



LEADING THE WAY IN 2020

2020 was the year that proved how TxDOT could quickly adapt and innovate to continue our mission of Connecting You With Texas.



VOLUME 44 | ISSUE 6 | NOV/DEC 2020

20 years is far too long

GUEST COLUMNIST: LAURA RYAN
 TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSIONER

EDITOR'S NOTE: Since Nov. 7, 2000, Texas has recorded at least one traffic-related death every day. Unless something changes, this November will mark 20 years of preventable deaths. TxDOT is working to end the streak (See story on page 18). And Texas Transportation Commissioner Laura Ryan is helping lead the charge and outlines her reasons why as this issue's guest columnist.

Fall has always been one of my favorite times of the year. The weather starts to cool. The holiday season is beginning. But about three years ago, this time of year became less cheerful for me. That's when I became brutally aware that the season is also painful for thousands of Texas families. For them, those who have lost a loved one in a traffic crash, this season means an empty chair at their holiday table because Texas has failed to end the 20-year streak of daily deaths on our roadways.



Like you, I'd heard the statistics on traffic crashes, but three years ago, it hit me. These are not just numbers. We are talking about someone's mother, father or child. We are talking about someone who could have been my loved one, if for no other reason than luck. At that moment, it became personal.

There are so many terrible things that can happen daily in our lives, and most of them are out of our control. But not traffic crashes. When I learned that the vast majority of serious crashes were preventable, I knew I had to be a part of the solution, or at least give it everything I could. Maybe this is where my stubbornness, that gritty side of my personality, will be put to the test.

So, I started asking questions. I started sharing information, any way to cut through the noise and get to the issue. I started to take ownership of the problem and become accountable for the solution. That's something we all can do. It is not our heads that will make the difference, it is our hearts. We need every Texan to care about ending this streak.

What turned my engagement into a true passion? What took this to the next level for me? Having someone at a TxDOT meeting or other gathering, someone I'd never met, share their story of losing a loved one in a crash. I learned their loved one's name, what they were like. I saw their pictures and realized that their families will have an empty seat at their holiday dinner table — forever. These conversations are etched on my heart.

That's why I'm encouraging everybody I meet to do everything they can to help. We can bring everyone home safe at the end of the day when we make ending the streak a personal goal. If that's hard for you, do one thing: Place an extra chair and place setting at your dinner table tonight and decide, with your other family members, how their lives would change if it were you who represented that empty chair. ■



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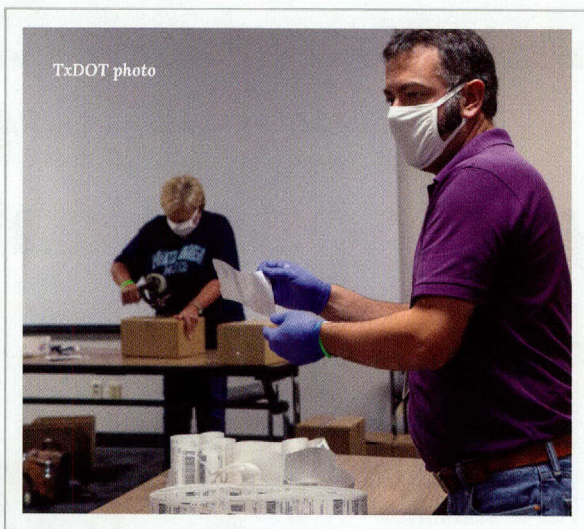
DESIGN & PRODUCTION
GDC Marketing & Ideation

PRINTED BY
TxDOT Print Services
Austin, TX

TN IS PUBLISHED BY THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
125 E. 11th St.
Austin, TX 78701-2483

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Email TNideas@txdot.gov and include "TN Editor" in the subject line.

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ON THE COVER

Many would agree that 2020 has been an unforgettable year, one filled with uncertainty and upheaval. Yet, it's also been a year filled with stories of TxDOT team members persevering, innovating and collaborating to keep us connected and on course.

FEATURED STORIES

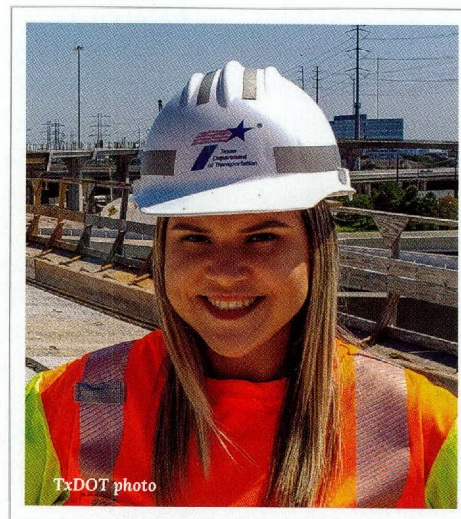
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SHINING STARS



Across the state, TxDOT employees go above and beyond.

When cell phones don't work, who you gonna call?

LUBBOCK DISTRICT

It's happened to many of us. Driving down the road, you feel a thump and reality hits: you have a flat tire!

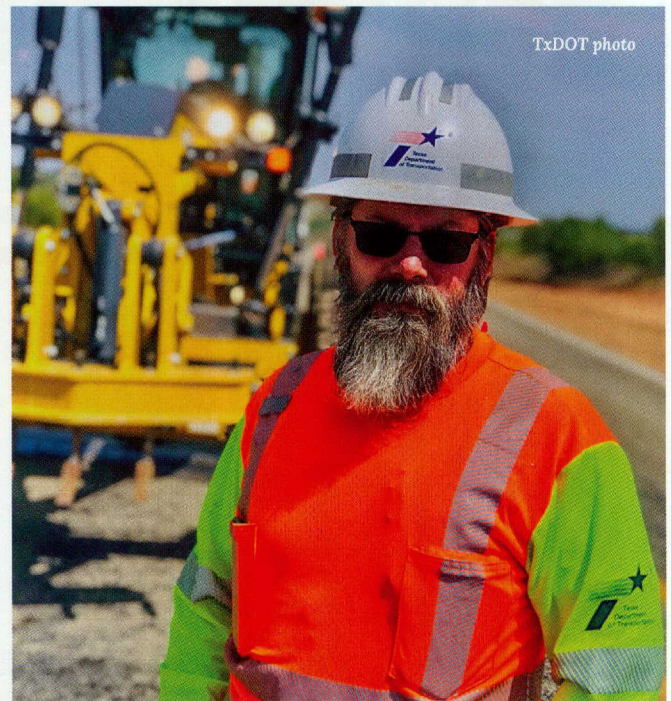
That's what one family experienced while driving recently along U.S. 84 in the Lubbock District. As David Bragg and his family drove between Snyder and Post, a storm hit. Rain pounded the roadway and lightning filled the sky. Bragg cautiously made his way down the road when suddenly he had a blowout.

Despite the bad conditions, Bragg successfully changed the tire. His family was on the road again thinking all was well. Then, after just a few miles and with rain still pouring, they heard another loud sound. Yes, it was yet another blowout and the one spare tire was already in use.

The situation looked bleak. Not only was the tire flat, but water was rushing through the ditches preventing Bragg from getting very far off the road. Their cell phones had no signal. Stuck in the rain were Bragg, his wife and their two small children.

As the sun was going down, Bragg set off on foot hoping to get a signal on his phone to call for help. That's when Robert Hansen, maintenance section supervisor with the Lubbock District, appeared. Hansen pulled over and offered Bragg his assistance. He gave him a ride to an area where Bragg could call for a tow truck to pick up his family and disabled vehicle. Hansen even provided a list of names of local wrecker services and tire repair businesses. Bragg says he showed extreme kindness during the storm.

"Mr. Hansen alerted the local sheriff's office and let them know our situation and where we were located," Bragg said. "He waited well into the evening with his truck parked behind our vehicle to alert passing motorists of our presence."



When rain, floods and two flat tires hit a Lubbock family on the road, Robert Hansen arrived to save the day.

Eventually, the family's ride arrived from Lubbock. Hansen was still there. He'd patiently waited for the family to get back on the road safely.

"Keeping our roadways safe can take shape in many ways and helping stranded motorists is one of them," said Hansen.

Hansen wholeheartedly believes in safety whether on or off the clock and this situation was no exception. The Bragg family says Hansen's great attitude gave them something to talk about for years to come. They are thankful for his much-needed service.

Send information or any thank-you emails, letters or calls you or your co-workers receive to AskTxDOT@TxDOT.gov so we can recognize TxDOT employee achievements. ■

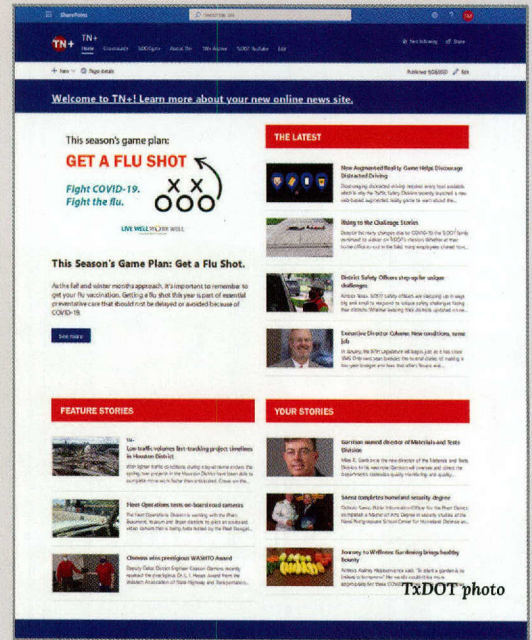
DISCOVER THE NEW TN+

In September, the Employee and Executive Communications Section in the Communications Division launched TN+, an engaging new way to experience the award-winning content of TN Magazine. The online news site allows readers to go beyond the pages of TN and view breaking news, videos, photo galleries and more.

Updated regularly, TN+ features an archive of previously published magazine stories, feature stories about the important work of TxDOT and employee-focused stories such as the Employee Q&A and Employees Chime In. The site features stories from the latest issue of TN in addition to original stories and videos.

The product of several months of hard work, TN+ was developed by the EEC team, with the assistance of Creative Services and input from various other members of the Communications Division.

To check out the site, visit txdot.sharepoint.com/sites/tn-plus. Bookmark TN+ and check back regularly to stay up to date on important news that's available 24/7. Got a story idea? Send an email to TNideas@txdot.gov. ■



Unified Transportation Program joins TxDOTCONNECT

With a new series of releases this year, TxDOTCONNECT continues to lead TxDOT's journey toward a modern, unified system for delivering transportation projects. More than 3,500 TxDOT staff and external partners are working together in a new technology system that transforms business processes, reduces the use of legacy systems and creates efficiencies for end users and external partners.

The Right of Way and Utilities release this past June allows users to enter right of way project information for parcels and utilities into a single system and track them. Minor releases and system enhancements have also been deployed to support end users' needs and work preferences. These minor releases included the specification request form to simplify the requests for bid items and specifications along with improvement to the review and approval process. Enhanced save functionality to improve system performance when saving a project is expected by the end of the year.

