

T1325.6

T697

2005/06

TEXAS

TRAVEL LOG

Government Publications
Texas State Document

JUL 20 2005
Depository
Dallas Public Library

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

JUNE 2005

TRAVEL NEWS

PALO DURO Canyon is about to grow by 43 percent to become the **second largest operating Texas state park** behind Big Bend Ranch State Park, all thanks to the recent acquisition of **7,837 acres** that will be **added** to its southeast side.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has arranged to purchase land in Armstrong County, which includes the site of Maj. Gen. Ranald Mackenzie's battle with native tribes in 1874. The family of Ed Harrell has owned the property for close to a century.

Natural and cultural inventories have to be assessed before it can be readied for the public, so access to the new property will remain restricted for the next year or two.

The acquisition will increase Palo Duro Canyon State Park, sometimes called the Grand Canyon of Texas, to more than 26,200 acres.

"Palo Duro is a priority park for expansion in our agency's Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan," says Robert L. Cook, TPWD executive director.

The purchase was made possible with a \$300,000 grant from the Amarillo Area Foundation, which also provided funds to add the 2,036-acre Cañoncita Ranch to the state park in 2002.

"This is truly a wilderness area," says Wales Madden, former Amarillo Area Foundation president who helped facilitate the acquisition by bringing the parties together.

Madden says, "The rangeland in the canyon bottom is in fine shape thanks to the Harrell family. They were anxious for the public to be able to share that property's natural beauty and fascinating history from now on, with no commercial development in view."

SENTIMENTAL SEND OFF

SINCE Jan. 1, 1987, visitors to the **Judge Roy Bean Texas Travel Information Center** have been receiving travel assistance from a cowboy gentleman, **Vernon "Neal" Billings**, the center's supervisor who ends an era when he **retires on June 30**.

Billings, who operated a ranch in West Texas before working at the center, will be spending more time with his family, but he feels like he's walking away from another.

"I will miss everyone in TxDOT and the travel industry. I feel like they are my extended family," Billings says.

He's proud of the work he has done and the service that the Travel Information Centers supply. "It has been an honor and a privilege to have been a small part of the Travel Division of TxDOT and the Texas Tourism Industry," he says.

"I feel like the Travel Information Centers and the service they provide is essential to everyone as the Travel Industry is one of the most important economic boosters in the state. And I am proud of being able to assist during the renovation of the Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center," he says.

Travel industry members are invited to wish Billings the best at a reception scheduled for 10 a.m. to noon on June 24 at the Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center in Langtry.

Texas Travel Services Director Brenda Harper says, "Neal has put his heart and soul into preserving the history of Judge Roy Bean, Langtry and the surrounding area. Neal is a true west Texas gentleman, and he will be deeply missed."

HOUSTON, Dallas, Austin-San Marcos and San Antonio are Texas' **leading cities for business and convention travelers**, according to a recent report that indicates these segments of travel are beginning to show signs of recovery.

According to the newly released 2004 Business and Convention Travelers Report from the Travel Industry Association of America, the National Business Travel Association and the Institute of Business Travel Management, business and convention travel volume

declined by more than 14 percent between 1998 and 2003. However, business travel volume grew more than four percent in 2004 and strong growth is expected over the next few years.

"We believe this reflects some of the changes that American businesses and business travelers themselves have made in recent years to enhance the efficiency of both the time and money they spend — changes that are still evolving," says Dr. Suzanne Cook, senior vice president of research for TIA.

The report's Top 25 business

travel destination rankings included Houston (6), Dallas (9), Austin-San Marcos (21) and San Antonio (25).

Convention/conference and seminar travel destinations included Dallas (6), San Antonio (12), Austin-San Marcos (18) and Houston (25).

Despite its slow growth, the report states that business travel remains big business in the U.S. with more than 38 million business travelers generating 210.5 million person-trips in 2003. Although business travel only comprised 18 percent of total travel volume that year, these travelers generated 31 percent, or \$153 billion, of all domestic traveler spending.

PRESIDENTIAL PRAISE

THE TEXAS Historical Commission's Heritage Trails program, that provides technical, financial and marketing assistance to heritage regions across the state, has been such a success that **President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush** honored it at a recent White House ceremony by presenting THC with the coveted **Preserve America Presidential Award**.

The award, one of only four given nationally, lauds the program's initiative to promote tourism to historical and cultural sites, especially in regions that might otherwise be overlooked. Through the program's

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ★ Lone Star cities shine bright in the art world
- ★ Fredericksburg dubbed a destination of distinction
- ★ Gator aid: Prime locations for spotting alligators



HERITAGE tourism is the fastest growing segment of the \$40.4 billion tourism industry in Texas. Texas ranks second in the nation in the number of cultural and heritage travelers visiting the state.

assistance, it has created economic development and educational opportunities at the local and regional level, while creating pride in heritage resources.

