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TRANSPORTATION news

Texas Department of Transportation

November 1993

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Short Course '93

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What's Inside

Photo pages provide a few lingering glances back at the parties held around TxDOT to wish the September retirees *bon voyage*.

Pages 2-3

Be the first on your block to know what to do with the big new sticker you get with your three-part vehicle registration form this year. For bonus points—what happens if you try to steal the sticker from someone's car?

Page 4

Wonder what happened to all the employee questions the Senior Management Team was supposed to answer at Short Course? Several of them are right here, in this month's "Ask Bill," kicking off seven pages covering this year's even-more-momentous-than-usual gathering in College Station.

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On our Covers

One of the big events at this year's Transportation Short Course was the presentation of the Senior Management Team's proposed vision and mission statements. Read them, learn them, post them. That's why we created the poster on pages 8 and 9. On our **inside cover**, Charlie Nail of the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division's El Paso regional office shows his archery form and his TxDOT colors.

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Alison Rutledge, El Paso District

Straight-arrow Nail nails medal

By Allison Rutledge
El Paso District

The image of strong arms drawing back a large wooden bow, sending arrows piercing through the air, may sound like something out of a Robin Hood movie. But to TxDOT employee Charlie Nail, that image is something out of his latest competition.

Nail won the gold medal for "Traditional Archery" in the Games of Texas held the first week of August in El Paso.

He was also the lead archer in the opening ceremony and was to receive the silver medal in the senior division. Nail relinquished that honor, however, to allow the next oldest competitor, a 52-year-old archer from Mexico, to take the medal home.

The games, which included baseball, swimming, soccer and karate, brought more than 6,000 participants from all over Texas, New Mexico and Mexico. And though about 40 of those participants competed for archery medals, fewer than a fourth of those entered the Traditional category.

Nail attributes that to the equipment used in this type of archery.

"All you have in Traditional Archery is a wooden bow with string and arrow, which is much more difficult than other categories, such as

Off the Job

Unlimited Archery, where you're allowed to have stabilizers and moveable, magnifying sights on your bow," Nail says.

That explains why Traditional archers must rely heavily on instinct.

"With this type of archery, you don't know the exact distance to your target, so your mind has to tell you how to aim," Nail says. "You've got to use your instincts, muscle memory and concentration. It's 99 percent concentration."

Nail fine-tunes his instincts every day as he practices.

"I go to the archery range for an hour every morning and when I get there it's still dark, so I have no choice but to use my instincts," Nail says. "I used to practice in the daytime with my eyes closed."

Although Nail began Traditional Archery only a year and a half ago, he's certainly no stranger to a bow and arrow.

A master pistol shooter, Nail got tired of the noise and decided to try something a little quieter. He bought his first bow in 1977 just for fun, but in

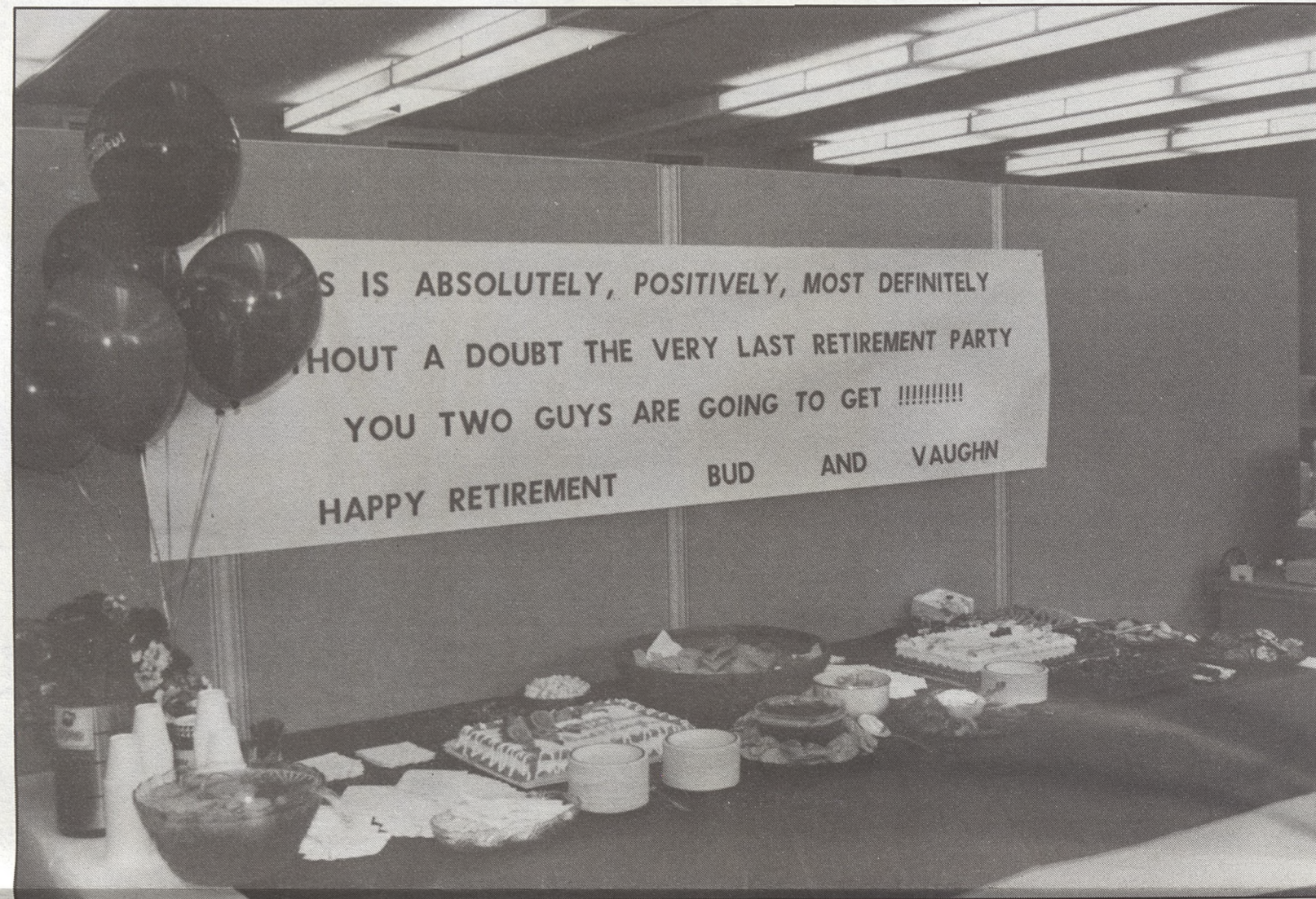
See Archery, page 4



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THANKS FOR T



John Hunt, Beaumont District

Houston party typifies TxDOT retirement fetes

By Victor Tsai
Houston District

Weeks of retirement coffees and gatherings culminated in a gala retirement party on the night of Sept. 28. More than 600 people attended to honor the 130 retirees from the Houston District, who collectively have more than 4,000 years of experience with the department.

The party twanged to life as a one-man band named "Cowboy" launched into his repertoire of popular country hits. District Engineer Milton Dietert started the program, referring to the retirees as the "Class of '93." "It's seldom that you have this many people retiring at the same time, so it's just like a graduation," Dietert said. He called the group "a class act."

Houston Mayor Bob Lanier, former chairman of the highway commission, presented awards during a barbecue dinner. Lanier quipped, "If this is a graduation ceremony, there must be some slow learners out there."

In his remarks, Dietert asked, "What was our transportation system

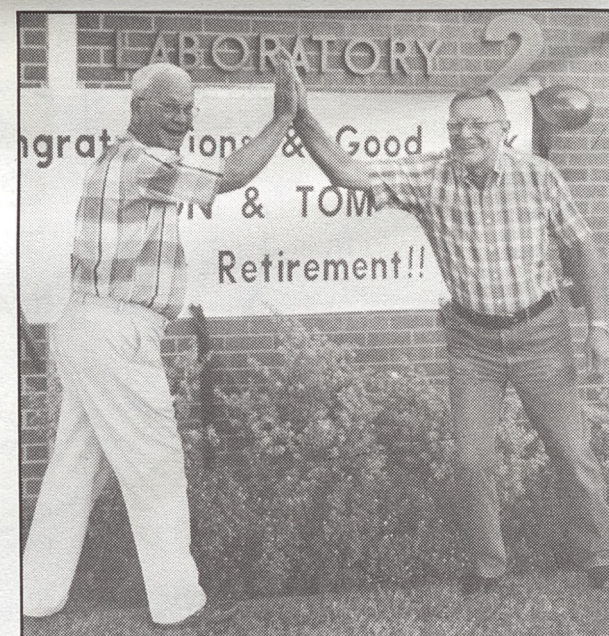
like?" 30 years ago. "There was no Interstate 10, no Interstate 45, no US 59, no Loop 610. These people truly have something to be proud of in what they have accomplished. On behalf of the department and the citizens of Texas, I'd like to thank them for a job well done," he said.

Each staff-level retiree was honored with a proclamation by the city of Houston naming Sept. 28 for him or her. Lanier explained, "If it confuses you to declare the same day for different persons, it just goes with the territory."

"I hope by the time you're 68 you won't be working as hard as I am," Lanier said, "and if you are working that hard, then I hope you don't have as many people aggravated at you as I do."

Director of Administration John Fendley presented appreciation plaques to other retirees.