Another major system release that is coming soon will allow projects to be planned in the Unified Transportation Program, or UTP, TxDOT's 10-year plan that guides the development of transportation projects across the state. This release creates an agency-wide program in a web-based system and replaces Excel workbook and Access database processes that districts, divisions and the UTP team had used to prioritize and fund transportation projects. Increased transparency on project funding, streamlined work processes and reductions in dual data entry are big bonuses in this release.

The agency's technology transformation is driven by district and division champions, subject matter experts and TxDOTCONNECT's project team working together to develop a system that is valuable to end users. As the system continues to evolve, maintenance projects will be available and managed in TxDOTCONNECT, allowing users to manage let and non-let maintenance projects in a single, user-friendly interface. ■

I AM AN ... ENGINEERING ASSISTANT

HOUSTON DISTRICT

Stephanie Rodriguez is an engineering assistant in the West Harris Area Office in the Houston District and has been employed there since 2016, after earning her civil engineering degree from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Before coming to the department full time, she worked for TxDOT as a summer intern in Austin and in San Benito. She has two sisters, one of whom also earned a civil engineering degree and works for TxDOT.

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DO ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS AS AN ENGINEERING ASSISTANT.

A normal day for me consists of keeping up with the daily construction activities as a project manager. This includes partnering and communicating with the contractor and third-party entities associated with my project. I ensure the contractor is constructing the project in accordance with the plans and specifications. I perform material testing, analyze the project schedule and ensure the barricades and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan follow TxDOT standards. I also assist in the execution of change orders at the West Harris Area Office.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING IN THE HOUSTON DISTRICT?

I enjoy working in the Houston District because I get to be a part of some of the most complex and challenging projects that TxDOT has to offer. The teamwork and camaraderie I have experienced here is beyond comparison. Each day is a learning experience for me as different situations or conflicts arise. I am able to learn how to improve or solve the situation by using resources around me and learning from my fellow West Harris colleagues.

WHICH PROJECT FROM THE PAST FEW YEARS ARE YOU THE MOST PROUD OF?

I am most proud of being a part of the U.S. 290 corridor project. The U.S. 290 corridor consisted of 13 segments spanning from I-610 in Harris County to the Waller County line. In my time on these projects, I was able to become familiar with the execution of change orders. I was also assigned as the project manager on three segments. The project manager role afforded me the opportunity to see all the partnerships and teamwork it takes to move a project forward. I was able to become familiar with daily construction activities, project progression, project acceptance and the project closeout process.

HOW HAVE YOU HAD TO ADAPT IN YOUR JOB AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

I have had to adapt to the use of masks and social distancing at the West Harris Area Office. Prior to COVID-19, lunch time in the breakroom was spent conversing with colleagues about life and work. Now our interactions are more restricted. When it comes to my project, I have had to adapt to an increased number of virtual meetings and phone conferences with the contractor and third-party entities associated with my project.



“

I enjoy working in the Houston District because I get to be a part of some of the most complex and challenging projects that TxDOT has to offer.

”

STEPHANIE RODRIGUEZ

EDITOR'S NOTE: We would like to thank Stephanie for following good social distancing measures and capturing her own photograph for this article. ■

YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 brings challenges and innovations

Every year has its unique character but no one could have predicted in January the world-changing developments that 2020 would bring. TxDOT employees had to face the challenges brought on by a global pandemic, including a dramatic shift in work culture and new ways of doing business. In true TxDOT fashion, they rose to the challenge and continue to find new ways to accomplish the agency's mission.

Here is a review of some of the events from 2020.

Calm beginnings

The year started off regularly enough with about 1,000 attendees, including industry stakeholders, contractors, consultants and TxDOT employees, at the 2020 Texas Transportation Forum in San Antonio. The event brought together transportation leaders from across the public, private and non-profit sectors to network and discuss the current and future possibilities for transportation.

The San Antonio District piloted a program testing technology that uses sensors and alarms to prevent vehicles and equipment from backing into workers in construction zones.

TN Magazine debuted a new look with the January/February issue.

However, a novel strain of coronavirus had emerged causing a disease named COVID-19. The disease began spreading throughout the world in January and February, including the U.S. Countries were taking the drastic measure of shutting down business activities to prevent its spread. In March, Texas would do the same, affecting TxDOT operations in a way not experienced before.

TxDOT has had a flexible work options policy since February 2016. As stay-at-home orders were put in place, TxDOT quickly instructed all office workers to telework unless required by their supervisor. Those employees still working in-person found temperature checks, social distancing and masks became the norm to protect their health. And just about everything went online.

Going virtual

With many employees teleworking and in-person meetings discouraged, virtual meetings became the norm. From public meetings to morning stretch-and-flex warmups, people were gathering online to accomplish the important work of TxDOT. Beginning in March, the Texas Transportation Commission's monthly meetings were also conducted virtually. The public could still comment on agenda items or the meeting via a special toll-free number.

It's been quite a year but TxDOT employees are still taking care of business and will be ready for whatever 2021 may bring them.

With many organizations going virtual, including college campuses, the Human Resources Division also mobilized technology to hold virtual recruiting fairs. Using virtual fair platforms, the team met with more than 400 qualified applicants through virtual recruiting fairs.

Standard events, such as town hall meetings and ribbon cuttings, also had to be moved online as well. But the Communications team was able to adapt, holding virtual ribbon cuttings for major projects.

One of the most significant events to go virtual was the 2020 Short Course. The annual event has typically been held at the Texas A&M University at College Station. This year, however, the conference used a video conferencing platform to broadcast all the sessions.



TxDOT photo



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TxDOT photo

Rising to the challenge

While COVID-19 brought many challenges, it also brought many opportunities for the TxDOT family to showcase their resiliency and caring spirit.

Multiple members of the TxDOT family put their sewing skills to good use during the pandemic by creating masks for their communities.

TxDOT crews across the state had to adopt new methods for staying safe while on work sites. In the Corpus Christi District, Port Aransas ferry operations staff conducted their daily safety meetings via bullhorn while the crew practiced social distancing.

Other TxDOT employees shared how they were able to accelerate certain project activities due to lower traffic during the stay-at-home orders. In the Beaumont District, crews were able to fast-track bridge re-construction for an interchange on I-10 at FM 3180. In the Houston District, crews on the I-610 West Loop/I-69 Southwest interchange project accelerated many aspects of the project, cutting work time significantly. Thanks to their hard work, the opening of the new I-69 northbound direct connector to I-610 southbound took place eight months early.

It's been quite a year but TxDOT employees are still taking care of business and will be ready for whatever 2021 may bring them. ■



RANSOM RESCUE:



**ITD MAKES
SHORT WORK OF
HACKER ATTACK**

The global cost of ransomware attacks is in the billions. Ransomware is malicious software that spreads across computer networks, encrypting files and causing them to be non-operational unless the victim pays to decrypt the device.

The ransoms themselves can range from tens of thousands to millions of dollars for one attack. Moreover, these attacks cost their victims in downtime as critical systems are unavailable. A large organization can take months to recover from these incidents. Many companies just quietly pay the ransom rather than deal with a long-term disruption to their operations.

Though people might think that a computer virus starts taking over the second it gets access to a system, that is not actually the case. Powerful ransomware programs behave more like a stalker. Once they get access to a computer, they begin building a profile of the user and the computer systems. They sit and watch and capture information about passwords, contacts and programs. They record behaviors of the user to find weaknesses, then pick the best time to attack.

On May 14, TxDOT's Information Technology Division detected an alarming problem with encryption of the agency's servers, causing them to be non-operational. As more and more servers were affected, the team realized that the malware was traversing the agency's network through the internet and immediately shut down access to stop the spread. This attack had a major operational impact to the agency. ITD staff began the hard work to get TxDOT up and running again while also communicating with leadership and employees.

Multiple partners assisted in the recovery process: the Texas Department of Information Resources and specialized vendors in cyber security, such as Microsoft and AT&T. These partners helped TxDOT staff implement an action plan to mitigate the ransomware and recover and secure systems as they were brought into operations again. The agency also contacted the FBI, which investigates most ransomware cases.

The ITD team worked around the clock for weeks after the attack. In addition to getting help from ransomware experts, the team also relied on the agency's business continuity plan to determine the critical systems to bring back first.

They identified compromised servers and devices. Hundreds of infected laptops had to be collected and replaced. They searched for the cleanest backup images available prior to the attack to use to restore the systems. At the same time, they worked with all staff and contractors to reset their passwords and implement multifactor authentication to prevent future attacks. They were also communicating with employees everyday about the status of multiple programs and systems.

Everything had to be thoroughly tested before it could be brought back online. It was a careful, methodical process that had to be done quickly to get the agency back up and running.

Ultimately, ITD staff were able to return the agency to normal in less than a month. Fortunately, no data was lost and no private information was exposed. The agency's planning and teamwork allowed it to emerge stronger and continue to focus on its mission.

"I'm very proud of my team!" said Anh Selissen, chief information officer. "They really worked together to bring the agency back up and beat the normal downtime statistics for an organization half our size. We fully recovered within a month. We did not miss any major operations. We either did it manually or were able to get the critical systems back up in time, like payroll. That sets a pretty high standard. It speaks to the power of the team pulling together, as well as the support of agency leadership and the cooperation of employees. Now other agencies are looking to us for guidance because we've been through it."

Moving forward, ITD is implementing strong security solutions and continuing to strengthen the agency's security posture. Strong access policies are being developed in order to better control who has access to our network and systems. ■

Moving forward, ITD is implementing strong security solutions and continuing to strengthen the agency's security posture.

EL PASO'S BORDER WEST EXPRESSWAY wins achievement award



The Border West Expressway, which includes pedestrian crossings such as the one shown here, was recognized by America's Transportation Awards.

The El Paso District's Border West Expressway earned regional recognition in the America's Transportation Awards. The project, which was recognized for improving transportation along the U.S.-Mexico border, was one of several projects in the Western region of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials' competition.

The project earned the recognition in the competition's Quality of Life/Community Development large category. The award highlights projects that provide a better solution to connect their communities to businesses, jobs, health care facilities and recreational activities while encouraging a mix of transportation modes.

"Receiving this prestigious award is an honor," said El Paso District Engineer Tomas Treviño. "The Expressway is the result of extensive multi-agency cooperation and partnerships. It parallels not only an interstate, but also two major railroads, the Rio Grande River and the international boundary. It is a true testament to what working together in all aspects can do for the citizens of our region."

The \$640 million, 7.4-mile roadway runs along the U.S.-Mexico border and completes a loop around the city. Since the Expressway was completed, TxDOT has seen a reduction in congestion on I-10.

Due to the length of the roadway and the unique geography it traverses, unusual construction techniques were employed to overcome some constraints. Challenges included the roadway crossing or running alongside several sets of railroad tracks owned by two different operators which resulted in relocating and constructing tracks, as well as constructing a mile-long bridge along the international border. Most of the bridge swings out over the existing border fence, and onto the river levee, just this side of the international border.

