



TOGETHER, WE'RE BETTER!

People from many walks of life and backgrounds work together daily to keep the state's transportation system the best in the nation.





JAMES BASS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RESOLUTIONS WITH A PLAN

Happy 2018!


With every new year, we make resolutions to lose weight, exercise more, think more positively; you get the idea. I've made more than a few of these declarations myself, and I've found that the best way to stick to them is to have a definitive plan of action and commit to it. It's not easy, but it pays off.

So, what does that have to do with TxDOT? Well, we're resolving to do a better job of making our workforce more inclusive, more diverse. That's not being politically correct; it's being morally right and business smart. Studies show that when companies commit to diverse leadership, they are more successful. The more diverse companies are, the better they are at attracting top talent and improving employee satisfaction.

And given that TxDOT must prepare for a future that will accommodate more Texans who will be driving smart cars and trucks on infrastructure that will adapt to communicate with them, we need diverse minds and points of view to meet the task of making these changes work for Texas. We need those strengths and talents to tackle the transportation challenges the 21st century will bring.

But diversity in our workplaces creates more than new ideas. It fosters respect and when we respect our co-workers, that translates into more respect for the people of Texas whom we serve. And that is the kind of reputation we work hard every day to earn.

So how do we open our doors to this new talent? Through recruitment and retention. The Human Resources and Civil Rights divisions are leading our efforts on this front. You can read more about how they're doing that in this issue of TN.

We serve a diverse Texas and our workforce should reflect that — at all levels. We owe nothing less to the citizens of Texas. 



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10 ON THE COVER

The value of diversity in the workplace is not lost on an agency as far-reaching in scope as TxDOT. We will be best prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the future by being inclusive and respecting the innovation and solutions that come with welcoming people of all backgrounds.

On cover (clockwise from top left): Michael Wiley, Khoa Nguyen, Carmen Jacquez, Lois Rodriguez, Kevin Stillman, Taya Retterer, Haley House, Bob De La Rosa and Chris Lewis. All photos by Will van Overbeek.

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THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW RIGHT NOW

1 **Salazar named Laredo District Engineer**

David M. Salazar Jr. was named the new district engineer for the Laredo District last October. He will oversee the planning, designing, building, operation and maintenance of the state transportation system for the eight-county district. A native of Uvalde, Salazar graduated from Texas Tech University with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering in 1992 and became a licensed professional engineer in 2001. He was also a summer intern in the Lubbock District while a student at the university. He joined TxDOT in 1995 and was appointed Laredo's director of maintenance in 2011.

2

Survey of Employee Engagement

The Survey of Employee Engagement will run from Jan. 22 to Feb. 9. At TxDOT, the survey is administered every two years and is used to assess employee perceptions of the department's success in fulfilling its mission and vision. Employees may complete the survey electronically or via mail-in survey. Be sure to log on to participate and have your voice heard.

3

Green named Tyler District Engineer

Glenn H. Green, previously the district engineer for the Atlanta District, is the new district engineer for the Tyler District. He will oversee the planning, designing, building, operation and maintenance of the state transportation system for the eight-county Tyler District in his new role. Green started at TxDOT as a summer intern in 1984. He served as deputy district engineer in Tyler from 2001 to 2016.


4

Freight mobility grant

In an effort to improve freight mobility and help ease congestion for all drivers, the federal government awarded TxDOT a \$6 million grant in October to add connected-vehicle technologies to Texas interstates and to more than 1,000 commercial and TxDOT vehicles. The technology will help provide advance warning to trucks and give them more time to alter their routes and avoid congestion, reducing overall freight traffic on busy interstates.

5


New directors announced

TxDOT has three new directors who were appointed last fall. C. Michael Lee was appointed director of Engineering and Safety Operations, moving from his previous role as director for the Maintenance Division. Lee joined TxDOT in 1997. Mary Anne Griss is the new director of Commission Support. Griss was previously a project coordinator for the Austin District and has experience working with the Texas Transportation Commission. Gina Gallegos is the new director of the Construction Division. She began her career in the San Antonio District and received the 2017 Gibb Gilchrist Award. 

TN READERS TELL US

TN MAGAZINE READER SURVEY RESULTS

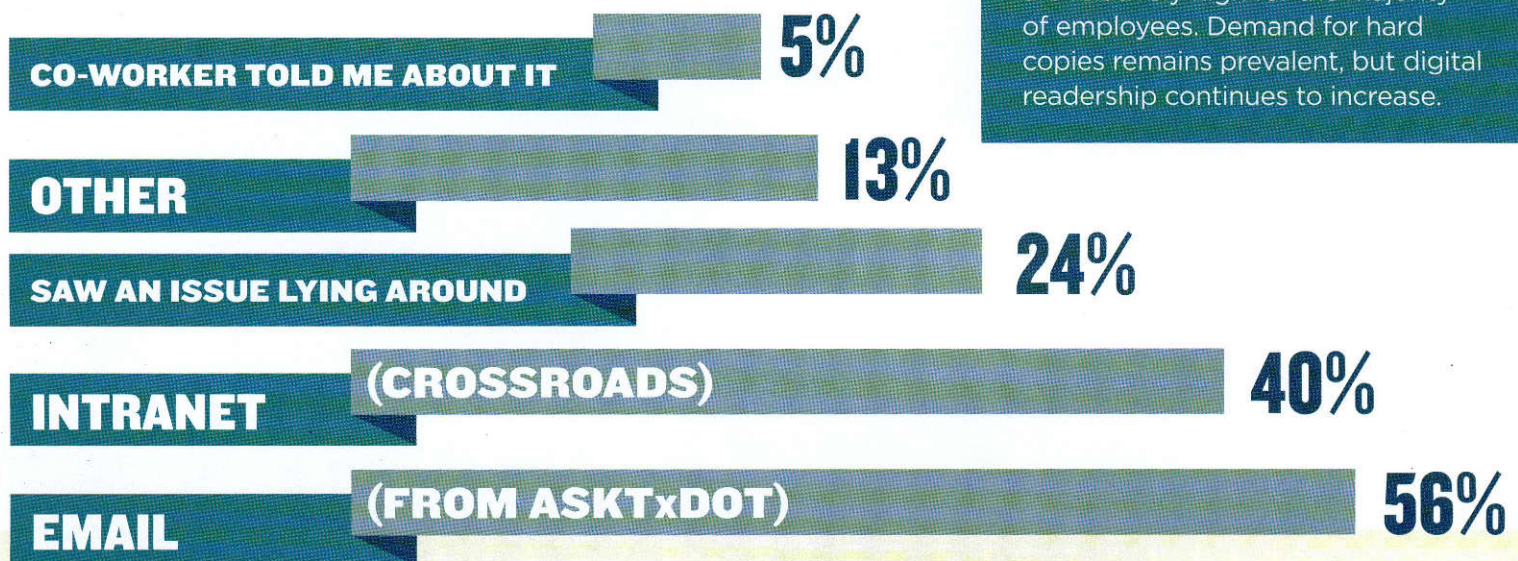
While keeping the department informed and updated about recent events is a vital part of TN Magazine, it's more than a vehicle for news — it's a way for team members to stay connected and to share in the success and achievements of which we're all part.

Periodic reader surveys are conducted to provide the Communications Division with employee feedback to continually refine and improve the content and delivery of TN Magazine. Thanks to all who participated in the survey. 

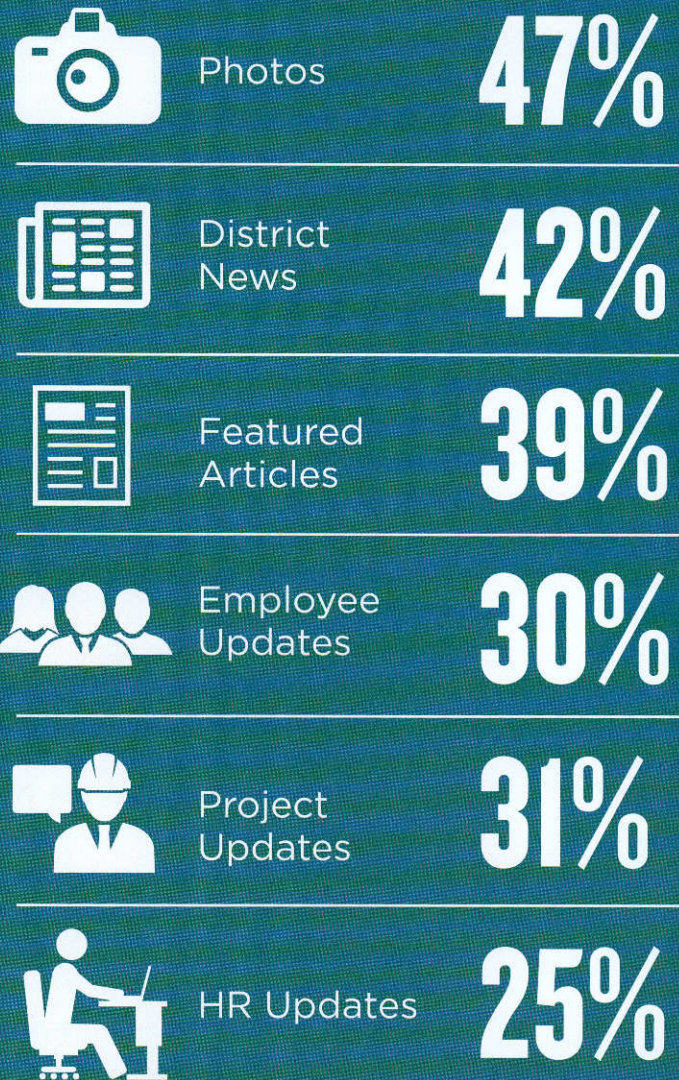
HOW DO YOU PREFER TO READ TN MAGAZINE?



HOW DO YOU FIND OUT ABOUT TN MAGAZINE?



WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE MORE OF:




TN READERS

TN readership is consistent (84% of TxDOT) and online experience ratings are relatively high for the majority of employees. Demand for hard copies remains prevalent, but digital readership continues to increase.

From the Panhandle to the Valley and all points in between, TN brings you transportation highlights happening throughout our great state.

