesus M. Escobar  
Richard W. Paske  
James E. Taylor  
**25 years**  
James L. Anderson Jr.  
Jon C. Elliot  
Roland R. Sowell  
**15 years**  
Youvonne C. Busby

#### San Antonio

**30 years**  
Juan Fernandez  
Christino E. Hernandez  
Victor F. Jaramillo  
James R. Mikesch  
David W. Spenrath  
**15 years**  
Harold J. Stevens  
Kenneth W. Zigrang  
**10 years**  
Gregory A. Malatek  
Jack E. Persyn  
**5 years**  
Russell A. Beck

#### Tyler

**10 years**  
James E. Sanders

#### Waco

**25 years**  
Thomas E. Brazzil

#### Wichita Falls

**25 years**  
Ralph D. Self Jr.  
**10 years**  
Jack H. Robb  
**5 years**  
Louis S. Smith

#### Yoakum

**30 years**  
Cheryl A. Trott  
**25 years**  
Wilbert B. Frank Jr.  
**15 years**  
Gloria C. Williams  
**10 years**  
David A. Kelley  
Tommy D. Parr

#### Construction and Maintenance

**25 years**  
Dorothy R. Plowman  
**20 years**  
John W. Aldridge

#### Design

**15 years**  
Gary L. Graham  
Ella A. Woytek  
**5 years**  
Deborah M. Walker

#### General Services

**30 years**  
James Justice  
**15 years**  
Laddie L. Bordovsky  
Portia R. Hausmann  
Don R. Walker  
Donald C. Washington

#### Information Systems

**5 years**  
Cindy W. Bordovsky Stone

#### Management Services

**15 years**  
Victor J. Holubec

#### Materials and Tests

**15 years**  
Larry G. Miller

#### Motor Carrier

**10 years**  
Robert W. Frizzell

#### Occupational Safety

**10 years**  
Martha G. Thompson

#### Transportation Planning and Programming

**15 years**  
Herman M. Nelson  
Lealean W. Peace  
**5 years**  
Jennifer L. Bierman

#### Travel and Information

**25 years**  
Linda F. Kneeland  
**15 years**  
John G. Appold

#### Vehicle Titles and Registration

**30 years**  
Judy S. Dodd  
**25 years**  
Darrel R. Hunt  
Cynthia W. McCelvey  
**20 years**  
Rita B. Foster  
Carolyn G. Williams  
**15 years**  
Ann N. Harper

## In Memoriam

### Retirees

**Edward E. Anderson**, Engineering Technician V, Cookeville, retired from Atlanta District 1976, died Feb. 17, 1996  
**Rita B. Beckman**, Secretary III, Austin, retired from San Antonio District in 1975, died May 11, 1996.  
**George D. Booher**, Engineering Technician V, Lubbock, retired from Lubbock District in 1983, died March 25, 1996.  
**Billy R. Browning**, Maintenance Technician III, Bowie, retired from Wichita Falls District in 1991, died March 25, 1996.  
**Paul D. Bushong**, Engineer III, Austin, retired from Yoakum District in 1964, died April 30, 1996.  
**Vernon K. Callaway**, Director of Programs, Hot Springs Village, retired from Vehicle Title and Registration Division in 1981, died April 19, 1996.  
**Wiley E. Carmichael**, District Engineer, Houston, retired from Houston District in 1973, died June 25, 1996.  
**William F. Collins Jr.**, Maintenance Technician III, Mexia, retired from Waco District in 1983, died March 20, 1996.  
**Preston M. Crim**, Engineering Technician III, Henderson, retired from Tyler District in 1987, died April 3, 1996.  
**John D. Cross Jr.**, Maintenance Technician III, Dallas, retired from Childress in 1973, died March 6, 1996.  
**Luches P. Darte**, Maintenance Technician III, Beaumont, retired from Beaumont District in 1976, died March 29, 1996.  
**Orbie Fleniken**, Maintenance Technician II, Nacogdoches, retired from Lufkin District in 1973, died March 26, 1996.  
**Elbert G. Gaines**, Maintenance Technician III, Wheeler, retired from Childress District in 1993, died April 15, 1996.  
**Fred N. Geyer**, Maintenance Construction Supervisor, Granbury, retired from Fort Worth District in 1982, died May 14, 1996.  
**Eugene W. Gleaton**, Engineering Technician V, Comanche, retired from Brownwood District in 1975, died May 22, 1996.  
**Valton R. Green**, Administrator Technician Programmer I, Houston, retired from Materials and Tests Division in 1983, died April 22, 1996.  
**Henry L. Helble**, Engineering Technician V, Victoria, retired from Yoakum District in 1978, died May 18, 1996.  
**Edward W. Higginbotham**, Roadway Maintenance Supervisor IV, Orange, retired from Beaumont District in 1993, died April 4, 1994.  
**Homer W. Jones**, Engineering Technician IV, Gladewater, retired from Tyler District in 1971, died May 19, 1996.