The competition, sponsored by AASHTO, AAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, recognizes projects for providing solutions that increase safety and save lives, make infrastructure more resilient and improve the quality of life for the citizens of their communities.

In the Western region this year, 15 states nominated 30 projects and only 11 received awards. ■

CELEBRITIES URGE TEXANS TO PROTECT THEIR HEALTH BUT DON'T LITTER

Don't mess with Texas®

Masks! Gloves! Wipes! Oh my! It's a sign of the times as people across the state use personal protective equipment during the pandemic.

These items are critical to avoid infection, but they still should be discarded properly and not thrown onto Texas roads. As the state sees a growing number of discarded face masks, gloves and sanitizing wipes littering roadways and parking lots, the Don't mess with Texas® litter campaign reminds fellow Texans that the only safe way to dispose of used PPE is in a trash can.

It's a message that's being spread with the help of some of the campaign's celebrity friends. Oscar-winning actor Matthew McConaughey and country music legend George Strait are lending their voices to new public service announcements that urge Texans to clean up their act when it comes to their PPE.

"Unfortunately, we're seeing a significant uptick in the amount of PPE litter," said Becky Ozuna, program administrator for the Don't mess with Texas campaign. "Not only is it unsightly, it is also harmful to the environment and a danger to public health. When you're done with your masks, gloves and wipes, do the right thing and dispose of them properly. This simple action helps keep Texas clean and safe."

The new spots are being shown on TV networks, cable channels and digital platforms. Other Texas celebrities joining the effort are Mark Cuban, Eva Longoria, actress Marsai Martin, singers Ally Brooke and Simply Rayne and influencer Brittany Broski. They are using social media channels to share personal messages reminding followers that Don't mess with Texas means don't litter.

To promote pride in keeping Texas litter-free, Don't mess with Texas cloth face masks are now available at [TexasHighways.com](https://www.texashighways.com) in the Mercantile shop. The masks are washable and include a pocket for a filter to be inserted. ■



Singer Simply Rayne urges Texans to dispose of masks, wipes and gloves in a trash can.

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY SEATS SAVE LIVES – IF THEY ARE USED PROPERLY

Motor vehicle crashes represent the leading cause of preventable deaths for children younger than 12 years old in the United States. Children riding in motor vehicles depend on caregivers to keep them safe, making the correct use of child safety seats a crucial, lifesaving responsibility.

An alarming number of car seats are being installed and used incorrectly. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, or NHTSA, 60% of all child car seats are being misused.

TxDOT's Traffic Safety Division works diligently to ensure that parents and caregivers get the training they need to properly restrain their children through the Child Passenger Safety Seat Education and Distribution Program. The program offers safety seat inspections at locations throughout the state, child safety seat education and free child passenger safety seats to low-income families.

A dedicated team of 49 traffic safety specialists, managers and staff administers the program. They also coordinate with a multitude of community traffic safety partners certified as child passenger safety seat technicians.

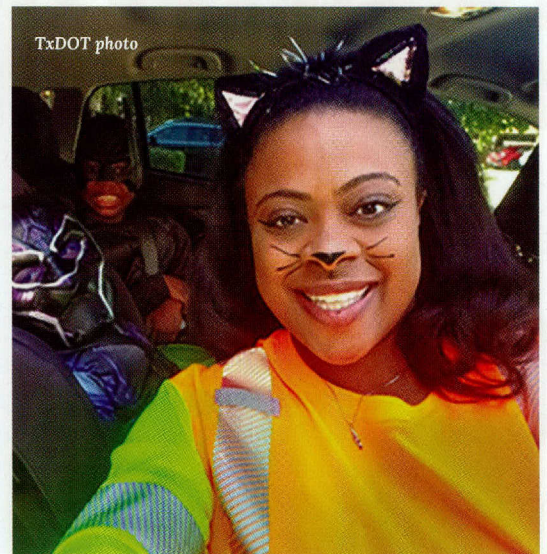
Since the program began in 2013, more than 10,465 seats have been inspected, more than 7,980 seats have been distributed and more than 4,455 outreach events have been held to deliver TxDOT's safety messages on the importance of properly buckling up.

"TxDOT provided a forward-facing seat with harness to a family," said Amarillo District Traffic Safety Specialist LaViza Matthew. "After a crash, the mother called me in tears to tell me how grateful she was that TxDOT had provided her with the new and correct car seat."

Child restraint usage rates for Texas children aged 0-4 years have risen by 11.7 percentage points since 2010, from 75.8 to 87.5 percent. In just the past five years, NHTSA estimates that the lives of 1,448 children ages 4 and under have been saved based on the current rate of seat belt and child restraint usage.

Providing Texas families with the education and tools they need to keep their children safe furthers TxDOT's goals to reduce fatalities and end the streak of daily deaths on Texas roads.

Note: TxDOT always evolves with changes, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no different. The Traffic Safety Division has developed virtual car seat checks to provide education to families while following social distancing guidelines. For a virtual car seat check, visit SaveMeWithASeat.org. ■



In 2019, Dallas Traffic Safety Specialist Elizabeth Jones adds some Halloween fun to life-saving child safety seat inspections.



Blanco Trevino-Castro, transportation funding specialist and certified child passenger safety seat technician in the Laredo District, checks to ensure a young passenger is secure. (photo taken before the COVID-19 restrictions).

PHARR DISTRICT WINS Environmental Achievement Award

TxDOT's Environmental Achievement Awards recognize the people and projects that go above and beyond to protect our state's natural environment and cultural heritage. This year's award goes to the Pharr District which proved that resource protection – and a little bit of patience – pays off!

Safety at TxDOT usually refers to protecting people. But when the Pharr District staff set out to improve FM 106 in Cameron County, they had to consider the safety of a special South Texas resident, the ocelot.

The ocelot is a wild cat known for its distinctive spotted coat. Bigger than your typical housecat, they can grow up to 4.5 feet long and weigh up to 35 pounds. Ocelot populations can be found from South America to Texas, but scientists estimate the state's current ocelot population at only 80 cats. Wildlife preserves in South Texas, such as the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, provide the ocelot with its natural habitat and room to roam.

FM 106 passes through the Laguna Atascosa refuge to connect the communities of Harlingen, Rio Hondo and Arroyo City with South Padre Island. The road needed extensive repair because of potholes and poor drainage. As Pharr District engineers planned to make the road safer, they realized they also needed to protect the refuge's wildlife population. Ocelots were being hit and killed along FM 106, creating a critical concern. The loss of even one cat to a speeding car threatens their continued survival.

Pharr's engineers, planners and environmental specialists joined forces. The team designed special wildlife crossing structures along FM 106, an impressive feat considering this was the first time the district had attempted to build them.

Wildlife crossing structures let animals pass underneath the roadway. They also help with drainage. Pharr staff coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to design the crossings and helped their scientists

A monitoring program collected location data on ocelots while remote cameras captured other wildlife on the move in the project area. Monitoring started in 2013 and construction began two years later.



TxDOT photo

The Pharr District won the Environmental Achievement Award for its efforts installing wildlife crossing structures on FM 106 in the Laguna Atascosa refuge. Here an ocelot finally crosses the road – safely.

track ocelots before, during and after construction. A monitoring program collected location data on ocelots while remote cameras captured other wildlife on the move in the project area. Monitoring started in 2013 and construction began two years later. Crews completed all eight crossings along FM 106 by the summer of 2019.

After the crossings were built, the biggest concern for engineers was whether ocelots would use them. Cameras initially captured rabbits, deer, raccoons, armadillos, alligators and bobcats using the crossings, but no ocelots. Pharr staff remained patient. The ocelot is a solitary and elusive animal. On Jan. 25, cameras finally captured the first-ever documented instance of an ocelot using a wildlife crossing in the United States!

The Pharr District team worked collaboratively and sought innovative solutions to achieve the project goal and to protect an endangered Texas native species. The Environmental Achievement Award is much deserved. ■

TxDOT photo

HURRICANE SEASON BRINGS TWO STORMS TO TEXAS

Maintenance crew clears debris after Hurricane Hanna

When Hurricanes Hanna and Laura hit Texas earlier this year, TxDOT once again met the challenge head on ensuring safe, efficient evacuations and an effective recovery. Responding to hurricanes is truly a team effort, and multiple districts – even those not directly impacted – came to the aid of their fellow Texans affected by the storms.

Hurricane Hanna

Hurricane Hanna, the first hurricane of the 2020 Atlantic Hurricane season, made landfall on Texas' Gulf Coast as a Category 1 storm on July 25. The Corpus Christi District was well prepared for whatever came. Each May, the Corpus Christi District discusses their district hurricane plan, just prior to the beginning of the hurricane season on June 1.

"Hanna was an event that we were well prepared for," said Corpus Christi Deputy District Engineer Martin Horst.

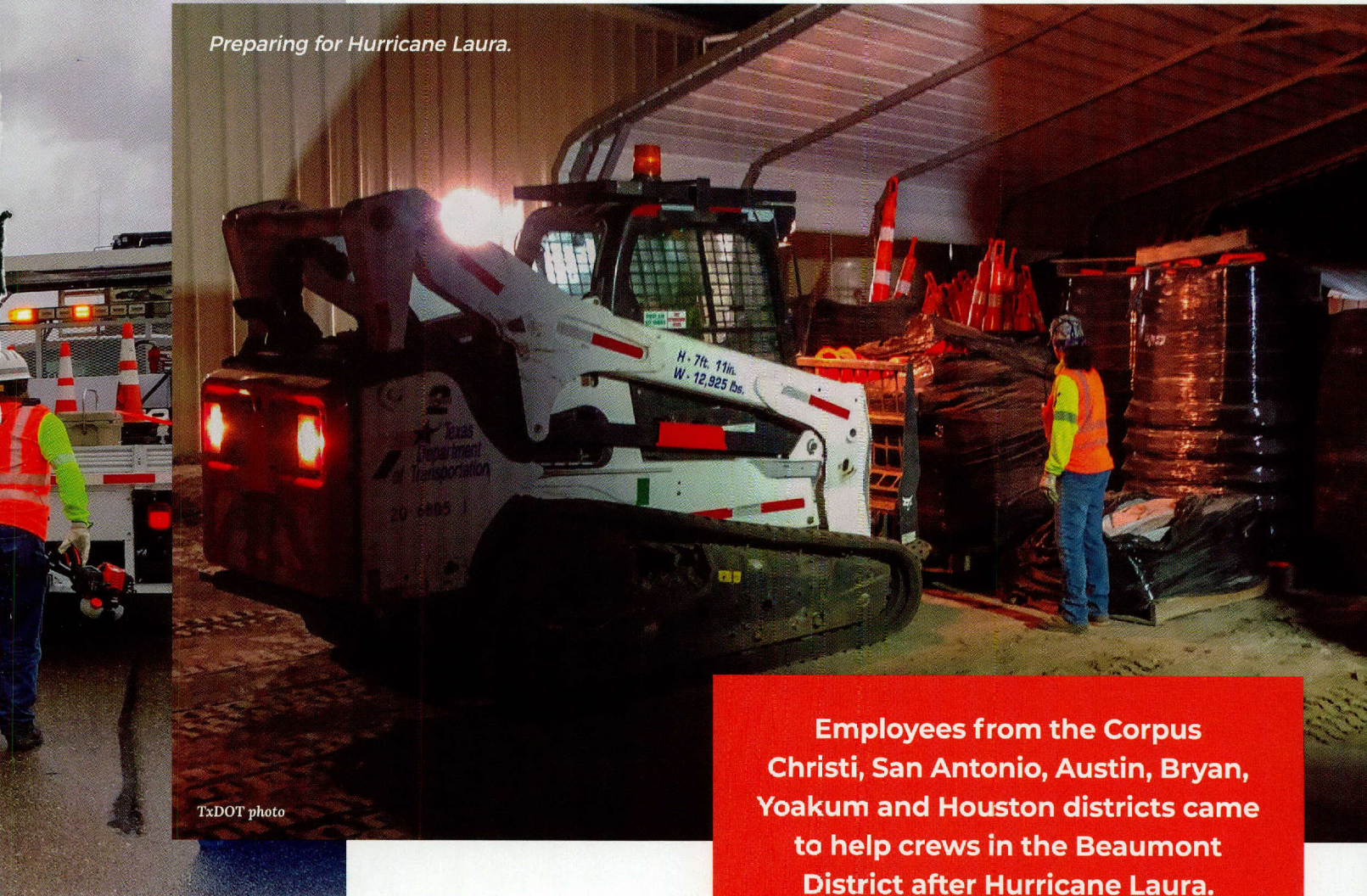
"The Corpus Christi District prepares for the worst and we adjust and estimate potential storm damage based on weather predictions."