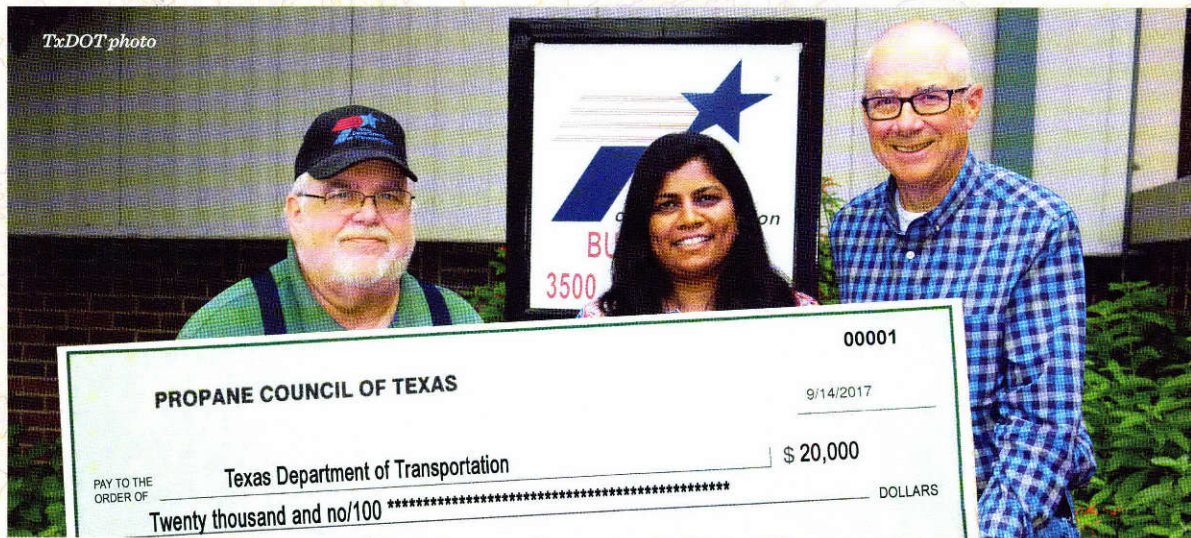
AUSTIN

Alternative fuels program receives propane reimbursement

The Fleet Operations Division recently received a \$20,000 incentive from the Propane Council of Texas to partially reimburse TxDOT for the purchase and conversion costs of propane fleet vehicles. The award is an early success for efforts by the division's Fleet Services team to seek grant funding for the department's alternative fuels program. 



The Fleet Operations Division received a \$20,000 check from the Propane Council of Texas to reimburse TxDOT for the purchase and conversion costs of propane fleet vehicles: (l to r) Fleet Services Manager Bob White, Special Projects Coordinator Farrah Bhatti and Fleet Operations Division Director Dalton Pratt.



AUSTIN


Leadership seminar provides practical skills in Austin District

Although TxDOT's continuing education program meets many needs, some classes are best taught by those with real-world experience, especially in non-technical fields where expertise lies outside TxDOT.

Terry McCoy, Austin's district engineer, realized diverse skills were necessary for success in today's transportation world. To fill this gap, he initiated a leadership seminar to expose the district's up-and-coming engineers and middle managers to topics like dealing with the public, choosing the most appropriate form of communication, and understanding the viewpoint of our private-sector partners.

Twelve participants gathered around a conference table interacting with two or three subject experts, including a Fortune 200 CEO, active community leaders and politicians, consultants and retired TxDOT employees.

"I thought the communication session was going to be a boring re-hash of professional etiquette," said Mobility35 Program Manager Karen Lorenzini. "Instead, the speakers engaged us with specific examples and detailed strategies we could apply in different situations."

McCoy hopes the Leadership Seminar will provide a glimpse into the broader world outside of TxDOT to enhance the careers of future TxDOT leaders. 



A leadership seminar developed in the Austin District introduced 12 participants to practical examples of dealing with the public and relating to community leaders: (l to r) Back row: Howard Falkenberg, president of Staats, Falkenberg and Partners; Karen Lorenzini; Dwayne Halbardier; Jason Cavness; Willie Semora; Joseph Muck and Mahendran Thivakaran. Front row: Hui Wu; Heather Ashley-Nguyen; Robena Jackson, president of Group Solutions; Gisel Carrasco and Tanli Sun.



Houston celebrates start of reconstruction for I-69/I-610 West Loop Interchange

Williams Brothers Construction recently began preliminary work on the I-69/I-610 West Loop Interchange project with plans to start major construction early this year. To mark the occasion, TxDOT joined community leaders, elected officials and other stakeholders to celebrate the rebuilding of one of the most congested interchanges in Texas: the I-69/I-610 West Loop Interchange.

The event was attended by Texas Transportation Chairman J. Bruce Bugg Jr., Texas Transportation Commissioner Laura Ryan, U.S. Rep. John Culberson, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, State Rep. Sarah Davis and TxDOT Houston District Engineer Quincy Allen.

The I-69/I-610 interchange connects two extremely busy highways serving the Houston area. The \$259 million project will improve safety and mobility while reducing congestion by widening the connector ramps to two lanes, increasing sight distances, and providing remedies to eliminate weaving. The project also calls for adding shoulders on the I-610 West Loop mainlane bridge over I-69 and adding detention ponds.

Construction will be phased and will include nighttime and weekend road closures. The project is expected to take about five years to complete. **TN**



HOUSTON



Texas Transportation Chairman J. Bruce Bugg Jr. (fourth from left) and Texas Transportation Commissioner Laura Ryan (third from right) were among the officials celebrating the rebuilding of the I-69/I-610 West Loop Interchange in November.

Wellness rooms debut at Wellness and Safety Fair in Tyler

The Tyler District hosted its annual Wellness and Safety Fair and Chili Cook-Off on Oct. 19. Wellness activities kicked off with the grand opening of two new wellness rooms in the district's administration building. The rooms, displaying the new Wellness Program logo, were outfitted with funds provided through the program overseen by the Human Resources Division.

Additionally, the district implemented a Spirit Week to show support for various health and wellness initiatives including Wear Red Day for heart health, Pink Out for breast cancer awareness and Wear Your TxDOT Red, White and Blue in support of the TxDOT Cares - Hurricane Harvey Employee Relief Campaign.

The week culminated with district employees coming together for the fair. It featured everything from traffic safety games and tournaments to health and wellness vendors. The fair also had a booth decorating contest, a car show, healthy snacks and a chili cook-off.

First place in the chili cook-off went to Joey Word and his team from the Longview Maintenance Office. Second place went to Mancil Richardson and the Tyler Area Office team. Third place was Will Buskell and the Longview Area Office team.

Best booth décor went to the District Maintenance and Special Jobs Crew with their "The Good Life" booth.

A special thanks to the employees who participated in the Carter Blood Care Blood Drive. **TN**



TYLER



The Tyler District's annual Wellness and Safety Fair and Chili Cook-Off in October marked the opening of two new wellness rooms in the district's administration building. The rooms were outfitted with funds provided through the Human Resources Division's The Good Life program.

NEW TRAINING AVAILABLE ON TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM DELIVERY PROCESSES

In the May/June issue of TN Magazine, we announced that the department has developed more rigorous processes to efficiently plan, develop and deliver the right transportation projects. Training for these processes is now available. All department employees can now register for the following classes through PeopleSoft:

- TPD100 - Introduction to Transportation Planning & Development (online)
- TPD101 - Overview of Project Development & Delivery at TxDOT
- TPD102 - Project Delivery & Governance
- TPD103 - Performance Based Planning
- TPD104 - Quarterly Review Process

The online introduction is recommended for all employees. No matter what your current role is at TxDOT, this class will provide you with a brief overview of the department's approach to delivering a greater number of transportation improvements throughout the state. It is a prerequisite for taking any of the other classes.

For anyone whose current role involves planning, designing, constructing or maintaining parts of our transportation system, the overview class or TPD101 will also be very valuable. In this half-day, instructor-led class, you will be introduced to the new processes and learn the reasons for developing them. This class is a prerequisite for the remaining three classes.

The Project Delivery & Governance class is also recommended for all employees involved in planning, designing or constructing transportation projects. This half-day, instructor-led class goes into more detail on the key stages and stakeholders in the project development and delivery process.

The Performance Based Planning class is targeted for district and division employees who are involved in assigning available project funding to specific projects. The goal is to align planning of future transportation projects with our strategic priorities (safety, preservation, easing congestion and connectivity).

The Quarterly Review Process class is for district and division employees involved in developing and delivering transportation projects. It will discuss activities in the following phases: preliminary engineering, right of way, environmental, preparation of the final plans, specifications and estimates. The goal is to advise students on how to monitor project development activities to ensure that we deliver the right projects, on time and at the budgeted cost.

These training classes include key milestones and decisions, defined roles and responsibilities, and expected outcomes for each process. Effective implementation of these new processes will make our day-to-day project development and delivery efforts more efficient and consistent throughout the state. Check with your supervisor to see which of these training courses are recommended for you. **TN**



PROJECT TRACKER: TRANSFORMING THE ONLINE GATEWAY

Project Tracker, an online tool for the public to follow more than 10,000 transportation projects, soon will undergo a transformation, thanks to the input of TxDOT employees and stakeholders.

Project Tracker consolidates project-specific information from several TxDOT databases and maps it into one publicly accessible location. Recognizing how valuable the tool is, TxDOT conducted an extensive outreach effort to identify ways to improve it and increase its usage. Through surveys and focus groups, more than 2,000 people contributed to the effort.

"This process reinforced how much our stakeholders and employees value Project Tracker to do their jobs," said Transportation Planning and Programming Division Director Peter Smith. "I want to thank all the employees who responded to the survey and participated in the focus groups. Through their input, we've identified solutions to deliver an even better Project Tracker."

Improvements will include:

- Easier-to-use search function
- More user-friendly and intuitive web design
- At-a-glance project summaries

To make sure TxDOT was on the right track, a second round of focus groups was conducted to review potential improvements. Participants were very supportive of the changes and offered minor refinements.

"During our focus groups, many stakeholders used Project Tracker for the first time and were impressed," said Dione Albert, business operations project manager for Transportation Planning and Programming. "We've launched an awareness effort to encourage more stakeholders and employees to take advantage of this great tool."