The highlight of the evening came with a 22-minute slide show, which delighted the crowd with nostalgic photographs and candid shots of the retirees and their loved ones though the years. ▶



John Lanier, Odessa District

The Beaumont District Design Section laid out quite a spread for their retirees, top left, and leavened it with a little humor, too. Above, Don Bradley and Tom Vorhees exchange high fives in front of a congratulatory sign posted outside the Odessa District Construction Lab. The two 30-year-plus veterans worked their entire TxDOT careers there.

HE MEMORIES

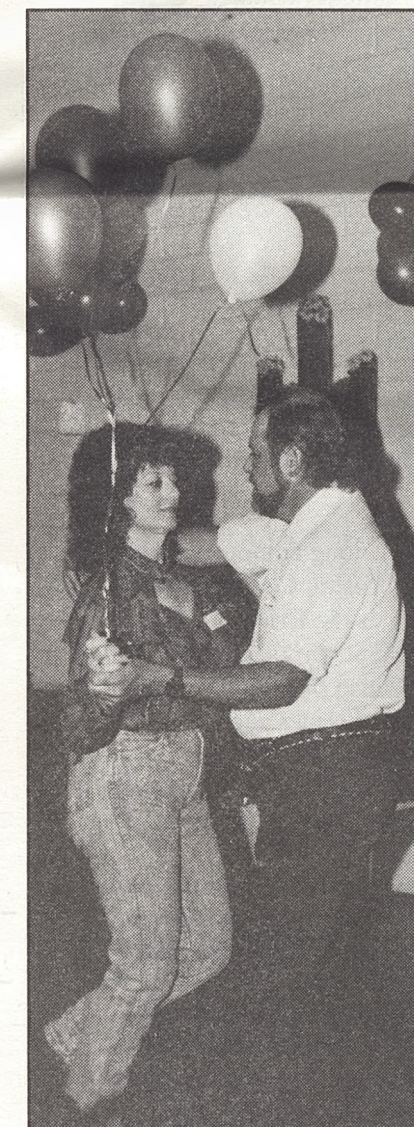


Allison Rutledge, El Paso District

At left, Jack Rutledge and Dave Kathery must have worked in the El Paso District together so long they pose alike. Paul Hinojos, below, also known as 'Don Pablo' to his co-workers, retired as Odessa District purchaser. He started his career as a 'common laborer,' the lowest rung on the department ladder.



John Lanier, Odessa District



Above, Frieda Smith and Buford Carr make do without the sawdust at the Eureka Maintenance Section party, Dallas District. At right, a crowd of more than 450 fry fish, drink tea and trade yarns at the Beaumont District's central celebration.

You know how much well-wishing goes on when even one person retires from TxDOT. When an incentive persuades many people to retire from an agency as close-knit as the Texas Department of Transportation, imagine all that bittersweet celebration multiplied 1,366 times.

It would be impossible to visit all the *bon voyage* parties held in maintenance and area offices, sections and divisions, regional offices and district offices, as well as the big sendoffs for the top administration. But this sampling shows some of their common activities: feasting, joking, dancing, talking, laughing.

And some weeping, as well. ▶



John Hunt, Beaumont District

New stickers to help reduce theft

By Emily Willingham
Staff Writer

Introducing the latest in anti-theft devices from Texas.

TxDOT is issuing a new vehicle registration sticker for placement inside windshields instead of outside on license plates. The program begins with registrations expiring January 1994.

The sticker is larger and of a different design. Its main purpose is to deter theft—bringing up another important feature.

If the sticker is peeled off the windshield, the word "VOID" appears, making it a useless scrap of paper. It's not even worth stealing.

In 1992, 568,885 replacement license plates and stickers were issued. TxDOT estimates that 60 percent of replacement stickers issued were because of theft. At \$5.30 each, replacement stickers

cost the public about \$1.8 million and a lot of time and annoyance.

Replacing a stolen sticker costs money, time, and the trouble of waiting in line to replace it. Since it's a little harder to walk away with an entire windshield than a license plate, these costs are sure to decrease.

"When the word gets out that these stickers are useless when peeled off the glass, incidence of stolen stickers will drop quickly, as will the cost of replacing stolen

stickers," said Jerry Dike, director of the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division.

"But the savings don't stop there. If all stolen stickers were used on vehicles that would otherwise be legally registered, state and county revenue losses could exceed \$17 million. Recouping these losses could mean savings passed on for use on other projects," Dike added.

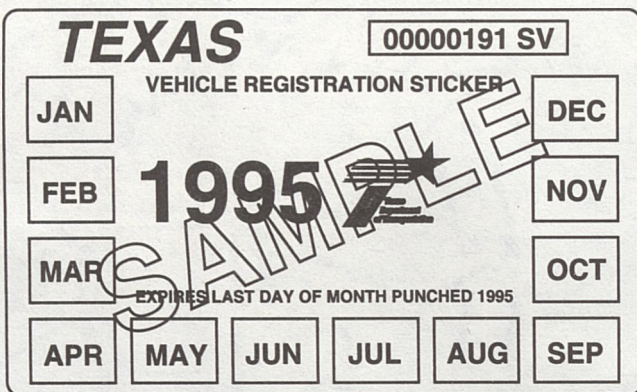
TxDOT is getting the word out about a change that affects millions

of Texas drivers. A brochure explaining the change and the procedure for placing the new sticker will be available to customers. A poster reminding

people of the change and a public service announcement are in the works.

The new stickers will be phased in each month as renewal notices go out to the 14 million registered-vehicle owners in Texas. That's a big job. But it's one the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division is ready to do.

The Texas Legislature passed a law in 1991 mandating the sticker change to reduce vehicle registration theft. Drivers whose vehicles have no windshield will continue using the license-plate stickers. ♣



HEEP conference in San Antonio provides prestige, information

By Cheryl Converse
Staff Writer

It's been about 40 years since the Highway Engineering Exchange Program (HEEP) started. Those involved with the program say it's been a heap of help.

"It started in the 1950s as computer systems exchange," said Bill Crawford, who recently retired from the Automation Division. Crawford still serves as the organization's president. "Now that computer systems have grown so much, HEEP is mostly a way to exchange information."

Crawford and co-workers Sandy Barling, William Tompkins and Clinton Hobbs hosted this year's conference, held in San Antonio. More than 400 people attended.

"This meeting is like a continuing education class. It's an oppor-

tunity for people with similar concerns to make contacts and work toward a solution," Crawford said. "We also have vendors attend the conference, so it serves as a way to see new technology.

"This year we had so many vendors and so much hardware that they couldn't run off of the hotel's power. The hotel had to contract a company to set up a special power plant for the copiers and computers," Crawford said.

"It was a major conference to put on," he added. "We had 406 attendees, representing China, Sweden, Australia and Czechoslovakia. It went well and the credit really belongs to the people who coordinated it—Sandy, William and Clinton."

Hosting a big international conference is a Texas-size job, but Crawford said the benefits to the



Highway Engineering Exchange Program president Bill Crawford, center, and Automation Division Director Tommie Howell listen to Executive Director Bill Burnett speak at the international HEEP conference in September in San Antonio.

host organization are tremendous and far-reaching. Traditionally, only one TxDOT representative is able to attend HEEP's yearly meeting. Because the conference is always held in the president's home state, more than 100 TxDOT employees attended this year's meeting.

The week-long conference featured workshops in technical areas, such as the Bridge Design Rating System workshop. The conference also offered information on global issues such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, metrication and federal transportation legislation. ♣

Archery

From inside cover

late 1978, someone told him he was too old to ever win competition with it. Nail says, "That got my bristles up, and I went to work on my shooting."

His hard work paid off ... fast. After only three months, he shot a perfect score in a New Mexico tournament and in 1979 became the New Mexico Grand Champion in Freestyle Unlimited Archery.

Nail placed first or second in every tournament he entered in

1979 in Freestyle Unlimited Archery and has won nine out of the last 10 in Traditional. He was even gearing up for the 1980 Olympic Team but was not allowed to try out because he had already shot as a professional archer.

Nail, who is "61 years young," began Traditional Archery to get back to basics and to keep challenging himself in the sport. He feels that any Traditional archer can win on any given day with the right mental attitude.

"In archery, good health is important, but it is also a very competitive mental sport," he says.

Nail, a title examiner for the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division regional office in El Paso, has been a TxDOT employee since 1983. He says he's grateful to division director Jerry Dike for allowing him to participate in the Games of Texas using the TxDOT colors and logo.

In addition to his state job, Nail is the only Traditional Archery staff shooter for an area archery shop, where he gives lessons.

"I like to encourage young people to get into archery because it teaches them self-discipline," says Nail, who is teaching one of his grandsons to shoot.

Nail enjoys spending time with his two grandsons, Christopher and Andrew, his son, Charles III, and his wife, Ilse. He also enjoys bass fishing but says he's much better at archery. "In fishing, a lot of it is just luck, whereas in archery you have to make your own luck."

Nail's hard work contributes to his "luck" in archery. "I work as hard at archery as I do at my job," Nail says. "I believe in the saying, 'Be the best you can be.'"

Judging by Nail's many accomplishments, that saying is right on target. ♣



Ask Bill

These questions are among the many submitted to me for Short Course this year, to be answered by the Senior Management Team. Unfortunately, time did not allow us to answer them at the general session. Here are most of them; the rest will be published in the December issue.