All 254 Texas counties are receiving heritage tourism assistance, and communities that once competed for visitors are now combining efforts to increase overall tourism, which is reportedly up by as much as 20 percent in the participating communities.

"There are some incredible sites out there — cultural as well as heritage — in small towns that just don't have the budgets to promote them," THC State Coordinator Janie Headrick says. "I love the 'Texas. It's like a whole other country' campaign because we are. We have so much to offer, so many sites."

THC Executive Director Larry Oaks says, "We know how successful the program is in Texas. We hope this will encourage other states to develop similar programs."

The program began in 1998 with the Texas Forts Trail Region encompassing much of West Central Texas as its pilot project. The program has grown to include the Texas Brazos, Forest, Independence, Lakes, Mountain, Plains and Tropical trail regions. Texas Hill Country and Pecos trail regions are awaiting official designation.

"Heritage tourism is a tremendous economic development tool," says Headrick. "Through this program our cultural and historical treasures are protected while com-

munities benefit economically and educationally. It is a win-win situation." She adds, "We relish in the fact that we've gotten the award. We couldn't have done this without the help of TxDOT," she says.

For more information, call (512) 463-6092 or visit www.the.state.tx.us.

HEN President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush decided to host a **White House dinner** in honor of William Shakespeare, one outfit that came to mind for an **invitation was Odessa's Globe of the Great Southwest Theatre**, one of the few replicas of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

Artistic director Anthony Ridley says he and resident artist Kathryn Graybill were ecstatic when they heard about the invitation and for the opportunity to represent the Globe theater and the City of Odessa at this dinner.

"All of us at the Globe are very excited about the possible opportunities that this visit will have for the theater and the Southwest Shakespeare Festival," says Ridley. "Obviously the news has reached Washington that we are here.

We're getting it back on the radar."

Graybill believes the invitation comes on the heels of a resurgence in the theater's reputation.

"When the Globe first opened, it was very well publicized," she says. "It was written up in the *New York Times* and there were presidential visits," she told the *Odessa American*. After that, the theater saw a gap in productions, but now "I think we're getting the word back out."

Graybill adds, "The theater really deserves that. It is a remarkable gem of a facility; there is nothing like it in the country."

For more information on the Globe theater and the Southwest Shakespeare Festival, call (432) 580-3177, (432) 332-1586, or visit www.globesw.org.

GET REAL!

EVEN young strangers picked to live in a 23,000-square-foot converted warehouse in downtown Austin might not draw special attention in this college town, but when camera crews are documenting all the drama, and the city, itself, gets pretty high billing, it can only

mean that the Capital City is getting a big plug with **MTV's** long-running reality series, "**The Real World**." Episodes, taped earlier this year, will begin airing June 21 on the cable network.

"It's like having a 26-week ad for Austin," says the city's Mayor Will Wynn.

The roomies — viewers will come to know as Danny, Wes, Melinda, Johanna, Nehemiah, Rachel and Lacey — live in the series' second largest home. It is filled with Texas kitsch, including an 18-foot neon cowboy named Big Tex.

"When they first walk in, I want them to feel like 'Welcome to Texas!' and I don't think I could've said it better than that," says interior designer Joel Mozersky.

He adds that all the other rooms, like the dining room and bedrooms, have a definitive Texas feel.

For more information, visit www.mtv.com/onair/realworld.

ON EXHIBIT

AN ANTONIO Museum of Art's newly completed **Lenora and Walter F. Brown Asian Art Wing** is now

ART SMART TEXAS

FOUR Texas cities made a respectable showing as *AmericanStyle* magazine released its readers' choice poll on the nation's **Top 25 Arts Destinations** — measuring a city's major arts institutions and concentration of artists.

The results, published in the magazine's June issue, shows Austin leading Texas cities in 8th place just behind New York City; Chicago; San Francisco; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; Seattle and Boston. Dallas/Fort Worth came in at 13 with Houston and San Antonio edging behind in the 17th and 18th spots, respectively, in the Big Cities category (500,000 people or more).

This year's ballot allowed readers to vote for their favorite arts destinations based on city size, reflecting the importance cultural tourism plays in communities across the nation.

"MOST who make the exhausting journey have heard that it is an arts colony with a vibrant cultural and social scene."



For more information, visit www.americanstyle.com.

