



WEATHERING THE STORM

TxDOT had a big job getting Texas back on its feet after the February winter storm. Learn how our employees pulled together and worked through one of the largest storms in Texas history.



A TxDOT story from the heart

JAMES BASS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EDITOR'S NOTE: At the end of May, James Bass will retire as the department's 22nd executive director. And while he moves on to his next life adventure, he leaves behind a wealth of colleagues and friends who will miss him. In his last column in TN, he shares his thoughts about his three decades of service and the people who served with him.

It is hard for me to imagine that some 36 years ago in the summer of 1985 I was preparing for a summer job with the Fort Worth District of the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation. Never did I imagine that 36 years from that beginning I would be retiring from TxDOT having had the honor of serving as its executive director for the past 5-plus years.



I have a lot of memories that I will take with me:

- Working a few summers in Fort Worth and then part time in the South Travis and Hays County Residency while completing my degree at UT Austin;
- Reporting to work at the Greer Building back in 1992 as a part of a temporary work assignment – it has now been my work place for the last 29 years;

- Being selected as Finance Division director in 1999 and TxDOT's first chief financial officer in 2005;
- Being a part of the team issuing the first bonds in the history of TxDOT;
- Serving as executive director during our 100th anniversary;
- Testifying countless times – some better than others – before committees of the Texas Legislature and twice before the U.S. Congress;
- Traveling numerous times to Washington, D.C. and New York on TxDOT business.

The memory I will hold closest to my heart of TxDOT is of its people. There are too many individuals to list, but here are the traits I have always admired:

- The spirit of riding for the brand – it is about “we,” not “me”;
- The willingness to prepare the next generation of leaders by spending time teaching those who want to learn;
- The pride in our work;
- The drive to continue to be better today than yesterday and even better tomorrow;
- The servant's heart when our fellow Texans are in need, including during:
 - Hurricane Harvey
 - Winter storms of 2021
 - And many other occasions
- Valuing the TxDOT Family.

I took this last one quite literally. In 1994, on the third floor of the Greer Building, I met the woman who would become, and remain, my wife. We have been blessed with two children who continue to amaze us both, and my wife challenges me to be a better person each and every day – which is exactly what I need.

Each and every one of you is also a part of my TxDOT story. I'm so grateful that I had the opportunity to be part of your TxDOT story as well. ■



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ON THE COVER

Find out how TxDOT employees around the state pulled together to keep working during February's unprecedented snowstorm.

On cover clockwise from top left: Ramon Ramos, Becky Lake, Jason Palmer and Michael "Bull" Rivers with the Dallas District.

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Across the state, TxDOT employees go above and beyond.

Remote help even during a storm

COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

A

n office worker took customer service to new heights after receiving an urgent email during the February winter storms.

We've all been there before: you send an email to a company for customer service, then you wait and wait on a response. Sometimes you get one and sometimes you don't. It's a toss-up!

That is exactly the type of experience Crystal Cardenas, customer service representative in the Executive and Employee Communications Section of the Communications Division, works hard to prevent. She diligently monitors messages coming from across the state to AskTxDOT and TRACK. On any given day, Cardenas may respond to as many as 65 emails. It's a task that takes constant attention.

Her dedication to answering in a timely manner makes a huge difference even on an average day. It was especially important during the February storms which crippled most of the state and left millions without power and water. During the multi-day event, she received an email from an elderly Texas resident. The woman explained she was alone, trying to reach her daughter and needed to get to the hospital. Recognizing the fragility of the moment, Cardenas knew the situation required immediate action.

Instead of a normal email reply, Cardenas believed speaking to the customer was the best way to provide assistance. Using the information provided in the email, Cardenas called the woman to offer help. After a brief conversation, Cardenas realized the woman was alone and trying to reach her daughter who lived near a hospital. Cardenas called the hospital and spoke with staff to find out if there were any ride-sharing programs or services available for senior citizens needing help



Crystal Cardenas (far left) with her family.

during the inclement weather. She also made another phone call to the customer to give her an update as snow continued to fall. The woman was eventually able to get to her daughter's house and was fine.

This type of quality service is a priority for Cardenas. She wants people to know their requests are important, and she's always willing to go above and beyond the call of duty.

"I am used to answering a lot of emails," Cardenas said. "However, because this winter storm was so unusual and caused so much damage, I was compelled to do more. I needed clarity and wanted to ensure the sender got help immediately."

Cardenas is accustomed to giving extra effort. She's been doing it for four years and says success means being flexible to meet the needs of the customers.

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. ■

REDESIGNED CAREERS SECTION hopes to attract workers

The careers section on txdot.gov has a new look and functionality to attract new employees and bring talent to the agency.

The redesigned section launched in mid-March. Instead of a simple listing of jobs, the page now features a map that shows users the jobs available near them.

“The interactive map was a major point for us in the redesign,” said Sheila Brooks, lead talent acquisitions specialist with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Section of the Human Resources Division. “We wanted the applicant to be able to touch a location and see all the jobs. It works great on mobile which was another important goal for us.”

When users click on the map, they can quickly see the job title, salary range and whether the job is full time or part time.

“We surveyed job applicants and they told us that location, pay and job type were the most important things they wanted to see,” said Joshua Hunter, Web Services Branch manager for the Creative Services Section of the Communications Division. “We wanted to make it quick and easy for them to see that information.”

The redesign also highlights specific areas where TxDOT needs job applicants, such as engineering or maintenance.

In addition, the new design includes a section on TxDOT’s work culture and its commitment to diversity and career development. This section includes a form for users to ask questions about the department.

Another new feature is an interactive calendar that shows TxDOT’s recruiting events and job fairs.

“The new design has more engagement, bigger photos and more whitespace to make it inviting and easy to read,” said Hunter. “You can search the jobs by what you want to do or where you want to work. It’s based on what people told us is important to them when searching for a job.”

Check out the new section at txdot.gov/careers. ■

The redesign also highlights specific areas where TxDOT needs job applicants.



Diversity at TxDOT

We are committed to create an environment where all employees feel welcomed and valued. The principles of diversity, equity and inclusion must be integrated throughout all levels of TxDOT to continually innovate and advance. TxDOT welcomes every gender, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

[Learn More](#)



The careers section on txdot.gov has a new look and new functionality to attract new employees.

I AM A ... SPECIAL JOBS SUPERVISOR

AMARILLO DISTRICT

Ron Herr, special jobs supervisor with the Amarillo District, has been with TxDOT for 33 years. He started his career with TxDOT on March 1, 1988. He says he enjoys the people at TxDOT and is honored to work with them. Ron was ordained a deacon in the Catholic Church in 2020. He and his wife, Levina, have been married for 37 years and have three children and four grandchildren.

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DO ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS AS A SPECIAL JOBS SUPERVISOR.

I have 19 employees. I have as many as seven crews out working in our district, including two sealcoat crews, mill and fill hot mix operations, base stabilization, striping operations, bridge repair and sign-signal-radio repair. In the winter months, we help the maintenance offices with snow removal.

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

What I enjoy most about working in the Amarillo District is the focus on safety. Our administration encourages us to be the best at what we do. Administration is always informing us about new safety ideas like the Foundation 14 and the four questions every employee should ask themselves before they start their task for the day. We recently embraced the Start Work Authority approach to safety, too.

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

I'm most proud of the emergency operations. I was involved with the Super Bowl snow and ice operations, and Hurricane Harvey. I helped the Houston and Beaumont districts with cleanup operations. To be honest, I've had a wonderful opportunity to work alongside some of the most talented men and women in Texas. My goal is to be my brother's keeper.

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

I had to take the temperature of every employee and had only one-way traffic throughout the building. This was a challenge.

Before COVID-19 hit, I knew the flu season was coming. I made sure we had all the supplies we needed to protect ourselves. All doorways had sanitizing stations. I had plenty of N95 masks and sanitizing wipes. Every vehicle had sanitizing gel.

Most importantly, I have had to keep my employees informed on the TxDOT Playbook for Safe Operations. I make sure that my employees have everything they need to be protected and safe. I keep everyone informed of changes and best practices. ■



“

My goal is to be my brother's keeper.

”

RON HERR

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



WEATHERING THE STORM

Employees go above and beyond to battle conditions and keep Texans safe

TxDOT photo

During the unprecedented winter storms last February, every county in Texas was hit in some way. Parts of the state saw record snowfall, with up to 8 inches in some places. All 25 TxDOT districts were affected, and more than 6,000 TxDOT employees responded or provided support during the storm. Due to power outages, some TxDOT locations operated on backup generators. TxDOT staff used snowplows, motor graders and other equipment to clear lanes for traffic. They also treated lanes with brine before and during the storm to improve traction and make the roads safer.

With grit and determination, TxDOT employees went above and beyond despite the fierce winter weather. Here are just a few of their stories.

BEAUMONT DISTRICT

For this monumental event, the Beaumont District Maintenance Office went above and beyond to ensure the sections had enough material for the entire event. Before the storm, more than 46,000 gallons of brine were delivered to the district over a three-day span from Buffalo, San Augustine and Henderson for pre-treating efforts on roads. Approximately 142,000 pounds of brine salt were delivered to the district from Denver, Colorado during the event to make more brine and continue operations. Near the end of the event, another 48,000 pounds of salt were delivered from Midland.