Q: Districts should budget paid overtime for non-exempt employees for priority projects that come up during the year. Employees work a tremendous amount of hours to meet deadlines on these projects. What is your opinion? *Juan Campos, Laredo District*

A: *Cassie Carlson Reed, deputy executive director for Administrative Services, replies:* Yes, we agree. Planning is the key to effective resource allocations and budgeting. Currently, districts could budget for such overtime, and some do.

Q: Can an employee be recommended for the Achievement Bonus Program more than once if he continues to excel in his job duties? *Rose Reyna, Laredo District*

A: *Reed replies:* Yes, if other conditions are met, such as at least a six-month waiting period and not exceeding 10 percent of salary in a 12-month period.

Q: What is the status of the proposed rewrite of the department's manuals, especially the Highway Design Manual? *Robert Stone, Design Division*

A: *Russell Harding, director of Staff Services, replies:* The Manual Review, Evaluation and Revision Project set out to inventory all department manuals and publications; evaluate how current, easy to read, accessible and comprehensive the publications are; and develop new manuals based on the users' needs.

TxDOT Directive 5-92 instructs offices to develop functional manuals based on

users' perspectives rather than on division manuals. The organization put in place Oct. 1 aligns closely with the functional manual system.

From a survey conducted this summer, most divisions responded that they are progressing in developing functional manuals. Specifically, the Design Manual, consisting of several volumes, is due to be published by September with metric-converted design criteria. This manual will include highway, bridge, landscape and traffic design.

Q: Why is the procurement process for computer hardware and software so slow and inefficient? I would suggest that each division and district be given a computer budget to be used as needed, with only broad parameters from the Information Systems Division. Additionally, TxDOT should follow the lead of other state agencies by contracting for software on a continually updated site-license basis, by which new versions of software are automatically provided to all users as they enter the market. The compatibility issues that the Information Systems Division seems so concerned about are no longer viable, as each mainstream software product is now compatible with all others of its type. *Todd Hemingson, Public Transportation Division*

A: *Reed replies:* All of these issues are being addressed by groups such as the Information Resources Advisory Committee, headed by Austin District Engineer Bill Garbade, and the Automation Advisory Committee, consisting of district and division automation administrators.

The initial steps in improving the budget and procurement processes for information resources have been taken by reducing Information Systems Division participation and increasing district and division involvement. The budget allocation process has been revised, new procurement procedures are currently being published, and other changes are forthcoming. I made a commitment to those who attended Short Course to expedite the procurement process.

The need to evaluate software, including upgraded versions, before releasing it to users was emphasized by faulty disk-compression functions in the recently released DOS 6.0 operating system.

Software compatibility is not as important an issue in stand-alone microcomputer applications as it previously was. It remains a critical issue in the network microcomputer

environment that is being implemented throughout TxDOT.

Q: Will TxDOT consider removing the rhetoric from the back of TxDOT business cards? The cost of printing on both sides of card is not good management of tax dollars. The backs of business cards are ideal for jotting down information. As long as I've been around, I've learned to respect someone's values more by what they do than what they say. *Clifford Halverson, Houston District*

A: *Reed replies:* As of June 9, TxDOT no longer prints the department values on the back of business cards. However, we encourage employees to exhaust their current supply before reordering business cards for the sole purpose of having the back side blank.

Q: Why is the department using compressed natural gas (CNG) on new vehicles? As we understand the process, each vehicle costs approximately \$3,500 to convert and our vehicle will only travel approximately 90 miles on each tank of CNG. We have to spend about one hour for travel time and fill up each time the tank is filled. If we fill up each day with CNG, we would be wasting a lot of time. The CNG tank and system also take up a large amount of space in each vehicle. We understand the need to use alternative fuels, but the department does not seem to be ready for the conversion. Couldn't we at least get a fuel station at the district office? *Ted Clay, Beaumont District*

A: *Reed replies:* You seem to have a fairly good grasp of the challenges we face in regard to CNG. The department, and others at the forefront of ushering in a new technology, are facing the proverbial chicken-and-egg dilemma in our efforts to improve air quality and make use of the state's abundant reserves of natural gas.

It might appear unwise, to some, for the department to purchase alternative-fuel vehicles at a price premium before there is easy access to fuel. However, vehicle prices would never drop and public CNG stations, offering clean-burning natural gas, would never be available without this initial demand and government intervention. If CNG is to take hold, it must be readily available to the motoring public. For this reason, we chose to support

development of retail CNG stations.

Q: Could a "form management operations" help in reducing the unit/issue on low-usage forms? For example, instead of users receiving packages of 500 forms that would last several years, they would receive a smaller issue of, perhaps one pad of 100 forms. And would the users or those who stock forms like to see the DHT# printed on the form? *Glenda Cooley, General Services Division*

A: *Reed replies:* Most customers (districts) issue the package of forms to a "Free Bin." It is expensed out at that point, demand (usage) data accumulated, and is available for users to withdraw the quantity of forms that they need to fill short-term requirements, e.g. a month or two.

If users would prefer having the DHT number printed on the form either in addition to, or in lieu of, the form number, it could easily be accomplished when the forms are reprinted.

Q: Why don't we scrap the Texas Reference Marker (TRM) project and purchase a Global Positioning System (GPS) package? *J.V. Hall, Transportation Planning and Programming Division*

A: *Bob Cuellar, deputy executive director for Transportation Planning and Development, replies:* The TRM has been developed to relate roadway records to physical location in the field and to integrate previously unrelated databases. TRM has been under development for more than five years, and numerous extensions to its original scope have extended its development time.

Each enhancement has added new strengths to the system or has been made to meet changing federal requirements. TRM is scheduled for implementation in the districts and divisions next fall.

Global Positioning Systems are an excellent way to determine position in the field. Unfortunately, neither TxDOT, other state agencies using reference markers, nor the traveling public will have GPS universally available to them for

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Ask

From page 5

some time. Moreover, GPS alone cannot integrate the department's databases. TRM is needed to provide that connection. The TRM database is prepared to receive latitude and longitude coordinates from any geographic information technology, including GPS. I am assured the Transportation Planning and Programming Division will work closely with the Information Systems Division to find the most cost-effective way of integrating GPS with TRM.

Q: With the recent retirements, we have seen women and minorities advance upward or come on as new hires. But what has the department done to help the upward mobility of its disabled employees? How many do we have? What are we doing to recruit disabled people? *Mike Borden, Austin District*

A: *Daffney Henry, assistant executive director for Human Resources Management, replies:* Employees with disabilities have the same opportunity and are protected from discrimination as are any employees who are members of minority groups. The fact that you have seen women and minorities advance or be hired simply means there were qualified women and minorities available. Disability is not always visible; therefore, people with disabilities may be among those who advanced or were hired.

Declaring that one has a disability is voluntary. Our records, therefore, are not reliable in determining how many people with disabilities are now employed by TxDOT or how many have advanced or been hired.

The bottom line is that department policy and the law prohibit discrimination on the basis of a disability, so qualified people with disabilities have equal opportunity for jobs. The Americans with Disabilities Act enhances these opportunities by allowing for reasonable accommodations.

TxDOT job vacancy notices are distributed to nine organizations that represent the interests of people with disabilities, in addition to all the other organi-

zations to which the notices are sent.

Q: It seems to us that hiring or promoting personnel just because of their sex or creed is as discriminatory as not hiring or promoting because of sex or creed. What are we doing to keep this reverse discrimination from our hiring policies? *Jerry Raines, Amarillo District*

A: *Henry replies:* In response to your first statement, I agree 100 percent. Hiring or promoting based solely on sex or creed is wrong. Hiring someone who is not qualified to perform the duties of the job or promoting someone who is undeserving hurts the individual and the department. Managers and supervisors should recruit qualified minorities and women. No one should be hiring people who are not qualified because they should not be interviewing people who do not meet the selection criteria. If we do a good job on the front end, we will not make hiring or promotion errors later.

Q: Was the rainfall study on Austin's Loop 1 exempt from the low-bid process? *Tasha Dugas, Traffic Operations Division*

A: *Cuellar replies:* Department research projects, by law, are not required to go through the "low-bid" process. Cheaper is not always better when it comes to scientific studies.

The four-year water-quality study in Austin will identify and quantify pollutants that accumulate along highways and develop cost-effective methods to filter these pollutants out before they enter nearby water sources.

A study was originally considered that would only have collected data on the runoff. It would not have evaluated the effectiveness of water-quality control devices or developed other filtration methods and modeling techniques to predict pollutant loads in highway runoff under various conditions. All of these tasks are within the scope of the current study.

Q: If a traffic engineering study is requested, why would a member of the Transportation Commission disregard the results and make a decision contrary to that of a professional engineer experienced in traffic engineering?

Name withheld by request

A: *Burnett replies:* I truly believe the underlying role of the commission's and Austin headquarters' involvement in operational issues is in trying to get to "yes" with our customers, the citizens of Texas.

As an agency, we must do two things. First, when we give an affirmative or negative response to an issue, each of us has a responsibility to explain clearly the facts and reasons that lead to that decision. This will not always provide the answer people want to hear, but it will explain why we reached the decision, whether because of state law, department policy or engineering guidelines.

Second, all of us must see the big picture. The issue that is raised sometimes is only the tip of the iceberg in the total solution. All our regulations are written by human beings. It is important that we realize this and, when appropriate, correct or enhance the regulations.