MARFA's no stranger to lights, but there's little mystery about the spotlight that it has been getting lately for its booming art scene — most recently from *USA Today* and the *New York Times*.

USA Today just listed Marfa as one of the 10 great places for big-city art with a small town feel, and the *New York Times* mentioned Marfa a few times in April, including "The Great Marfa ... Land Boom" feature about the influx of second-home buyers like many from New York, Boston, Chicago and California.

"Most who make the exhausting journey have heard that it is an arts colony with a vibrant cultural and social scene. Stay in Marfa long enough, however, and the landscape — vast, empty and remote, with the desert bumping up against the dark silhouette of mountains in the distance — reveals its beauty," the *Times* reports.

This small ranching town has enjoyed an art renaissance since the early '80s when minimalist artist Donald Judd started the Chinati Foundation, a contemporary arts center fashioned out of an old Army base.

For more information, call (800) 650-9696 or visit www.marfacc.com.

open to the public, making room for its collection of more than **1,400 objects** from China, India, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Pakistan, Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka and Tibet that span 6,000 years of history.

The 9,000-square-foot new gallery space, paired with the renovation of the museum's existing 6,000 square feet of Asian galleries, makes it the largest center for Asian art in the southwestern United States and the largest Asian art collection in Texas. The two-story space includes 12 galleries and a changing exhibition space, offering visitors insight into the arts of East and South Asian cultures.

"This is a milestone in the history of our museum, as was the 1998 addition of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Center for Latin American Art," says Dr. Marion Oettinger Jr., interim director of the San Antonio Museum of Art.

"By expanding its Asian galleries, SAMA is providing a better developed, preserved and displayed collection while also strengthening its commitment to spreading knowledge of the arts of Asia," says Martha Blackwelder, curator of Asian Art at the museum. "Not only a direct benefit to SAMA itself, the new Asian wing also benefits the city of San Antonio," she says.

For more information, call (210) 978-8100 or visit www.samuseum.org.

ENGLAND's most famous private art collection is coming to Texas as the **Tyler Museum of Art** hosts *The Devonshire Inheritance: Five Centuries of Collecting at Chatsworth* from July 30 through Oct. 23. It is the sixth and final stop in the exhibit's American tour and the only stop in Texas.

The collection includes 250 pieces of fine art, jewelry, porcelain, rare books, scientific instruments, early photography and architectural drawings collected since the 16th century by the earls, dukes and duchesses of Devonshire at their country home, Chatsworth.

For more information, call (903) 595-1001 or visit www.tylermuseum.com.

NE HUNDRED and fifty masterpieces spanning 250 years of American art history can be seen in only one Texas city as the **San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts** hosts the *Visions of America* exhibit. The exhibition — masterpieces from the permanent collection of the New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain, Conn. — features works by legendary artists Georgia O'Keeffe and Norman Rockwell, among others.

"San Angelo is excited to host Texas' only exhibition of this important collection of American Art," says Howard Taylor, director of the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, which recently received the Museum Service Award at a White House ceremony presided over by First Lady Laura Bush.

"We welcome visitors of all ages and backgrounds from across the state to join us in San Angelo to experience this world-renowned collection."

The *Visions of America* collection is the most comprehensive traveling exhibition of American art in the nation. It is exhibited chronologically, tracing the changes in American art over the centuries, beginning with its origins in the Colonial period and early Republic, to the development of landscape painting, images of women and their shifting roles in society, and the impact of European styles, notably Impressionism. The exhibition also illustrates American artists' journey from Realism to Modernism to Abstract Expressionism.

For more information, call (325) 653-3333 or visit www.samfa.org.

HANKS to renovations at **London's Victoria and Albert Museum**, one of the world's most renowned Islamic art collections is on the move, and **Fort Worth's Kimbell Art Museum** is one of only two national stops (also National Gallery in Washington, D.C.) that get to showcase *Palace and Mosque: Islamic Art from the Victoria and Albert Museum*.

The collection includes more than 100 Middle Eastern masterpieces including ceramics, textiles, wood-

DISTINCTIVE HONOR

NEW BRAUNFELS' ability to embrace its heritage and traditions, along with maintaining its small town spirit has earned it a spot on the **National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2005 list of America's Dozen Distinctive Destinations.**

The city, founded in 1845 by German immigrants, was nominated by individuals, preservation organizations and local communities for its expansive National Register Historic District and a historic downtown, as well as landmarks such as the Romanesque Revival Comal County Courthouse built in 1898, the Sophienburg Museum and Archives, Landa Park and Schlitterbahn.