**Eugene C. Kirkland**, Maintenance Technician III, Humble, retired from Houston District in 1987, died April 11, 1996.  
**Weldon E. Lane**, Maintenance Technician III, retired from Amarillo District in 1987, died May 9, 1996.  
**Thomas G. Manuel**, Maintenance Technician II, Childress, retired from Childress District in 1973, died May 23, 1996.  
**Isaac C. McCarter**, Maintenance Technician III, Springtown, retired from Fort Worth District in 1977, died April 4, 1996.  
**William D. Miller**, Maintenance Construction Foreman II, San Antonio, retired from Abilene District in 1971, died April 30, 1996.  
**Eldon S. Morrison**, Maintenance Technician III, Sherman, retired from Paris District in 1978, died April 7, 1996.  
**Warren K. Poitevent**, Maintenance Construction Supervisor, Midland, retired from Odessa District in 1982, retired from Odessa District April 14, 1996.  
**Weldon R. Pollard**, Roadway Maintenance Supervisor, Henrietta, retired from Wichita Falls District in 1993, died April 12, 1996.  
**Billy J. Price**, Engineering Technician V, Snyder, retired from Abilene District in 1987, died March 16, 1996.  
**George P. Ruff**, Engineering Technician V, New Braunfels, retired from Beaumont District in 1982, died April 27, 1996.  
**Francis A. Sims**, Engineer IV, Atlanta, retired from Atlanta District in 1974, died March 18, 1996.  
**Parris W. Skelton**, Maintenance Technician III, Channing, retired from Amarillo District in 1976, died March 27, 1996.  
**Robert M. Skibo**, Engineering Technician V, Port Neches, retired from Beaumont District in 1987, died April 1, 1996.  
**John Stephenson**, Marine Technician III, La Marque, retired from Houston District in 1989, died April 25, 1996.  
**Ewing H. Stogsdill**, Maintenance Technician II, Garland, retired from Wichita Falls District in 1985, died April 17, 1996.  
**Ray Tullis**, Purchaser I, Beaumont, retired from Beaumont District in 1986, died Jan. 24, 1996.  
**Raymond R. Watson**, Maintenance Technician III, Whitesboro, retired from Wichita Falls District in 1975, died Jan. 20, 1996.  
**Robert W. West**, Engineering Technician V, Dickens, retired from Lubbock District in 1981, died May 3, 1996.

## Ozone

### Continued from page 1

status. H.B. Zachry will post a sign at the beginning of their construction project on Loop 410 labeling it as an "Ozone Awareness Project." They want to convey to the public that they are good stewards of air quality. The media has shown an interest in a story about the sign's significance as soon as it is in place.