The temperature got so low that some brine makers froze. One was at the Port Arthur Maintenance Office.

Maintenance Section Supervisor Carl Ray used his best MacGyver skills to repair it in 18-degree temperature. The Port Arthur office also had the help of Ethen Armstrong, general transportation technician, who had just transferred from the Amarillo District. When the storm hit, it was his first day of work in Port Arthur, and he was a huge asset to employees unaccustomed to snow and ice.

When the Anahuac Maintenance Office lost water, they weren't sure how they'd be able to make brine. Maintenance Section Supervisor James Taylor thought quickly and hooked up a pump to use water straight out of the Trinity Bay.

There were also several firsts in the district. The Kountze Maintenance Office had no employees with experience spraying brine, but that didn't stop Transportation Maintenance Crew Chief Sam Dowden and General Transportation Technician Walter Boerner from learning quickly. Dowden and Boerner alternated spraying night and day not only in their section, but also in the Beaumont Section.

In another huge first, the district decided to spray all main lanes – not just the bridges – of U.S. 69 and I-10. Treating all the lanes helped keep road issues to a minimum.

"I could not be prouder of the teamwork and passion demonstrated by all the employees in the Beaumont District throughout this event," said Beaumont District Engineer Chad Bohne. "Every section gave 100% and ended by walking off the field together at the same time. Nobody was left behind."

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Michael "Bull" Rivers with the Dallas District inspects the underside of his snowplow.

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AMARILLO DISTRICT

The Amarillo District employees went above and beyond during the storm by helping those caught out on the road.

In the middle of the storm, Maintenance Section Assistant Frank Figueroa was patrolling and monitoring road conditions when he noticed a stopped car. Figueroa stopped to check and learned that the motorist was out of gas and had been stranded for about 4 hours. Frank provided them with gas, and they were once again safely on their way.

During one night of the storm, Maintenance Section Assistant Chris Davis was traveling on SH 70 in Gray County when he came upon an accident. A driver lost control of her car and spun out into the ditch. Davis pulled over to check on the driver. Her vehicle was stuck in the ditch, and she had no way to get home. Davis got her safely into his vehicle and drove her back to her home in Pampa.

ABILENE DISTRICT

TxDOT workers in the Abilene District went above and beyond during the storm and people took notice. The community expressed tremendous gratitude toward TxDOT and the district's work crews. Lamar Billboards even had two digital message boards in Abilene thanking TxDOT.

Tanya Brown, public information officer for the Abilene District, was one of the millions of Texans without power and water for days during and after the storm. She and her puppies would get into her car at least three times a day to warm up and charge up. Nevertheless, she kept her customers up to date with only a cell phone at her disposal and never missed a beat. Her Twitter and Facebook pages were continually updated. She even offered to help her co-workers with anything they needed!

"What a trooper," said Sonja Gross, public information officer for the Amarillo District. "What a positive attitude!"



Lamar Billboards had two digital message boards in Abilene thanking TxDOT.

AUSTIN DISTRICT

As power went out across the state, TxDOT employees found their co-workers provided personal as well as professional help.

Adam Hammons, information specialist with the Communications Division, lost power in the early hours of Monday, Feb. 15 and woke up to a freezing home. Fortunately, his co-worker, Information Specialist Ryan LaFontaine, had power and was within walking distance.

“Ryan not only offered a place to warm up and make calls and emails, but he cooked tacos, provided coffee and even gave me two bundles of firewood,” said Hammons. “This while my neighbors were hacking away at trees on our street to get wood to warm their homes. It may not sound like a lot, but at the time, a safe harbor and some firewood felt lifesaving. It’s nice to know your co-workers are there for you in times of need.” ■

I could not be prouder of the teamwork and passion demonstrated by all the employees in the Beaumont District throughout this event.

CHAD BOHNE
Beaumont District Engineer



TxDOT photo

Freer Maintenance crew members from the Laredo District before pretreating roads with brine solution before the winter storm.

BEAM SIGNING

MARKS MAJOR MILESTONE FOR NEW AUSTIN CAMPUS

In January, TxDOT employees in Austin were able to sign their name to the final beam of the new Stassney Campus office building. The installation of the beam marks the official “topping out” or completion of the building’s structure.

The beam traveled to multiple TxDOT campuses in the Austin area during the last week of January. More than 250 TxDOT employees, along with members of administration and the Texas Transportation Commission, put their name on the beam, which was installed on Feb. 22.

TxDOT broke ground for the Stassney Campus in the fall of 2019. The Campus Consolidation Project, which combines five Austin locations into one, is the largest vertical construction project in the history of the department. The finished campus will house 2,000 TxDOT employees and contractors. Final construction is expected to be completed early next year.



Executive Director James Bass prepares to sign his name to the beam.

TxDOT’s leases on the buildings at its Riverside campus in Austin will expire in the next few years so TxDOT leadership decided to combine most of the department’s headquarters in Austin into one campus. TxDOT also did a cost analysis to determine whether the department should purchase or lease a new facility. The analysis determined TxDOT will realize a net savings after 15 years of owning the Stassney Campus compared to leasing.



The beam travelled to multiple campuses in Austin, including the Riverside Campus.

More than just a brick and mortar project, the new campus will enhance how TxDOT employees work. It will feature innovative designs and supportive technology, such as video conferencing in all conference rooms, enhanced security features and sound masking technology.

This project has been a collaborative effort among the executive team, Campus Consolidation workgroup and change champions. The effort has also been aided by a series of open houses, roadshow events and brown bag activities among divisions. Beginning in late 2019, TxDOT employees have been able to work from a Living Workspace Lab at the Austin Riverside Campus, which simulates the various workspaces being planned for the new campus.



TxDOT employees at the Cedar Park Campus in Austin sign their name to the beam.

More information on the Campus Consolidation Project, including videos and construction milestones, is available on the Support Services Division SharePoint site on the Campus Consolidation Project page. ■

FRONTLINE WORKERS honored with Grit Award



Special Crews Supervisor Matt Heinze (here with Chief Engineer Bill Hale in the background) accepted the Grit Award on behalf of TxDOT frontline workers.

The Texas Transportation Commission presented TxDOT frontline workers with the Grit Award last February in appreciation for employees' tireless service in the face of numerous challenges.

The Grit Award was established by the Commission after Hurricane Harvey to honor employees for their exceptional efforts in extraordinary circumstances. Any district and division can earn this distinction. The piece is made from spare parts and is inscribed with the words "passion, spirit, perseverance, courage and heart."

Whether responding to last year's hurricanes, the significant snowfall this past January or the unprecedented winter weather in February – all in the midst of a global pandemic that brought unique challenges – the frontline workers of TxDOT continued to deliver impeccable service to the people of Texas.

Last year, frontline workers in the coastal region faced a number of storms, including hurricanes Hanna and Laura. As always, TxDOT crews met the challenge head on, ensuring safe, efficient evacuations and an effective recovery. Responding to hurricanes is truly a team effort. Multiple districts – even those not directly impacted – came to the aid of their fellow Texans affected by the storms. Last year's Tropical Storm Beta and Hurricane Delta also created hazards on Texas roads, yet TxDOT crews worked tirelessly to clear roads and respond to impacted communities.

In late February, frontline workers across the state responded to an unprecedented winter storm (see story on pages 8-11) that shut down roads and left millions without power. Nearly 6,000 roadway sections were affected by ice and snow, and more than 70 roads were closed over the course of the event. All 25 districts were affected and crews across the state worked overtime to clear 2,000 lane miles, including routes to multiple critical infrastructure facilities such as water and power plants. Workers also assisted in escorting oxygen tankers to area hospitals.

"We are all grateful for the sacrifice and commitment of the thousands of frontline workers of TxDOT," said Texas Transportation Commissioner Laura Ryan. "I believe I can speak for all of us and share that we are truly proud to be able to work with each of them. [February's] weather event challenged our crews and stretched resources beyond even extreme limits and yet no one ever wavered, and no one ever let up."

Congratulations and thank you to all our frontline workers! ■

BEST WISHES TO TXDOT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BASS

Executive Director James Bass (right) plans to retire in May after 36 years at the agency. He is shown here in the Beaumont District after Hurricane Harvey in 2017.



TxDOT photo

EDITOR'S NOTE: Read more tributes (or contribute one) to Executive Director James Bass on TN+ as he prepares to retire on May 31. Send your best wishes to him by sending an email to TNideas@txdot.gov with subject line "Retirement Best Wishes."

In January, TxDOT Executive Director James Bass announced his plans to retire at the end of May following the legislative session.

"It has been the honor of a lifetime to be a member of the TxDOT family and to represent the women and men of TxDOT," Bass wrote in an email to all TxDOT employees.

Bass began his TxDOT career in 1985 working summers in the Fort Worth District. He was selected as finance division director in November 1999 and became chief financial officer in 2005. He became executive director in January of 2016.

He leaves TxDOT after 36 years of service. He met his wife, Patty, at TxDOT and would bring his children to the office to visit.