As professionals, each of us has a responsibility to ensure that our designs meet the test. When the commission or Austin headquarters requests a softening of the position taken, it is important that we adequately investigate every step we could take and make the best "win-win" recommendation.

I, the commission and the Austin headquarters also need to realize that sometimes the department's hands are tied, and we cannot be all things to all people. This is an educational process for all of us, and unfortunately we will always have to revisit it.

Each of us, you included, wants to feel that we contributed to a successful transportation system for Texas. If we can communicate effectively at all levels and be open and frank with each other, we can begin to avoid the situations you described in your question.

Finally, going back to the second point of my answer, the tip of the iceberg. We, the Austin headquarters and the commission, when requested to try to get to a "win-win" situation, share with you the entire big picture.

Q: While Continuous Improvement needs to cut across all areas of our operations, many of us are new to our position. Can you address this? *Janet Vickery, Human Resources Division*

A: *Burnett replies:* As we begin our new leadership roles, each of us on the

Senior Management Team may do something that seems strange to our quality, long-standing employees. Our intent is not to say someone can't do a job. We know that each employee can.

However, to speed up our learning curve, we might occasionally ask for information to help us understand our new responsibility. Many of us are now in positions where we want to see more detail initially so that through continuous improvement, we can streamline our processes and make everyone's job more fulfilling.

It is not our intention to micro-manage, only to get up to speed as quickly as possible.

Q: What does Continuous Improvement mean to you? It can be perceived as constant change, moving away from the comfortable status quo or even "stirring things up." Can you give encouragement for those situations? I enjoy reading the praise and comments from our customers in *Transportation News* letters. Are there plans to print cases of Continuous Improvement in a similar fashion? *Gary Popp, Transportation Planning and Programming Division*

A: *Burnett replies:* I believe Continuous Improvement is a journey and not a destination. It cuts across all areas of our business.

In selecting the Senior Management Team, district engineers, and division and office directors, we sought out forward thinkers. I believe they feel the same as I do about the importance of Continuous Improvement.

This process should not be used to create change but to assist in smoothing out change. Every day, each of us has a responsibility to improve or make changes. If we don't, we have failed ourselves and the citizens of Texas.

We propose to continue sharing our experiences with Continuous Improvement with our internal and external customers. We need to learn from our mistakes, so we should not be afraid to recommend areas to continuously improve. Also, we must share our successes.

I intend to answer questions in *Transportation News* and encourage all to ask questions. It is important to our agency that each of us can be open with one another. ♣



Short Course '93

Session melds old, new traditions

By Meredith Whitten
Staff Writer

From the moment the 67th annual Transportation Short Course began, change was the theme of the day.

With the theme of "Creating Tomorrow Today," the approximately 2,000 conference participants listened to transportation officials discuss the need to continually improve the department and the transportation industry.

Because of the recent department reorganization, many participants were attending their first Short Course in new positions. TxDOT Executive Director Bill Burnett noted that for 22 years he sat in the audience during Short Course, and that it was substantially different being an active participant on center stage.

The other members of the senior management team—the deputy executive directors and assistant executive directors—also attended

their first Short Course as top managers. All cited their commitment to directing the department into the future.

"We're here to create for the future," Burnett said. "We're no longer a highway department. We have to become a Department of Transportation."

Burnett emphasized his three main objectives for the department: to keep the employees paid, to keep the lettings up and to keep the citizens of Texas happy.

Transportation Commissioner David Bernsen talked about the TxDOT vision statement. He said that although the vision should point the way to the future, we must not disregard our past and overlook those who brought us to this point in history.

"When we create this vision, we have a responsibility to the people before us," Bernsen said.

The opening session began with a slide presentation prepared by the Travel and Information Division

and the Public Information Office. The show spotlighted TxDOT employees around the state and their efforts to improve the department.

In the afternoon session, Burnett previewed a future change in the Short Course awards program.

Beginning in 1994, the department will present the High Flyer Award, which will recognize innovation by a TxDOT employee. Individuals and groups are eligible for the award through their use, research or development of a product that increases safety, saves money or provides improvement in other areas, such as the environment. Award recipients must have worked for the department at least five years.

Next, the senior management team discussed TxDOT's direction.

Jim Bisson, assistant executive director for Motorist Services, said that despite its past merits, the department will be judged on how

it runs today.

"Today we're being measured by how well we listen and how well we respond to our customers," he said.

Tom Griebel, assistant executive director for Multimodal Transportation, agreed that TxDOT must continually move forward and not rest on its laurels.

"As we reflect back on our history, we can think of ourselves as the best highway system in the country. But we must also concentrate on the future," Griebel said.

Russell Harding, director of Staff Services, stressed the need to be on the offensive in the future instead of responding defensively to situations. He cited promoting "good news" stories to the media and public. Harding echoed Bisson's theme of saying "yes" to the external customer.

On the other hand, Daffney Henry, assistant executive director for Human Resources Management, and Cassie Carlson Reed, deputy executive director for Administrative Support, discussed the need to keep internal customers—TxDOT employees—content. Reed cited shortening the time purchase orders require as an example.

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The TxDOT Senior Management Team explains the department's future direction during the opening session of Transportation Short Course in College Station on Oct. 20.



Short Course 93



Continuous Improvement

How can you make TxDOT a better agency?

By Meredith Whitten
Staff Writer

As Bill Burnett says, you've got to walk the talk.

So with all the discussion about Continuous Improvement that's been going on, you may want to make sure you understand the concept so that you will be talking—and walking—correctly.

Continuous Improvement is a fundamental philosophy for how we should operate in the department. It affects all 15,000 TxDOT employees. The Texas Transportation Commission confirmed its support for Continuous Improvement in a resolution signed in May. (The full text appeared in the July issue of *Transportation News*.) The resolution supports the new

TxDOT vision introduced at the 67th Annual Transportation Short Course.

TxDOT's vision is to be a progressive state transportation agency recognized and respected by the citizens of Texas:

- Providing comfortable, safe, durable, affordable, and environmentally sensitive transportation systems that work together;
- Ensuring a desirable workplace that creates a diverse team of all kinds of people and professions;
- Using efficient, cost-effective work methods that encourage innovation and creativity; and
- Promoting a higher quality of life through partnerships with

the citizens of Texas and all branches of government by being receptive, responsible and cooperative.

Continuous Improvement is not a project that runs on a schedule or

starts and ends on a specific date. Therefore, what you're going to see are many subtle changes throughout the department, such as the new style of meetings managers are attending, more

training opportunities and the chance to be more involved in decision making.

"It's the little things that count," said Deborah Morris, director of TxDOT's Continuous Improvement Office. "Actions speak louder than words, so when people see

something is happening, that's where it is going to start. It gradually changes the culture inside the department, bit by bit."

The opening session of Short Course started with a slide presentation produced by the Travel and Information Division and the Public Information Office. The show, "Creating Tomorrow Today," highlighted TxDOT employees, several of whom voiced their support for Continuous Improvement.

"Continuous Improvement is probably one of the better things to happen in the department. When people feel like they're part of the solution they'll work harder for it," said Rosemary Eaves of the

See Improve, page 15



Short Course 93



TxDOT MISSION

TxDOT's mission is to work cooperatively to provide safe, effective, and efficient movement of people and goods.

TxDOT VISION

To be a progressive state transportation agency recognized and respected by the citizens of Texas:

Providing comfortable, safe, durable, affordable, and environmentally-sensitive transportation systems that work together;

Ensuring a desirable workplace which creates a diverse team of all kinds of people and professions;

Using efficient and cost effective work methods that encourage innovation and creativity; and

Promoting a higher quality of life through partnerships with the citizens of Texas and all branches of government by being receptive, responsible and cooperative.



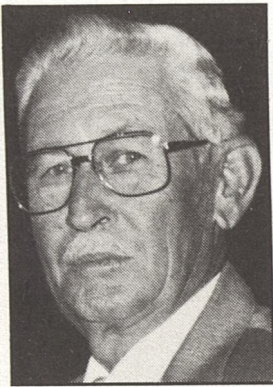
Five honored for outstanding quality

By Victor Rodriguez
Staff Writer

On a day when the word "quality" was used frequently, it seemed appropriate that the department honor those whose work improved the quality of the state's transportation system.

Each year at the Transportation Short Course, the department awards employees and citizens for their contributions to the development of the state's highways.

The candidates for these awards are nominated by district engineers, division directors and other transportation officials throughout Texas. The winners are presented with a plaque and, in most cases, with a check for \$1,000.



Joseph Raska

Greer Award

For his outstanding service to the state of Texas and TxDOT, retired chemical engineer Joseph Raska won this year's Dewitt C. Greer Award.

Raska, who retired Sept. 30 after 33 years of service, worked for the Materials and Tests Division since

graduating from the University of Texas at Austin in 1960. He earned a national reputation for his expertise in pavement marking and roadway signing and lighting.

"Joseph is an outstanding example to all because of his knowledge, foresight, leadership, dedication and numerous contributions to the department," said Billy Neeley, former division director.

The award is given to TxDOT engineers who have contributed significantly to Texas highway development.



William Runnels

Gilchrist Award

William Runnels has helped preserve the natural environment in the Atlanta area, and TxDOT honored him for it.