TxDOT photo

Project Tracker, an online tool for the public to track more than 10,000 transportation projects, will soon launch a redesigned version with improved usability. Pictured: (l to r) Shana Thomas and Dione Albert with the Transportation Planning and Programming Division.

Employees may see Project Tracker demonstrations at upcoming events.

As awareness of Project Tracker increases, so will expectations. Employees responsible for providing data that Project Tracker relies on will have to ensure that information is updated quickly and accurately. Complete and accurate information is evidence of our commitment to full transparency of agency operations.

The new Project Tracker will be available in Spring 2018. However, improvements won't stop then. A working group of stakeholders and employees will analyze ongoing feedback and suggest additional improvements over time. Feedback will be gathered through a pop-up survey on Project Tracker. Users can also email their suggestions to Project.Tracker@txdot.gov.

"We are very excited to launch the new version of Project Tracker, and I encourage all employees to try it," said Michael Chamberlain, data management section director for the division. 

MOVING THE NEEDLE: DIVERSITY AT TxDOT

TxDOT's mission to deliver a safe, reliable and integrated transportation system affects all Texans. Our state's population reflects a wide range of ages, backgrounds and abilities. One of TxDOT's ongoing goals is to ensure an inclusive and diverse workforce that reflects the cultural richness of the people we serve.

Workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between people in an organization. It encompasses gender, race, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organization function, education, background and more. Diversity involves how people perceive themselves, how they perceive others and how those perceptions affect their interactions.

"TxDOT is one of the largest state agencies in Texas, and we are committed to building and maintaining a diverse environment where employees from all backgrounds can thrive," said Director of Human Resources David McMillan.

Embracing diversity can be a challenge, but it has many benefits. A diverse workplace with varying points of view provides a larger pool of ideas and experiences in finding solutions to problems.

"Diverse minds have diverse thoughts and that leads to new ideas," said Michael D. Bryant, director of the Civil Rights Division. "When you have a group where everyone shares the same background — the same ages, the same schooling, the same experience — you can have tunnel vision or groupthink. They all have the same answer."

Groupthink is a phenomenon that occurs when a group emphasizes harmony to the point it fails to consider alternatives and dissenting viewpoints, resulting in flawed decision-making. Ideally, a workplace will include employees from a variety of backgrounds and experiences who aren't afraid to speak up and contribute solutions to the problems the agency faces every day.

"Diversity and inclusion at all levels within the organization are critical to the success of our business," said McMillan.

TxDOT's efforts to achieve a truly inclusive workplace focus on two major areas: recruiting and retention.

"Changing the numbers on our workforce demographics is a slowly melting iceberg," said Bryant. "We're not going to set arbitrary goals. We're not going to get rid of good people. We're not working on a timetable. We're making incremental changes that will snowball down the road."

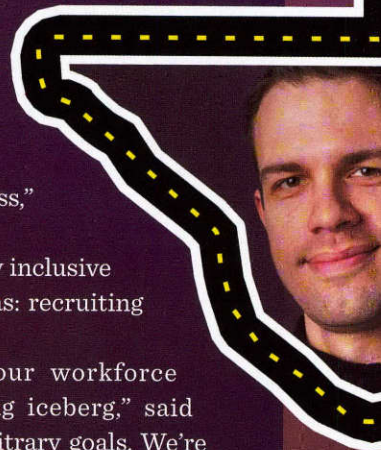
A key focus for recruitment is the agency's incredibly successful summer hiring program. Many employees at TxDOT, including those in leadership positions, started their careers here as summer hires.

"The summer program is a clear target for increasing diversity," said Bryant. "It's a small group that can affect great change down the road."

TxDOT's recruitment and outreach efforts involve job fairs and high school and college career fairs. At High School Career Exploration Day, TxDOT hosts high school students so they can explore career opportunities. Other programs include the Conditional Grant Program, which provides funds for college tuition to students who agree to come to work for the agency when they graduate, and the College Externship Program where partner universities market TxDOT careers to students.

"We have a lot of opportunities for young people just out of school at our agency," said Bryant. "We want to improve our outreach to potential candidates."

The divisions are also working with minority organizations to help expand recruitment efforts. Partnerships with organizations like the Society of Women



WORKFORCE BY THE NUMBERS

SEX/RACE	*TEXAS POPULATION	TxDOT WORKFORCE
MALE	49.6%	78%
FEMALE	50.4%	22%
WHITE (NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO)	42.6%	61%
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	12.6%	8.11%
HISPANIC	39.1%	26.93%
ASIAN	4.8%	3.08%

*Texas population numbers from U.S. Census Bureau, 2016



Engineers, the National Society of Black Engineers and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers enable the agency to promote opportunities for women and minorities in the engineering and technology workforce.

The divisions are also looking at involving more employees in the recruitment effort, not just Human Resources staff or agency leaders.

“Employees are our best advertisement for recruitment,” said Bryant. “Their involvement is key to relaying our message that TxDOT is a great place to work. We want to bring more employees to our recruitment efforts and connect with potential hires one-on-one.”

Of course, once employees are hired, it’s important that they have opportunities to advance their career.

Employees who feel stuck in one place are not likely to stay. Employee retention and turnover is always a major concern in any workplace.

“Career development is another available tool that can help cultivate our internal resources for future leadership positions,” said McMillan.

The Civil Rights Division is currently developing an understanding of our workforce in an effort to expose employees to opportunities available to them across the agency. The hope is to encourage employees to stay here. Fostering inclusivity and career development can help with that effort.

Individually, employees can help increase diversity by building a welcoming environment where everyone feels comfortable. Hostile activities and attitudes can turn away good people. If you witness inappropriate behavior, it’s important to step up and stop it. When one person does the right thing, it motivates others to follow that example. Small actions by a few people can make a big difference. **TN**

TxDOT photo

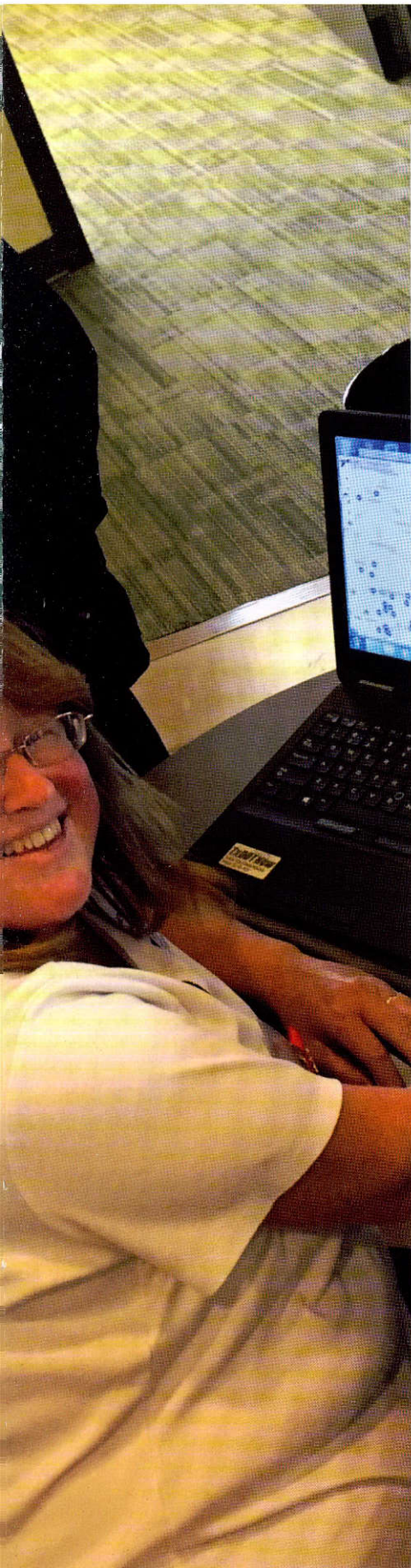


TICS AND

DriveTexas.org and the Travel Information Line, managed by the Travel Information Centers, were invaluable resources for drivers during Hurricane Harvey: (standing from left): Travel Counselors Peggy Miller and Annette Mata and TIC Supervisor Daphne Adkins of the TIC located on Airport Boulevard at I-40 in the Amarillo District. Seated is Travel Counselor Kathy Caraway.

DRIVETEXAS.ORG

SHINE DURING HURRICANE HARVEY



With more than 500 state roadway closures during the height of Hurricane Harvey, TxDOT's DriveTexas.org website was visited more than 5 million times as drivers searched to check road conditions, find alternate routes and see closures on state roadways. Meanwhile, Texas Travel Information Centers, or TICs, across the state worked longer emergency hours answering more than 163,000 calls to the toll-free TxDOT Travel Information Line.

"We never relied on [DriveTexas.org] more than we did in the days following Hurricane Harvey," said TxDOT Executive Director James Bass. "During the storm, DriveTexas.org was visited by a record number of people trying to safely navigate to their destinations. The real-time updates, which are made by TxDOT team members in the field, kept pace with fast-moving conditions and were invaluable to thousands of travelers and emergency responders who otherwise may not have known where to turn for accurate information."

Staff at the TIC in Amarillo normally answer 20 phone calls a day. During the storm, that volume grew tremendously to almost 300 calls in one day.

"On Aug. 23, our center answered 293 phone calls," said Daphne Adkins, supervisor of the TIC located on Airport Boulevard at I-40. "All of the calls were Harvey-related."

The DriveTexas.org website was instrumental in helping TIC staff guide callers around multiple road closures.

"Our team in Austin leading the DriveTexas.org website did a remarkable

job of keeping us updated on what's going on," Adkins says. "In turn, our travel counselors provided guidance and reassurance to the public who depend on Texas' roadways to get home."

Adkins, who has been with the TIC for the last 10 years, worked the center during Hurricane Ike in 2008, and says Hurricane Harvey has brought a much deeper emotional response.

"The people calling us for help are scared and they are frustrated. Even so, they have been extremely grateful just to have someone talk them through whatever situation they are experiencing," she said.

In fact, one call Adkins received was

from a lady who was stuck on the roof of her home with two children.

"It was heart wrenching, but to be able to talk with her and give her the information she needed to get help was rewarding,"

Adkins said. "She actually called back to let us know she was rescued."

Adkins says that teamwork also played a huge role in her staff's morale.