"James is leaving TxDOT a better place because of his leadership and commitment to the organization and each employee," said Marc Williams, TxDOT deputy executive director.

After retirement, Bass will serve as executive director of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority.

Here are some kind thoughts for James from family, friends and colleagues. You can find more tributes, such as from James' children, on TN+ through the end of May.

“When I moved from New York to Texas 28 years ago, I not only started working at TxDOT almost immediately, but I met my future husband on my first day of work, although I obviously didn't know it at the time. It's been exciting to watch James' career flourish, and I'm thankful to the TxDOT family for all the support and hard work they've done to serve the citizens of Texas.”

— **PATTY BASS,**

James' wife and former TxDOT budget analyst



Just as every Texan owes a debt of gratitude to James for his years of public service to this state, every commissioner who had the privilege to work with James owes him a debt of gratitude for teaching us everything we know about transportation finance. His job was rarely easy, but he always did it with patience, optimism and most importantly, a sense of humor.

— **DEIRDRE DELISI**, Texas Transportation Commission Chair, 2008 to 2011

It is TxDOT's lasting good fortune to have had James Bass' dedication, discipline, insight and indispensable good humor hard at work for over 35 years. It was also my privilege to have worked with James during the years bracketing his promotion to Finance Division director and to have followed his accomplishments before and since. Character and leadership — two sides of the same coin during his tenure. Many thanks, James, from all of Texas.

— **DAVID LANEY**, Texas Transportation Commissioner, 1995-2001, Chair from 1995-2000

James has been a great executive director and will be a tough act to follow. Sometime in the future, when they name a ferry in Port Aransas after him, it will be the first one to double as a Bass Boat."

— **CARLOS A. LOPEZ**, senior vice president, HNTB Corporation, former Austin District engineer

James has been an example of a true leader who cares about his employees. It has been wonderful to work for him, and I wish him the best.

— **CASSANDRA MATA**, executive administrative assistant

I count James as a friend and would fully agree with everyone who would judge him to be one of the truly great leaders of TxDOT.

— **TERRY MCCOY**, former Austin District engineer

[James] is a true public servant, always willing to help and do whatever needs to be done to meet any challenge. His unyielding desire to help the motorists and people of our great state has made Texas a much better place.

— **AMADEO SAENZ JR.**, former TxDOT executive director

During my time at TxDOT, James was a trusted colleague who always focused on the best interest of the citizens of Texas and employees of TxDOT. James was a critical partner in working to utilize all the financial tools available to support the buildout of the highway system. He was a great leader and his tremendous institutional knowledge was invaluable.

— **PHIL WILSON**, former TxDOT executive director ■



THE TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION SAYS GOODBYE

James Bass has been a dedicated public servant to TxDOT and the people of the state of Texas for decades. Through James' years of service, the agency he will soon retire from as executive director has benefited from his leadership and unwavering commitment to integrity in everything we do at TxDOT.

On a personal note, I will miss James' counsel as my trusted advisor on complex TxDOT matters that have helped me immensely as chairman of TxDOT, and James' counsel will sorely be missed by me.

James, a "good and faithful servant" to TxDOT, go forth and enjoy your retirement from TxDOT knowing you honored us with your service.

— **J. BRUCE BUGG JR.**

Texas Transportation Commission Chairman

After 33 years, James will leave a sizable void that will only be rivaled by the legacy he leaves behind. He has demonstrated leadership and added professionalism to everything he touched. During my time on the Commission, it has been an absolute pleasure to work with James. He is a consummate leader and gentleman and will be greatly missed. I wish him only success in his next endeavor.

— **LAURA RYAN**

Texas Transportation Commissioner

I have enjoyed James because he is comfortable in his own skin and can enjoy lighthearted comments, while staying on top of the subject at hand.

— **ALVIN NEW**

Texas Transportation Commissioner

Executive Director James Bass is one of those individuals you come across very rarely. He has a broad range of attributes, which uniquely qualify him to lead, motivate and inspire thousands of team members, direct billions of dollars of public capital, all while able to patiently opine on UT sports and be an all-around nice guy! Congratulations to James on his dedicated and successful career at TxDOT.

— **ROBERT VAUGHN**

Texas Transportation Commissioner



Don't mess with Texas® **AD WINS AWARD**



An ad for TxDOT's Don't mess with Texas campaign received an American Advertising Federation Award.

A Don't mess with Texas® campaign's television public service announcement has earned gold at the regional 2021 American Advertising Federation Awards, an annual competition honoring the best in advertising. An ADDY Award, as it is known, recognizes the creative spirit of excellence in the art of advertising.

The 30-second video featuring a voiceover by actor Matthew McConaughey illustrates the pride that Texans have in their great state and how that pride translates to keeping roadways litter-free. The video was produced safely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a scene featuring the proper disposal of sanitizing wipes was added to address a timely issue.

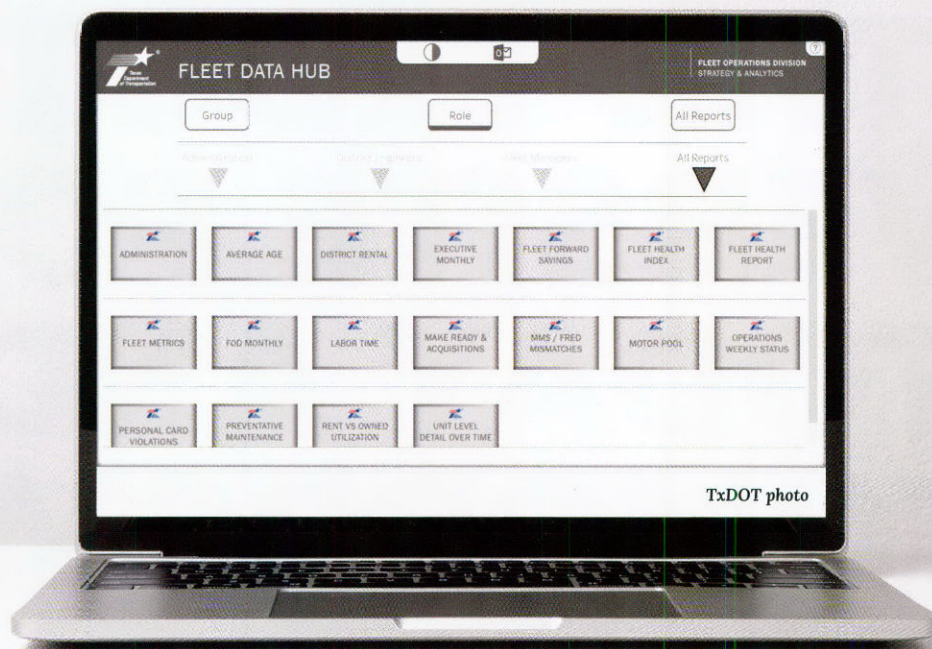
The PSA praises the perseverance of Texans during COVID-19, noting that many things have changed in the last year, but one thing remains the same: Don't mess with Texas still means don't litter.

The spot was recognized in the "Single Spot - Up to 2:00" category. After the regional win, the spot will be considered for district competition. A gold win at the district level will earn a place at the national competition. Each year, more than 40,000 entries are submitted in local AAF competitions.

Texas Country music legend George Strait also provided a voiceover for an alternate PSA. Both spots began airing across Texas late in the summer of 2020. ■

FLEET OPERATIONS

DEVELOPS ONE-STOP SHOP FOR DATA



TxDOT's adoption of Tableau in recent years has helped the agency harness the power of data through easy filtering and visualization tools. The Fleet Operations Division has been a prolific Tableau user, producing a treasure-trove of dashboards and reports for the division and its customers.

With the Fleet Division offering many new dashboards, navigating the various reports was becoming difficult. Strategy and Analytics Section Manager Chris Hebel challenged his team to create a solution to organize the division's Tableau user experience. The resulting product is the Fleet Data Hub, which serves as the primary point of entry to Fleet's Tableau reporting suite.

"There was so much effort behind the scenes to get it working, to interface with other software and to automate it," Hebel said. "Our team worked very hard to create a tool that will benefit our customers."

To develop the Hub, data analysts John Santana, Sagar Ghimire, Candace Jones and Deric Patton researched industry best practices to understand available solutions and how other industries are using Tableau. Three factors that shaped their thinking when creating the Hub:

- Users prefer a primary point of entry that organizes reports intuitively with an easy way to access it.
- The report design is as important as the data itself.
- Users want the ability to update and scale data easily with the creation, modification and deletion of reporting suite content.

The Fleet Data Hub is a self-guided experience for users to access information. When the user selects the dimensions and categories of the information they desire, the hub displays all relevant reports.

"We have a ton of valuable information, but navigating it can be cumbersome," Santana said. "It's not easy to know what's in there."

To further improve navigation, the Fleet Operations staff worked with the Communications Division to develop a design theme that is consistent across the reporting platform. The result was a seamless integration of current reports that allows for updates and scalability.