Days ahead of the hurricane making landfall, the district reviewed their plans with all area offices and maintenance sections. The district also took precautionary measures, such as topping off district vehicle fuel tanks, assessing equipment and ensuring preventive maintenance was up to date on essential equipment.

During Hurricane Hanna, the wind damage was minimal, although downed trees required removal. The storm surge was an issue immediately along the coast, but did not cause significant damage to the district's roadway facilities. Rain during the event was also minimal, which allowed the Corpus Christi District to assist other districts with debris removal and traffic signal damage repairs.

"Planning is essential, but even the best plan will always change and need to be adjusted," said Horst.

Preparing for Hurricane Laura.



TxDOT photo

Employees from the Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Austin, Bryan, Yoakum and Houston districts came to help crews in the Beaumont District after Hurricane Laura.

“We emphasize employee safety, communication, being flexible and maintaining your ability to adjust and adapt to each situation.”

Hurricane Laura

Two months later, when Hurricane Laura moved toward the Gulf Coast in late August, some worried a repeat of the devastating Hurricane Harvey from 2017 was on the horizon. As Hurricane Laura picked up steam in the Gulf of Mexico, the category 4 hurricane gathered sustained winds of up to 150 mph.

In the Beaumont District, crews set up evaculanes in Hardin, Orange and Liberty counties. TxDOT worked closely with local governments, emergency responders and law enforcement to ensure smooth evacuations. Social media was also critical in alerting the public to evacuation routes and road conditions.

Fortunately for Texas, but not so fortunately for Louisiana, Hurricane Laura pivoted east, largely missing East Texas.

Although the damage was less than expected, recovery and cleanup from the fierce winds and rain required the collective efforts of TxDOT crews from the region.

Employees from the Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Austin, Bryan, Yoakum and Houston districts came to help crews in the Beaumont District. The teams assisted with cleanup and traffic signal repair, clearing most roads in less than 48 hours. TxDOT also worked with a contract vendor to remove debris from state highways and in the right of way in Orange and Newton counties — areas that were hardest hit by Hurricane Laura.

“TxDOT did an amazing job during and after the storm,” said former Beaumont District Engineer Don Smith. “With the help of multiple districts and our crews, we were able to open all roads, reinstall critical signage and get all signals up and operating just three days after the storm hit. This allowed the people from our community to return home and take care of their homes and family. I am proud to be a part of TxDOT and the many great things we do!” ■

TxDOT mobilizes to end the streak before 20-year anniversary



Wharton Area Office employees in photo from last year's #EndTheStreakTX campaign.

It's an anniversary TxDOT hopes to avoid. Nov. 7, 2020 will mark two decades since Texas had a deathless day on our roads. Every day since — for more than 7,300 days straight — someone has died in a fatal crash on Texas roads and bridges leading to more than 70,000 deaths.

Earlier this year, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, traffic levels on Texas highways dropped nearly 44% in some parts of the state. This decrease in traffic encouraged TxDOT to think the horrific streak might finally come to an end. Instead, the death rate was unchanged, even with fewer drivers on Texas roads.

To help raise awareness of this tragic, daily statistic, TxDOT asks people to share personal stories of loved ones lost in car crashes on their social media pages using photo and video testimonials with the hashtag, #EndTheStreakTX. The agency also posts startling statistics for the public to repost on social media outlets to help share this important message.

The #EndTheStreakTX campaign is just one way TxDOT is working to end traffic deaths. In May 2019, the Texas Transportation Commission approved a goal aiming to end all fatalities on Texas roads by 2050, with an interim goal to reduce them by half by 2035.

Texans can play a major role in ending fatal crashes with a few simple driving habits: when you get behind the wheel buckle up, pay attention and avoid all distractions like phones. Never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs; watch your speed and always drive to the conditions around you.

Because #EndTheStreakTX is a social media, grassroots and word-of-mouth effort, Texans are being asked to do any or all the following to raise awareness:

- Visit TxDOT.gov and search “end the streak” to find downloadable social media filters, videos, banner images, a printable hashtag sign and more.
- Post pictures on social media with the downloadable sign displaying the hashtag #EndTheStreakTX.
- Use one of TxDOT's social media profile filters available on the TxDOT.gov website.
- Join the #TexasTag10 challenge on social media and tag 10 family members or friends and encourage them to say what they will do differently to avoid a fatal crash on our roads.

By taking these easy steps, Texas drivers can make 2020 the year we end the streak of daily deaths on our roadways. ■

Houston District's **ELIZA PAUL** leads by example

Eliza Paul is the first woman district engineer to ever serve the Houston District for TxDOT, a district that includes the largest metro city in the state. Paul has had a long career at TxDOT, starting as an engineering assistant more than 30 years ago. In late 2019, she accepted the top position in the Houston District.

Paul is a true professional and extremely knowledgeable. In the Houston District, she has held positions from engineering assistant to area engineer to director of construction.

Her experience includes working on numerous ground-breaking projects like the I-10 corridor and the U.S. 59 and I-10 interchange.

“Everybody faces challenges and hardships,” said Paul. “But it’s all about how you treat people.”

Paul treats people the way she wants to be treated and understands that respect is mutual. Her advice to other women in the field is to be knowledgeable, know what you are talking about and stand your ground. This will make you successful and respected in any situation.

The sense of pride she shares for her projects is contagious. Paul’s accomplishments are real. The projects she has worked on are a representation of the true heart and strength of the agency.

Members of her team view Paul as a role model to others in the district. She very much wants to support women in TxDOT and is a strong proponent of STEM programs in education. She hopes to encourage young girls and women to enter fields in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

“Women are equal to their counterparts,” Paul said. “They should simply see themselves as engineers. When pairing this motto with a passion for the job, there is not much that can stand in the way.”

Paul’s actions will continue to resonate throughout the agency as she blazes a trail for others to follow. ■



Eliza Paul

EAP services are there when you need them

Life is tough for everyone. The challenges you face affect you physically, emotionally, financially and socially. Many times, individuals feel they are alone in their struggles. In fact, people don't have to take on the challenges alone. Help is available from TxDOT's Employee Assistance Program.

Katrina Dorrrough, ferryboat deckhand in Port Aransas in the Corpus Christi District, knew she couldn't take on life's challenges alone anymore. She took advantage of the agency's EAP services. The program is available for all employees to help navigate personal issues in their lives. These benefits are designed to help with daily responsibilities, major events, work stress or any issue affecting quality of life.

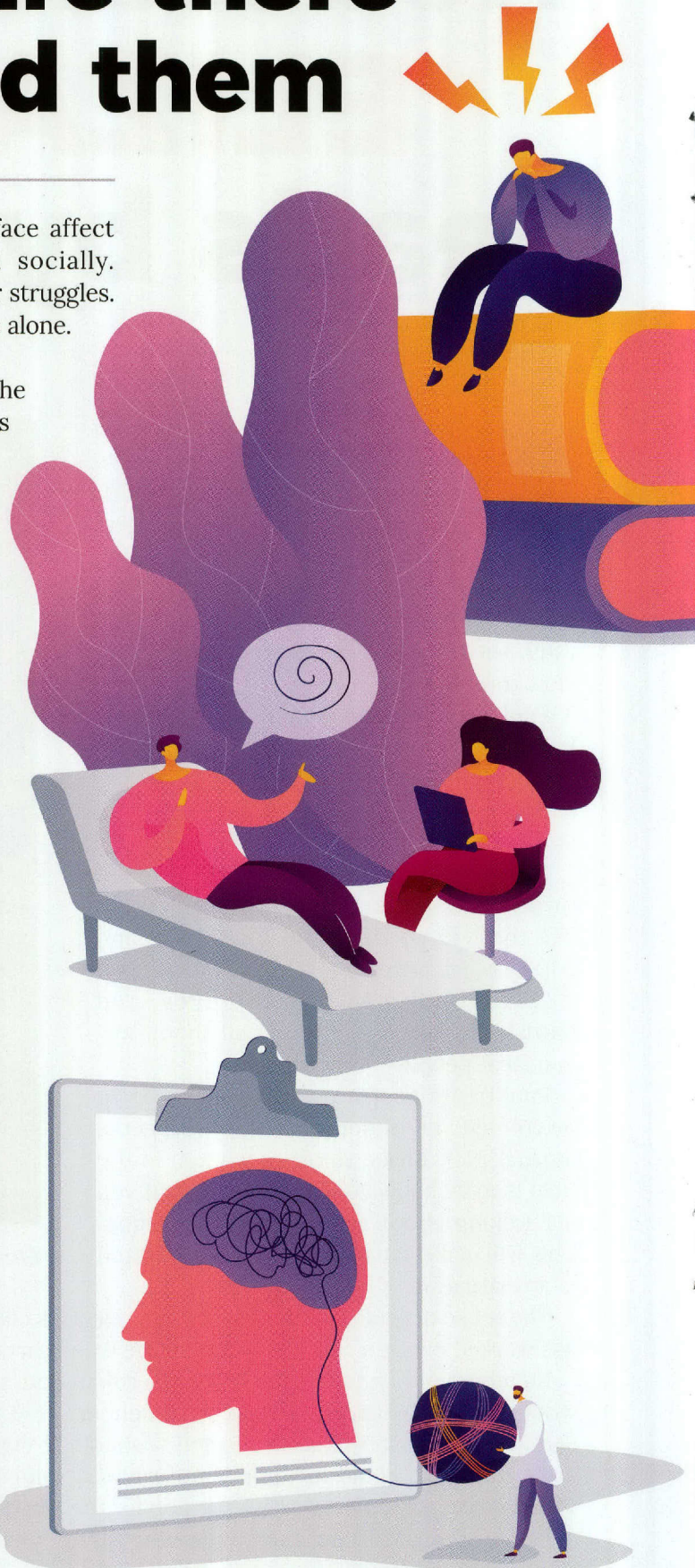
"I lost a grandson and I lost my father," said Dorrrough. "When I realized my emotional response was interfering with my interactions with others, I knew I needed to make a change."