Runnels, director of transportation planning and development for the Atlanta



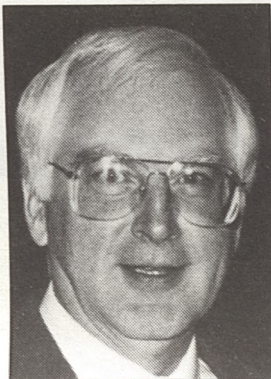
Short Course 93

District, won the Gibb Gilchrist Award for his contributions, including setting up a rural transportation system in a four-county area, coordinating a transportation-related training program for elected officials and drafting a cost-saving proposal for mitigating the loss of wetlands.

"His work in helping preserve the environment demonstrates William's dedication and is a good example of his leadership and creativity," said Lawrence Jester, former district engineer in Atlanta.

Runnels is a graduate of Lamar University and has worked for the department since 1964.

The award is presented to a TxDOT engineer who has significantly contributed to Texas transportation development.



Chris Olavson

DeBerry Award

For his quarter-century of contributions to Texas transportation, Hans "Chris" Olavson won the 1993 Luther DeBerry Award.

TxDOT honored Olavson for his pivotal role in organizing and maintaining the Houston-Galveston Regional Transportation Study. The group publishes and distributes a newsletter to local government entities to keep them informed of transportation news and area roadway construction.

"Many agencies have benefited from Mr. Olavson's concern, knowledge, sharing of expertise and willingness to work toward the common goal of providing better and more efficient transportation," said Houston District Engineer Milton Dietert.

Olavson, a native of Sweden, attended the Stockholm Institute of Technology and served in the Norwegian Army Engineering Corps.

The Luther DeBerry Award, established in 1980, rewards employees of Texas transportation agencies who have made outstanding contributions.



Ray Stoker Jr.

Perry Award

For his relentless dedication in the drive to keep Texas transportation fully funded, Ray Stoker Jr. received the Russell H. Perry Award.

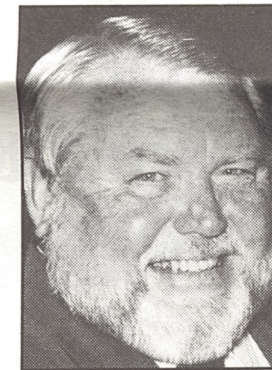
TxDOT acknowledged Stoker's contributions, which include eight years on

the Texas Transportation Commission and successful campaigning to keep all federal highway construction reimbursements dedicated to highway purposes.

From his appointment as a member of the commission in 1985 until his retirement as commissioner of transportation in January, the Odessa attorney tackled a wide range of transportation issues.

"During his service on the commission, Ray dedicated himself to the development of the Texas road and recognized its importance to the overall well-being of the state," said former TxDOT executive director Arnold Oliver.

The Russell Perry Award, established in 1988, recognizes citizens outside state government who have made significant contributions to the field of transportation.



Bert Lundell

Stotzer Award

For his role in creating the nation's finest permit office for freight haulers, TxDOT gave Bert Lundell the Raymond Stotzer Award.

Under his leadership, the Central Permit Office developed a computerized

system that allows any truck driver in the United States to obtain a Texas oversize/overweight permit within 10 minutes. The Central Permit Office has since earned a national reputation for efficient service to the trucking industry.

"Bert's vast technical knowledge and positive management approach to problems resulted in an operation that is nationally recognized," said Gary Trietsch, director of the Traffic Operations Division.

The Stotzer Award was established in 1990 to reward outstanding employees who are not professional engineers.

The awards selection committee was composed of Eugene Robbins of Spicewood, who acted as chairman; Dr. Charley Wootan, director emeritus of the Texas Transportation Institute; and A. Sam Waldrop, former member of the Texas Transportation Commission.

The awards were established in 1966 and since then have been presented at the annual Short Course in College Station. ♣

Lung Association recruiting teams for walkathon

Helping promote healthy lungs can improve your own cardiovascular health.

"We hope that someone in TxDOT will seize the opportunity to be a team captain at the Christmas Seal Walk this year," said Cindy Walker, central region director of the American Lung Association of Texas.

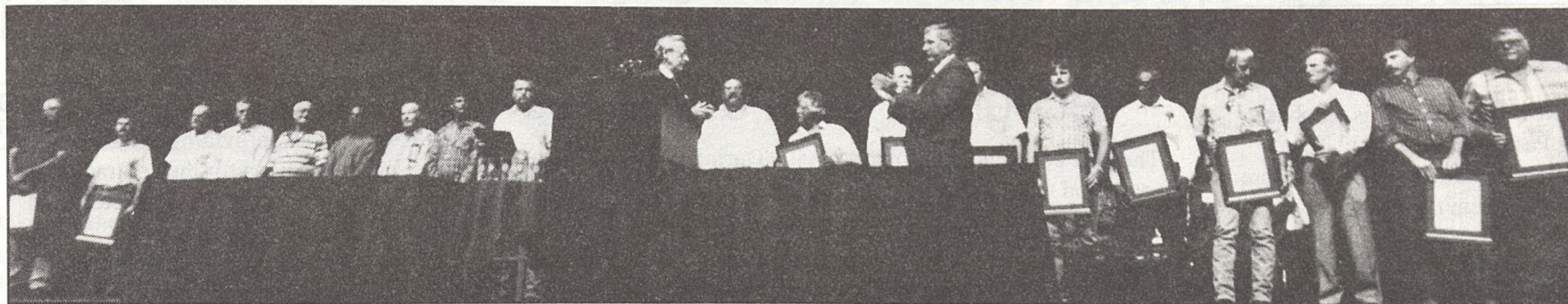
The Dec. 4 walk will raise funds for local programs that promote healthy lungs and clean air in Austin.

Teams for the three-mile walk must consist of five or more members. Trophies and plaques will be awarded to organizations for most money raised, most team members and best team spirit.

Individuals can also participate. Prizes and chances to win more will be awarded according to the amount pledged.

For more information, call 512/346-9308 as soon as possible. ♣

One individual, one team get Extra Miles



Geoff Appold

By Victor Rodriguez
Staff Writer

The department lauded a record number of employees this year for going far beyond the call of duty. How far? Far enough to risk their own lives.

The department recognizes employees who exemplify the service spirit of TxDOT through the Extra Mile Award. The awards are handed out during the annual Transportation Short Course.

Tom Negrette, engineering technician in El Paso, earned his Extra Mile Award for displaying extraordinary bravery to save another human life.

While inspecting a construction project, Negrette noticed a man photographing the Rio Grande. Five men stealthily approached the photographer from behind, prompting Negrette to investigate.

When he arrived on the scene, he saw the photographer on the ground and the five men assaulting him and attempting to steal his camera equipment.

Negrette intervened by screaming at the attackers and telling them to leave the man alone. This scared the attackers, who then fled.

As he expressed his gratitude, the photographer told Negrette that the attackers attempted to cut him

with broken bottles and that if it had not been for Negrette's brave actions, the attackers might have taken his life.

Twenty-six employees from the Waco District acted heroically by putting their own lives at risk to prevent injuries and diminish a life-threatening situation.

In the spring of 1993, Tommy Gaskamp and his maintenance crew from McLennan County were called upon for support during the infamous 51-day standoff between the Branch Davidians and federal agents at Mount Carmel that ended in a deadly explosion and fire. A story detailing their contribution ran in the August issue of *Transportation News*.

The compound was 13 miles east of Waco, just off FM 2491. Access to the area was closed by law-enforcement agents, and when officials needed support they called Gaskamp.

He and his crew lent their help inside the command area of the compound, within range of the Davidians' weapons. His crew set barricades and litter barrels, hauled fuel and roadway material to the command post, and repaired sections of highway damaged by tanks and other armored vehicles.

During the tense deadlock, the

crew placed themselves in danger to assist officers of the law.

Fortunately, no shots were fired. Nonetheless, Gaskamp and his men exhibited extraordinary bravery, handled their assignments professionally and performed their work without injury.

Members of Gaskamp's crew included maintenance technicians Mark Baker, John Beckner, Marvin Hammons, T.P. Holt, Bubba Land, Jessie Martinez, Floyd Norwood, David Robinson, Jerry Shelton, Clovis Sutton, Les Barker, Ronnie Harris, Tim Hillard, Roy Lopez, Jimmy Miller, Marvin Pankonien, Ricky Quinn, Jeff Seay, Harold Shilling, Ronnie Wiley and Ed Zettler; assistant maintenance supervisors James Hill and Clarence Johnson; and preventive maintenance technician James Will.

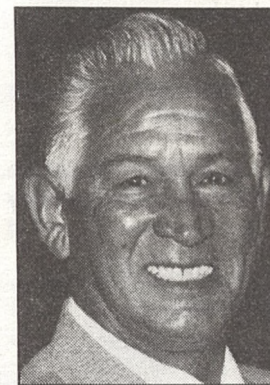
"I was extremely pleased that the department recognized each of these men for the work they did during the standoff," said Waco District Engineer Kirby Pickett.

"Tommy and his crew did their jobs in a professional manner during some rather unusual conditions, and while they may have been in harm's way, I know each of them thought of it as just doing his job," he added.



Short Course 93

Tom Negrette of the El Paso District, below, and the crew of the McLennan County Maintenance Office, Waco District, received Extra Mile Awards at Short Course Oct. 20 for their courage in life-threatening situations this year.



The Department of Public Safety and the Texas Rangers also recognized Gaskamp and his crew and presented them a Texas-shaped plaque as a token of appreciation during a safety meeting in June.

Gaskamp and his 26 crew members traveled to Texas A&M University from Waco to receive their Extra Mile awards. One by one, the heroes walked up on the stage to be handed their awards for their courageous deeds.