Over time, Fleet Operations staff will analyze user activity and feedback on the Fleet Data Hub to continue improving functionality. ■

REIMAGINING THE TxDOT WEBSITE FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

The Communications Division, in partnership with the Information Technology Division, recently launched Project Reimagine, a redesign of TxDOT's website, txdot.gov. The redesign is a collaborative rebuilding of the site from the ground up to focus on customer needs and user experience.

The website has had small redesigns and tweaks since its launch in 2012, but it has not been completely overhauled. The current project includes upgrades to the content management system and a comprehensive rewrite of the content, as well as changes to the architecture of the site. Visuals and branding will also be updated.

"We've done several studies to get user feedback on the current site," said Sean Linton, Creative Content Branch manager with the Creative Services Section of the Communications Division. "People found that the navigation was not intuitive, and that the site's structure was too tied to TxDOT's internal organization."

The Creative Services Section also did a study comparing txdot.gov to websites from other state departments of transportation.

"Our primary goal is to build a best-in-class website that distributes consistent and relevant messaging while ensuring consistency in tone and voice," said Linton.

Other goals of the redesign are to optimize content for customers and improve accessibility and overall performance on the site. Also, the redesigned site will work better on mobile devices. Robust analytic tools will provide valuable information on how people are using the site as well. The result will be an improved user experience.

"We brought a lot of the work on the site in house to lay the groundwork for this redesign," said Joshua Hunter, Web Services Branch manager with the Creative Services Section of the Communications Division.

In order to reach the project goals, Creative Services is collaborating with employees across districts and divisions.

"We've set up workgroups and workstreams to help us evaluate and reorganize our content," said Hunter. "We are soliciting help from subject matter experts throughout TxDOT, so we can build a better website."

Currently, the project team is reviewing content on the current site to remove "rot" – redundant, unnecessary or out-of-date content.

"This effort will rely on our partnerships with web coordinators across the agency," said Linton. "This is a collaborative effort. Together we want to create a user-centric website that makes it easy to do business and communicate with TxDOT."

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Connecting You With Texas Trails

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TEXAS CLEAR LANES

CLEARING THE WAY FOR TEXAS DRIVERS

Driver
Learn more about Texas travel, driving laws and highway safety.

Government
Research studies and laws and learn how we work with communities.

Business
Learn about TxDOT business resources and the bidding process.

Careers
We're more than a job. At TxDOT, you can build a career.

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Looking for These?
Read about the work of the Texas Transportation Commission.
View highway projects on a map with Project Tracker.
We're addressing congestion at TexasClearLanes.com.
Submit your suggestion.
Cost Savings
Find up-to-date news and media resources.

News
Steady Rise In Pedestrian Fatalities Rings Alarm Bells
TxDOT Urges Teens to Buckle up to Save Lives
Amid Global Pandemic, Other Challenges, TxDOT Continues to Execute on Projects Statewide
Don't mess with Texas® Scholarship Contest Opens to High School Seniors
TxDOT Launches Digital Highway Sign Contest

How Do I
Find COVID-19 Information?
Find the UTP?
Browse TxDOT Visual Dictionary
Find Hearings or Meetings?
Find Forms or Publications?
File Open Records Requests?
File a Complaint?
Report Fraud?
Find Veterans Information?
Find HB 803 TxDOT Toll Debt Report?

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TxDOT's website (seen here) is getting a redesign scheduled to launch next year.

In addition, the team is updating the site's policies and procedures and branding guidelines. The new site will follow these guidelines more rigorously than in the past to ensure consistency across the site and across all TxDOT media.

Once the new site is launched, staff will get training on the tools for updating it.

"We want to improve the experience for the people who are updating the site, too," said Hunter. "We want to help people think about their piece of the site and make decisions based on data."

The redesigned site is scheduled to launch in the first quarter of 2022. Visitors can expect a user-centric site with relevant content to help them do business with the agency.

Like a complex highway project, the work done now will pay off in a much better experience for all who use TxDOT's website. ■

Small conversations can make a big difference

For a parent dealing with a child in their teens or early 20s, talking about anything can be difficult. Conversations about mental health can be even harder.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 6 children between the ages of 6 and 17 years old and 1 in 5 adults ages 18 and over experience a mental illness each year in the U.S.

Paying attention to children's mental health is paramount. It is an important part of a child's emotional, social and cognitive development as they grow into adults.

Talking about mental health with our kids is easier said than done. For James Stevenson, director of the Maintenance Division, and Elizabeth "Lisa" Stevenson, executive assistant with the Construction Division, knowing the warning signs and creating a safe space built on trust helped one of their children seek the support they needed.

"As a parent, you know their personalities," said Lisa. "When something is not in line, you ask if everything is okay."

Warning signs can include acting out, persistent sadness, withdrawing from or avoiding social interactions, lack of motivation, lack of concentration, changes in eating or sleeping patterns, frequent headaches, changes in academic performance, substance abuse and even talking about hurting oneself.

James and Lisa noticed their son's mannerisms were different. He started shutting himself off and feeling down. Instead of pressuring their child to open up, they respected his boundaries. They had small conversations letting him know they would be there for him when he was ready to talk. James said they emphasized in these conversations that they would not judge or get mad and that there was no shame in getting help.

When their son was ready to share, James and Lisa didn't dismiss his problems. They validated their child's emotions by acknowledging them and watched their tone and body language.



James (far right) and Lisa Stevenson (second from left) with their children.

"We responded in a calm demeanor and let our son know that we were there to listen," said James.

After listening to their son's concerns, James and Lisa encouraged him to call TxDOT's Employee Assistance Program and meet with a mental health professional. He did and they have seen a positive change in his attitude and behavior.

If an employee has a child under age 26 who is struggling, the Employee Assistance Program is here to help. Call toll-free: 866-348-9368. Teen Line: 800-334-8336. ■

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

Conversations about mental health can overcome barriers and remove stigmas. Join the Wellness Team in their mental health campaign. Let's Talk: The Power of Small. Visit the Wellness Program website for information.

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 May 17.



Identified:

Congratulations to our first identifier Tracey Lane (FTW).

Last edition's photo featured the original World's Largest Fire Hydrant at the Fire Museum of Texas in Beaumont.

Others correctly identifying the photo were Justin Kalisek (BRY), Amy Jenkins (LFK), Jonathan Lawrence (BMT), Shannon Eddings (BMT), Heather Evans (PPD), Garry LeBlanc (BMT), Chris Cowen (SJT), Lyndol Irby (TRV), Danny Cox Jr. (CRP), Sue Tidwell (BMT), Steven Simpson (SAT), Peter Marcinkiewicz (YKM), Darren McDaniel (TPD), TP Holt (WAC), Maurice Maness (BRY), Sandra Chipley (DES), Tammy Rabun (BRY), Elizabeth Ortego (LFK), Myron Broussard (BMT), Jennifer Morales (HRD) and Tammie Duhon (BMT). ■



UPCOMING TxDOT EVENTS

May 27

**TEXAS TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION MEETING***

May 31

MEMORIAL DAY
(All agencies closed)

June 24

**TEXAS TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION MEETING***

*TxDOT is complying with state and federal guidelines regarding COVID-19 safety. Some Texas Transportation Commissions meetings may be held telephonically.

JUNETEENTH

Celebrates Emancipation

EDITOR'S NOTE: As Juneteenth approaches — and so much of the nation is focused on the cause of social justice — TN and the TxDOT employee resource group, the Black Employee Network, highlight the importance of the holiday to Texas and the nation.

The year: June 19, 1865. The bloodiest battle on U.S. soil ended just days before.

The place: Galveston, Texas. Union Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger, the commanding officer of the District of Texas, along with more than 2,000 of his men of the 13th Army Corps, marched into the city.

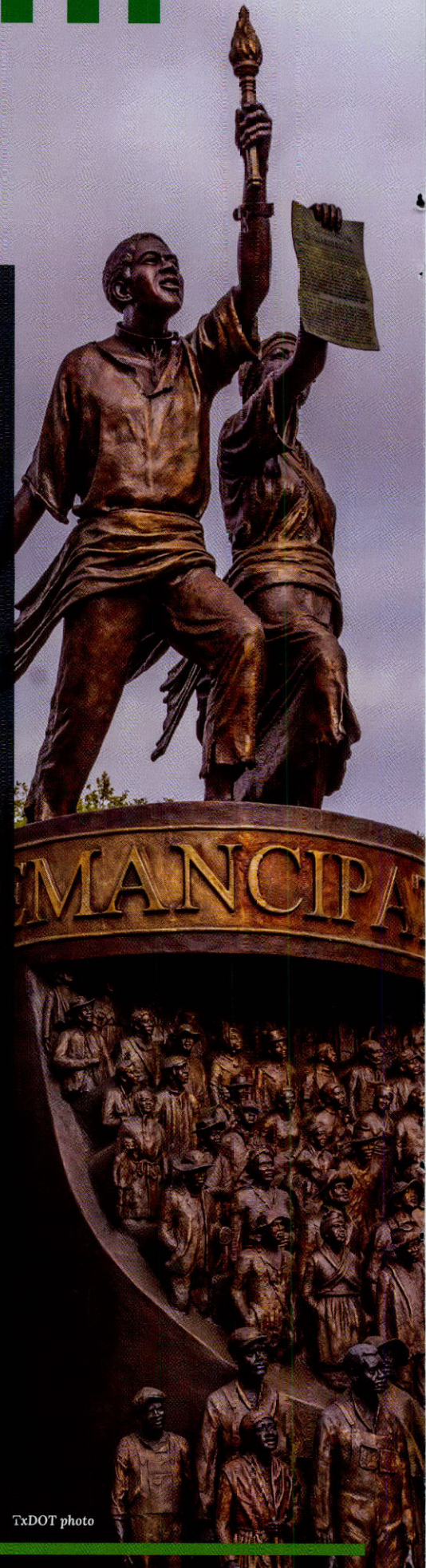
Their charge that day was to publicly read General Order No. 3, the news that an estimated quarter of a million slaves in the state had been anxiously waiting for — and their slaveowners dreaded: Slavery in Texas was no longer the law of the land.

