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# TEXAS TRAVEL LOG

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A NEWSLETTER FOR THE TEXAS TRAVEL INDUSTRY

MAY 2005

## TxDOT

**A**PPPLICATIONS for free exhibit space at TxDOT's Travel Information Centers will be accepted beginning at 8 a.m. on June 1 through 5 p.m. on June 20. All city convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce, and rural and regional tourism organizations that promote travel to a specific region or metropolitan area can apply for the six-months of free space — Sept. 1, 2005, through Feb. 28, 2006. Exhibit space will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

These exhibit areas promote attractions with displays — including colorful photographs and other promotional materials — in the centers' lobbies. Every six months, use of the display cases rotates to another set of tourism organizations.

Applications postmarked or faxed before or after that time period will not be considered.

For more information, call (512) 486-5800 or contact Theresa Olson at [tolson@dot.state.tx.us](mailto:tolson@dot.state.tx.us) or Martha Martin at [mmartin4@dot.state.tx.us](mailto:mmartin4@dot.state.tx.us). Applications and additional information are available online at [www.dot.state.tx.us/trv/trvserv.htm?pg=disp](http://www.dot.state.tx.us/trv/trvserv.htm?pg=disp).

**T**HE DEADLINE to submit entries for *Texas Events Calendar's* Fall issue is June 1. Calendar editor Julie Stratton is accepting detailed listings for events occurring from September through November. Entries must be of interest (and open) to the general traveling public. Inclusion is not guaranteed, and submissions may be edited for grammar and clarity.

To submit a listing or for more information, e-mail [trv-tec@dot.state.tx.us](mailto:trv-tec@dot.state.tx.us), call (512) 486-5876 or write to P.O. Box 141009 Austin, TX 78714-1009.

## TTCC 2005

**M**ORE than 100 Texas travel professionals and representatives of Texas Department of Transportation's Travel Division, the American Automobile Association, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and city information centers paraded to San Antonio for the 50th annual Texas Travel Counselors Conference (April 17-21). The weeklong conference included visits to area attractions, training sessions, an awards luncheon and culminated with a celebratory gala.

### Awards were given to:

**Lone Star Award:** Cindy Murrell, TxDOT Travel Division Administrative Manager, Austin.

**TxDOT Roadrunner Award:** Teresa Carney, Travel counselor, Texas Travel Information Center in Amarillo.

**AAA Roadrunner Award:** Ghadir Zhemani, AAA Texas — Houston Memorial.

**Gene Phillips Hospitality Award:** Carol Morgenthaler, former member of the San Antonio Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Professional Travel Counselor certificates were issued to: Luz (Lucy) Baeza, Valerie Eaves, Ofelia Noriega and Naomi Flores.

## TRAVEL NEWS

**A**QUARIUM Christi's Texas State Aquarium has launched its latest exhibit, *Amazon*, which aims for thrills, shills and raised awareness about the unique natural resource.

Creatures like the Amazon horned frog, hawk-headed parrot, green anaconda, giant Tegu and Goliath bird-eating tarantula, as well as other mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates and fish, are all part of this exhibit, which explores the diversity of the Amazon rainforest while drawing attention to the need for preserving this natural resource. The Aquarium accomplishes this by creating a

scenario of a smuggler's camp to expose the illegal pet trade/wildlife smuggling industry.

Aquarium Executive Director Tom Schmid says, "To interpret this ecosystem in a 2,700-square-foot exhibit would be a challenge, so we chose to focus on the illegal wildlife trade, a more than a billion-dollar-a-year industry. Each year, more than 10 million animals are captured from the Amazon region alone for the illegal pet trade. Sadly, the vast majority of these animals perish before they reach their final destinations."

For more information, call (361) 881-1200 or (800) 477-GULF, or visit [www.texasstateaquarium.org](http://www.texasstateaquarium.org).