The district has worked for two years to help preserve San Antonio's attainment status for ozone, and has been recognized by the TNRCC, the city of San Antonio, Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) and others as proactive about air quality. ★ *This article originally appeared in ENVision, the Environmental Affairs Division newsletter*

## Retirements

### August 1995

#### Houston

Joe Lightsey, 35 years, Engineering Specialist I

### December 1995

#### Brownwood

L.C. Smith, 14 years, Maintenance Technician IV

### March

#### Houston

Charlie Hodges, 16 years, Engineering Technician III

#### Waco

David W. Bohn, 17 years, Maintenance Technician II

### April

#### Atlanta

Lester E. Potter, 28 years, Maintenance Technician III

#### Austin

Juan Porras, 30 years, Maintenance Technician IV

### May

#### Childress

Larry R. Grimes, 21 years, Engineering Technician IV

#### Fort Worth

Jo T. Windham, 28 years, Staff Services Officer

#### Lubbock

Gerald L. Drager, 30 years, Maintenance Technician IV

#### San Antonio

Donald E. Jackson, 32 years, Maintenance Technician IV

### June

#### El Paso

Jose Herrera Jr., 30 years, Right of Way Agent IV

#### Lubbock

Marlo D. Davis, 41 years, Roadway Maintenance Supervisor IV

#### Information Systems

Rene Gonzales, 32 years, Systems Support Specialist III

### July

#### Abilene

Lowell B. Fine, 14 years, Purchaser I

#### Austin

Terry M. Kessel, 30 years, Engineering Technician V

Alvin L. Moore, 26 years, Maintenance Technician IV

#### Beaumont

Thomas K. Brown, 30 years, Heavy Equipment Operator II

Dorothy Fondren, 31 years, Roadway Maintenance Supervisor IV

Richard M. Littlepage, 30 years, Equipment Superintendent I

#### Bryan

Antone E. Pavlock, 28 years, Roadway Maintenance Technician IV

#### Corpus Christi

Jose R. Cuevas, 28 years, Maintenance Technician V

#### Dallas

Gordon T. Summitt Jr., 11 year, Engineer II

Hulen Whitfield, 16 years, Roadway Maintenance Technician II

#### Fort Worth

Doyle W. Chapman, 39 years, Engineering Specialist III

Allen E. Smith, 30 years, Maintenance Technician IV

#### Paris

Harvey L. Dowdy, 31 years, Maintenance Technician IV

#### Pharr

Ramiro A. Ramirez, 30 years, Administrative Technician II

Juan Guerra, 30 years, Maintenance Technician V

Doroteo Garcia, 32 years, Engineering Technician III

#### San Angelo

Richard W. Paske, 30 years, Motor Vehicle Mechanic III

#### Waco

David G. McClellan, 26 years, Administrative Technician II

John P. Jones, 30 years, Maintenance Technician IV

Allin L. Tipton, 26 years, Maintenance Technician II

#### Information Systems

Joel F. Young, 28 years, Programmer Analyst III

Jerry Eschberger, 27 years, ADP Supervisor IV

James C. Holland, 32 years, Photogrammetry Specialist IV

## Turner

### Continued from page 3

In actuality, the captain spends only about 10 percent of his time running the ferry because the biggest part of his job is management. "The rest of my time is spent running the crew, dealing with passengers and controlling what hazardous materials we're allowed to transport," Turner said.

And then throw in situations like ones involving emergency medical personnel where Turner may be forced to transport ambulances while leaving long lines of cars filled with impatient, and sometimes angry, citizens who are in a hurry to get to the other side. Or you might see criminals running from the law, just like on television.

"Our operation is the primary lifeline from the peninsula," Turner said, "so we see lots of hospital-EMS related situations. And we've had lawbreakers as passengers, too. In these situations, it becomes obvious to the individuals that they have a choice—they can either ride to the other side where police will be waiting to pick them up or they can jump over the side of the vessel.

"I've actually seen that happen a time or two," he chuckled.

Born and raised in inland Virginia farm country, Turner was 12 years old before he saw the ocean, but water fast became one of his three passions (the others are his family and bicycling). Looking for an opportunity to get away from a small town and find excitement, he joined the Coast Guard in Virginia, serving four years active duty and 10 years reserve duty.

"I was a boatswain's mate, which meant I was in charge of the team that took care of maintenance for all search and rescue and law enforcement operations," Turner explained. But then he got married and found himself setting new priorities.

"I took a 30-day leave of absence from the Coast Guard and traveled down the east coast to the Gulf of Mexico," Turner said. "I was looking for a place to live that offered a college for my wife and the marine industry for me. Here we found the campus (Texas A&M on Pelican Island) and with the oil industry booming, employment."