For the men, women and their families who had lived as chattel, it was a day to celebrate. Freedmen around the state commemorated that event just a year later. Juneteenth as that day has become known — an amalgamation of June and 19th — was African Americans' Emancipation Day.

Interestingly, the announcement came to Texas more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. That document, which Lincoln hoped would cripple the Confederacy, only applied to slaves in states under Confederate control, of which Texas was one. Areas loyal to the Union — even those which were slave-holding states — and areas already under Union control were exempt. It wasn't until the Civil War ended — and Granger made it to Texas — that slaves here were granted their freedom, a move that would be formalized for all slaves with the passage of the 13th Amendment.

Nevertheless, Granger's news spread in Texas. And the celebrations began. Some freed slaves even purchased land — which they called “emancipation grounds” — for their celebrations. In 1872 in Houston, Rev. Jack Yates, a Baptist minister and former slave, along with others in his community, purchased 10 acres of land in the city. They named it Emancipation Park, and today it is still a place where the city celebrates Juneteenth and other cultural events. As freed African-American Texans began to migrate away from the state, they took the celebration with them to Alabama, Florida and California.

But it wasn't until 1979 when a freshman legislator from Houston, Rep. Al Edwards, had the idea to make Juneteenth, or Emancipation Day, an official holiday in Texas. Today, 47 states recognize Juneteenth as a state holiday or observance. North Dakota is expected to join that list after state legislators passed a bill in April to make the day a state-recognized holiday. ■



TxDOT photo

Sarah Dunlap

BROWNWOOD DISTRICT

Sarah Dunlap

**BUSINESS SERVICES COORDINATOR
BROWNWOOD DISTRICT**

Sarah Dunlap, business services coordinator with the Brownwood District, has worn many hats since beginning her career with TxDOT in 2005. She says she's seen it all, but one of her favorite things to do at work is the annual asset inventory. She's certainly the right person for the job! The married mother of two has a lot to keep up with at home, too. That's because the family has 46 chickens, a herd of goats, three dogs, two donkeys, two cats, two parakeets and three cockatiels — one of which barks like a dog! Now that's a pet inventory for sure.



TxDOT photo

Sarah Dunlap with Quinn, a cockatiel that barks like a dog!

If you picked the official soft drink of Texas, would it be Coke, Dr Pepper or Pepsi?

Dr Pepper all the way!

You're outside and it starts to pour. Are you dancing in the rain or running to the house?

I don't mind a good dance in the rain, if I'm not freezing or carrying groceries.

You've got two weeks off work. What's the first project around the house you'll work to complete?

Raking all the leaves in the yard and replanting the flower beds. We have oak trees all around our house and the sheer number of leaves we have in the yard is overwhelming.

Motorcycle, motor scooter, motorboat or motorhome. Which do you like?

Motorhome pulling a motorboat. I love to go fishing with my husband. At one time, we belonged to a couples fishing club. We were fishing in a tournament and managed to sink a boat once.

Name a secret talent you have.

I am an amateur photographer. I only do this for fun and for family. It is more of a hobby for me than anything.

Have you kept any of your New Year's resolutions? If so, which one?

I don't make New Year's resolutions anymore, but I stopped drinking Dr Peppers in February and have not had one since. I went from about three a day to zero.

Tell us a favorite childhood pastime.

We had a trampoline when I was younger. I learned to do flips backward and forward on one, and I can still do it today.

Tell us a piece of advice that's helped your career.

Always be willing to help. You never know how much it means to the person you help, and you never know when you will need their help in the future. ■

All Across TxDOT

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

TxDOT ADMINISTRATION

TxDOT updates Playbook for Safe Operations

In response to Gov. Greg Abbott's executive order in March, TxDOT updated its Playbook for Safe Operations which outlines practices to help keep our employees and the public safe during this era of COVID-19.

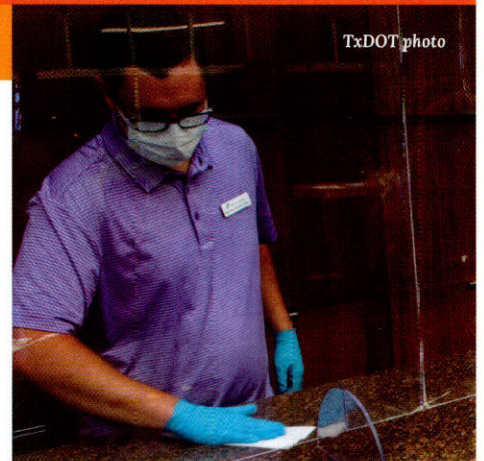
Safety is still the agency's priority. In fact, personal responsibility is as important now as ever. As the governor said in announcing the executive order, this "is a reminder that each person has a role to play in their own personal safety and the safety of others."

Some of the main updates to the Playbook include:

- Return to the office for in-person work remains voluntary until further notice. Those who can effectively do their work remotely are encouraged to continue to do so. Our facilities will reopen to the public, so some staff may be directed to return in person unless remote processes are effectively in place to meet the needs of the public. Additionally, office-based employees may be required by their district engineer or division director to report to a TxDOT worksite when necessary to ensure they are able to adequately perform their work.
- Employees should continue to adhere to all the 3Ws in the work environment: Watch distance. Wear masks. Wash hands.
- Office workers returning to TxDOT facilities and front-line employees who continue to report onsite should still socially distance in the company of other employees.

As always, an employee who is ill should not report for work. Anyone not feeling well should stay at home, seek medical attention if the need arises and notify their supervisor.

As the COVID-19 landscape changes, the agency must adapt. Updates to the Playbook will continue as circumstances change. ■



COMPLIANCE DIVISION

TxDOT equipment to be used for TxDOT business only

While increased remote working has created new opportunities for TxDOT employees, it's important to remember TxDOT policies regarding the use of TxDOT laptops, iPhones and other technology equipment while working from home or in the field.

The Human Resources Policy Manual states:

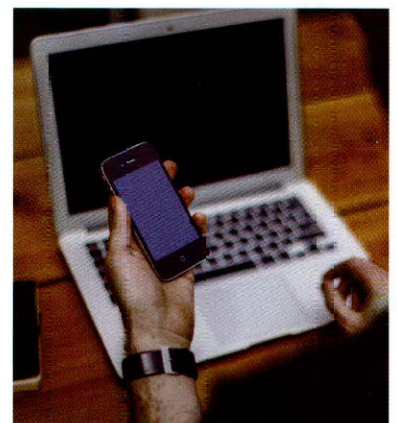
An employee shall not ... utilize state time, property, facilities, or equipment for any purpose other than official state business, unless such use is reasonable and incidental and does not result in any direct cost to the state or TxDOT, interfere with the employee's official duties or interfere with TxDOT functions.

In addition, the Employee Conduct Handbook states:

As a TxDOT employee, you have access and permission to use many state resources and are expected to use these assets responsibly. Department property and resources may only be used for state purposes and may generally not be used for personal business, fundraising or political activities.

With today's changing work and life situations, confusion is understandable. For example, an employee working from home with children doing remote schooling may be tempted to let their child use their TxDOT computer to finish schoolwork. However, this action violates TxDOT policy on computer use and could result in disciplinary action up to termination.

Visit TN+ on Crossroads to see more real-world examples about what is and isn't allowed under TxDOT's policy. If you have any questions, contact ethics@txdot.gov. ■



AUSTIN DISTRICT

Austin District works to bring transportation innovation to Central Texas

The Austin District, Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority and the city of Austin have signed an agreement with The Ray, a group dedicated to transforming transportation, to collaborate on ideas for new technologies and green energy solutions in Central Texas.

“Central Texas is a dynamic growing community with a tech-based economy and a highly educated workforce,” said Austin District Engineer Tucker Ferguson. “The community expects government entities like TxDOT, the city of Austin and the Mobility Authority to use new technology and innovative strategies to enhance mobility, protect the environment, improve quality of life and increase economic opportunity. The partnership with The Ray is a great opportunity to bring additional expertise and experience to our work.”

By leveraging The Ray’s expertise in innovation, this collaboration accelerates smart infrastructure development in the region.

“In Georgia, The Ray has partnered with state and industry leaders to create the world’s first sustainable highway living laboratory, and we are excited to bring our experience in transportation innovation to Central Texas,” said Laura Rogers, director of strategic partnerships at The Ray.