**I**T'S OUT with the old and in with the new as Houston's historic Warwick Hotel changes ownership and will reopen next spring as a new, more contemporary Hotel ZaZa.

The Museum District landmark was purchased by Charles Givens and Jeff Records, owners of Dallas' much-lauded luxury Hotel ZaZa, and special discounts are running from now until the 307-room hotel closes on Aug. 1.

The Warwick has an illustrious history and has attracted public attention ever since opening in 1926. At the time, it was the only luxury hotel in town.

John Keeling, senior vice president with PKF Consulting in Houston, says Hotel ZaZa will have to "offer something pretty unique to convince people to travel there for the experience. That's a real risky road." He does acknowledge, however, that the Dallas version has done very well.

For more information, call (713) 526-1991 or visit [www.warwickhotelhouston.com](http://www.warwickhotelhouston.com).

**T**HE 2005 edition of "The Great Stays of Texas," which includes a listing of inspected accommodations approved by the Historic Accommodations of Texas, is now available and free by request.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ★ New basketball teams in Texas
- ★ Veterans remembered and freedom celebrated
- ★ San Antonio snags rare Vatican exhibit

The guidebook is arranged by region and directs travelers to well-known and off-the-beaten-path bed and breakfasts, country inns and unique hotels.

For more information, call (800) 428-0368 or visit [www.hat.org](http://www.hat.org).

**ON EXHIBIT**

**AIN'T Peter and the Vatican: The Legacy of the Popes**, one of the world's largest collections of Vatican art, documents and historical objects to tour North America, will be on exhibit at **San Antonio's Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center** from Oct. 15, 2005, through Jan. 8, 2006, and tickets are already on sale for this limited three-city tour that begins in Montreal and ends in Milwaukee.

More than 300 pieces, which trace 2,000 years of Catholic leadership, beginning with Saint Peter through Pope John Paul II, are on loan from the Vatican, the Vatican Museums, the archives of the Propaganda Fide, the Pontifical Sacristy, the Sistine Chapel and Roman churches administered by the Vatican. Many of these objects have never been on display before, even in Rome.

A highlight is the bronze cast of Pope John Paul II's hand, which guests are welcomed to touch. It

was the pope's wish that a personal blessing, as well as a cast of his hand welcome those visiting the exhibition.

"We are delighted to bring this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to San Antonio especially in light of the recent passing of Pope John Paul II," says Peter Radetsky, Ph.D., of Clear Channel Exhibitions, the producer of the Vatican exhibit.

For more information, visit [www.VaticanSanAntonio.com](http://www.VaticanSanAntonio.com).

**EVERYTHING'S** big in Texas, with a few exceptions, like **Rocksprings' new Texas Miniature Museum** with a private collection of dollhouses, dollhouse furnishings, dolls and miniature accessories from the early 1900s to the present. The museum, which opens May 7, will also house a lending library geared toward architecture, interior design, landscaping, art and miniatures.

The museum's gift shop will include architectural and building items, books, stationery and vintage miniatures.

For more information call (713) 515-2780.

**THE HISTORY** of **Austin's Fire Department** is being showcased in the new **Austin Fire Museum** at Fire Station No. 1, 401 E. Fifth St. which opened April 23. The Austin Fire Department

Historical Society opened the museum with a collection that includes a 19th-century lantern used on a horse-drawn fire truck and old leather helmets dating back to the turn of the 20th century. The museum also exhibits the crumbled remains of a marble plaque from Fire Station No. 3, which was burned by an arsonist in 1879, and antique engines from Central Texas fire stations.

The department's history also includes being the first city in Texas (in 1952) to hire African-American firefighters. The uniform of Willie Ray Davis – one of the first African-Americans in the department – is also on display.

For more information, call (512) 825-0751 or visit [www.austinfiremuseum.org](http://www.austinfiremuseum.org).