Turner went to work at a Galveston off-shore survey company in 1981, but soon discovered that living off-shore was not the life for him.

"The Coast Guard was always exciting," Turner said, "but the merchant marine end of being a seaman just wasn't all that much fun. And besides, you're away from your family a lot."

So he signed on at the Galveston-Port Bolivar Ferry Operation as a deck hand, and in less than two years had his first class mate's and master's licenses. "Now I had the best of both worlds," he said, smiling. "Piloting ferries allows me to live at sea AND come home to my family every night."

And that's very important to Turner; his wife, Elizabeth, a professional educator; his 13-year-old daughter, Ginger; and his 9-year-old son, Andrew, who live on the west end of Galveston Island. The big family news is that Ginger recently represented Texas at the National History Day competition in Washington, D.C., as a junior high performer. The captain is proud of his family's accomplishments.

As for his bicycling passion, Turner enjoys it because it "keeps me in tone" and he always participates in the 168-mile Houston-to-Austin Benefit Ride for multiple sclerosis every year.

Okay, so my captain is not some suntanned swashbuckler with a patch over one eye; he's a regular guy who's married with children and cares about his community. In the words of the ferry operations manager, "Jim and the rest of the staff make this place go. He's a good skipper and an all-around good guy," Daniels said.

And he's still dashing and courtly and gentlemanly, all the things I think are necessary ingredients for a sea captain.

Turner had no desire to overwhelm me with stories about his adventures on the sea. "In the Coast Guard, those are called sea stories," he said. "Here, we call them 'ferry' tales."

I think he may have the beginnings of a book. ★

## Calendar

### August

2-7 51st Annual Professional Development Forum & Products Exposition, Austin, GSD

6-8 Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) Visual Training, Austin, DES

13-15 Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) Visual Training, Beaumont, DES

20-22 Regional Traffic Safety Strategic Planning Meetings, Odessa, TRF

20-22 Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) Visual Training, Austin, DES

25 Best Practices in Contract Management, Austin, GSD

27 LBJ's Birthday (state holiday)

29 Commission Meeting, Austin

### September

2 Labor Day (holiday)

3-5 Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) Visual Training, Dallas, DES

16-17 Falling Weight Deflectometer User's Group Meeting, Austin, DES

23 Yom Kippur

26 Commission Meeting, Austin

### October

14-16 Transportation Conference, College Station, STF

31 Commission Meeting, Austin

### November

11 Veteran's Day (holiday)

13-14 Accident Prevention Management Meeting, Austin, OCC

21 Commission Meeting, Austin

28 Thanksgiving Day (holiday)

29 Holiday

### December

19 Commission Meeting, Austin

24 Holiday

25 Christmas (holiday)

26 Holiday

### January

1 New Year's Day (holiday)

20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (holiday)

## Letters

The following letter was received by Robert Woods, Aviation Division deputy director:

Dear Mr. Woods:

From time to time I try to assess the various services that are most valuable to me as a flight instructor and to send a thank you note. I'd like you to know that your print/video library is an excellent resource to me. I frequently stop by to use reference materials or check out videos and **Marie Peinado** is always very helpful.

I also refer all my students to you to check out training videos. I find that the print library offers a research resource that is not available anywhere else in the area.

Although I don't personally use the Internet or any of the other similar electronic mail sources, it looks like you might consider linking the library to the Web so as to provide a new resource for folks interested in seeking research help from the library. That might be a bit much for the one assigned to handle, but it's food for thought.

Please keep the library!

**George A. Wilhite**

**San Marcos**

*Marie Peinado is an information research and referral assistant*

.....

This letter is coming to you a little late, but I feel better late than never.

A few weeks ago, I experienced a flat tire on I-35E. I was able to pull over to the side of the highway and begin changing the tire myself. I immediately began to have problems with the jack. At about this time, two of your employees stopped to ask if I needed some assistance. As you can imagine, I was very relieved to see these two gentlemen.

**Charles Lankford** and **Verlin Reynolds** finished changing my tire and placed the flat and tools in my trunk. I was and am so happy to know that there are men such as these working for the state of Texas.