"The amount and types of calls were exhausting," she said. "I'm also thankful that we received staffing help daily from Amarillo District headquarters. It really is one, big TxDOT family — including the support from the other TICs across the state."

TxDOT has 12 TICs in all, but due to flooding, the one in Orange County was evacuated during the storm.

DriveTexas.org is an industry leader in providing accurate and up-to-date travel-related information to drivers in Texas. The toll-free Travel Information Line is 800-452-9292. **TN**

The DriveTexas.org website was instrumental in helping TIC staff guide callers around multiple road closures.

EXTRA MILE AND HARVEY HEROES AWARDS

TxDOT HONORS THOSE WHO HELP OTHERS

At the 91st Annual Transportation Short Course on Oct. 10, TxDOT recognized employees who went above and beyond the call of duty to help people in need. The Extra Mile Awards are presented to TxDOT workers who have helped save a life or prevented a situation from becoming life-threatening, either while performing their TxDOT duties or on their own time.

This year, the Short Course program also acknowledged the extraordinary efforts of TxDOT employees during the response to Hurricane Harvey. Employees across the state stepped up to help. These particular Harvey Heroes were on the front lines to help with high-water rescues.





ATLANTA DISTRICT | Ricky Wright, Jason Griggs, Daniel Burkhalter and Norm Petrimoulx

On a quiet rural road in Bowie County in August of last year, the Special Jobs Crew in the Atlanta District — Ricky, Jason, Daniel and Norm — was trimming tree limbs when they witnessed a horrific collision between a motorcycle and a pickup truck hauling a utility trailer. The motorcycle driver was thrown into the air and landed in the middle of the road. Norm raced to the young man’s side while the rest of the crew called for paramedics. They administered what first aid they could and directed traffic away from the injured motorcyclist. An ambulance arrived and took him away. Sadly, he died of his injuries, but the TxDOT crew gave him a voice of comfort and got help to him as quickly as possible.



DALLAS DISTRICT | Ricky Farmer

Like something out of a movie car chase, an 81-year-old woman drove her pickup truck off the road, through a barbed wire fence and into a stock pond. As the truck started to sink slowly, she called 911. Ricky happened to be nearby on this day in March while working on a bridge over Chambers Creek. When Ricky’s supervisor, Michael Anthony, heard the police dispatch call, he alerted Ricky in hopes he could get there in time to help. Ricky jumped into his truck and drove off, looking for any sign of the woman. Finally, he spotted the pond and the truck — barely visible now under the water’s surface. Ricky dove into the water and found the woman unconscious, but with her head sticking out of the window. He struggled to get her body free from the door while still holding her head above water. The water fought against him as he dove under time and again trying to pull her free.

Finally, two sheriff’s deputies arrived to help and managed to get the woman back to the shore. They were able to get a pulse just as medics arrived to transport her to the hospital. Unfortunately, this story did not have the happy ending Ricky wanted. She never regained consciousness and was removed from life support after her family gathered around her to say goodbye. But Ricky’s valiant efforts helped give them that opportunity.

Continued on page 16

TxDOT photo



At the 91st Annual Transportation Short Course on Oct. 10, TxDOT recognized employees who went above and beyond the call of duty to help people in need. The Extra Mile Award winners and the Harvey Heroes selflessly put others before themselves.



HOUSTON DISTRICT
Joe Garcia

In the early morning hours of January of 2016 Joe Garcia and two other crewmembers were surveying flood gauge markers on the Eastex Freeway when they witnessed a sedan spin out of control and hit an outside barrier wall. The car ended up on its side in the road. Joe ran to help, but cars were speeding by too fast. Finally, he saw a break and darted to the vehicle. Smoke was billowing from all sides of the car and he knew he had to get everyone out. The only way to do that was to climb on top of the car, despite its precarious placement.

He made his way up and was able to open the door. A teenage boy was there, conscious and apparently unhurt. Joe pulled the boy from the car and lowered him to the ground where more people had gathered to help. Joe then pulled out another passenger and found a baby still in his car seat. He pulled the child to safety, handing him off to bystanders below who had formed a human chain to get the small passenger to safety. Still, two more people were left in the vehicle. The driver was pinned by the steering wheel, so Joe had to muster all the strength he had to push the wheel away enough for the driver to slip out.

The front passenger was the most seriously injured but it was impossible to reach her from Joe's perch on top of the car. He and the others had to break the front window to get to her. They carefully pulled the woman out of the car and she asked Joe about her baby. He assured her the child was fine. That seemed to give her the comfort she needed and she stopped breathing. Paramedics soon arrived and transported the injured to the hospital. Joe's quick action saved lives that day.



SAN ANTONIO DISTRICT
Henry "Jay" Fojtik
and Michelle Barton

You probably heard about the horrendous crash in Uvalde County when a pickup truck collided with a bus loaded with a New Braunfels church group of senior citizens, killing 13 people. That was the scene Jay and Michelle happened upon last March. They were out to look at some potential seal coat projects when they saw the mangled wreckage. Jay, a volunteer firefighter, immediately secured the area for emergency personnel. It was a remote area and EMS would take some time to get there. Jay and Michelle assessed the scene and did what they could for those few who had survived the impact. When EMS arrived, Jay and Michelle helped in whatever way they could under the worst of circumstances.



LUBBOCK DISTRICT
Trey Seely

Fall in the Lubbock District means the hum of cotton gins, the buzz of module trucks zipping along farm-to-market roads and, unfortunately, wild fire.

On a December afternoon last year, Lamesa Maintenance crew member Trey Seely responded to a call of a cotton seed fire sparked by a module truck along SH 137 in Dawson County. Thick smoke blanketed the sky, shrouding everything in near darkness. He turned on his truck's hazards, and blue and amber lights, to make it easier to see and for others to see him.

Just as Trey reached the site, something crashed into the back of his TxDOT truck. He got out, no worse for the bump, and checked on the other driver. She told him that she was experiencing chest pains so he immediately called 911. He then radioed a crew member who helped him get the driver out of the vehicle and away from the smoke. Trey stayed with the driver until emergency services arrived, and later visited her at the hospital, making sure to stop and thank emergency responders for coming to the rescue.



SAN ANTONIO DISTRICT
Jason Mark Meyer

Jason Mark Meyer, a sign technician, was repairing and installing signs in Uvalde County in June of last year with a co-worker. They were working under a bridge over the Frio River near a popular local watering hole. The idyllic spot is also known for the river's fast currents. While Jason was working, an older couple and two small children were picnicking on the opposite bank. Suddenly, one of the children fell in the water and got caught in the current.

Jason didn't hesitate. He jumped in and began to swim toward the little boy. The water was colder than he expected and the boy's sister complicated things when she jumped in to help her brother. Now Jason had two rescues on his hands.

Fortunately, he was up to the task. Both children were safely returned to their family, wetter but wiser about swift-moving currents. And Jason? He broke his eyeglasses and waterlogged his cellphone but walked away a hero.

**SAN ANTONIO DISTRICT | Mark Perez**

Night work is pretty much a staple in metropolitan districts. In April of last year, Mark Perez was doing sign work with a contractor on I-410 in the wee hours of the morning when they noticed a car parked on the left shoulder. Just as the car started, a woman opened the passenger door and tried to step out, lost her balance and fell. Before she could get up, the car sped up, hit her and knocked her body into the main travel lane. She laid there motionless as the car sped away.

Mark raced to her side as another car came up and almost hit her, braking inches from her body. Mark found the woman unconscious but alive. Not wanting to move her, Mark told the contractor to move the truck-mounted attenuators behind her to protect her from oncoming traffic. He called 911 and asked TransGuide to post a warning on the dynamic message signs. The woman regained consciousness and was transported to the hospital. Fortunately, Mark's quick thinking helped keep this woman alive.

HARVEY HEROES

The Harvey Heroes are a group of 60 employees who helped in high-water rescues after Hurricane Harvey brought record flooding to Southeast Texas in August. Three groups — one deployed to Houston, another to Beaumont and a third already working in Port Arthur — were put into the worst of the aftermath of Harvey when floodwaters were at their highest and had trapped countless numbers in their homes, on rooftops and on the tops of vehicles.

**BEAUMONT DISTRICT
CURTIS SIMON JR. AND KEVIN FREDERICK**


Five days after Hurricane Harvey made landfall, the city of Port Arthur was hit with severe flooding. Curtis and Kevin were working the night shift when they noticed a car desperately trying to navigate a flooded road. With water covering the road, edge lines disappeared. As the car moved forward, it began to sink. Within minutes, it was almost fully submerged.

Curtis and Kevin waded through the water to reach the car and its frightened driver. They needed to move fast as water continued to rise, but the elderly man was confused and disoriented. They had to coax him to unlock his seat belt and get out of the car. With patience, despite the urgent situation, they managed to get him to trust them enough to get out of the car so they could get him to higher ground.

**MULTIPLE DISTRICTS**

Employees from seven districts — Beaumont, Brownwood, Lufkin, Dallas, Paris, Tyler and Waco — were involved in high-water rescues. For days, these employees shadowed the National Guard, and fire and police personnel as they went door to door in flooded neighborhoods to check for people who could not escape the rising flood waters. While Guard and law enforcement airboats could navigate through the waters, they weren't nearly large enough to transport the many people who needed help. And that is where TxDOT crews came in.

As soon as stranded residents were discovered, our crews took up the slack, loading people and pets — as many as they could carry — on the back of dump trucks and drove them to drier ground. These crews dealt with extraordinary circumstances and helped save lives.

To all the men and women of TxDOT who selflessly helped others during this crisis, the agency salutes you. 



AWARDS

Honor Outstanding Achievement

TxDOT recognized outstanding achievements from the past year with the Big 5 Awards at the 91st Annual Transportation Short Course on Oct. 10.

GINA GALLEGOS, SAN ANTONIO DISTRICT
Gibb Gilchrist Award

The Gibb Gilchrist Award, honoring an outstanding TxDOT engineer, went to Gina Gallegos, the first female area engineer in the San Antonio District. She has been director of construction for the district since 2010. She leads the Young Engineers Group for the district and mentors future professional engineers. She was recently named director of the Construction Division.