**THE NEW Braunfels Museum of Art & Music**, an affiliate of the **Smithsonian Institution**, is premiering the multimedia **Austin City Limits: Making Music – Making History** exhibit on May 14 to celebrate the award-winning television music program's 30-year history. The museum, in historic Gruene, collaborated with show creator KLRU-TV to produce the exhibit, highlighting the cultural significance of one of the most popular and enduring programs in

American television history.

This technology-driven exhibit re-creates the legendary studio that has hosted the program since 1974. Visitors will experience the ACL stage, take a virtual tour of the director's booth and visit interactive custom kiosks presenting a timeline with film footage of ACL highlights. There also will be more than 90 photographs and two documentary films: "The Making of Austin City Limits" and "The 30-Year History of Austin City Limits."

A line-up of performers, programs and events will be scheduled throughout the duration of the exhibit, along with the museum's "Austin City Limits Sessions," a series that will showcase some of the program's most popular archived performances.

For more information, call (830) 625-5336 or visit [www.nbmmuseum.org](http://www.nbmmuseum.org).

**BOOKS** created by artists such as **Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall** and **Georges Rouault** are highlights of the **Southern Methodist University Bridwell Library's exhibit**, the "**Livre d'artiste**," which brings the modern artist's vision to the traditional crafts of making books.

Dr. Dorothy Kosinski – Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture, and The Barbara Thomas Lemmon Curator of European Art, Dallas Museum of Art – curates the exhibition. An illustrated guide with an introductory essay by Dr. Kosinski accompanies the exhibition.

The exhibition, which opened March 11, is free and open to the public through June 1. For information, call (214) 768-3483 or visit [smu.edu/bridwell/html/LivresdArtiste.htm](http://smu.edu/bridwell/html/LivresdArtiste.htm).

**THE GREAT OUTDOORS**

**THE NEW \$60 Texas State Parks Pass** is selling like hotcakes with the onset of busy spring and early summer seasons. Since it was launched in January 2004, nearly 60,000 passes have been sold, generating \$3.7 million in revenues for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Depart-

**PATRIOT'S CORNER**

**AS Memorial Day** approaches, the list of names to be remembered continues to grow, and **many events across the state** are set to pay homage.

On May 28-29, the Admiral Nimitz SHS – National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg is planning a World War II re-enactment at its Pacific Combat Zone with demonstrations of an M-3 Stuart tank, as well as a display of weapons, and United States and Japanese uniforms. On Memorial Day, May 30, the museum will feature music, a patriotic address, placement of memorial wreaths in the courtyard and a 21-gun salute in tribute to all who have lost their lives while fighting for their country in all wars.

Other Memorial Day events in-

clude Kirbyville's Veterans Memorial Day Program on May 28, for the annual dedication of names to their Veteran's Memorial Wall.

On May 30, Denison offers a parade complete with military vehicles, marching bands and more; Ozona also presents its own Memorial Day ceremony; and the Dallas Symphony performs a Memorial Day Concert at Flagpole Hill.

**EACH** year, cities across the state pull out the stops to put on amazing **Independence Day** celebrations, but one of the most anticipated is **Willie Nelson's annual Fourth of July Picnic**, slated again at **Fort Worth's Stockyards**. This year, he's bringing along about 20 other performers, including fellow legend

Bob Dylan and his protégé band Los Lonely Boys.

Tickets for the 32nd annual picnic, held in the 27-acre North Forty sprawl just east of Billy Bob's Texas, went on sale April 25 through Ticketmaster and will also be available at the show.

"Willie takes such an interest," says Pam Minick, marketing director for Billy Bob's Texas, which co-organizes the picnic. "He picks every artist according to who he likes and he negotiates the contract. They are his friends and money is not the issue. They are there for the fellowship and to be part of an event that each year gets bigger than the previous."

For more information, call (817) 626-7117 or visit [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

ment's state parks operations and maintenance.

The credit card-style parks pass gives greater access (and free entry) to all 120 state parks and historic sites, as well as camping and park store merchandise discounts and other member benefits.