The collaboration is focused on facilitating, executing, promoting and building real innovative projects that prioritize road safety, improve infrastructure resiliency and protect and restore the environment. These projects include connected autonomous vehicle infrastructure, solar-powered photovoltaic electric-vehicle charging stations and in-road dynamic wireless electric-vehicle charging. ■

LUBBOCK DISTRICT

Passing lane project making safety and mobility improvements in Lubbock District

The Lubbock District began work in February on a \$48.8 million project to add passing lanes to U.S. 180 in Dawson and Gaines counties. Alternating passing lanes will be constructed every two miles along the 30-mile corridor between the cities of Lamesa and Seminole.

“In addition to making roadway and drainage improvements, the project will widen segments of the roadway to add passing lanes along this busy energy sector corridor,” said Seve Sisneros, Brownfield Area engineer and project manager. “The passing lanes – what TxDOT calls Super 2 or alternating passing lanes – will allow drivers to pass slower moving traffic at designated intervals and are expected to improve safety and mobility.”

The project contractor, James Hamilton Construction Co., of Silver City, New Mexico, is working on the culverts before moving onto road widening and pavement work. Work is scheduled to progress from west to east.

Motorists traveling on U.S. 180 should anticipate speed limit reductions and daily lane closures with traffic being guided through the work zone via pilot car. Delays and slow-moving traffic and construction equipment should be anticipated.

Work is expected to wrap-up late October 2022. ■

National Work Zone Awareness Week in April

April 26 - 30 was National Work Zone Awareness Week. This year’s theme was Drive Safe. Work Safe. Save Lives. The week is an annual spring campaign held at the start of construction season that encourages safe driving through highway work zones. The key message is for drivers to use extra caution in work zones. Check out TxDOT’s social media channels to see the agency’s activities for the event. ■

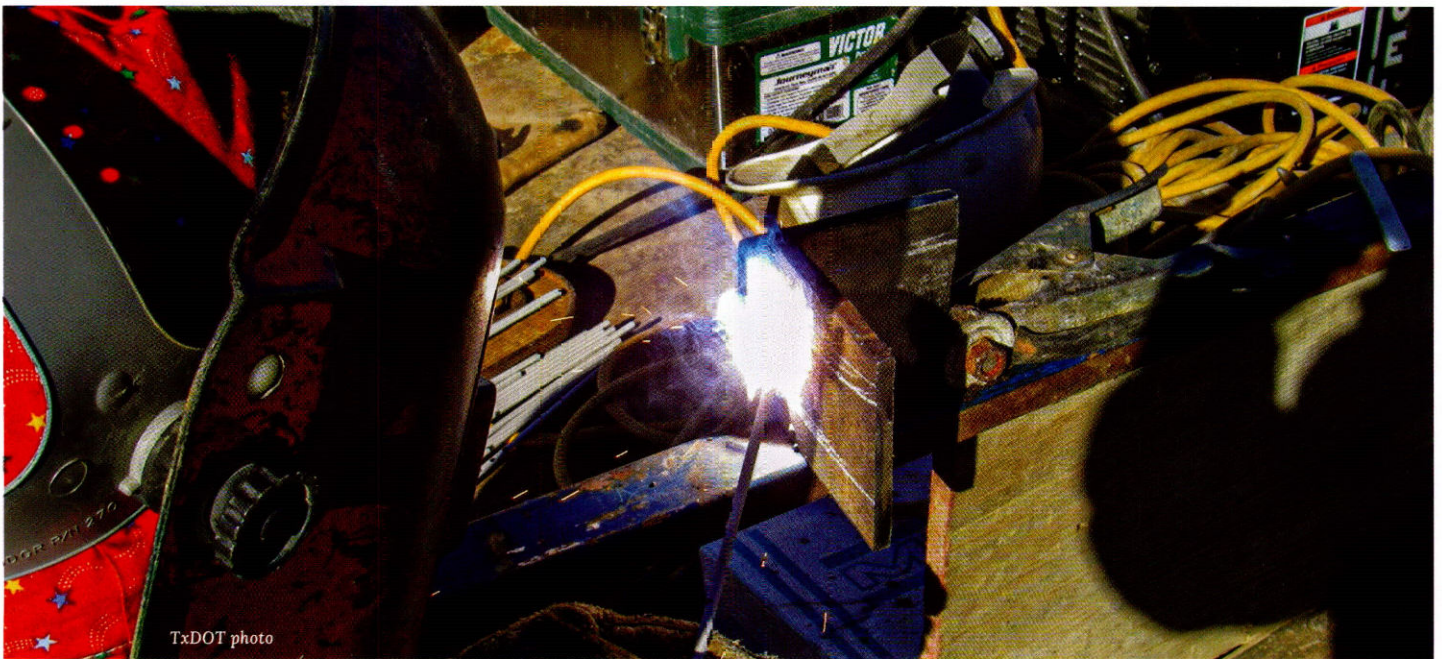
Wildflower Shop on Texas Highways Mercantile

Texas Highways’ Mercantile website has opened its Wildflower Shop just in time for the wildflower season. Discover wildflower-inspired art, stationery, books, apparel and more. Visit shop.texashighways.com/gifts/wildflower-shop. ■

Don’t forget about EAP resources

With the recent winter storms causing untold upheaval and stress, employees should remember that the Employee Assistance Program has resources available for them and their families. These include short-term counseling and information about local resources and services, such as plumbers and electricians. Call 866-348-9368 or TDD 800-448-1823. ■

BRIDGE REVIVES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR WELDERS



TxDOT photo

The Bridge Division recently revived its in-house welding certification program.

In the past, the Bridge Division offered bridge welding certification to district maintenance offices. This certification qualifies employees to perform welding on structural steel bridge members. As many maintenance offices increased the number of certified welders on staff, the certification program became less necessary and ultimately faded away. With many of those certified welders now retired, the agency is once again seeing a demand among employees for certification. As a result, the Bridge Division recently revived the program.

Employees selected for the in-house welding certification need to have welding experience and knowledge of the American Welding Society's bridge welding code. The Bridge Division has developed a training document that employees can use to practice welding prior to requesting certification.

Once the testing is scheduled, a Bridge Division specialist will issue the test at the requested maintenance

office. Employees who pass will be issued a certification and added to the list of in-house TxDOT certified bridge welders.

The goal of this initiative is to provide districts with expertise to perform in-house structural steel bridge repair work. This work may include:

- Impact damage repair
- Bearing assembly repairs
- Temporary beam bearings
- Minor steel repairs
- Beam end repairs
- Supplementing severely corroded steel piling

Several districts have already requested testing to certify staff for in-house welder certification and have begun preparation for testing. Districts will coordinate with the Bridge Division once the district has secured the equipment, materials and test location for the certification process. ■

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

wins award for excellence



The Financial Management Division's annual financial report was honored for excellence. Team members pictured: (from top, left to right) Wai Chi Wong, Megan Lowary, Matthew Walajty, Diana Gittinger, Robert Snipes, Cyril Blake, Ning Chen, Latrica Good, Roopa Yarlagadda, Arthur Levine, Kayzia Braden, Brian King, Becky Wood, Demetria McGee, Jeremy Gardner, Van Harvey and Irene Lee. Not pictured: Kristiana Lingurovski, Charlie Ulloa and Juan Herrera.

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to TxDOT for its comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year that ended August 31, 2019.

The report, which covers the financial data of TxDOT, has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the association's high standards, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the report.

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government organization and its management.

"This certificate of achievement reinforces our successful efforts to be a best-in-class state agency for financial reporting," said Amanda Landry, Accounting Section director with the Financial Management Division. "Only a handful of other Texas state agencies pursue the award, which requires agencies to prepare an expanded report containing more information than required by the Comptroller of Public Accounts. Recognition goes to the team in Financial Reporting and all those in the agency that provided information needed to compile and prepare the 2019 TxDOT Comprehensive Annual Financial Report."