MOHAMED "MO" K. BUR, DALLAS DISTRICT
Dewitt C. Greer Award

Mohamed "Mo" K. Bur of the Dallas District received the Dewitt C. Greer Award, which recognizes the skill and dedication of TxDOT engineers. He was honored for his leadership roles with the Modernize Portfolio Project Management initiative and the HB 20 Committee. He led work on the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge and the \$798 million highway reconstruction effort known as the Horseshoe Project.



TxDOT recognized outstanding achievements from the past year with the Big 5 Awards at the 91st Annual Transportation Short Course on Oct. 10: (l to r) Nueces County Judge Samuel Loyd Neal Jr., Claude "Pat" Henry, Gina Gallegos, Mohamed "Mo" K. Bur and Dennis Markwardt.


CLAUDE "PAT" HENRY, HOUSTON DISTRICT
Luther DeBerry Award

Claude "Pat" Henry received the Luther DeBerry Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to transportation, for his work with the Houston District. He was instrumental on major projects like the Grand Parkway and I-45. His responsibilities include overseeing the district's Environmental and Schematic Design sections and working closely with development consultants.

JUDGE SAMUEL LOYD NEAL JR.
Russell H. Perry Award

Judge Samuel Loyd Neal Jr. was recognized for his community leadership in transportation with the Russell H. Perry Award, which honors citizens for their leadership in transportation issues. He is currently serving his second term as Nueces County judge. He also serves on the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Committee.

DENNIS MARKWARDT, MAINTENANCE DIVISION
Raymond Stotzer Award

The Raymond Stotzer Award honors non-engineers and this year's award went to TxDOT's resident wildflower expert, Dennis Markwardt. He has championed the wildflower program throughout his career. He leads the way on the Texas Monarch and Native Pollinator Conservation Plan, which works to preserve habitats needed by Monarch butterflies and other plant pollinators. He began a series of wildflower presentations for schools and various civic organizations, which continue to this day. 

TxDOT ARCHEOLOGIST GETS RESEARCH PUBLISHED

If you're involved in a TxDOT project that receives federal funding, you might have seen Dr. Kevin Hanselka, archeologist, in a safety hat and vest searching in the right of way for evidence of human culture. But for about four months in 2005, Hanselka was camped under the stars in Tamaulipas, Mexico, exploring ancient cultures. The research from that work has recently garnered him some prestigious attention.

During his studies, he sometimes had a little bit of shelter, but it wasn't much. When not taking shelter under a tarp and sticks, he had just a tin roof on four posts that previously served as a carport for a local villager. Hanselka, who has a doctorate in anthropology, spent his days in the heat and cold, exploring the mountains and canyons on foot and muleback and searching for some answers in rural Mexico. Heat, bugs and dust wouldn't deter him from his main goal: to find out how and what ancient cultures in this area farmed and how they survived.

Last year, two articles based on his research were published in the *Journal of Ethnobiology*. According to Dr. Hanselka, hunter-gatherers in this mountainous area began using domesticated plants about 6,000 years ago. Settled villages dependent on maize finally appeared about 3,500 years ago.

During his time in northeast Mexico, Hanselka identified 22 prehistoric sites, including one open-air campsite, six new caves and 15 villages with evidence of houses.

Dr. Hanselka looks back at this time with nostalgia and fondness. "Even picking the ticks off wasn't so bad," he said.

Dr. Hanselka now works with TxDOT on federal projects to see what stories we can preserve through excavations. TxDOT has discovered more than 30 archeological sites in the past 15 years.

"We work in the spirit of preservation to share stories of Texas' history," he said.

Dr. Hanselka is currently researching prehistoric rainfall in Texas by looking at today's mesquite trees. To learn more about his research and TxDOT's archeology program, visit www.txdot.gov and search "archeology." **TN**

TxDOT archeologist Dr. Kevin Hanselka recently had two articles published in the Journal of Ethnobiology based on research he did in Mexico in 2005.



TxDOT photo

HENDERSON AND TEXAS HIGHWAYS SHOWERED WITH HONORS

Texas Highways Magazine and Travel Information Division Director Joan Henderson were recently honored by the International Regional Magazine Association, or IRMA. In 2017, Texas Highways won 14 awards – three gold, three silver, four bronze and three awards of merit. Henderson, who has been an active member of the association for the past 23 years, was presented with the Kenneth L. Gibbs Award of Merit.

The Gibbs award was established in 1968 to honor a member publisher for extraordinary personal and professional accomplishment and achievement beyond excellence. The award has been presented just nine times in 49 years. Henderson is the first woman to receive the honor.

“It was a complete surprise to receive the Gibbs award at the IRMA conference this year. I’m thrilled to be the first woman to receive the award, but more than that, I’m thrilled to have been deemed worthy of the recognition,” Henderson said.

Henderson was named Travel Information Division director in March 2016. She previously held the position of Texas Highways publisher. Henderson came to TxDOT and Texas Highways in 2014 from Oklahoma Today magazine where she served as publisher for nearly 20 years. She is a past president of IRMA and serves on its president’s council.

She was also on the board of directors of the Magazine Publishers of America Independent Magazine Advisory Group for 10 years, and is a past vice-president of the Oklahoma Pro chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. Henderson graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in humanities.



Texas Highways also received national recognition at the Eddie and Ozzie awards. These awards recognize excellence in magazine editing and design across all sectors of the industry. In 2017, a panel of more than 300 judges narrowed more than 2,500 entries into a pool of roughly 800 finalists. In total, 262 awards were given out across 33 categories.

Texas Highways was a finalist in five categories and placed first in the Supplemental, Annual or One Shot category for its Dirt Roads to Diverging Diamonds: A Century of Transportation in Texas issue that commemorated TxDOT’s centennial. **TN**

TxDOT 101



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

EDITOR'S NOTE: TxDOT101 is a feature that focuses on explaining a common topic for the agency.

In the Rio Grande Valley — home to McAllen, Brownsville and Harlingen — there's a debate brewing, and the outcome could determine how transportation projects get built in the region.

The argument that's embroiled the area is whether to merge the area's three existing metropolitan planning organizations into one "mega group." Local leaders are trying to decide how cities and counties could benefit from combining transportation dollars that flow into the region. At the time of publication, a final decision hasn't been made, but the issue does bring up an interesting topic for this edition of TxDOT 101: What is an MPO and why is it important to transportation planning?


Metropolitan planning organizations, or MPOs, are local or regional agencies that provide cities and counties with a voice in transportation planning. They work with departments of transportation to determine local transportation priorities and funnel state and federal transportation dollars to their regions. Ultimately, MPOs help states provide a cooperative, continuous and comprehensive planning process that considers all transportation modes and supports local transportation goals.

Federal legislation that passed in the 1960s required any urbanized areas with a population of 50,000 or more to have an MPO. Those areas, however, are only designated by agreement between the state governor and the local governments in those regions.

MPOs are policy boards that are predominately governed by the elected officials within its boundaries. The local TxDOT district engineer is also on the organization's board. MPO bylaws spell out the number of voting members and determine how cities may rotate onto the policy board as well as terms of service.

While MPOs don't construct or operate local transportation projects, they are the first line in helping the state determine what those local projects should be. They do that by coordinating with local transit agencies, airports, maritime operators, rail-freight representatives, ports and others within the MPO region.

Texas has 25 MPOs statewide, second only to Florida with 27 MPOs, according to the Federal Highway Administration MPO database. The largest MPOs in the state, in terms of populations served, are the Houston-Galveston Area Council; the North Central Texas Council of Governments which includes several counties in the region; the Alamo Area MPO which serves the greater San Antonio area; and the Capital Area MPO which represents Travis, Williamson and other Central Texas counties. The Texarkana MPO and the El Paso MPO also include cities in neighboring Arkansas and New Mexico, respectively, on their policy board.

A list of the state's MPOs and the urbanized areas that they represent are at www.txdot.gov, keywords "metropolitan planning organizations." 



TxDOT photo

Tyler District employees jumped at the chance to answer letters from fourth-grade students asking for information about TxDOT. Each employee hand wrote a reply to a child's letter, almost 60 letters in all.

Dear TxDOT

District pens notes for elementary students

A call from a retired school teacher recently brought a little excitement to some Tyler District employees. Since it had a bit of a twist, Public Information Officer Kathi White turned to her co-workers to unravel the challenge.

It all started when retired Dallas-area teacher, Caroline Cornelius, was helping her daughter, Katy Murrah, a fourth-grade teacher at Cain Elementary in Whitehouse in the Tyler District. Cornelius recommended that the class write letters to the local TxDOT district headquarters to request

state maps to use when they study Texas. Cornelius called White to discuss the idea.


"I told Caroline I would be happy to provide maps to the class and the letters were a great idea," said White. "A week or two later, I received a package from Katy containing almost 60 letters from the students. My immediate thought was that each deserved a personal reply."

White began to consider how she could involve more employees. Billie Simpson, human resources specialist for the district, agreed to respond to about 20 letters.


"I sent 17 letters to Central Project Development Supervisor Eric Fisher and asked him to distribute them to his employees," said White. "Then, I started handing out two per employee in the office to prepare a handwritten response that included information about themselves, their jobs and TxDOT."

Each person was more excited than the last to participate but no one was more eager than Deputy District Engineer Vernon Webb. He immediately sat down at his desk to write his two replies. He also lives in Whitehouse and his children had attended the same school.

Once she collected all the letters, White hand delivered them to the fourth grade class. She and Traffic Safety Specialist Heather Singleton listened to the excited students read their letters out loud and ask questions. Singleton also conducted a short traffic safety presentation on seat belts.

"It was amazing to see such a simple request turn into a really great opportunity to share our TxDOT story," said White. 

JORDAN RECEIVES DPS HONOR

Just a few weeks before he retired, former Emergency Management Coordinator Gilbert Jordan was honored with the Texas Department of Public Safety's Director's Award. The award was presented at the Public Safety Commission meeting on Aug. 24. The award is presented for academic performance during the agency's Law Enforcement Polygraph School. Congratulations, Gilbert! 



TxDOT photo

Former Emergency Management Coordinator Gilbert Jordan (center with plaque) was honored with the Texas Department of Public Safety's Director's Award just a few weeks before his retirement at the end of August.