The revamped annual pass is good for a year from the time of purchase and can be bought at all Texas state parks and historic sites and through TPWD's Customer Contact Center at (512) 389-8900.

## SPORTS AND TOURISM

**AUSTIN** and **Fort Worth** were recently awarded **new franchises** in the **National Basketball Development League**, a developmental arm of the NBA.

The new franchises, which will begin play later this year, will be owned and operated by Southwest Basketball LLC, led by former Indiana Pacers general manager David Kahn.

"The expansion of the NBDL illustrates that the NBA's minor league has not only been successful in developing NBA talent on and off the court, but is a business proposition whose time has come," NBA Commissioner David Stern told reporters in a conference call.

"We're bringing in a special brand of professional basketball featuring players on the verge of making it to the NBA and an affordable, family-oriented atmosphere," says Kahn.

For more information, visit [www.nba.com/nbdl](http://www.nba.com/nbdl).

**BEGINNING** May 22, bases will be loaded at the **Museum of Fine Arts – Houston** where **concurrent exhibitions** examine the relationship between **baseball** and the **American culture**.

"**Baseball as America**" – examining the sport from its early roots to present – includes 500 National Baseball Hall of Fame artifacts from the sport's starts like Satchel Paige, Jackie Robinson, Mickey Mantle, Cal Ripken Jr., as well as items like the handwritten manuscript of the song, "Take me out to the ballgame," Yogi Berra's mitt from the 1956 World Series game, a letter from Babe Ruth to polio patient Freddie Clark and a ticket to Lou Gehrig Day, among others.

**"BASEBALL and America have grown up together. In fact, the game is such an integral part of our culture."**

—Jane Forbes Clark

Just outside this exhibit is a room dedicated to the history of baseball in Houston with artifacts from the Houston Astros to cham-

## THE BIG D

**PANACHE** magazine featured **Dallas** in its pages recently, saying that the city is "Thinking Big" and "realizing its ambition to become one of the country's premier cultural destinations." The magazine article touted Big D's six professional sports teams, its most restaurants per capita than any other in the United States and being a Mecca for luxury shopping, and *Panache* says the city is vying to become a "major cultural destination" with its Dallas Arts District.

The article highlighted some of the city's best in dining, lodging and shopping. It also devoted a side story to an interview with Raymond Nasher about the Nasher Sculpture Center.

championship college and Little League teams. Other concurrent exhibits include *Sports Photography from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston* (June 13-Oct. 3); *Photographs by Jim Dow: Baseball Stadiums, 1980-1982* (May 2-Sept. 12); and *The Latino Baseball Story: Photographs by Jose Luis Villegas* (May 22-Aug. 21).

"Baseball and America have grown up together. In fact, the game is such an integral part of our culture that we often take for granted the deep day-to-day significance in our lives," says Jane Forbes Clark, Chairman of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

MFAH director Peter Marzio says the sport is also a "reflection of our culture – men, women, children, minorities – and has been a part of our culture stretching back to the early 1800s, possibly further."

For more information on the exhibits, call (713) 639-7300 or visit [www.mfah.org](http://www.mfah.org).

**TILL** LOOKING for a baseball fix? According to *USA Today*, the **Nolan Ryan Exhibit Center in Alvin** is among the "**10 great places to touch base with the best**" – special spots for baseball and baseball enthusiasts.

"The center, built by the Ryan Foundation and donated to Alvin Community College in 1996, chronicles the life and baseball career of Alvin's favorite son in many state-of-the-art exhibits, including an interactive one in which the visitor feels a Ryan fastball in a catcher's mitt," the article states.

For more information on the

center, call (281) 388-1134 or visit [www.alvin.cc.tx.us/ryan/nolanbg.htm](http://www.alvin.cc.tx.us/ryan/nolanbg.htm).