Their actions were praised not only by Executive Director Bill Burnett but by the attending audience, who gave TxDOT's heroes a standing ovation. ♣

Session

From page 7

Robert Cuellar, deputy executive director for Transportation Planning and Development, noted the department's need to take the initiative in many areas instead of waiting for legislation or public pressure to change things. He also cited the need to address environmental concerns up front and not have to be "nudged" into it.

Bob Templeton, assistant executive director for Field Operations, echoed the conference theme and lauded the

Continuous Improvement activities and opening the department up to more people.

Bill Crumley, director of Transportation Planning and Development in Brownwood, has attended Short Course many times in the past. He said that because of the recent department changes, this year's opening session was somewhat "different."

"With the new management team that's come on board, there was a little different focus. They told us where we're headed," Crumley said.

Crumley said the senior management team's discussion about the future of TxDOT made him feel confident about the direction

the department is headed.

"I feel good about it," he said. "There's going to be some opportunities in the department."

After the many retirements that hit the department and the recent organizational changes, the opening session also served as a means to meet new employees and put names with faces.

James Bass, budget and forecasting analyst in the Budget and Finance Division, enjoyed his first Short Course.

"I liked the open discussion in the session and that all the members of the senior management team were given a chance to speak," he said. Bass said that before Short Course he did not

know all of the senior management team.

Several of the employees highlighted in the opening slide presentation expressed anticipation of future successes. But they also provided a glimpse of the past, and the foundation that TxDOT has to build on.

An employee quoted in the slide show summed up the combination of past and present: "There's a tremendous amount of talent out here and that's a huge resource we can tap into. I think the department is a great place to work. In the past, we've always taken care of our people, and now the future has a lot to hold." ♣

Awards spotlight excellence, cooperation

By Victor Rodriguez
Staff writer

Now that TxDOT is emphasizing Partnering, the 1992 Texas Project Awards winners are more worthy of emulation than ever.

Ten of the awards, presented Sept. 14 in Austin, celebrate department and contractor personnel who completed projects under adverse conditions. Two of the awards go to department engineers who developed project plans resulting in a particularly smooth construction project.

The annual program, sponsored by the Associated General Contractors, spotlights how construction quality usually results from cooperation between department and contractor personnel.

Construction

Raymond Buzalsky
Mark Freeman
Mike Dillow

Buzalsky of the Fort Worth District and project superintendents Freeman and Dillow of H.B. Zachry Co. had to lower Fort Worth's Abram Street about 20 feet and construct underpasses at both Texas 360 frontage roads.

The frontage road bridges were built before excavation entailing monolithic pours of columns with drill shafts. The slab-span superstructures were formed and poured on the ground.

The construction sequence mandated that the storm-sewer system be constructed before roadway excavation to allow adequate drainage during construction. Dealing with significant grade changes—while maintaining through-traffic on Abram Street and on both frontage roads at all times—presented another challenge.

Even so, the team put effort and forethought into details such as making sure the finish and color of the cast-in-place retaining walls matched the pre-cast walls. The resulting project received the department's highest rating of "Excellent."

Ronald Johnston
Kenny Zarr

The Amarillo District's Johnston and Zarr of Bemis Construction worked together to successfully complete a new section of Farm-to-Market Road 3214 in Hansford County. The project, which included a section built across a dam, was completed in 83 percent of the time allotted.

1992 Texas Project Awards recognize 'best of the best'

The first construction problem encountered was the need to raise a section of the dam and incorporate a super-elevation section into the riding surface. Superelevating the roadway would raise the spillway 18 inches.

The team discussed the problem with the Texas Water Commission and the area engineer, and decided to solve the problems with additional base completed by the prime contractor.

Water pollution and erosion were major concerns on this project. Local landowners who irrigated were having problems with runoff water ending up in the newly graded ditches and not in their tailwater pits. The answer agreed to by the state, contractor and the landowners was for the contractor to install a ditch on the property at no cost to the state.

Fred Long
Mark Leintz

Lubbock's Long, and Leintz of Granite Construction, worked together on a \$27.2 million project consisting of 2.36 miles of new Interstate through a heavily built-up part of Lubbock. More than 1.2 million cubic yards of earth were moved quickly, efficiently and safely in an urban area.

The pair personally explained construction activities to area residents and merchants, keeping complaints and tensions to a minimum. The strategy paid off—construction was completed several months ahead of schedule.

Retaining walls were also an important facet. Three types of retaining walls were originally established in the plans. To reduce costs and to give the contractor more flexibility, options were made available when possible.

An encounter with an unanticipated gas line required a design change, and prestressed ground anchors were chosen to avoid the line. This required construction methods not originally anticipated and a method unfamiliar to state inspectors and contractor alike.

Donald Williams
Joe Hoffereck

TxDOT Project Manager Williams of the Lufkin District and Hoffereck of Smith and Co. worked to convert a stretch of US 59 to a controlled-access freeway with one-way frontage roads.

During construction, access was maintained to several major businesses, a medical facility and a primary school. The transition main-lane access to frontage roads was smooth because of how well Hoffereck and Williams worked with each other and with the business community.

The project included virtually all usual phases of roadway construction, as well as the construction of an experimental soil nail retaining wall.

The team anticipated and solved utility problems to ensure that adjustments were made before they caused scheduling changes. In addition, the project was completed during a wet period within the allotted number of working days and ended up with a "very good" rating.

Keith Carlton
Gerald Horn

Houston District project manager Carlton and project manager Horn of J.D. Abrams are responsible for the construction of 4.5 miles of Texas 225 and 0.11 miles of Municipal Highway 554, mostly in Deer Park.

When the project began, 12 right-of-way parcels were not acquired and 38 utility adjustments were outstanding. Most of the dates planned for utility adjustments and land acquisitions were not met, forcing construction rescheduling. Carlton and Horn worked together to continue the project without a hiatus.

Despite the numerous problems, this project was completed a year ahead of the original schedule.

Jerry Huggins
Richard Powell

Another Houston District winner was TxDOT Project Manager Huggins, teamed with project superintendent Powell of Williams Bros. Construction. Their projects involved resurfacing I-10 from Oates Road to Federal Road and I-610 from Homestead Road to McCarty Road.

One of the most difficult problems was scheduling. The plans permitted work on the freeways seven days a week. But to minimize inconvenience, work continued on the weekends from Friday night to Monday morning—60 hours of operation.

Another major problem was traffic control. Both eight-lane

freeways carry high traffic volumes with a large percentage of trucks. The weekend scheduling eliminated frequent weeknight operations, providing safer working conditions for the contractor's employees, TxDOT inspectors and motorists.

The project was completed 30 days ahead of schedule despite all the challenges.

John Cofas
Ted Sanderfer

Cofas of the Corpus Christi District and Sanderfer of Heldenfels Bros. have a history of cooperation. That relationship and their knowledge of roadbuilding were put to the test during the complicated project to complete Padre Island Drive.

Texas 358, Padre Island Drive, is the primary traffic artery for Corpus Christi. The freeway has been built in segments, with the first construction taking place more than 20 years ago. This project, with the connection to Park Road 22, completed the loop from I-37 to North Padre Island.

An example of the difficulties encountered on the project involved the high water table and the proposed sequence of construction, which rendered the proposed storm-sewer design and installation unworkable.

Working together, utilizing a design proposed by the contractor and later modified by the state, Cofas and Sanderfer decided to set a precast multiple box on a seal slab. This eliminated the boring and jacking for pipe installation. An open cut was used, reducing installation cost.

Walter Whitehead
Don Garrison

Beaumont's Whitehead and Garrison of APAC-Texas worked on a \$7.4 million project to expand a two-lane highway with narrow shoulders to four lanes with wider shoulders and a continuous left-turn lane.

Whitehead and Garrison stayed in constant contact with business owners and residents, and effective signing kept the public informed of traffic control measures.

What easily could have been a serious public-relations problem turned out to be a model of what can happen when contractor and department personnel work closely. The project caused little inconvenience to motorists and businesses and was completed quickly and with high quality.

See Projects, next page

Tech Trade

Beaumont traffic management goes 'on air'

By John Hurt
Beaumont District

The Beaumont District has taken to the airwaves, but motorists won't find the latest Top 40 hits when they tune in; no disk jockey yelling, "This is the big sound in the big town!" Nope, not even a sports score.

What they will hear is traffic information that can be used to avoid accidents, construction sites, and even tell you the best way to get to the Southeast Texas State Fair.

It's called the Traveler's Information Station (TIS), and it's already proving to be a valuable resource. The TIS is a low-power AM radio station that broadcasts traffic messages. Highway signs alert motorists when and where to tune in.

The TIS returned to the air Sept. 27 after lying fallow for six years. The system was employed during the early and mid-1980s but was beset with problems.

Ted East, who works in the district transportation operations office, oversaw the system's rebirth.

"When we tried it before, the system was a joint venture with the city of Beaumont," said East. "We used old audiotape cartridges for the messages, and it was based at the Central Fire Dispatch Office downtown. Of course, the dispatchers had their hands full during

an emergency and usually forgot to record the message. Now the entire operation is based at the district headquarters."

Those old audio carts were a problem, too. Tape would often break, and sound quality was usually poor after a few days of continuous operation.

That was then. This is now.

A new digital voice-storage unit, along with a new antenna and transmitter, have been installed. The voice unit uses no tape and can store up to 13 minutes of information.