MPPM INTRODUCES TxDOTCONNECT

The Modernize Portfolio and Project Management Initiative, or MPPM, has branded its upcoming transportation program and project management system TxDOTCONNECT. This innovative solution will connect systems, processes and people across TxDOT. It will ultimately transform how the agency executes and measures portfolio management, project management, asset management, contract management and letting management.

Here is a sneak peek at TxDOTCONNECT features coming your way.

Project Information

TxDOTCONNECT provides one system and one source of information to manage project data. End-users will view the same data, in real-time, through a simple, easy-to-use interface.

In addition, this new system will provide:

- Extensive search capabilities
- Preconfigured and customizable dashboards
- Easy report production with multiple output formats, including Excel, PDF and Word

Geospatial Mapping

An embedded geospatial map allows users to see the project and other assets around it. Users will be able to select and visualize beginning and end points on the map for a project. In addition, key information identified by location for the project and assets impacted by the project will automatically update, no longer needing manual updating.

Excited about TxDOTCONNECT? To learn more, visit the MPPM page on Crossroads under Key Initiatives or search "MPPM Project" on txdot.gov. Or contact MPPM_Project@txdot.gov. 

SEGWAYS HELP MEASURE SIDEWALKS




TxDOT photo

An Ultra-Light Inertial Profiler mounted on a Segway personal transportation vehicle allows for fast and accurate inventory of sidewalks and driveways to help analyze pedestrian infrastructure.

The TxDOT Design Division is using Segway personal transportation vehicles to build a database and mapping system to analyze pedestrian infrastructure within the state right of way. As part of the Americans with Disability Act, or ADA, public agencies are required to inventory their assets and provide a transition plan to bring their entire system into compliance.

One of the current tools the team uses is an Ultra-Light Inertial Profiler, or ULIP. As part of a Federal Highway Administration grant program, this innovative tool was developed and is mounted on a Segway.

The highly accurate device is driven over sidewalks and driveways to collect a variety of measurements that capture constant slope, grade, displacements and GPS coordinates.

The Design Division is taking advantage of this advancement to collect data statewide. ULIP data will supplement curb ramp collections to complete the Pedestrian Access Inventory, which will integrate into the department's ADA Transition Plan Update in 2019. 

I am a...

Utility Manager

Anna Pulido

**Utility Manager
San Antonio District**

Anna Pulido, a utility manager for the San Antonio District, joined TxDOT in 2016. She saw it as a great opportunity to be a part of improving the utility coordination process. She graduated from Texas A&M University in 2009 with a degree in civil engineering. She has worked for Bexar County, the City of San Antonio and CPS Energy. Her husband, David, also works at TxDOT. She enjoys watching the Aggies play football, traveling, the outdoors and running. She also loves to find a great TV series to binge watch on Netflix.

What are the main duties of your job?

My team and I assist our designers with utility coordination and help facilitate utility relocations with the goal to have them completed prior to the letting of our highway projects. We have adopted TxDOT's goal to avoid, minimize or accommodate utility facilities, such as water lines, sewer lines and gas lines. Our team also helps to execute utility agreements and process the billings for reimbursable utilities.

Describe a few of the challenges and rewards that come with your job.

Seeing people not only participate in the new utility conflict management process but thanking our team because it has helped projects succeed is very rewarding. Hearing how I have been able to help improve the overall process is the biggest reward, not just from TxDOT but from the utility companies themselves.

As most of us are aware, some people do not like change. A challenge I love is helping people gain a new perspective on our improved processes.

What kinds of skills and mindset does being a utility manager require?

It helps to fully understand the end goal of the other party. In my case, my past experience working for a utility company gives me the understanding of what they need and want. I can see things from their perspective and help them meet their goals as well.

You also need to be flexible and willing to solve problems. The schedule, scope and conflicts could change on any project. A person in this position must always have alternate solutions to achieve the overall goal.

People skills are also important. As a utility manager, I work with so many other agencies and constantly communicate with them to meet the project schedule. Without the good relationships I have developed with other agencies, my job becomes a lot more difficult.


You also need project management skills. While my main focus is utilities, I understand the project development process. This enables me to keep track of the project scope, budget and, most importantly, schedule. By understanding the project development process, I am able to better understand how utility conflict management fits into the overall project.

Tell us about what a typical day might look like.

Meetings, meetings and meetings.

I'm usually in utility coordination meetings, project status meetings or field meetings most of the week. If I'm not in a meeting, I'm answering and making phone calls to address issues or coordinate the utility adjustments. I also work closely with my team to make sure utility agreements and billings are being processed on time.

What has the job taught you?

My job has taught me the importance of building relationships with both TxDOT staff members and external agencies. At the end of the day, we are all aiming to achieve the same goal: to improve a much needed transportation system for the public in the most efficient manner. 



Brent Lane

**Maintenance Section Supervisor, Potter County
Amarillo District**

In 1989, Brent Lane was in his third summer of working with a road maintenance crew at TxDOT when he was hired on full-time. Twenty-two of the last 28 years he has worked at the Amarillo Expressway Maintenance Section in every position from maintenance technician to crew chief. Seven years ago, he was promoted to maintenance section supervisor in Potter County where he still gets to enjoy working outside. Lane and his wife of 27 years, Shannon, have three daughters, one grandson and another grandson on the way. In addition to spending time with his family, Lane enjoys working on old muscle cars and camping.

Brent Lane

What are the five words that best describe you?

Trustworthy, dependable, dedicated, motivated and personable.

What's the best part of being a maintenance section supervisor? What's the worst part?

The best part is having my own area of responsibility and a great crew to help maintain the section. The worst part is dealing with Mother Nature. All the different types of weather we deal with in the Texas Panhandle can be chaotic and unpredictable at times.

What's an ideal weekend for you?

Spending time with my family. We love to go camping and I love to watch my youngest daughter play fast-pitch softball.

What's the coolest thing you're working on right now?

Planning a trip with my family to Yellowstone National Park for next summer.

What are three things still left on your bucket list?

Going to Yellowstone National Park. Buying a cabin in Colorado. Going to the Smithsonian Institution.

At which store would you like to max out your credit card?

Best Buy. I like buying new electronics for the house.

What is one personal fact that no one would ever guess about you?

I'm a World War II history buff. I love studying all the history related to the war.

Do you prefer white, dark or milk chocolate?

Milk chocolate, definitely.



What would you sing at karaoke night?

Probably wouldn't. I'm definitely not a singer.

What is the best gift you've been given? The worst?

The best gifts I have ever received are my three daughters and my grandson. The worst is socks for Christmas (I hate getting those for Christmas).

Would you rather watch "Star Wars" or "Star Trek" and why?

"Star Wars." It was a very big, cutting-edge movie when I was a child. I grew up with it.

Would you rather play a sport or watch one? Which one?

Watch a sport, especially professional baseball because it's relaxing to me and it's America's pastime.

Where Am I?


Here is a photo depicting an identifiable landmark you may have seen in your travels around Texas. If you think you know what this is a photo of or know where it was taken, send an email to TNideas@txdot.gov. Deadline for submissions is Feb. 9.

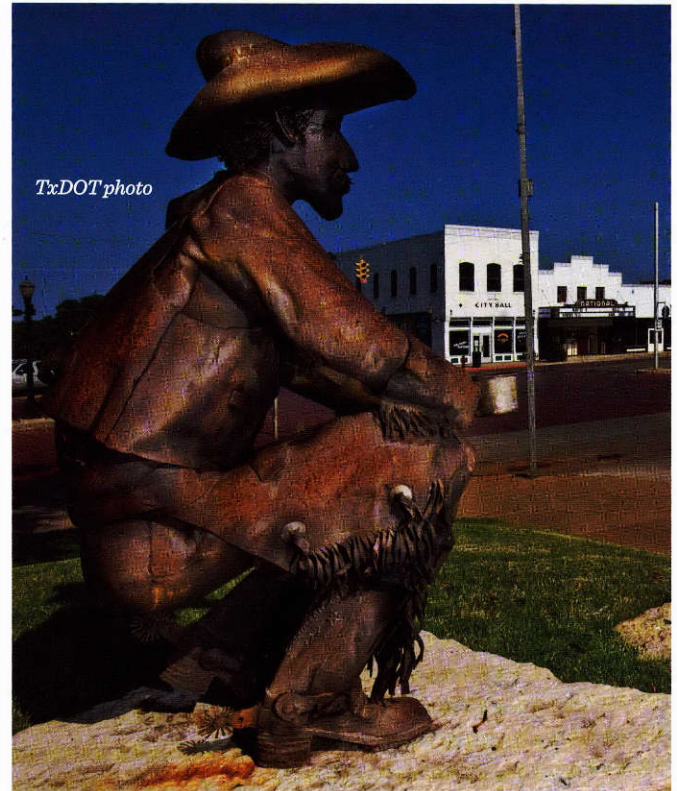


Identified:

Congratulations to our first identifier Chris Cowen (BRY).

Last edition's photo featured the statue of a cowboy drinking coffee located at the Old Post Office Museum and Art Center in Graham.

Others correctly identifying the photo were Buddy Hudson (MNT), Szende Smith (CMP), Carmen Ramos (AUS), Hector Siller (PHR), Adeliza Ramirez (AUS), Lyn Irby (TRV), Larry Wann (FTW), Jeremy Gardner (FIN), Rafael Garza (FTW), Jacob Fleming (BMT) and Zach Husen (WFS). 



UPCOMING TxDOT EVENTS

Jan. 15

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
(All agencies closed)

Jan. 19

Confederate Heroes Day
(Minimal staff required)

Jan. 25

Texas Transportation
Commission meeting
(Austin)

Feb. 19

Presidents Day
(All agencies closed)

Feb. 22

Texas Transportation
Commission meeting
(Austin)

MILESTONES

NOVEMBER SERVICE AWARDS

DISTRICTS

ABILENE

- 20 Gregory R. Cotton
Kyle D. Lacey

AMARILLO

- 10 George R. Henderson
Jimmy L. Thomas Jr.

ATLANTA

- 20 Kelli A. Speer
- 15 Bruce D. Boobar
Chad G. Heldt
- 5 John T. Dunson
Joshua N. Sibert

AUSTIN

- 20 Gregory S. Mills
Brad H. Phipps
- 15 Cody M. Kosub
- 10 Lorena E. Echeverria De Misi
- 5 Steven W. Jones
Humberto Ontiveros Jr.