Dorrrough called EAP, and after a series of individual counseling sessions, began attending a mental health and well-being program. She met with three different counselors to find the best fit for her.

"The EAP is the best thing that TxDOT offers its employees," Dorrrough said. "It can be what changes your life, if you let it."

Alliance Work Partners, the vendor that manages TxDOT's EAP, provides an array of free, confidential services such as short-term counseling, financial and law expertise and concierge services. They also hold live webinars on wellness topics. This program is available to all TxDOT employees, their household members and children who live outside of an employee's home and are 26 years old and younger.

EAP services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 866-348-9368 or TDD: 800-448-1823. A special line is set up for teen family members at 800-334-TEEN (8336). ■

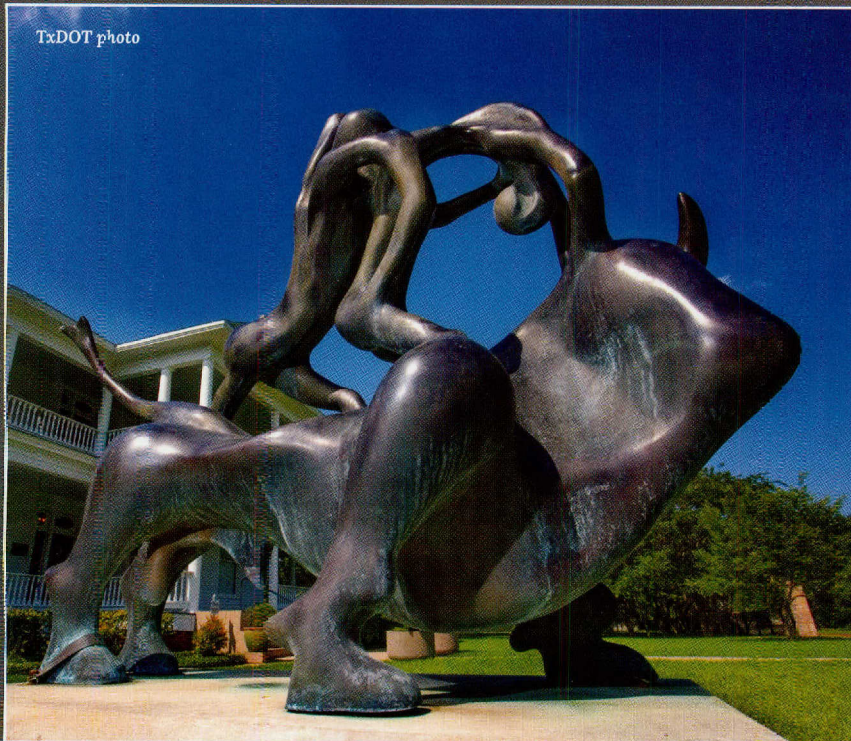


**LIVE WELL
WORK WELL**
Texas Department of Transportation

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

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 Nov. 13.



Identified:

Congratulations to our first identifier Kevin Jenkins (ROW).

Last edition's photo featured wildlife sculptor Robert Glen's The Mustangs of Las Colinas as they romp across a granite-lined stream at an office park in Irving. The sculpture's nine horses were cast in bronze in England at one-and-a-half-times life size, then installed in Texas in 1984.

Others correctly identifying the photo were Julie Dickerson (HRD), Franklin Desai (FTW), Lanny Wadle (FIN), Barbara Mills (LFK), Pamela Anderson (HOU), Elsa Morfin-Ibarra (PHR), Jodie Kelly (BWD), Felice Herrera-Kish (HRD), Joseph Youngblood (ATL), Tracy Hefner (FTW), Rhonda Schmid (DAL), Beverly Longfellow (CIV), Joseph Hagler (LFK), Lyndol Irby II (TRV), Dana Cote (HOU), Diane Abercrombie (SSD), Lauren Garduno (STR), Bobby Jennings (PAR), Stacey Parker (AMA), Jebadiah Clawson (ABL), Rosa Cuevas (LRD), Jeremy Gonzalez (PHR), Kim Deal (LFK) and Darren McDaniel (TPD). ■



UPCOMING TxDOT EVENTS

Nov. 11

VETERANS DAY

(All agencies closed)

Nov. 12

**TEXAS TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION MEETING**

(Austin)

Nov. 25

DAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING

(Minimal staff required)

Nov. 26

THANKSGIVING

(All agencies closed)

Nov. 27

DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING

(All agencies closed)

Dec. 10

**TEXAS TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION MEETING**

(Austin)

Dec. 24

CHRISTMAS EVE

(All agencies closed)

Dec. 25

CHRISTMAS

(All agencies closed)

All Across TxDOT



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

EDITOR'S NOTE: TN has a new News feature combining TxDOT Talk Around the State and 5 Things You Need to Know Right Now. All the great content about events, people and news is still here. Check it out!

AUSTIN DISTRICT

Fourth Avenue Bridge opens in Smithville

The Fourth Avenue Bridge over Gazley Creek officially opened to traffic in August. The original structure was closed in November of last year after flooding damaged the bridge and made it unsafe for travel. To celebrate the completion, the Austin District held a virtual ribbon cutting featuring local and TxDOT officials.

“This project included demolishing the old bridge and constructing an entirely new one, all in just under three short months,” said Austin District Engineer Tucker Ferguson. “I’d like to thank the city of Smithville, and especially its residents, who waited patiently for this bridge to reopen.”

Built in 1936, the original bridge suffered damage over the years from multiple flooding events, including Hurricane Harvey in 2017. The bridge was demolished in May.

The new structure is 34-feet wide, with two travel lanes and 5-foot shoulders. ■



The Fourth Avenue Bridge over Gazley Creek in Smithville officially opened to traffic in August.

SAN ANTONIO DISTRICT

HERO program expands to San Antonio

TxDOT’s roadside assistance program, known as HERO, expanded to San Antonio in September.

HERO has 28 trucks on 14 major San Antonio highways, including Loop 410, Loop 1604, I-35, U.S. 281, U.S. 90, I-10 and SH 151. Hoping for under-20-minute response times, the trucks will run from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., usually two vehicles per route, less frequently overnight and on weekends.

HERO drivers can assist with flat tires, jump starts, gas, water and cellphone calls. They can push disabled cars to a safer spot. The program is intended to improve traffic congestion by helping disabled motorists get on their way quickly and safely. ■

DISTRICTS AND DIVISIONS WELCOME NEW LEADERS

TxDOT has a lot of new faces in leadership positions. Here's a round-up of the newest district engineers and division directors.

Glenn Allbritton is the new Abilene District engineer. He comes to Abilene from the Wichita Falls District, where he served as the director of Operations since 2016. Allbritton graduated from Midwestern State University in 2003. He began with TxDOT in 1998 and has worked in the Abilene and Childress districts as well. He and his wife have three children.

Jessica Butler is the new director of the Transportation Planning and Programming Division. She joined TxDOT in 2005 as a member of the Design Division where she coordinated the development of transportation projects from conceptual to final design phases. In 2018, she became deputy division director for the Design Division. She is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin.

Chris Cowen is the new San Angelo District engineer. Cowen comes to San Angelo from Bryan, where he served as the director of Construction since 2011.

He began his TxDOT career in 2000 with the Bryan District working in the Brenham Area Office. In 2007, he joined the Construction Division serving as a field engineer assisting the Dallas, San Antonio, Laredo, Lufkin and San Angelo districts with construction contract management. Cowen is a graduate of Texas A&M University.

Blair E. Johnson is the new Amarillo District engineer. He has worked for TxDOT in the Amarillo District most of his career serving in positions including design team leader, advanced planning engineer, area engineer and director of operations. He is a graduate of Texas Tech University. Blair and his wife and children make their home in Amarillo.

Carl L. Johnson is the new Fort Worth District engineer. He graduated from Texas Tech University and worked for Austin Bridge and Road on projects in the Fort Worth and Dallas area. In April 1995, he joined TxDOT's Brownwood District in the Lampasas Area Office. In 2017, he became the Abilene District engineer. Johnson and his wife make their home outside of San Saba with their children.

Kelly O. Morris is the new Lufkin District engineer. Morris began at TxDOT as a summer employee in 1993. She joined the private sector before returning in 2013 as a project manager with the Lufkin District. She soon became the district design engineer and then the director of Transportation Planning and Development. Morris and her husband make their home in Lufkin with their children.

Marisabel Z. Ramthun is the new director of the Design Division. She is a 1996 graduate of the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus with a degree in electrical engineering. She joined the department in 1998 as an engineering assistant for the Waco District in the Belton Area Office. In 2002, she transferred to the Austin District's Advanced Project Development Section. Most recently she was the Austin District director of Transportation Planning.

James Stevenson is the new director of the Maintenance Division. He is a native of El Paso and received his civil engineering degree from the University of Texas at El Paso. Stevenson was previously the Yoakum District director of operations and the deputy director of the Maintenance Division.

Vernon M. Webb is the new Tyler District engineer. He is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin and worked summers for TxDOT as a student. He rejoined TxDOT in 2001 and became the Athens Area engineer in 2003. In 2006 he became the Tyler area engineer. In 2016, he became deputy district engineer for the district. ■

VIRTUAL JOB FAIR BRINGS NEW RECRUIT

From finding the right emails to updating resumes and cover letters, searching for a new job can be an extremely stressful experience at the best of times. Try doing it while in a combat zone in a foreign country.

That's what Reggie Bedford did as he was stationed in North Africa with the Army Reserve earlier this year. He knew he wanted his next job to be at TxDOT, so he joined a virtual job fair while deployed, despite some complications.

North Africa is in a different time zone that's about eight hours ahead of Texas time. So, if he wanted to join a job fair, he could only do it at night. Plus, if duty called, he had to answer.

"Even if my workday was done, so to speak, any time there was an incoming siren or an emergency siren I would have to go," Bedford said.

Fortunately, he says that's where the difficulties ended.

"Seamless, just seamless," Bedford said of TxDOT's virtual job fair process. "The virtual job fair worked hand in hand with the technology to be almost like being in front of someone."

In 2019, TxDOT went to around 100 in-person job fairs. Since March 2020, those have been put on hold because of COVID-19. However, the Human Resources Division's Talent Acquisition Team quickly transitioned to be completely online.