"You can break the messages up any way you want, make them any length you want and play them back in any order," says East. "Before, the message could only be as long as a 30- or 70-second tape cart."

Motorists know when to tune to 530 AM because East can initiate a series of flashing yellow lights attached to sign bridges. Signs advising drivers to monitor the system when the lights are flashing are posted over several key highways and at various highway entrance ramps around the city.

The radio transmitter near the Interstate 10/US 69 interchange affords the best signal near the two busiest highways in Beaumont. The transmitter puts out 10 watts, and the signal has been heard as far as 16 miles away.

The beauty of the system is that it can be operated from a touch-tone phone. East can turn on the lights over selected signs and can change the message just by pushing a few buttons. When traffic information isn't being broadcast,

NOAA weather radio is. This keeps the system on the air 24 hours a day.

"We plan to use the radio to warn people about construction, maintenance, sign-changing operations, concrete blow-outs and accidents," says East. "We have also made some portable signs telling motorists to tune to 530 AM that can be placed at individual construction sites."

Besides routine operations, the TIS also has hurricane evacuation applications. The system could warn motorists which highways to use during an evacuation and recommend alternate routes if major thoroughfares are jammed. ♣

Alert lights on sign bridges over key highways can be activated from a touch-tone phone.



John Hurt, Beaumont District

Projects

From previous page

Evaristo Gonzales Mark Grahm

Gonzales of the Pharr District and Grahm of Ballenger Construction worked on overpasses carrying Texas 48 across a highway and a railroad. They had to deal with a lack of frontage roads, which necessitated detours. They coordinated closely with the railroad company for construction of a temporary crossing and signals for detoured traffic. Contractor personnel worked smoothly with the railroad to assist them in crossing and signal installation to avoid the delays often associated with railroad work.

The lack of frontage roads also required steep grades on entrances and exit ramps between the highway and railroad overpasses. The

contractor did extra work, partially at his own expense, to provide area lighting to improve visibility for vehicles using the ramps. State workers provided warning signs and flashers for a signal at the bottom of one of the ramps.

To enhance safety further, the contractor suggested use of additional concrete traffic barriers where a superelevated curve caused excessive drop-off along the edge of construction area. He also moved fill dirt with minimum interference to traffic.

Mayland Foard Bobby Johnson

Foard of the Childress District and Johnson of Gilvin-Terril were involved in a two-segment reconstruction project on US 287. The second segment of the project was to rebuild a section of roadway more than two miles long.

Access to businesses at all times and safe passage of motorists were

top priorities. Together, the chief inspector, Foard, and the general superintendent, Johnson, planned temporary access and pavement driveways, scheduling operations to miss existing utilities in the scant 7 feet of right-of-way behind the curb.

Not only did they keep the project safe, but the contractor-TxDOT team completed the difficult job on time.

Design

John Tiaden

Tiaden earned his design award by developing an alignment and grade for a major highway along a city street and connecting to an interchange on Texas 6 in Bryan.

Tiaden paid particular attention to blending the highway into the topography and the aesthetics of the adjacent property. Practical concerns did not take a back seat, however. During construction, no

problems were encountered that required change or modification of the plans.

Frank P. Holzmann

Holzmann was honored for an I-37 project near the Alamodome in San Antonio. The arena was scheduled to open in March 1993, which made for a short lead time on design, although coordination with multiple subcontractors and government entities, groundwater problems and access for transit and pedestrians made the project unusually complicated.

Innovative wall designs and a pump station solved the groundwater and drainage problems. In the final design, the pedestrian walkway under I-37 ended in a bridge over a depressed entrance ramp, creating a tri-level design.

The project was completed ahead of schedule and within allocated funds. ♣



Marcia Sandifer, Atlanta District

A new Interstate?

Texas Transportation Commissioner David Bernsen, left, participates in a briefing at the state line in Texarkana with Gov. Ann Richards, Texarkana businessman Truman Arnold and Arkansas Gov. Jim Guy Tucker, right.

The meeting was to reinforce official support of plans to develop Interstate 49 from New Orleans to Kansas City.

Richards told the crowd, "The

potential benefits that will come from \$200 million in construction contracts does not stop at the Arkansas line. The Interstate 49 extension is part of a long-sought improvement for transportation systems in East Texas."

Though only 16 miles of the proposed Interstate will run through Texas, plans call for the upgrade of US 59 to Interstate standards to provide a direct link to Houston.

Calendar

NOVEMBER

- 14-17 Traffic Safety on the U.S.-Mexico Border International Conference, El Paso, TO
- 15-17 IVHS Texas, College Station, TO
- 15-17 PMIS District Coordinators Training, Austin, DN
- 16-17 Highway Construction Lettings, Austin, CM
- 25 Thanksgiving Day (Holiday)
- 26 Holiday
- 30 Commission Hearing and Meeting, Austin
- 30 Introduction to Right-of-Way, Austin, RW

DECEMBER

- 1-3 Introduction to Right-of-Way, Austin, RW
- 2 District Chief Accountant or District Director of Administration Meeting, Austin, BF
- 6-8 PMIS District Coordinators Training, Austin, DN
- 7 Executive Level Finance Briefing, Austin, BF
- 8-9 District Nuclear Safety Officer Conference, Austin, MT
- 14-15 Highway Construction Lettings, Austin, CM
- 24 Christmas Eve Holiday
- 29 Commission Meeting, Austin

JANUARY

- 17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Holiday)
- 19 Confederate Heroes Day (Holiday)

FEBRUARY

- 23-24 38th Annual District Laboratory Meeting, Pharr, MT

MARCH

- 2 Texas Independence Day (Holiday)

APRIL

- 21 San Jacinto Day (Holiday)
- 24-27 Texas Public Transportation Conference, College Station, PT

Looking ahead

- May 30 Memorial Day Holiday
- June 3-25 Biennial Radio Technician's Conference, Kerrville
- July 4 Independence Day (Holiday)

Service Awards

November service awardees listed as retiring Sept. 30 by the Human Resources Division have been deleted, but some retirees may appear if their notifications did not reach *Transportation News* by press time.

Districts are now alphabetized, rather than in order by accounting number.

Division employees have been listed under the old division names. Future service awards will be listed under the new names as soon as the Human Resources Division begins producing the reports that way.

Abilene
35 years
Glen E. Bohannon
30 years
Robert E. Hallford
25 years
Glenda P. Eaton
Don L. Lunday
Charles S. Morris
Patsy J. Rowden

Amarillo
25 years
Carl W. Robertson
15 years
Kenneth J. Oliver
10 years
Troy D. Stubblefield
5 years
Ernesto Garza Jr.
Tommy B. Lane

Austin
35 years
Claude H. Garrett III
30 years
Leonard D. James
25 years
Gerry L. Fox
20 years
Myron L. McKelvey
15 years
Samuel E. Holland
Gene C. Rice
David A. Till

Beaumont
25 years
Leonard H. Estes
5 years
Kenneth R. Stephens Sr.

Brownwood
25 years
David C. Wilson
15 years
Ben A. Mackey

Bryan
25 years
Jerry S. Fagan
10 years
Michael M. Greig
Alford Hardwick

Childress
5 years
Janet L. Crawford

Corpus Christi
35 years
Harold G. Franke
25 years
Frank Jozwiak Jr.
10 years
Grace L. Greenlee
Ruben G. Lopez
5 years
Miguel A. Flores
Jose E. Garcia

Dallas
30 years
Nancy M. Hyden
Jerry D. Shepherd
25 years
Hershel W. Derryberry
Gregory Richards
20 years
Van M. McElroy
10 years
Johnny F. Greer
5 years
Rodney Douglas
William D. Grooms
Larry D. Shumate
Theresa A. Williams

El Paso
5 years
Ramon P. Gonzales
Hector J. Granados

Fort Worth
15 years
Lloyd H. Biggs
Ahe W. Crayton
Jose P. Esquivel Jr.
10 years
Sherman L. Edwards
Miguel Galindo
Harold G. Hall

Houston
25 years
Wilbert W. Riewe
15 years
Angel M. Barela Jr.
Allen Clark III
Cynthia S. Sauer
Frieda L. Smith
10 years
Sharon L. Edwards
Gerald G. Foster
Alfred L. Jones
Michael R. Tello
5 years
Mary J. Charles
James V. Hinkle
Lisa A. Meier
Manuel S. Rodriguez Jr.
Troy D. Shelly
Richard Turner III

Lubbock
15 years
Tracy L. Cumby
10 years
Kyle D. Hill
Carol E. Jackson

Lufkin
20 years
Robert L. Faver
5 years
Mark E. Jeffrey

Odessa
25 years
Jose Lopez
10 years
Hector Flores

Paris
30 years
James S. Hill
Bobby R. Kennedy
25 years
Jerry W. Baker
Michael D. Griffith
5 years
James B. Hutchison III

Pharr
35 years
Miguel M. Tijerina
25 years
Jose A. Ochoa
15 years
Rodolfo Amesquita Jr.
Roel Valenzuela

San Angelo
30 years
Gary L. Maricle
10 years
Cecil L. Robbins

San Antonio
35 years
Richard F. Herms
25 years
Dennis W. Zuber
15 years
Ruth M. Tschirhart
10 years
Joe L. Espinoza
Judith L. Friesenhahn
Matias H. Galvan
5 years
Abelardo G. Galvan
Augustin Martinez
Gretchen L. Qualls
Ronald Rubio
Manuel D. Tovar
Eloy C. Zertuche