BEAUMONT

- 20 Horace S. Estes
Billie J. Mays Jr.
- 5 Melissa A. Daugherty
Ronald A. Mathis Jr.

BROWNWOOD

- 15 Kevin L. Crim
- 10 Armando A. Garcia
Ramon Gutierrez Jr.
Gary W. Watson

BRYAN

- 20 John D. Moravec
- 10 Olin J. Seago Jr.
- 5 Marcella K. Schulze

CHILDRESS

- 20 Roy D. Bertrand
- 15 Kamela D. Bonham
Clifford A. Byrd
Shon R. Crouch
- 5 Kolby L. Foard

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 20 Felix C. Lopez
- 15 Delma E. Cave
Jose V. Sosa
- 10 David Gonzales
Rene Longoria

DALLAS

- 30 Richard A. Cortez
Rhonda Schmid
- 25 John D. Brewer
- 20 James E. Atkins II
James S. Fant

- 15 Bryan A. Esmaili-Doki
David P. Honza

- 15 Nicasio Lozano
- 10 Bobby D. Rosselot
- 5 Chelsea M. Dilday

EL PASO

- 25 Rodolfo G. Sanchez
- 10 Gerardo R. Brito
- 5 Kayla A. Rinehart
- 5 Zilthai O. Soto

FORT WORTH

- 20 Thomas N. Hite
Gerald D. Robbins
- 15 Lemar D. Leonard
Scotty L. Peevey
- 5 Eva M. Oster
Richard L. Reed

HOUSTON

- 30 Richard D. Escamilla
Samuel M. Walden
Ivor E. Walker
- 20 Linda G. Hall
- 15 Corando I. Alegria
Jamal Z. Fadda
Esteban M. Tovar
- 10 Daniel J. Dvorak
Sidronio Flores Jr.
Philip D. Newmons Jr.
Rodney Punch
Ryan C. Walker
- 5 Clifton D. Harris
Tyrone Robinson
Johnny R. Rodriguez

LAREDO

- 25 Ramon J. Rodriguez
- 20 Lilia I. Gutierrez
Fidel Quiroz
- 15 Alberto A. Aldape
Hector M. Cayanan
- 5 Yecenia M. Araujo
Eduardo Sifuentes

LUBBOCK

- 35 Luis M. Martinez
- 10 Zosimo L. Agrimor
James T. Collins
- 5 Forrest T. Abell
Alan M. Boggs
Toby S. Brito
Elizabeth A. Deleon
Santiago J. Garcia
Alexander Hernandez Jr.

LUFKIN

- 20 Jimmie A. Johnson
- 15 Kealon D. Hightower
- 10 Charles D. Elliott
Quentin B. Matthews

- 5 Kimberly T. Deal
Drew S. Higginbotham
Audrey A. Johnson
Jack F. Smith

ODESSA

- 20 Louis B. Lara
- 15 Griselda Carrasco-Rodriguez
- 10 Herminia Gonzalez
Michael R. Nichols
Edwin A. Rentas
- 5 Bernie M. Ramey
Juan V. Sanchez

PARIS

- 10 Jimmy D. Miller

PHARR

- 20 Michael G. Quintanilla
- 5 Antonio L. Moreno

SAN ANGELO

- 10 Arnulfo Gonzales
Ringo G. Hunt
Troy A. Wellmann
- 5 Estella H. Franco

SAN ANTONIO

- 20 Martin W. Bordovsky
Jason M. Meyer
Ishmael C. Trevino
- 5 William A. Frees
Clinton R. Harbison
David O. Herrera
John A. Morin
Ronnie G. Pruitt Jr.

TYLER

- 20 Lupe S. Cruz Jr.
- 10 Natalio Gaona Jr.
- 5 Aaron B. Eaton
Enson R. Stevenson

WACO

- 20 Francisca Chavez
- 5 John R. Ball
Bradley A. Mayes

WICHITA FALLS

- 20 Joe D. Moore
- 5 James W. Gibbs
David L. Martin

YOAKUM

- 20 Mark A. Wenske
- 15 Keith A. Dornak
- 5 Timothy O. Brewer
Gabriel Perez Jr.

DIVISIONS

AVIATION

- 15 Amy C. Slaughter
- 10 Robert N. Johnson

BRIDGE

- 5 Yi Qiu

COMMUNICATIONS

- 5 Natalie R. Galindo

CONSTRUCTION

- 20 Graham W. Eudey
- 15 Jimmy Z. Si
- 10 Miranda D. Unruh
- 5 Susan E. Shaw
Todd M. Speck

DESIGN

- 15 John T. Hajek

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 10 Linda L. Pendergras
- 5 Jack W. Carsten Jr.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 25 Doris L. Oradesky
- 5 Dora N. Granados
Erin M. Lashlee

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 30 Karen L. Dennis
- 15 Henry Duran
David Guzman
- 10 John L. Rushing

GENERAL COUNSEL

- 5 James W. Kirk II

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- 15 Stacey D. Worsham

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

- 5 Sidney Maloy

PEPS

- 20 Clara Carbajal-Sanchez
- 10 Johnnie Tennie
Bing Wang

PROCUREMENT

- 5 Dominique D. Pope

RIGHT OF WAY

- 10 Anna Lydia R. Benavides

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 20 Benny S. Steen
- 15 Shelli D. Butler
- 5 Kurt R. Ohnesorge

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS

- 15 Leticia T. Von Rossum
- 5 Robert L. White

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & PROGRAMMING

- 30 Charles L. Ditmore
- 15 Lori A. Morel
- 5 Caroline A. Mays
Susan M. Rossi

TRAVEL INFORMATION

- 15 Lois M. Rodriguez
- 5 Matt G. Joyce

DECEMBER SERVICE AWARDS



DISTRICTS

ABILENE

- 25 Clifton P. Hallford
Alan S. Thomas
- 15 Gerald L. Brown
- 5 Elaine M. Singiser

AMARILLO

- 20 David S. Miller
- 15 Ronnie M. Hathaway Jr.
Blair E. Johnson
- 10 Jerold E. Frizzell
- 5 Nadine C. Pope

AUSTIN

- 25 Rodolfo Gonzalez
- 20 Logan L. Ketron
- 10 Edwill J. Butler

BEAUMONT

- 25 Donald L. Dozier
Jody C. Pitman
- 15 Danny O. Brack
James W. Thames
- 5 Elena M. Barras
Melinda P. Huber

BROWNWOOD

- 25 Gilbert B. Ramon
- 5 Britt L. Parker

BRYAN

- 35 Curtis L. Beckham
- 25 Ricky L. King
- 20 Carolyn K. Dobos
- 15 Jason L. Tomek

CHILDRESS

- 15 Steven K. Jones
- 5 Dan J. Kajs
Matthew W. Woolsey

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 15 Erasmo S. Cuellar
Bobby L. Lewis
Juan C. Marfil
Joe Tellez

DALLAS

- 20 Alireza M. Shafiye
- 15 Alan J. Halbrooks
Lorenzo R. Martinez
Rusty L. Vess
- 10 Leona L. Aparicio
- 5 Michael D. Booze
Nathan B. Fojt
Roger J. Horst
James R. Howard
Jonathan N. Rich
Larry D. Watson

EL PASO

- 25 Andres J. Pacheco
- 20 Alfredo P. Sanchez
- 10 Levi L. Pavia

FORT WORTH

- 10 Erich C. Brehm
Donald R. Wonner
- 5 John T. Forbes

HOUSTON

- 30 Eliza C. Paul
- 20 Grant Chim
Pamela M. Martinez
- 15 John F. Cato
Blake L. Labay
Cynthia Lee
- 10 Stella S. Jackson
- 5 Kevin H. Finstad
Glenn C. Lazaro
Jose M. Ramos

LAREDO

- 25 Alfredo Alaniz Jr.
- 20 Pablo Resendez

LUBBOCK

- 20 Edward R. Goebel
Linda S. King
Francis Romanofski
- 15 Raul Sassenhagen Jr.
- 5 David Castilleja
Ricky R. Clem
Troy M. Conley
Robert S. Gutierrez
Reginald B. Moore Jr.
Ernest Rocha
Pablo B. Saenz Jr.
Christopher Salazar
Santiago Samarron Jr.
Carlos J. Sanchez
Juan G. Sanchez
Camillo Villa

LUFKIN

- 15 Jacky K. Hill
Shannon Q. Ramos
- 5 Matthieu J. Harvin

ODESSA

- 25 Ector G. Almendarez
Kathryn C. Evans
- 20 Robert Ornelas

PARIS

- 20 Vickie L. Coplin
- 15 Justin W. Ferguson

PHARR

- 20 Jennie M. Pedraza
- 15 Michele Cavazos
Nidia Ramirez

SAN ANGELO

- 20 Jerry M. Conner
- 5 Lonnie Green III

SAN ANTONIO

- 35 Jesse Hayes Jr.
- 15 Ernest C. Casias
Ray Valverde
- 5 Toni M. Cantu
Joshua C. Simons

TYLER

- 20 Steven W. Hall
- 15 Michael K. Allen
Clarence M. Berry
- 5 Terry H. Lindsey II
Cody W. Vaught

WACO

- 20 David O. Herrell
David R. Lemons
- 5 Wyite R. Butler
Eriberto Gomez
James B. Mullen
Brandon M. Sanders

YOAKUM

- 20 Kenneth W. Kocurek
- 10 Bernard E. Jurena
- 5 Bryan F. Klekar

DIVISIONS

AVIATION

- 10 Timothy J. Borgmann
James T. Reid
- 5 Timmy C. Taylor

COMMUNICATIONS

- 5 Joshua W. Black

CONSTRUCTION

- 25 Jana M. Buck
- 5 Rachel I. Cano

DESIGN

- 20 Shelby L. Delgado

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 20 Gordon L. Ellis
- 10 Summer J. Chandler
- 5 John H. Young Jr.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 25 Shelly J. Hanke

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 20 Thomas H. Holcomb
- 15 John T. Chandler
Billy J. Downing
- 5 Juan Gutierrez