Government Finance Officers Association advances excellence in government finance by providing best practices, professional development, resources and practical research for more than 21,000 members and the communities they serve. ■

MILESTONES

MARCH SERVICE AWARDS

ABILENE

- 15 Jesse Valdez
- 5 Jonathan R. Boone

AMARILLO

- 20 Hugh W. Durbin
- 15 Wayne T. Neeper Jr.
- 5 Jason D. Sedgwick

ATLANTA

- 20 Bruce R. Allen
- John M. Morris
- 10 Steven W. Matchett
- Richard K. Neal
- 5 James C. Easley
- Michael Wicks

AUSTIN

- 25 Shawn K. Reitan
- 20 Cathleen A. Kratz
- 15 Randy W. Cotton
- David E. Henry
- 10 Aaron G. Garza
- 5 John K. Burke
- Ty P. Cagle
- William B. Gates
- Michael S. Quimby
- Qasem Saffarzadeh
- Scott Serafin
- James Webb

AVIATION

- 35 Edward M. Mayle
- 5 Elaine J. Alvarado

BEAUMONT

- 15 Keith L. Canady
- Jeremiah K. Leopard
- Keith O. Moore
- 10 Rawetts T. Baaheth
- Leanne L. St. John
- 5 Murphy A. Mason
- Katrina R. Morgan

BRIDGE

- 5 Roderic Bolen
- Addisu A. Tilahun

BROWNWOOD

- 40 Jimmy D. Field
- 10 Jonathan R. Miller

BRYAN

- 20 Erick L. Knowles
- 10 Bruce M. Schoen
- 5 Jann Keong Kam

CHILDRESS

- 25 Shari A. Thomason
- 20 Chad E. Skelton
- 5 Nathan S. Herring

CIVIL RIGHTS

- 15 Diana F. Miranda

CONSTRUCTION

- 25 Cullen T. Pfeiffer
- 10 Aaron W. Lenz

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 20 Emilio R. Amador
- 10 Gregory R. Shekell

DALLAS

- 25 Stephen M. Endres
- Michael G. Stanley
- 20 Troy L. Graham
- 15 Nashwan Abdul-Karim
- Mark A. Aboso
- Shane King
- 10 Janice L. Shepherd
- Rachael Twiggs
- 5 Alma Bocanegra
- Kevin Y. Brosam
- Alanzo David
- Rodolfo J. Gonzalez
- Robert Washington

DESIGN

- 15 Teresa A. Burcham

EL PASO

- 25 Robert Reyes
- 20 Eduardo Perales
- 15 Johnny Salcido

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 10 Layde E. Phillips

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 20 Silvia Morales

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 20 Jeff Fischer
- Robert J. Herrera
- 15 Jesus J. Vizcaino
- 5 Juan J. Enriquez
- Jeremy Kimbrell

FORT WORTH

- 35 Gregory Panzino
- 30 Zelma A. Myers
- 25 Clinton L. Hyatt
- 20 Daniel M. Donahue
- 15 Paul A. Armendarez
- Kenneth R. Brand
- Larry H. Lewis
- Kristie L. Woods
- 5 Dalton J. Durante
- Joseph Smith
- Christopher Vian

GENERAL COUNSEL

- 5 Jeffery Smoot

HOUSTON

- 20 Willa F. Brooks
- Michelle L. Graham
- Roger J. Lopez
- Terry M. Sakar
- Loretta S. Wilson
- 15 Lewis D. Brown
- Scott L. Salcido
- Schandria M. Williams
- 10 Santos Mancha
- David M. Martinez Sr.
- 5 Alex A. Alvarado
- Tsutien Chang
- Emile B. Desormeaux
- Muslim Hassan
- Vincent C. Nguyen
- John Serna

HUMAN RESOURCES

- 5 Macy Silva

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 5 Matthew Bryant
- Roberto Morel

LAREDO

- 20 Servando Casas Jr.
- Rodolfo Garza Jr.
- 15 Victor R. Samaniego
- 10 Fernando J. Lozano
- 5 Arlene L. Calderon
- Arthur Ivy

LUBBOCK

- 20 Rodolfo Gonzales Jr.
- 10 Billy J. Jordan
- Kyle A. Heath
- 5 Joey Cimental
- John Ruiz

LUFKIN

- 10 Jett K. Brown
- 5 Kolten D. King

MAINTENANCE

- 15 Alanna S. Bettis

MATERIALS AND TESTS

- 20 Michael C. Dawidczik
- 15 Horace L. Bolden
- 5 Jeffrey Perabo

ODESSA

- 35 Ramon M. Prieto Jr.
- 20 Yvonne O. Mora
- 15 Holly C. Brady
- 10 Isaac S. Letkeman
- 5 Debe Loza

PARIS

- 25 Daniel Blackmon
- Susan R. Robinson
- Timothy R. Wright Jr.
- 15 Traci R. Coston
- Josh L. Fields
- Charles K. Miller
- 5 Creighton O. Byrd
- Cody Gose
- Stacy M. Taylor

PHARR

- 5 Euben Cabrera

PROCUREMENT

- 25 Carrie Sanford
- 5 Tamra Elias
- Alexis Jimerson
- William D. Noble

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING PROCUREMENT SERVICES

- 5 Nichole L. Cervantes

PROJECT FINANCE, DEBT AND STRATEGIC CONTRACTS

- 5 Gregory W. Faber

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- 20 Sarah Stroman
- 10 Mark A. Sprick
- 5 Wendy Arias

RAIL

- 15 Luke J. Chisenhall

RIGHT OF WAY

- 5 Pedro Escobar
- Anna Pulido

SAN ANGELO

- 5 Jeffrey H. Simpson

SAN ANTONIO

- 15 Melanie L. McBride
- 5 Emanuel F. Lerma
- John C. Obadal
- Richard Martinez
- George Salinas
- Thanya Tarrosa
- Ryan Wolff

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 35 Daryl D. Starkes
- 25 Annie D. Campodonico
- 20 Christine Esqueda
- 15 Michael S. Becker
- Betty J. Gonzales
- Julian Trevino III
- James D. Wilson
- 5 Alan DePalmer
- Clifford Farrell

TRAFFIC SAFETY

- 5 Dena Cordova

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

- 20 Laura L. Norton

TRAVEL

- 15 Lakena K. Cooks

TYLER

- 25 Jeffrey B. Harmon
- 15 Rex A. Hoot
- 10 Jeffrey K. Curtis
- Johnny C. Henderson
- Steven W. Thornton
- 5 Charles Rains

WACO

- 20 Donald Hampton
- Maria D. Padua
- 15 William H. Compton
- Brian A. Fulwider
- Luis D. Hernandez

WICHITA FALLS

- 25 Paul E. Bennett
- 15 Richard L. Hoberer
- 5 David J. Garcia

YOAKUM

- 25 Mark A. Koeppen
- 15 Ryan S. Simper
- 10 Larry W. Frick
- 5 Aaron S. Bludau
- Daniel B. Denn
- Peter F. Marcinkiewicz

APRIL SERVICE AWARDS

ABILENE

- 5 Erin D. Dunnam
- Marcus Flores
- Matthew T. Salada

AMARILLO

- 15 Jason L. Peters

ATLANTA

- 10 Corey S. Yarbrough

AUSTIN

- 25 Miguel A. Arellano
- 20 Eduardo Calzoncit
- Clinton R. Dowdy
- 15 Michael J. McDonald
- 5 James Albers
- Euell Anderson
- Jenie Garcia
- Justin A. Goolsby
- Terry Newton
- David J. Stolte

AVIATION

- 15 Roy D. Goad
- 5 Joseph A. Comeaux

BEAUMONT

- 15 Susan M. Will
- 5 Brian T. MacGinnis
- Fred J. Miller
- Charles Savant

BRIDGE

- 20 Patricia A. Harris
- 15 Graham A. Bettis
- Daryn E. Sims
- 5 Joshua Gutzwiller
- Kuei Wang

BROWNWOOD

- 30 Tina R. Crelia
- Kelley A. Hamrick
- 10 Scott M. Perry
- 5 Felicia D. Durkop

BRYAN

- 15 Charles D. Reed
- 10 Daniel K. Vess
- 5 Mark S. Spivey
- Hagen Williams

CHILDRESS

- 25 Royce Burrows
- 10 Robert B. Johnson
- Dwane R. Morton
- Raul R. Rojas
- Christopher L. Wiley

CIVIL RIGHTS

- 5 LaShaundra K. Shaw

COMPLIANCE

- 5 Nicole Lawson

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 15 Eugenio Alfaro
- 10 Robert L. Charles
- Ricardo Garcia
- Gregorio Gonzales III
- David M. Johnson
- Roel V. Perez
- 5 Kerry Richards

DALLAS

- 20 Jonathan W. Roddy
- 10 Josh D. Faglie
- 5 Frazier E. Black Jr.
- Anne Christie
- Kimberly Faglie
- Charles E. Gagne
- Jonathan C. Stowe

DESIGN

- 5 Clint A. Kainer

EL PASO

- 15 Armando Galvan
- 10 George C. Vasquez
- 5 Hilda O. Allen
- Alberto Benitez
- Raul A. Chairez
- Jesus A. Hernandez
- Reyes J. Hernandez-Talavera
- Timothy M. McCray
- John P. Penalosa
- Cruz A. Sotelo

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 25 George T. Dempsey

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 25 Kimberly K. Parris
- 5 Penny L. Blackerby
- DeAndrea Brown

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 20 Rickey W. Braddy
- Dennis W. Whatley
- 15 George A. Valenzuela

FORT WORTH

- 20 William C. Boothe
- David C. O'Neal
- 10 Terry L. Rainwater
- 5 Joshua L. Newpher
- Lacy Webb

GENERAL COUNSEL

- 15 Leonard Reese

HOUSTON

- 25 Kevin E. Braun
- 20 Rhonda K. Hebert
- Cory D. Heckler
- Suzanne M. Johnson
- 15 Lisa D. Cotton
- Crystal L. Stollings
- Susan K. Theiss
- 10 Ashley J. Burton
- Patrick R. Jackson
- Virgilio D. Ma-Ang
- 5 Endrias K. Gudina
- Esperanza Leal
- Brandon Reavis
- Dakota Whitehead