Tyler
25 years
George L. Humphrey
10 years
Odis M. Cates
Millard C. Martin
Bryan K. O'Neal
Stanley L. Rushing
5 years
William E. Fletcher
Jack D. Wells

Waco
20 years
Paul R. Spear
15 years
Curtis W. Hefelfinger

Wichita Falls
10 years
Timothy S. Weber

Yoakum
25 years
Melvin B. Bayless
Freddie L. Duebbe
Patrick J. Kram
10 years
Ernest D. Aleman
Milton J. Barta
William J. Eisman
Guadalupe Gomez Jr.
Rodney G. Strait

Automation
15 years
William E. Holt
10 years
Elmo J. Roberts
5 years
Mary E. McGrath

Aviation
5 years
Patrick R. Shaub

Equipment and Procurement
25 years
Thomas D. Brown
McKinley Clark Jr.
Ernest L. Spradling
10 years
Cynthia J. Blagden

Human Resources
5 years
Barbara J. Linzey

Maintenance and Operations
25 years
Terry A. Palmer
20 years
Curtis M. Wagner
5 years
Patrick J. Worsham

Materials and Tests
30 years
Charles D. Jenkins
25 years
Joseph R. Johnston

Motor Vehicles Titles and Registration
20 years
Patricia R. Batiste
Eddie A. Thorp III
15 years
Mary H. Davenport
Patricia C. Gunn
Helen C. Sanders
10 years
Charles H. Nail Jr.
5 years
Cherylanne M. Frame

Right-of-Way
5 years
Robert C. Bernhard

Transportation Planning
5 years
Michael G. Lloyd

Travel and Information
5 years
Paul E. Dehnel
Penny G. King
Jose Sermeno Jr.

Improve

From Page 7

Amarillo Travel Information Center. "Task forces can be cumbersome, but if you get everybody working together instead of against each other, you'll have happy employees."

The theme of the general session at Short Course reinforced Continuous Improvement. For the first time, a guest speaker was brought in for the general session. In a segment titled "The Challenge of Continuous Improvement," Pat Townsend, president of Townsend & Gebhardt, Advisors on Quality, spoke on how each employee can make a difference.

Townsend said Continuous Improvement is not just another buzzword developed by an upper-level manager somewhere. "Con-

tinuous Improvement is here to stay," he said.

But he went on to explain that just talking about improvement will not work. Townsend said it is necessary to understand the reason for the need for Continuous Improvement and have a desire to make it happen.

The principles of Continuous Improvement date back to right after World War II. Since then, the philosophy has evolved. Recently, Gov. Ann Richards attributed San Antonio's successful effort to keep Kelly Air Force Base off the national base-closure list to Kelly employees' involvement with Continuous Improvement. The employees were able to cite base efficiency and cost-effectiveness as well as how they compared to the private sector.

Many Fortune 500 companies also employ their version of Continuous Improvement, often known as Total Quality Manage-

ment, to stay competitive. Strong management involvement is always a characteristic. With the backing of the commission and the senior management team, TxDOT already has met this crucial requirement. With its operating budget, TxDOT can compare to many companies in the private sector.

Even if operations appear to run smoothly, there will always be the need for Continuous Improvement.

"The environment around us is constantly changing," Morris said. "We need to constantly check our perceptions against our customers' expectations." Morris said this includes both internal and external customers.

Townsend touched on the same topic. He said that something that we felt was OK five years ago may be totally unacceptable now when we are the customer.

"Just having a vision is not enough," he said. "You've got to

understand the problem and have a reason for getting from here to there."

For TxDOT employees, "there" could include an endless list of things, such as increased efficiency, better customer service or updated procedures. This is recognized in the vision for Continuous Improvement: Clearly recognize TxDOT's external and internal customers' needs, striving continuously through teamwork to improve TxDOT products and services.

As Burnett pointed out, the vision should serve as a guiding light, leading the way to an improved future. It's not necessarily the final stop. "A vision is a journey, not a destination," he said.

So, take a look around. Every part of the department—no matter how large or how small—has room for improvement. Commit yourself to this continuous effort, and you, too, can walk the talk. ♣



Who am I?

That's what we want to know. She's apparently an enthusiastic member of TxDOT's chapter of Toastmasters International, which received its charter in September at an Austin meeting attended by then-Executive Director Arnold Oliver and new director Bill Burnett. Toastmasters encourages self-development and is well known for fostering public-speaking skills.

Highway workers can keep eye out for missing girl

Department employees often help people on the road, whether it's courtesy patrols in Dallas or travel counselors in Amarillo. Now, employees working on construction and maintenance projects may be able to help out a family in New York state.

On Aug. 18, Sara Anne Wood disappeared as she rode her bike home from vacation Bible school. People in central New York have organized a nationwide effort to find Sara, and highway workers can be part of it. The search group has

asked that flag persons and other workers be made aware of Sara's description, and have sent flyers with her description and picture.

Sara, 12, was last seen wearing a pink T-shirt, turquoise shorts and brown sandals. She has dark brown, shoulder-length hair and blue eyes, and is 5 feet tall. Anyone with any information can call 800/684-7272. Rewards are offered for information on her whereabouts and for her safe return. ♣ **Emily Willingham**

Field changes

Toribio H. Rodriguez, El Paso, retired in October instead of September. **Jesus Nuñez** and **Joe R. Cedillo** of the Odessa District withdrew their September retirements.

Julian C. Limon, Austin District; **Clarence T. Morgan**, Beaumont District; **Ramon Longoria**, Corpus Christi District; **Robert A. Thornton**, Lufkin District; **Lawrence R. Wilks**, Pharr District; and **Simon B. Rodriguez**, San Angelo District, were reported in various issues of *Transportation News* as having retired, but they all actually retired in September 1993.

Retirements

May 1992

Dallas

Robert Babineau, 9 years
Maintenance Technician II

April 1993

Odessa

Froilo S. Franco, 27 years
Motor Vehicle Mechanic III

May 1993

Abilene

William F. Shaw Sr., 11 years
Maintenance Technician II

Tyler

Eugenia P. Perry, 34 years
Administrative Technician II

September 1993

Amarillo

Harold W. Smalley, 27 years
Assistant Foreman

Beaumont

Edward C. Dominguez, 36 years
Engineer IV

Reginald W. Willis, 22 years
Assistant Foreman

Fort Worth

Lincy D. Clemmons, 11 years
Maintenance Technician II

Lubbock

Doyle L. Wassom, 33 years
Roadway Maintenance
Supervisor IV

Paris

William F. Huml, 31 years
Engineering Technician II

Yoakum

James C. Wright, 27 years
Roadway Maintenance Supervisor I

Right-of-Way

Wayne L. Childers, 35 years
Program Administrator III

October 1993

Atlanta

Jerry Armstrong, 31 years
Roadway Maintenance
Supervisor IV

Beaumont

Jimmie L. Clark, 27 years
Maintenance Technician III
John Z. Mallett, 29 years
Maintenance Technician III

Dallas

Jerry L. Stroud, 30 years
Maintenance Technician III

Fort Worth

Weldon D. Jarratt, 30 years
Engineer III

Houston

Ronald H. LaBorde, 28 years
Engineering Specialist I

Paris

Troy G. Duckworth, 30 years
Maintenance Technician III

Pharr

Rafael Baez, 30 years
Maintenance Technician III

General Services

Nancy Blankenship, 27 years
Micrographics Technician II
Harvey Ricks, 25 years
Maintenance Technician III

Motor Vehicle

Adrian Muñoz, 6 years
Accountant I

Letters

I wanted to let you know about the kindness showed to us by two of your employees: **Robert Marquez** and **Joe Diaz** from the McCamey Maintenance Section, Odessa District.

My wife and I were traveling from San Francisco to Tampa, Fla. On March 9, we were on US 385 between McCamey and Rankin on our way back to I-10 when our van broke down.

We were only stopped about 10 minutes when Mr. Marquez and Mr. Diaz stopped to assist us. We had a cellular phone in the van to use for emergencies, but because we were in a valley, we could not use it. Mr. Marquez and Mr. Diaz used their CB to call a tow truck and the police for us. They did everything they could to assist us and stayed with us until a McCamey police officer arrived.

You have no idea what this kindness meant to my wife and me. My wife was in tears when the car broke down in the middle of nowhere. I was greatly comforted by the men's professionalism and the kindness they showed. They are a credit to their positions and

their community. With men like this, it is very easy to see why the roads in Texas are superior to the rest of this country.

I need to make a comment about the friendliness of that area of your state. Before the car broke down, we had several people wave to us. Being from overcrowded California, we thought that this could only mean one thing—there was something wrong with the car.

We pulled over at one point and walked around the car to be sure that all the tires were full and that we hadn't left anything on top of the vehicle. When we told Mr. Marquez and Mr. Diaz about this experience, they were very quick to inform us that this was just plain Texas friendliness.

I thank you all for a safe and peaceful trip through your state. And a very special thanks to Mr. Marquez and Mr. Diaz.

Edward W. Clough
Lafayette, Calif.



Write, and ye shall receive

By state law, those receiving *Transportation News* through the U.S. mail must ask to be retained on the mailing list each year. Here's your **second notice** for 1993. If you did not already do so, sign below, cut out or copy this part of the page including your mailing label, and send to:

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