"We jumped on board immediately," said Sheila Brooks, talent acquisition leader. "As job seekers log in and come into the booth, you reach out to the individual just like you would if you were shaking their hands. Then you can invite them to a private chat."

"It was welcoming. Not just a person, or a suit, it was a welcoming environment," Bedford said.

Bedford said he was able to open what he called his toolbox and showcase the skills he could bring to TxDOT.

He now recommends the process to anyone looking to transition to civilian life.

"It is absolutely crucial to bring those skills over for those veterans who are transitioning to basically an unknown," Bedford said.

Fortunately, there is less of a chance of a combat zone emergency at the Belton Area Office where he now works as a construction inspector for TxDOT. ■



TxDOT's virtual job fair let Reggie Bedford get hired while overseas during a pandemic.

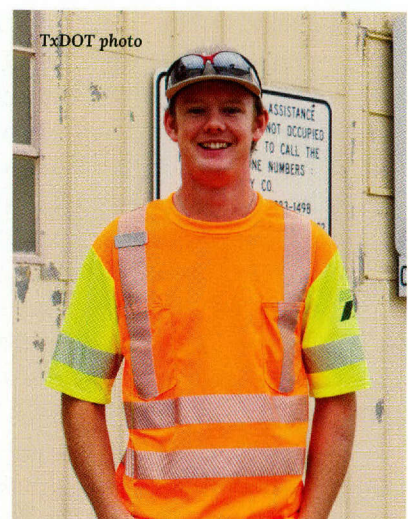
CHILDRESS DISTRICT EMPLOYEES RECEIVE TEXANS CARING FOR TEXANS AWARD



Daniel Castro



J.B. Covey



Logan Jones

On Aug. 27, three Childress District employees received the prestigious Texans Caring for Texans award, which was established in 1996 by former State Rep. David Swinford. The award honors state employees in the Texas Panhandle who go above and beyond in their service to their communities.

Logan Jones, general transportation technician, was honored for his service as a volunteer fireman for the Matador Fire Department. As a fireman, he responds to wrecks,

fires and anyone who needs assistance. He is dependable and mature with a passion for helping his fellow Texans in need.

Daniel Castro, transportation maintenance crew chief, and J.B. Covey, general transportation specialist, were honored for coming to the aid of a Memphis resident.

In October 2019, Castro and Covey were driving through the city when they noticed a woman fall after coming out of a drug store. They immediately pulled over to assist her. After another bystander called 911, Castro and Covey stayed with

the woman until the ambulance arrived. Their supervisor said their quick response showed their awareness for what's going on around them and their passion for helping others.

Childress District Engineer Marty Smith applauded the trio for their recognition.

"Watching Childress District employees be honored for the work they do in their communities makes me very proud," said Smith. "Logan, Daniel and J.B. are all very deserving and embody the true meaning of the Texans Caring for Texans award." ■

EMERGENCY BRIDGE REPLACEMENT SHOWS IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK

Thousands of vehicles cross over and under our bridges each day. Bridges are integral to transportation but can be damaged in many ways. Things like over-height impacts, barge impacts along the coast and flash flooding can cause extensive damage to bridges and their approaches. A damaged bridge creates a hazard for motorists. That's why TxDOT's emergency response plan for bridges is vital. The process aims to ensure the right staff is notified so the appropriate action is taken to report damages. One good example is the bridge repair at I-10 over SH 304 in the Yoakum District.

Last April, the middle span of a prestressed beam bridge was hit by a large truck. The impact significantly damaged three beams in the five-beam cross-section carrying eastbound I-10 over SH 304, north of Gonzales. Though the span remained in place with limited displacement, the employees of the Field Operations Section of the Bridge Division knew they had to take swift action.

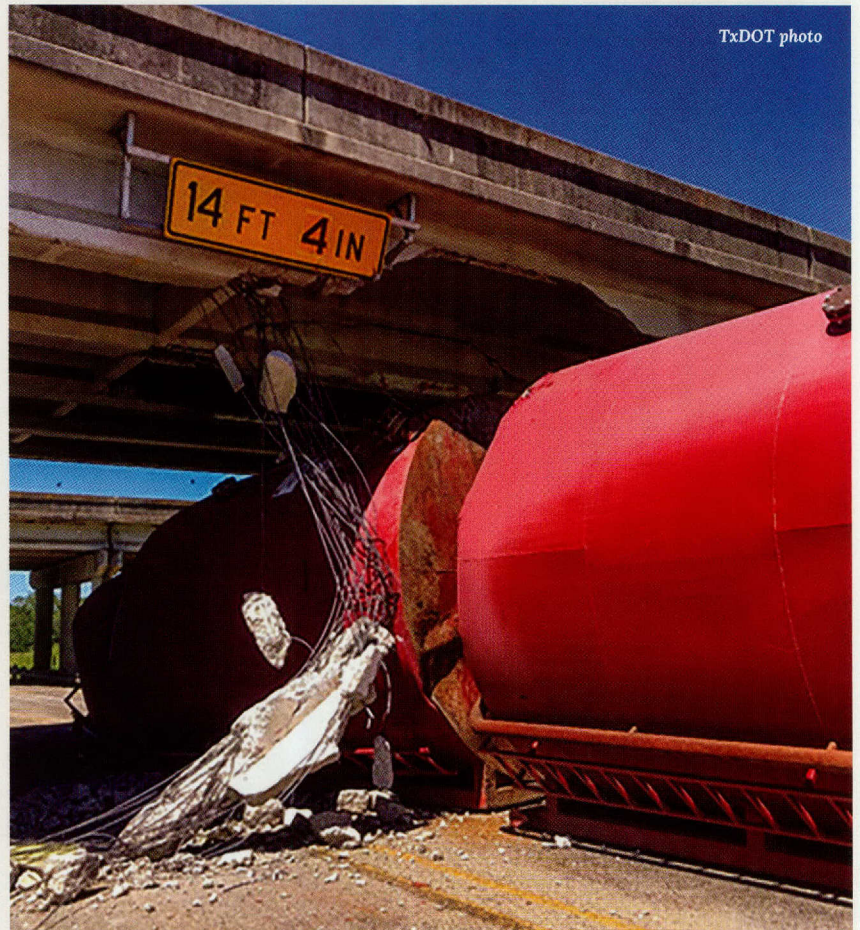
Staff performed an assessment of the bridge and determined that traffic could be reduced to one inside lane and the lower roadway opened, once debris from the crash was cleared out. Employees from the Yoakum District set up traffic control to direct traffic on I-10. The Yoakum District and Bridge Division developed repair plans and rehabilitation efforts.

Yoakum District staff chose to completely replace the span and move traffic to the frontage road during construction. Within a week, plans were developed and let in an emergency maintenance contract with a bid of \$686,400. The contractor expedited construction and completed the work within one month of the initial event. Construction inspection and management was handled by the Yoakum District staff. The staff also worked with the contractor to meet or exceed the schedule and restore I-10 to full capacity.

Those involved say the key to successfully handling emergency bridge projects is simple: understanding the bridge emergency response reporting process and communicating between districts, divisions and contractors. It takes a collaborative effort to determine the safety of the structure and the handling of traffic. Everything from developing a plan to funding approval, coordination and contractor outreach is necessary.

Because employees of the Bridge Division and the Yoakum District were well-versed in taking pertinent steps for project completion, the SH 304 at I-10 emergency span replacement is a good example of such a success.

For more information on reporting bridge emergencies, visit the Bridge Division's page on Crossroads. ■



An over-height truck damaged the main span of eastbound I-10 over SH 304 in Gonzales.

Samantha Wilbanks

ATLANTA DISTRICT



TxDOT photo

Samantha Wilbanks

**PLANNING ASSISTANT
ATLANTA DISTRICT**

Samantha Wilbanks, planning assistant with the Atlanta District, is an adventurer. She began her career at TxDOT in May 2019 as an office technician in the Maintenance Division. Within six months, she became a planning assistant in Atlanta's Advance Project Development Section where she supports public outreach on construction projects. When she's not working, this active mom is fishing, riding four wheelers and supporting her athletic son. She says she's the loud mom during football games yelling, "That's my boy!"

Name the most exciting thing you did this summer.

Due to the pandemic, we decided to rent a cabin and go tubing on the Caddo River in Arkansas to take a break from home but remain socially distanced. Little did I know the river would flood the entire area and take my car along with it. It's a trip we will never forget!

What's your choice: cabin by a lake or cabin in the mountains?

Cabin in the mountains. The view would be awesome.

What have you discovered you're good at during the pandemic?

Yard work! All I've done in my free time for the past six months is mow, weed and pot plants.

What would you rather do for exercise: Ride a bike, jog or go to a gym?

My real preference is walking. If you see me jogging or running, you probably want to run also. Something is after me!

Take your pick: lifelong supply of Mexican food or seafood from your favorite restaurant. Why?

Mexican food. I could have Taco Tuesday every day!

Is there a vegetable you just won't eat no matter what?

Beets. The texture and dark red color are just too much for me.

Name something you've done in your childhood that you still do today.

I played softball from the age of four all the way through high school. I continue being active in the sport with my son. I coached his baseball teams when he was younger, and I still practice with him.

Which do you like best: high school, college or professional sports? Why?

Professional sports, for sure. Rangers, Mavs and Cowboys all the way!

What's your dream car?

A black or white Tesla S Model. They cost about \$80,000.

Tell us a talent or skill you have that few people know about.

Graphic design. I love it! When creating projects, I get lost in the process.

What's your favorite place to visit in Texas?