Please send along my thanks again to these gentlemen, and tell them to keep up the good work.

**Connie Riley**

**Plano**

*Charles Lankford and Verlin Reynolds are Engineering Technicians in the Dallas District's survey section.*

.....

I wish to express my gratitude to **Martin Ramos**, **Robert Perez**, **Ricky Thomas**, **Aurelio Rios Jr.** and **Luis Flores Jr.** These men were out on the road doing their job. They were there at the time that I was traveling back from Laredo. I was driving back to San Antonio from Laredo after a job interview. It was Thursday, May 23 and the weather was very hot. It did not take long before I reached Cotulla and the back left tire blew out. I got off the car and was headed to seek help from the men that I had noticed were working out on Highway 35. Before I reached them they spotted me from a distance and came to my rescue. I will always thank God that they were there and pray that He will reward them.

I also wish to tell you that the men not only do a good job of cleaning the roads and making them safe for the travelers but they are generous with their time and strength. I hope some day in the future the department may recognize these men and others for the

## TxDOT to the rescue



I would like to tell you a nice story about one of your highway workers.

On June 5, six Shannon Medical Center Auxiliary members were on our way home from a Texas Auxiliary Convention in San Antonio. About 10 miles west of Fredericksburg we had car trouble. My radiator lost all the water. **Lonnie Hohmann** stopped to help us. He emptied all the water out of his water cooler but that was not enough, so he radioed for the water tanker up the road to come help. The tanker was filling up at the time but arrived in about 30 minutes with 2,000 gallons of water. Luckily it didn't take all 2,000 gallons to get us going again.

Lonnie stayed with us until the tanker arrived and then he filled up my car. He was very nice and very helpful.

Please give him our thanks.

**Karen Jo Surber**

**San Angelo**

*Lonnie Hohmann is a maintenance technician in the Austin District's Gillespie county maintenance section.*

many things they do for travelers and people in distress.

With these thoughts and gratitude I wish to remain

Respectfully yours,  
**Sister Carmen Avila, MCDP**

*Martin Ramos is a heavy equipment operator; Robert Perez, Ricky Thomas, Aurelio Rios Jr. and Luis Flores Jr. are roadway maintenance technicians. They work in the Laredo District's Cotulla maintenance office.*

.....

This letter is sent in recognition of one of your employees of the Texas Department of Transportation on Bull Creek, **Henry Floyd**. He was a lifesaver for me and this letter is sent in thanks and appreciation of his kindness.

Traveling east on Ben White Boulevard, I felt a strange tug on the wheel of my car. I stopped to check it out, and sure enough, I had a tire blowout. As I attempted to get the jack out of the car (I was having trouble even doing that), Henry stopped to see if I needed help. Before I knew it, he flashed his TxDOT badge as ID and began to work. Even with a bandaged hand (and a very hot afternoon) he had the car jacked up, the tire changed and I was on my way in no time.

Henry would take nothing as a thanks, so I wanted to express my thanks to him in some other way. You should be very proud to have an employee such as Henry working for you. He took the time out of his day off to help a stranger.

Thank you, Henry, for reaffirming that the world is still full of kind people. I hope that if someone you care about ever has car trouble, that their guardian angel is looking after them, as mine was for me today.

**Jenny Tynes**

**Austin**

*Henry Floyd is a commercial vehicle registration clerk in the Motor Carrier Division.*

.....

I hope you will take the time to acknowledge the kindness and compassion of **Mary Alice** and **Mr. Wigington**. Why? To make a long story short, a friend of mine moved a sailboat for me and somewhere near Refugio a hatch was lost. I called Mary Alice and asked if the road crews would please watch out for it. Incredibly, within one hour she called back. Mr. Wigington from Refugio found the hatch, and they brought the hatch to Corpus for me! Thank them and God bless.

**Ken Pagans**

**Corpus Christi**

*Mary Alice Piñon is a staff support supervisor in the Corpus Christi District maintenance management office, and Jack Wigington is a maintenance construction inspector in the district's Refugio maintenance office.*

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