HUMAN RESOURCES

- 25 Soledad A. Gracia
- 5 Ashley N. Bostick
- Terry Conner
- Daina Franco

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 10 Douglas A. White

INTERNAL AUDIT

- 5 Charlita Freeman

LAREDO

- 5 Julio C. Flores
- Michael A. Granado
- Felipe Munoz
- Ezequiel Sevilla

LUBBOCK

- 25 Jose M. Garza
- 10 Richard W. Pearl
- Benjamin G. Terry
- Joel P. Venhaus
- 5 Nicholas Coffman
- Kenneth D. Elledge
- Jim B. Johnson
- Jerry L. Rodriguez
- Juanita Vasquez

LUFKIN

- 15 Cody Duffey
- Billy J. Hendry Jr.
- 10 Kevin S. Hughes
- 5 Lee Mahan

MATERIALS AND TESTS

- 30 Johnnie S. Miller
- 5 Thomas Ungard

ODESSA

- 30 Hector J. Aguirre-Luna
- 15 Jose A. Ibarra
- John F. Nobles II
- 5 Jose A. Renteria

PARIS

- 25 Clint A. Traylor
- 20 Jason W. Hewitt
- Steven W. Hughes
- 15 James C. Hopkins Jr.
- Phillip D. Huff

PHARR

- 20 Stella M. Loreda
- 5 Jose L. Cardenas

PROCUREMENT

- 5 Elvin W. Keller

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING PROCUREMENT SERVICES

- 20 Basem T. Dia
- 5 Darla S. Hanson
- Johanna Pike

PROJECT FINANCE, DEBT AND STRATEGIC CONTRACTS

- 25 Beau B. Buchanan
- 5 Wendy Reilly

RAIL

- 15 Michael L. Horton

RIGHT OF WAY

- 10 Christina M. Roque

SAN ANGELO

- 20 Philip B. Leach
- 15 Arthur B. Lutz

SAN ANTONIO

- 10 Gary W. Stein
- Steven R. Trevino
- 5 Francisco H. Garcia

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 20 Steve Burleson Jr.
- Betty L. Hernandez
- 5 Susan Rougeau

TRAFFIC SAFETY

- 15 Richard A. Carruth

TRAVEL

- 10 Gloria Tapia

TYLER

- 40 James L. Harris
- 10 Joseph Lathem Jr.

WACO

- 10 David E. Hogg
- 5 Christopher O. Pruitt

WICHITA FALLS

- 25 Cymantha M. Cato
- 5 Kelvin C. Green
- Justin D. Gulley

YOAKUM

- 20 Clinton D. Novak

MILESTONES

JANUARY RETIREE REPORT

ABILENE

17 Joe M. Cox

ADMINISTRATION

15 Brian D. Ragland

ATLANTA

31 Sedric M. Gaston

AUSTIN

3 Lynn DeLorenzo

BEAUMONT

14 Mickey L. Cox

BROWNWOOD

27 Thomas S. Greer

DALLAS

26 Nicki C. Kerksieck

19 Forrest L. Huffman

DESIGN

10 Junaid Akhtar

FORT WORTH

28 John M. Rooney

22 Alireza Momenzadeh

HOUSTON

35 Jeffery A. Earl

21 Wally E. Houston

16 Carol L. Davis

MAINTENANCE

18 James Randal Ormsby

MATERIALS AND TESTS

34 Mark H. Necessary

PARIS

22 Marvin W. Gibson

PROCUREMENT

27 Michele L. Starr

RIGHT OF WAY

19 Manuel A. Kilpatrick

SAN ANTONIO

19 Eugene T. Kelly

TOLL OPERATIONS

29 Linda Sexton

FEBRUARY RETIREE REPORT

ABILENE

23 Jesse Camacho

ATLANTA

24 William Burns

18 Bruce D. Boobar

12 Elizabeth J. Taylor

BROWNWOOD

15 Ricky W. Williams Sr.

CORPUS CHRISTI

16 Reynaldo L. Ramirez

DALLAS

26 Daniel H. Peden

FORT WORTH

20 Theresa M. Estrada

HOUSTON

33 Robert S. Bissett Jr.

22 Joseph M. Martinez

17 William S. Bailey

LUBBOCK

28 William K. Munden

27 James Edwards

23 Gilbert Sepulbeda

ODESSA

31 Ruben L. Reyes

PEPS

27 Michelle N. Veale

SAN ANGELO

34 Ricky L. Green

SAN ANTONIO

23 Troy D. Witt

SUPPORT SERVICES

35 Michael D. Quimby

12 Patrick Moczygemba

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

34 Timothy G. Juarez

IN MEMORIAM

BROWNWOOD

Lindsey Passmore

Maintenance Technician

Date of Death: 02/11/2021

Years of Service: 27

Retired: 1982

Ramon Gutierrez Jr.

General Transportation Technician

Date of Death: 04/06/2021

Years of Service: 13

SAN ANGELO DISTRICT

Victor Villarreal

General Transportation Technician

Date of Death: 03/13/2021

Years of Service: 1 month

TYLER DISTRICT

Clinton Corley

Maintenance

Section Assistant

Date of Death: 03/05/2021

Years of Service: 29

WACO

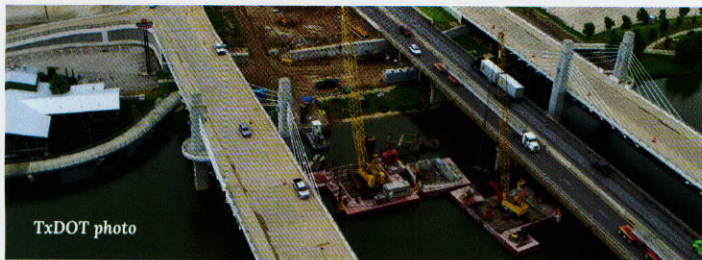
Phillip Stone

Construction Inspector

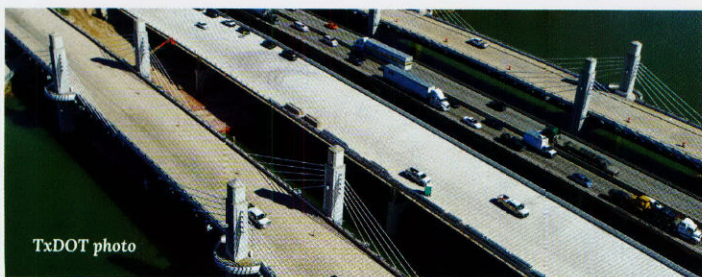
Date of Death: 02/09/2021

Years of Service: 8

I-35 IN WACO HITS KEY MILESTONE



TxDOT photo



TxDOT photo

The I-35 project in Waco has reached the halfway point. These photos show the Brazos River Bridge in 2020 (top) and earlier this year.

The Waco District is making a major traffic shift on I-35 through Waco as the \$341 million construction project reaches a key milestone that marks the approximate halfway point for the project. In February, TxDOT completed reconstruction of the new southbound mainlanes south of U.S. 77, a significant achievement in the effort to improve I-35 through the heart of Texas.

As part of the project, TxDOT shifted traffic to the newly completed lanes allowing TxDOT to reconstruct the northbound lanes of I-35. This means a smoother ride for drivers as they travel on the new pavement. The shift will be implemented in phases, and two travel lanes in each direction will remain open.

Additionally, the northbound exit for MLK Boulevard will close temporarily for up to one year so crews can work in the area.

The permanent southbound exits for MLK Boulevard and for University Parks Drive will open once traffic is shifted. At that point, crews plan to begin reconstructing the northbound lanes by removing the overpasses at the Union Pacific Railroad, MLK Boulevard, Brazos River, University Parks Drive and 4th/5th Streets.

TxDOT plans to shift remaining mainlane traffic from U.S. 77 to N Loop 340 to the newly reconstructed lanes in the spring. ■

EMPLOYEES CHIME IN

What is your favorite summer memory from growing up?

ABILENE DISTRICT

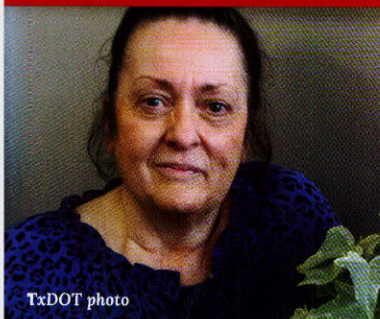


TxDOT photo

KYLA MCGUFFIN
CONTRACT SPECIALIST

“The most memorable summer was in 1973. Seven family members got into my grandparent’s old Pontiac Bonneville and headed out for a very long road trip.”

LUBBOCK DISTRICT



TxDOT photo

CAROL CRADDICK
OVERSIZE/OVERWEIGHT
PERMITS COORDINATOR

“My favorite childhood summer memory is of the two-and-a-half-week road trip and family vacation we took through the western United States when I was 10.”

TYLER DISTRICT



TxDOT photo

AMY STOTTS
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

“Drinking out of the water hose. But you had to wait for a bit because there was always a bumblebee that would shoot out of the hose like a cannon. Fun times!”



**Pedestrians
don't come
with airbags.**

Yield the right of way to pedestrians.

BE SAFE. DRIVE SMART. 

[#EndTheStreakTX](#)