Surfside Beach. It is my idea of a perfect place any time of year. ■

MILESTONES

SEPTEMBER SERVICE AWARDS

ABILENE

- 20 Gary R. Morris
- 15 Joshua R. Flores
Melissa L. Hinckley
- 10 Carlos R. Licon Jr.
- 5 Oscar J. Ledford

ADMINISTRATION

- 5 Angelia Burford

AMARILLO

- 20 Ismael C. Navarrete
- 15 Thomas C. Knox
- 10 Bradley Koch
Jesus M. Mariscal
- 5 Michael F. Cook

ATLANTA

- 20 Clay H. Davidson
- 5 Brian H. Green
Carl T. Pruitt

AUSTIN

- 35 Rogelio F. Garcia
- 15 Darrell W. Gray
William E. Lantz II
Danella Ayala
Ashley L. Fiero
Michael W. Jordan
Amy L. Langley
Whitney Liesmann
James Tow

AVIATION

- 20 Allison L. Martin
- 5 Ann Pinder

BEAUMONT

- 25 Michael L. Smith
- 5 Mark P. Lindley
Rodney D. Shivers

BRIDGE

- 10 Lianxiang Du
- 5 Gitahi Waiganjo

BROWNWOOD

- 15 Danny Garza
- 10 Anthony D. Cantu
Travis L. Hammond
Keith R. Shaffer

BRYAN

- 35 Martin D. Dyer
- 25 Thomas W. Reed
- 20 William D. Salters
- 15 Norman M. Maurer
James W. Robbins
- 10 Luis A. Benavides
- 5 Samuel J. Ratliff

CHILDRESS

- 15 Michael W. Moore
- 10 Randy C. Shaw
Jeffery D. Widener

COMMUNICATIONS

- 5 Don C. Barrett II

COMPLIANCE

- 5 Omair Ansari

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 10 Jonathan D. Anderson
- 5 Patricia A. Dunn
Crystal M. Garza
Paulino Martinez
Marshall D. McCown
Paula A. Sifuentes

DALLAS

- 35 Michael K. Ricks
- 30 Jerry M. Norris
Harry J. Rogers III
- 20 John T. Knott III
Billy R. Taylor
- 15 Kirk M. Johnson
Refugio Ortiz
Paula E. Renfro
Jesse B. Wade
- 10 Kent W. Bates
Dylan M. Dyer
Clyde W. Robinson
Scott B. Whipkey
- 5 Daniel L. Skurlock

DESIGN

- 20 Charles R. Harris
- 5 Yassine Sghiouiri El Idrissi

EL PASO

- 20 Richard W. Baird
Angelica C. Gonzalez
Jorge A. Nevarez
- 15 Luis R. Ortega Jr.
- 5 Raymond Arizpe
Gilberto Fragoso Jr.
Debra K. Sullivan

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 20 Allen C. Bettis Jr.
- 15 Lindsey V. Kimmitt
- 10 Mark D. Norman

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 25 Vicki S. Dickerson

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 20 John C. Costner
- 15 Denise M. Lynch
- 10 Terry D. Hawkins
- 5 Adam Miller
Ricardo Ramirez

FORT WORTH

- 25 Sherman L. Edwards
- 10 Matt D. DeGeest
Timothy S. Parum
- 5 James R. Thomson

HOUSTON

- 20 Ryan S. Gibson
Isidro Rodriguez
Peter C. Sissons
- 15 Scott E. McPherson
Hop-Ming Tang
Hamid Youssefi
- 10 Samir K. Goel
Roberto V. Lewis
Lisa A. McGuire

- 5 Terry G. Baddock
Michael Burns
Xiaofang Huang
John E. Milan
Mario M. Moreno
Reed Myers
Donald W. Palmer
Jasmine Pipkins
Robert Wishkoski

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 15 Jordan L. Krueger
Melissa A. Ruemke

LAREDO

- 20 Omar Cantu
- 15 Rafael Guzman

LUBBOCK

- 30 Hilario C. Gonzales Jr.
Ruben M. Ramirez
- 20 Simeon J. Larkins III
- 10 Rueben Lopez
- 5 Salvador Palacios
Mike Price
Jacob Ramos

LUFKIN

- 15 Antonio R. Bondad
- 10 Kelly G. Collins
- 5 Adrian P. Guerrero
Terry K. Nichols
Ernest E. Rowe Jr.

MARITIME

- 15 Carolyn M. Reyna

MATERIALS AND TESTS

- 15 John W. Henley
Justin W. Schneider
Philip J. Vahalik

ODESSA

- 20 Raul R. Melendez
Jose G. Rodriguez
- 5 Elias Anaya
Lorri L. Hill

PARIS

- 5 Larry D. Johnson

PHARR

- 20 Ronald N. Reyes
Ramon Sanchez
- 15 Orlando Cantu
Timothy M. Champion
Armando Gonzales
- 5 Santiago Cantu Jr.

PROCUREMENT

- 20 Maria L. Felan
- 15 Marina U. Young

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING PROCUREMENT

- 25 Carlitha L. Womack
- 10 Gina L. Daniel

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- 15 Bolivar C. Bolanos
- 10 Laura Morales

RAIL

- 15 Randy C. Caldwell
Larry D. Wright

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION

- 15 Thomas R. Schwerdt

RIGHT OF WAY

- 10 Elizabeth G. Osgood
- 5 Richey E. Truitt

SAN ANGELO

- 15 Cruz T. Garza
Thomas L. Warden
- 5 Ronald Maldonado

SAN ANTONIO

- 15 Jorge A. Manriquez
Marti Salazar

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- 5 Tiffany M. Creuzbaur

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 5 Brian Sweat

TOLL OPERATIONS

- 20 Erica M. Ramirez

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMING

- 20 Michael V. Chamberlain
Eric S. Oeding

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

- 15 Anthony Molina

TYLER

- 20 Antonio Lopez
- 15 Jerry A. McKnight
Zachary T. Moore
- 10 James E. Brown
- 5 Todd Cooley
Michael Eades
Aaron Guy
Jose Nava
Michael West

WACO

- 15 Jose G. Torres
- 10 Josh R. Voiles
- 5 Claude Randall

WICHITA FALLS

- 25 Monty F. Brown
- 20 Travis J. Herrell
- 15 DeLane E. Hatfield

YOAKUM

- 25 Woodrow W. Jasek Jr.
Kathryn C. Marek
Desmond E. Earls
Amanda A. Fling
- 20 Larry J. Bujnoch
- 10 John D. Cockrell
Christopher M. Holub
Kyle W. Kuhlman
Thomas J. Miksch
Vincent Rodriguez

OCTOBER SERVICE AWARDS

ABILENE

- 25 Bradley J. Pylant
- 10 Eric B. Elkin
- 5 Russell C. Jordan

AMARILLO

- 20 Dolan H. Dean
- 15 David L. Castellon
- 10 James D. Graves
- Joshua D. Hilleary
- Jonathan Kabetzke
- 5 Ron W. Anglin
- Austin Lindsey

ATLANTA

- 40 Carl A. Peters
- 20 Rebecca L. Wells
- 15 Douglas W. Simmons
- 5 Jerry L. Sutton

AUSTIN

- 35 Tracy House
- 25 Mark F. Herber
- 20 John D. Gold
- Jesse Serna
- Linda A. Weidenhammer
- 5 Denver Blackwell
- Beatriz Hernandez
- Hilary D. Kieschnick

BEAUMONT

- 15 Debbie L. Hallam
- 10 LaDonna M. Waters
- 5 Marsha L. Hinson
- Joseph Holbrook
- Gerald W. West

BRIDGE

- 5 Trenton Ellis

BROWNWOOD

- 20 John W. Reagan
- 15 Thomas D. Brizendine
- 5 Frances D. Champion
- David R. Williams

BRYAN

- 15 Rodney E. Ewing
- William L. Ray III
- 5 Timothy T. Thomason

CHILDRESS

- 20 Wilbern L. Brendle

CIVIL RIGHTS

- 10 Beverly A. Longfellow

COMMUNICATIONS

- 15 Karen A. Threlkeld
- 5 Szende S. Smith

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 15 Howard G. McNutt
- 5 Adam Baltazar
- Christopher Semonis

DALLAS

- 35 LeAnn H. Kemp
- 20 Raymond R. Faraizl Sr.

15

- Arvell R. Crawford
- Eyad Fanous
- Jonathan Kelsey
- Bedford J. Mathis
- Floyd A. Russell

10

- Thadeus V. Egar
- Neal W. Frisinger
- Robert E. Irvine Jr.
- Raymond Parker
- 5 Noel Alphonse
- Harvie Murray
- Steve Penner

EL PASO

- 20 Jonathan J. Concha
- Ruben Florez Jr.
- Ramon J. Hartnett
- Rosezina M. Leal
- Elva I. Rascon
- Ramon Gonzalez
- 15 Miguel E. Gonzalez Gardea
- 5 Paulo M. Gutierrez Jr.
- Raul E. Ortiz

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 20 Michelle M. Lueck

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 15 Julia S. Boehme
- 5 Quinn L. Goodloe
- Debbie R. LaSalle

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 35 Timothy J. Carroll
- 15 Steven Armendariz
- 10 Christopher W. Breach
- Alan Ritchey
- 5 Michael L. Lopez
- Bradley Sandberg

FORT WORTH

- 30 Steven Murray
- 15 Robert J. Blickensderfer
- Michael W. Jones
- 10 Mark L. Barnes
- Jerry W. Elam
- 5 Justin W. Hensley
- Sonja J. Nelson
- Abigail Tucker
- Scott A. Walker

HOUSTON

- 25 Samuel E. Ainabe
- Herrael S. Montalvo Jr.
- 20 Sergio Rodriguez
- Daniel R. Segura
- 15 Seth O. Gibson
- Alejandro Rodriguez
- Sylvia C. Wright
- 5 Aaron K. Campbell
- Walter Hensel
- Denese R. Laskowski
- Jimmy D. Lipscomb Jr.
- Jaycee McKinzie
- Julie K. Pierce

HUMAN RESOURCES

- 5 Kyla Owen

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 20 Nohemi S. Ruiz
- 5 Ikwuemesi U. Okoli

LAREDO

- 15 Juan C. Gomez
- 5 Reynaldo Carabajal
- Martin Diaz

LUBBOCK

- 30 Heath C. Bozeman
- 15 Michael E. Wittie
- 10 Bobby A. Castillo

LUFKIN

- 35 John D. McKee
- 10 Steven W. Smith
- 5 Cleopha Blanton

MATERIALS AND TESTS

- 30 Mark S. Pavlik

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

- 5 Gordon Leff
- Matthew Stifflemire

ODESSA

- 20 Mark A. Flores
- Rebecca L. Serna
- Heather Sinclair
- 15 Robert Alaniz
- 5 Abel Garcia

PARIS

- 25 Mark E. Miller
- 10 Joshua B. Lappin
- 5 Logan Arthur
- Brandy Cunningham
- Manuel Enriquez

PHARR

- 15 Elias Casares
- Juan D. Cepeda

PROCUREMENT

- 30 Detra A. Evans
- 5 Angela Rember

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING PROCUREMENT

- 20 Tamika S. Griffin

PROJECT FINANCE, DEBT AND STRATEGIC CONTRACTS

- 10 Gilbert M. Coronado
- 5 Christopher Chapman

RIGHT OF WAY

- 15 Mandy A. Bungler
- 5 Norma Duran
- Jodi L. Watkins

SAN ANGELO

- 25 Diane F. Weishuhn
- 10 David A. Sanchez

SAN ANTONIO

- 20 Bryan K. Elbel
- 15 Jose V. Castro
- Steven R. Fosmire
- Ashlee B. Kirby
- Jesse S. Sanchez
- 10 Dax Hooten
- 5 Michael S. Allen
- James E. Coyle
- Dustin Halbardier
- Justin R. Zigmund

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 30 Rick N. Greer
- 15 William J. White
- 10 James C. O'Brien
- 5 Mark Alvarez
- Ricardo Guerra
- Michael Johnson
- Lisa Moore
- Douglas Williams