According to the organization, "New Braunfels offers genuine Lone Star hospitality, small-town spirit and a unique heritage that is celebrated year-round. New Braunfels boasts a variety of distinct activities that include Wurstfest, a '10-day salute to sausage' and Schlitterbahn, the top rated water park in the nation."

For information, visit www.nbcham.org or call (800) 572-2626.

work, calligraphy and painting.

Victoria and Albert Museum Director Mark Jones explains that "Islamic art is a broad cultural term rather than one based on an exclusively religious definition. It is the art of both palace and mosque."

For more information, call (817) 332-8451 or visit www.kimbellart.org.

THE MARSH PIT

SEE YOU later, alligator," might be an appropriate thing to say for someone on their way from a **unique Texas adventure — gator watching.** Many locations, especially in the eastern third of the state, are prime for catching glimpses of the American alligator. Some businesses in those regions offer boat tours for an even more intimate look at the natural habitat.

According to Texas Parks and Wildlife, there are an estimated 283,263 alligators in Jefferson, Chambers and Orange counties combined. Visitors to the Texas Travel Information Center in Orange, just west of the Sabine River Bridge, have witnessed the

gators from the center's boardwalk.

Here are some other hotspots for viewing the protected game animal:

- ★ **Sea Rim State Park's Gambusia Nature Trail** in Jefferson County includes a 3/4-mile-long wooden boardwalk that is prime for watching birds, fish, turtles, as well as gators.
 - ★ **Anahuac Wildlife Refuge** in Chambers County is a hotbed of alligators sunning. If visiting Anahuac in mid-September, check out the Texas Gator Fest. www.texasgatorfest.com.
 - ★ **McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge**, just west of Sabine Pass with its 50,000 acres of coastal marsh, has one of the densest populations of American alligators in the state.
- It's important to note that feeding alligators is illegal because it decreases their fear of humans, which increases the danger for humans. Alligators can also be surprisingly quick on land and are capable of running quickly over short distances.
- For more information, call (407) 736-2551 or visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

TEXAS TRIVIA

Which granite dome, the second largest in the United States, is the geologic center of Texas?

Enchanted Rock, just west of State Highway 965 near the Gillespie-Llano county line in southern Llano County, stands 1,825 feet above sea level and 385 feet from the base to the summit and has long been a favorite destination for hiking, camping, rock-climbing, hang-glidering and other outdoor adventures. This granite monadnock is the second largest such mountain in the United States (the largest is Stone Mountain, Ga.) and more than 500 species of plants can be found within the park, with more than a dozen native plants that are unique to the area. Its name derives from interpretations of Indian folklore, which attribute magical and spiritual properties to the ancient landmark. The site was acquired by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1979 and was opened as Enchanted Rock State Park, with Enchanted Rock near the center of the 1,643-acre park. The park also includes Turkey Peak and Enchanted Rock Cave.

TEXAS TRIVIA

TEXAS TRAVELOG is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, Travel Division. Please send news items of interest to the Texas travel industry to *Texas Travelog*, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009. (512) 486-5874, fax (512) 486-5879. E-mail: trv-log@dot.state.tx.us. Deadline for each newsletter is the 15th of the month preceding the issue date.
 EDITOR: Lois M. Rodriguez DESIGN/LAYOUT: Kirsti Harms

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

NUMBERS as of April 30, 2005

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Year-to-Date Visitors	Percent Variation*
AMARILLO	7,542	-17.03	30,309	-10.96
ANTHONY	14,852	+33.02	60,362	+2.89
CAPITOL	7,707	-9.33	29,755	-1.61
DENISON	38,488	+2.47	138,383	+4.42
GAINESVILLE	26,166	+38.86	109,446	+47.61
LANGTRY	8,722	+5.29	30,258	-2.68
LAREDO	8,631	-33.52	45,094	-7.76
ORANGE	52,181	+12.01	194,677	+3.08
TEXARKANA	37,213	+4.00	134,872	-3.06
VALLEY	13,815	-12.78	108,874	+8.37
WASKOM	40,282	-8.98	149,727	-5.67
WICHITA FALLS	14,157	+2.13	54,093	-0.53
CENTER TOTALS	269,756	+2.67	1,085,850	+3.30

*Compared to last year

Dial toll-free (800) 452-9292 for travel assistance from TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers (8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily, Central Time)

www.traveltexas.com • www.texashighways.com
 • www.dontmesswithtexas.org

FORWARDING AND RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED
 ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

TRAVEL DIVISION
 P.O. BOX 149249
 AUSTIN, TX 78714-9249