**OWABUNGA** could be the celebratory word of the day as **Texas' only surf museum opens** its doors on June 2 at the Water Street Market complex in **Corpus Christi**. The Texas Surf Museum opening – complete with book and CD signings, prizes for the first 200 visitors and performances by surf music star Donavon Frankenreiter – will help kick off the Water Street Market Music and Art Fair slated for that weekend.

The museum takes a look at surfing history and the Lone Star State's role in that history with a display of more than 35 classic boards from the early 1960s and replicas of boards made about 100 years ago, as well as other pieces of memorabilia such as movie posters, collectable surf music albums and pioneering Texas surfers and landmarks along the state's 367-mile coastline.

Longtime Port Aransas surf shop owner Pat Magee, along with surfing friend and businessman Brad Lomax, put the museum together. Magee acquired many of the museum's artifacts over a 35-year period.

"We have checked out other surf museums around the country, and we believe the Texas Surf Museum will rival any in the nation and probably even the world," says Lomax. "We have a wonderful collection of artifacts."

For more information, call (361) 882-2364 or visit [www.executivesurfclub.com/records](http://www.executivesurfclub.com/records).

## INDUSTRY INSIDERS

**DONNA LANGFORD** has been promoted to **Tourist and Convention Director** for the **Del Rio Chamber of Commerce**. Langford worked for eight years with Susan Cottle-Leonard, the previous director. Cottle-Leonard has taken the Tourist and Conventions Director position in Palestine, Texas.

**NANCI LILES**, director of the **Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau**, was honored in February for 20 years of service with the CVB when Gov. Rick Perry and Mayor Norm Archibald proclaimed Feb. 18 as Nanci Liles Day.

**PETE FLORES**, a 20-year veteran game warden who has worked all over the state, now leads the **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's** state game warden field force of approximately 480 officers.

**JASON GUTHRIE** joins the **El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau** as sales manager responsible for convention development within corporate and multi-cultural markets. His previous experience in the hospitality industry includes sales manager at the Camino Real Hotel in El Paso, Staybridge Suites by Holiday Inn and the Marriott in Austin.

TEXAS TRIVIA



What Mexican holiday celebration crosses the border into the United States (and especially Texas) in honor of a shared victory against the French?

To find Cinco de Mayo events across the state, visit [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com) or [www.traveltexas.com](http://www.traveltexas.com).

Cinco de Mayo. After Mexico won its independence from Spain and eventually expelled Spanish soldiers, French Emperor Napoleon III had his heart set on conquering Mexico – while the United States was preoccupied with its own Civil War. He didn't bank on the reported 4,000 Mexicans with a lot of heart who weren't as willing to give up as easily as European countries had under threat of the French. The small Mexican army managed to do enough damage that it kept the Emperor from supplying U.S. confederate rebels for at least a year. After confederate forces were defeated, Union weapons and soldiers needed to defeat the French.

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](mailto:trv-log@dot.state.tx.us). Deadline for each newsletter is the 15th of the month preceding the issue date.

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NUMBERS as of March 31, 2005

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Year-to-Date Visitors	Percent Variation*
AMARILLO	9,366	-13.09	22,767	-8.75
ANTHONY	17,828	+3.58	45,510	-4.19
CAPITOL	10,266	+0.77	22,048	+1.40
DENISON	40,929	+2.64	99,895	+5.19
GAINESVILLE	32,930	+44.70	83,280	+50.59
LANGTRY	9,963	-4.10	21,536	-5.58
LAREDO	15,096	+8.09	36,463	+1.55
ORANGE	57,351	+13.58	142,496	+0.15
TEXARKANA	37,147	+4.84	97,659	-5.51
VALLEY	25,167	-5.01	95,059	+12.33
WASKOM	43,889	-13.72	109,445	-4.40
WICHITA FALLS	16,490	-3.74	39,936	-1.49
<b>CENTER TOTALS</b>	<b>316,422</b>	<b>+3.55</b>	<b>816,094</b>	<b>+3.51</b>

\*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)

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• [www.dontmesswithtexas.org](http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org)

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