TOLL OPERATIONS

- 5 Crystal M. Jimenez

TRAFFIC SAFETY

- 5 Jolie Person

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMING

- 5 Greg Goldman
- Geena Maskey

TYLER

- 20 Dennis W. Gilliam
- 5 David A. McDow

WACO

- 25 Jon H. Plumlee
- 15 Kleslie D. Koether
- 5 Erika Kunkel

WICHITA FALLS

- 30 Allan R. Moore
- 15 Randy J. Jenkins
- 5 Randy M. Woods

YOAKUM

- 25 Steven W. Immenhauser
- 20 Adam S. Andel
- Timothy M. Henke
- 10 Maurice Harrison
- Calvin D. Hillmann
- Marc S. Krenek
- 5 Allen R. Konvicka Jr.
- Eric A. Velasquez
- Frank A. Wick
- Randy W. Woytek

MILESTONES

JULY RETIREE REPORT

ATLANTA

8 Richard A. Matlock

BEAUMONT

29 Todd E. Dinger

BROWNWOOD

18 Willard Lee Johnson II

DALLAS

20 Gustavo J. Garcia

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

32 Sheila K. Craven

FLEET OPERATIONS

27 Rickey L. Willis

HOUSTON

33 Gary D. Witt

LAREDO

25 Jose M. Benites

24 Edmundo Maldonado

15 Raul Rodriguez

LUBBOCK

16 Billy W. McClellan

LUFKIN

39 Cheryl P. Flood

20 Kenneth W. Ashby

MATERIALS AND TESTS

32 Gervase J. Szalwinski Jr.

PHARR

31 Saturnino Flores Jr.

26 Eduardo Gracia Jr.
Evan M. Roberts

21 Jose L. Escaname
Edelmiro Flores

SAN ANGELO

13 William T. Woodard

SAN ANTONIO

16 Roberto Cardenas

15 Robert P. Hicks

SUPPORT SERVICES

20 Charles A. Wallace

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

27 Noel C. Didear

TYLER

33 Marlin L. Cooper

26 Thurber A. Defreece

20 David F. Proctor

19 David A. Ivins

10 Terry G. Platt

WICHITA FALLS

27 Vivian S. Fatheree

AUGUST RETIREE REPORT

ABILENE

46 Patrick D. McKennon

39 Daniel P. Leonhard

16 Kenneth W. Bullard

ADMINISTRATION

7 Julia Jerome

AMARILLO

36 Brian P. Crawford

32 Sandra J. Collins

20 Joel Cenicerros

7 Dennis G. Baker

ATLANTA

37 Kenneth P. Williams

35 Charles L. Stracener

33 Stacy G. Burns

27 Tony R. Johnson

22 David K. Braley

14 John D. Neuville III

AUSTIN

32 Eric W. Goertz

28 Girard K. Behrends

John M. Nevares

26 Pernell L. Coats

21 Teresa A. Resendez

AVIATION

13 James T. Reid

BEAUMONT

26 Johnny K. Johnson Jr.

23 Jerry D. Bevil

20 Robert E. Twine

12 Mitchell L. Hartsfield

BRIDGE

41 Shou-Fang Yang

33 Jon T. Ries

28 Kevin R. Pruski

BROWNWOOD

27 Jerry G. Johnson

Jana L. Osbourn

Michael K. Poe

18 Donald I. Epperson Jr.

BRYAN

29 Michael D. Bairrington

27 John Sifuentes Jr.

26 David Polk III

21 Jerry E. Dvorak

14 David W. Rinn

CHILDRESS

24 Russell D. Favor

CORPUS CHRISTI

36 Jimmy G. Rutkowski

34 Vance A. Woods

33 Laura Benavides

31 Edward Bernal

Arthur R. Chacon

20 Hipolito A. Gonzalez

DALLAS

35 Larry J. Gilbert

27 Paul W. Lewis

26 Jesse Jacquez

25 Porfirio Lopez Jr.

22 Norman L. Manuel

20 Becky L. Holland

Larry E. Jeffers

18 Andrew R. Wanees

DESIGN

22 Camille Thomason

EL PASO

24 Godwin I. Ubanyionwu

23 Alfredo P. Sanchez

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

23 James P. Barta Jr.

20 Jonathan H. Budd

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

19 Susan Robertson

FLEET OPERATIONS

35 Ricky L. Nieman

7 Stephen W. Spies

FORT WORTH

37 Richard S. Williammee Jr.

35 Randall L. Bowers

32 Loyl C. Bussell

30 Linda B. Stevens

27 Armando Rodriguez

26 John P. Poskey

25 Charles B. Wier IV

HOUSTON

43 Jackie Ray Logan

31 Christopher A. Patterson

Dane E. Raines

30 Elizabeth A. Gunn

Frank M. Wadlington

27 Clyde J. Alexander

24 Paul E. Martin

23 Jerry C. Longoria

21 Kenneth N. Chism

16 Gary R. Asbell

HUMAN RESOURCES

27 Debra D. Key

24 Billie F. Long

23 Deanna J. Berry

LAREDO

27 Antonio Sarmiento Jr.

25 Anestacio J. Cantu Sr.

LUBBOCK

35 Jose L. Trevino

32 Gary E. McLendon

30 Russell N. Hayes

22 Francisco J. Cruz

19 Randell D. Weems

LUFKIN

40 Timothy A. Thompson

30 Howard S. Looney

27 Hoy J. Clark Jr.

Emilio Delva Jr.

20 Gregory C. Korn

18 Phyllis D. Clark

Kealon D. Hightower

16 Patricia G. Fears

MAINTENANCE

33 Stephen J. Matula

32 Daniel L. Stacks

22 Harold Ned Pyatt Jr.

MATERIALS AND TESTS

34 Troy A. Dewitt

33 Douglas W. Dupler

21 Mohammad N. Mereih

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

27 Deryl S. Creekmur

ODESSA

28 Joel S. Griner

24 Deanne Hamilton

21 Jose C. Leyva

PEPS

27 Jesus Avila

PHARR

35 Jesus S. Leal

26 Roel Silva

21 David Quiroga

20 Francisco Rodriguez

PROCUREMENT

29 Laura J. Pierce

23 Karen E. Moore

20 Vidal F. Trevino

RIGHT OF WAY

16 Elizabeth Naumann

AUGUST RETIREE REPORT

SAN ANGELO

- 31** Terri A. Meacham
- 30** William R. Galbreath
- 29** Cathey L. Galbreath
- Ricardo L. Sanchez
- 24** Mark E. Jones
- 23** Ronald G. Blaylock
- Ronald L. Nowlin
- 22** Ray E. Douglas Jr.
- Gary W. Enos

SAN ANTONIO

- 37** Clint P. Rodriguez
- 31** Basilio M. Quiroga Jr.
- 27** Eduardo Reyes
- 24** Israel Garcia Jr.
- 20** Daniel L. Herley

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 27** Amy Y. Nieman
- 25** Carl C. Moseley
- 20** Kyle M. Josey
- 19** Mark D. Harris

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

- 18** Peter Neil Smith

TRAVEL INFORMATION

- 28** Cynthia M. Walker

TYLER

- 35** Glenn H. Green
- 34** Donald E. McQuitty
- 29** Alfonso T. Sparks
- Steven P. Tugwell
- 28** David Michael Boyd
- 25** Richard P. Mathis
- 24** Freddie R. Jones
- 23** Kyle D. Kissinger

WACO

- 34** Sondra D. Shaeffer
- 33** David Swinson III
- 26** Charles W. Johnson
- 19** Robert L. Blakley

WICHITA FALLS

- 32** David W. Brooking
- 26** Timothy P. Purdy
- 24** Richard P. Hardin
- 22** Randy A. Sumpter
- 20** Don S. Richardson

YOAKUM

- 33** Martin D. Ryman
- 24** Anthony W. Janda
- 22** Lana K. Warnken

IN MEMORIAM

EL PASO

Gerardo Galvan

General Transportation Specialist
Date of Death: 8/14/2020
Years of Service: 17

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING PROCUREMENT

Rosalinda Cavazos

Resource Support Specialist
Date of Death: 9/1/2020
Years of Service: 18

BEAUMONT

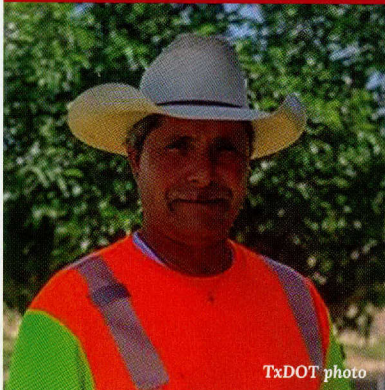
William Owen

Construction Inspector
Date of Death: 9/29/2020
Years of Service: 8

EMPLOYEES CHIME IN

What was your favorite place to visit as a kid during the holidays?

EL PASO DISTRICT



TxDOT photo

CARLOS MENDOZA JR. PRESIDIO MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

“Born and raised in Odessa, I loved to visit my grandparents in Presidio for all holidays!”

SAN ANGELO DISTRICT



TxDOT photo

FELICIA LINDSEY HUMAN RESOURCES GENERALIST

“My favorite place to visit as a kid during the holidays was my great-grandmother’s house in Brownwood. I will always cherish the effort and love she put into those precious times we shared.”

DALLAS DISTRICT



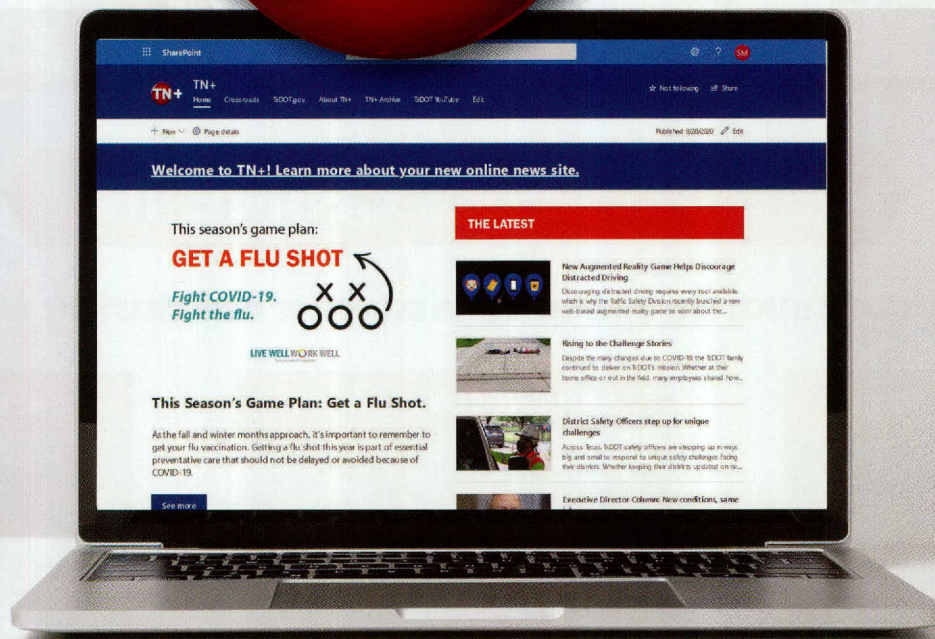
TxDOT photo

PATRICK CLARKE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

“My favorite place to visit as a kid during the holidays was the town square in Montego Bay, Jamaica where I grew up.”

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