HUMAN RESOURCES

- 5 Jeanette L. Sanders

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- 15 Debra Robinson

MAINTENANCE

- 15 James R. Ormsby
- 5 Amanda A. Fowler

PEPS

- 15 Rosa E. Lee

PROCUREMENT

- 25 Kimberley H. Rutherford

RIGHT OF WAY

- 25 Ismael Hernandez

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 25 Georges L. Barrera
- 15 William White
- 5 Artria T. Cumby

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS

- 30 Shelli D. Belser
- 5 Matthew R. McCarty

MILESTONES 2017

SEPTEMBER RETIREE REPORT

DISTRICTS

ATLANTA

25 Jerry L. West
10 Gary L. Winchester

AUSTIN

27 Barbara J. Russell

DALLAS

28 Timothy W. Moody

EL PASO

13 William K. Fierro

FORT WORTH

15 Abraham Jackson
13 George E. Jackson

LUBBOCK

32 Gary L. Vick
10 Neal Darling

LUFKIN

21 Jerry K. Jasper

PARIS

21 Kent D. Hall

SAN ANGELO

18 Ben D. Shackelford

TYLER

19 Randall C. Smith

WACO

34 Douglas L. Fleming

YOAKUM

31 Andrew C. Brzozowski

DIVISIONS

FLEET OPERATIONS

27 Frederick N. Jones

HUMAN RESOURCES

17 Tammy R. Oliver

SUPPORT SERVICES

27 Howard K. Bullard

TRANSPORTATION

PLANNING & PROGRAMMING

29 Robert C. Williams

OCTOBER RETIREE REPORT

DISTRICTS

ABILENE

29 Elmer Green Jr.

AUSTIN

25 Darlene Y. Austin
11 Leslie G. Haak

CHILDRESS

19 Bobby Kautz

CORPUS CHRISTI

15 Noe Trevino

DALLAS

20 James S. Fant

EL PASO

25 Ernesto Gonzalez

HOUSTON

31 Thomas P. Smith
11 Jimmy R. Bussey

LUBBOCK

13 Joe B. Woodard

PARIS

28 Gary D. Rater
23 Stacy L. Wilson

PHARR

27 Juan M. Mendoza
17 Roberto Agueros
14 Alex Quintanilla

SAN ANTONIO

17 Michael T. Boyd
16 Theresa A. Canales

DIVISIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

17 Terrence L. Tyler

FINANCIAL

MANAGEMENT

7 Filecia S. Bohuslav

HUMAN RESOURCES

24 Linda E. Morgan

PROCUREMENT

35 Robert A. Jones

SUPPORT SERVICES

15 Pat M. Vardell IV
14 Joe Angel Sanchez
2 John Bullock

IN MEMORIAM

DISTRICTS

ABILENE

Manuel Lopez
General Transportation
Technician
Date of Death: 10/10/2017
Years of Service: 3

BROWNWOOD

Glenn Burkman
Sign Technician
Date of Death: 9/22/2017
Years of Service: 6

CORPUS CHRISTI

Lou Anna Garcia-Adame
Purchasing Coordinator
Date of Death: 11/17/2017
Years of Service: 18

FORT WORTH

Gary W. Baird
Design Technician
Date of Death: 11/4/2017
Years of Service: 30

HOUSTON

Israel Cuellar
Permit Coordinator
Date of Death: 11/2/2017
Years of Service: 10

SAN ANGELO

Henry C. Reichenau
Date of Death: 6/13/2017
Retired: 1983

Jesse Pendley
Date of Death: 9/14/2017
Retired: 1987

Donald F. "Fred" Mahannah
Date of Death: 11/16/2017
Retired: 1993

SAN ANTONIO

Max A. Bowman
Date of Death: 10/20/2017
Retired: 1989

Pablo Guerra Jr.
General Transportation
Technician
Date of Death: 10/28/2017
Years of Service: 5

TYLER

Cmdr. Frank M Conklin Jr.
District Director
of Administration
Date of Death: 3/31/2017
Retired: 1996

Percy Simmons
Surveyor
Date of Death: 12/14/2016
Retired: 1979

DIVISIONS

CONSTRUCTION

Gerald D. Lankes
Materials Branch Manager
Date of Death: 11/24/2017
Years of Service: 20
Retired: 2003

TxDOT Family Members Chime In

The Houston Astros won the first World Series for the state of Texas this fall in a thrilling set of games against the Los Angeles Dodgers. What was your favorite moment?"



TxDOT photo

ANDREW LEE
BRIDGE ENGINEER
BEAUMONT DISTRICT

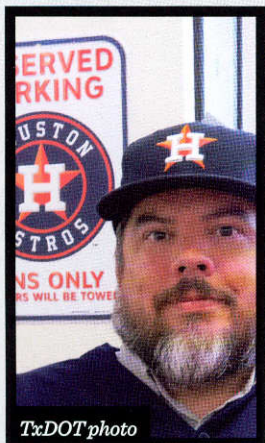
"Game 2, top of the 9th: Utility man Marwin Gonzales (who had a quiet postseason, but led the team in RBI during the regular season) hit a game tying home run off Kenley Jansen, arguably the best closer in baseball. Without that hit, we may never have gotten to a Game 7."



TxDOT photo


DANNY PEREZ
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER,
HOUSTON DISTRICT

"I am a lifelong Astros fan and my favorite moment was seeing my family's joy too. It sweetened the memories of all the years we went to games at the Astrodome and Minute Maid Park and it helped give the city something very special following the tragic events of Hurricane Harvey. Go 'Stros!"



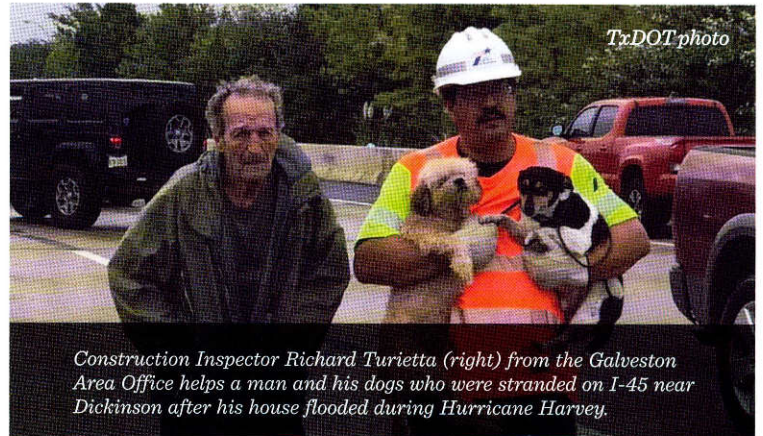
TxDOT photo

PETER SISSONS
MAINTENANCE
TRANSPORTATION SPECIALIST,
HOUSTON DISTRICT

"Ninth inning of Game 2, Houston Astro Marwin Gonzales hits a home run to tie the game. This was the first-base hit and RBI off Dodgers pitcher Kenley Jansen during the playoffs that gave the Astros a boost as well as showed them that the Dodger's bullpen was not invincible." 

Bright Lights

EVERY ACT OF KINDNESS COUNTS



The response from TxDOT's employees during the pounding Texas took from Hurricane Harvey was extraordinary. Here's one story that shows what a bright light our crews were to people facing unimaginable destruction.

On Aug. 27, the torrential downpour from Hurricane Harvey displaced hundreds of people from their homes in Dickinson along FM 517 near I-45. Heading north to place barricades, Construction Inspector Richard Turietta and General Transportation Specialist William Hausman from the Galveston Area Office came across hundreds of people and dozens of vehicles stopped on the interstate.

Evacuees stood there stranded with trash bags filled with clothing and other valuables. Some had babies crying in their arms. Turietta and Hausman decided to help.

Hausman snapped a photo of Turietta assisting an elderly man with his dogs. Turietta said he found the man with only his two dogs and a small plastic bag of items, lying down, barely able to move.

"I helped him to his feet," Turietta said. "My heart went out to him and I told him I had the dogs. They were terrified and shaking. He had spent the entire night, terrified, cold and shivering in his attic with the dogs."

Turietta and Hausman were glad that they were able to help people in one of the worst situations in their lives.

"We will never forget our experiences on that bridge," Turietta said. "We know we will all make it through because of the true heroism of those in the actual flood waters and because we do come together, even in the simple ways, even just doing our job, as Billy and I did that day. Every act of kindness counts."

Read more about the good work employees are doing in Bright Lights on Crossroads: <http://crossroads/brightlights/>. Send information on any thank-you emails, letters or calls you or your co-workers receive to AskTxDOT so we can continue to shine Bright Lights on TxDOT employee achievements. 



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TN Online (TxDOT computers only):
<http://crossroads/>

Know your numbers WITH BIOMETRIC SCREENINGS

Beginning in January, employees can receive free biometric screenings to find out their risk for diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure. The biometric screenings are voluntary and led by the Occupational Safety and Human Resources divisions. Confidential screenings include testing for body mass index, blood pressure, total cholesterol and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) for men over 40.

TxDOT has offered this program for several years. Knowing their numbers has inspired many employees to make positive changes.

Anthony McCormick, a transportation technician with the Electra Maintenance Office in the Wichita Falls District, participated in last year's screenings.

"I did not like being as heavy as I was," he said. Since then he's lost 20 pounds and kept it off.


Rebecca Soliz, a human resources specialist with the San Antonio District, said her motivation for making changes was vanity, until she got her numbers.

"I knew I needed to make some changes, I just didn't realize how badly I needed to make them," she said. "You don't know what your body is doing on the inside, and my numbers were alarming for someone who thought they were slightly healthy. I have made changes to my diet,

cut back on sugars, increased my water intake, and I am looking forward to my next visit with the doctor. My goal is to be healthy inside and out. I want to be active for my girls to set an example for them," she said.

Keith Tinsley, a designer with the Jasper Area Office in the Beaumont District, was not pleased with his numbers. So he signed up for the Real Appeal program and lost 27 pounds. His numbers have improved.

"I have noticed that I have more energy during the day and I sleep better at night since enrolling in the program," said Tinsley.

Employees who participate in the program receive a results booklet and a private consultation at the testing site. Results are also accessible online through a secure web portal. To find out when screenings will be available in your area, contact your Wellness Program Coordinator. 



Contact your local Wellness Program Coordinator to learn about the wellness program and start your journey today!

