

DELIVERING EXCELLENCE

Enhanced technologies and tactics are helping TxDOT improve project delivery.



Delivering Excellence for Texans

MARC WILLIAMS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

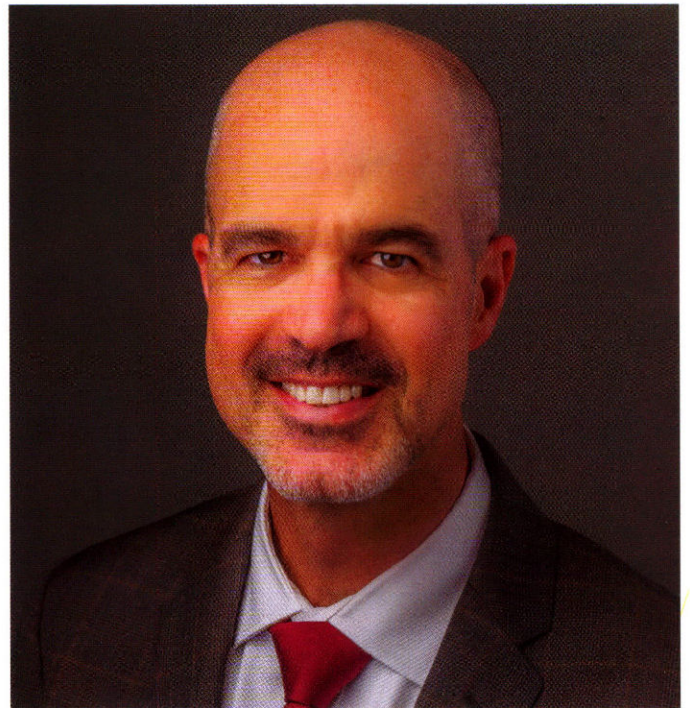
Another successful Transportation Short Course wrapped up last month. This year's theme is a phrase I constantly emphasize with employees and leaders across TxDOT: "Delivering Excellence." Whether maintaining vital roads in the Permian Basin, relieving congestion in our major metro areas or keeping evacuation routes open during hurricane season, we must strive for excellence each and every day.

One of the ways we can deliver excellence is through our project delivery. Statewide, TxDOT currently has more than \$26 billion worth of projects under construction – the largest in our state's history. During the 87th regular legislative session, state lawmakers granted TxDOT \$30.24 billion during the next two-year budget cycle – 86% of which goes toward project development, delivery and maintenance.

State leaders have entrusted us with valuable taxpayer dollars to deliver projects on time and on budget. A key tool in that effort is our TxDOTCONNECT system, which helps us manage the delivery of transportation programs, projects and right of way. With better communication and tracking provided by TxDOTCONNECT, we can avoid project delays and overruns.

We're working hard to ensure our letting factory works efficiently and effectively to get projects through the pipeline. We know that wide variations in letting from month to month make it difficult for our contracting partners to plan their staffing levels. That's why we're working to level contracts so there is some consistency in workload, aiming for a regular monthly letting target of \$500 million.

We've ramped up our project delivery to build on the momentum we've created over the past few years. We nearly doubled our budget for professional engineering services from FY 2015 to FY 2020. And from FY 2016 to FY 2019 we increased our construction letting totals by more than \$2 billion.



Moving forward, we're going to develop more and varied projects than is currently budgeted, so that we have projects ready to go as opportunities arise. This will be especially important if additional funding becomes available. As Congress hammers out legislation that could provide billions in transportation funding, TxDOT is prepared to take those valuable funds and put them to work. [Editor's note: At press time, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was being debated in Congress.]

You can read more about our project delivery in this issue's cover story on page 8.

Our state leaders, lawmakers in Washington, D.C., and the taxpayers are counting on us to deliver. We can't take that lightly. Together, we will all work to deliver excellence on the projects and programs the people of Texas deserve. ■



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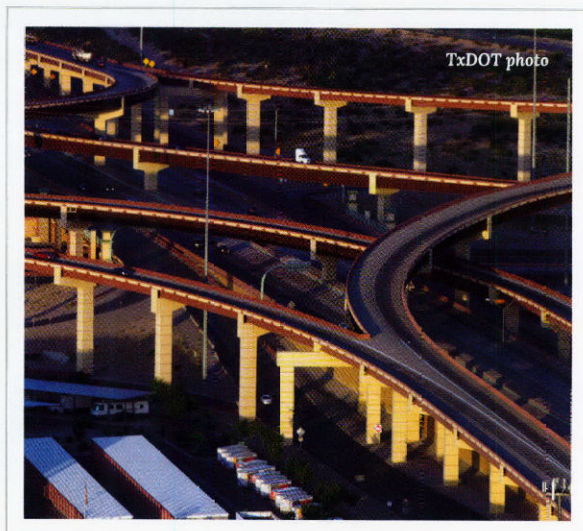
DESIGN & PRODUCTION
GDC Marketing & Ideation

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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ON THE COVER

TxDOT is constantly working to make the project delivery process more efficient and effective by improving tracking, communications and flexibility.

FEATURED STORIES

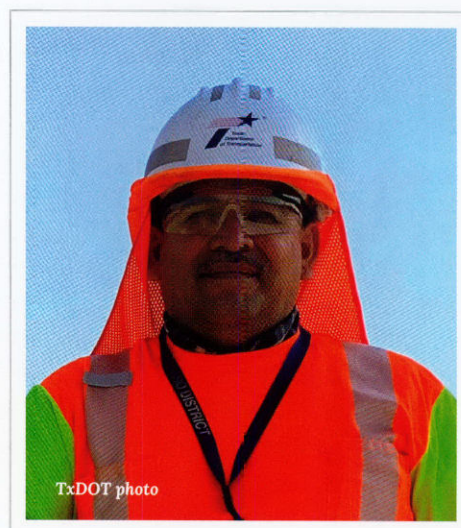
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**I Am An...
Assistant
Maintenance
Supervisor**



Across the state, TxDOT employees go above and beyond.

Good catch! Little girls and puppies need safety help, too

BEAUMONT DISTRICT

The Jasper Maintenance Crew began August 3 thinking they'd spend the day clearing a massive tree from FM 777. Little did they know that tree would put them in the right place at the right time.

The crew worked throughout the day cutting and moving pieces of the tree. Occasionally they were visited by a beagle that lived in a home across the street. Around mid-afternoon, the beagle and a litter of puppies came running from the house. Running after the puppies was six-year-old Alyssa. And they were all running straight toward the road!

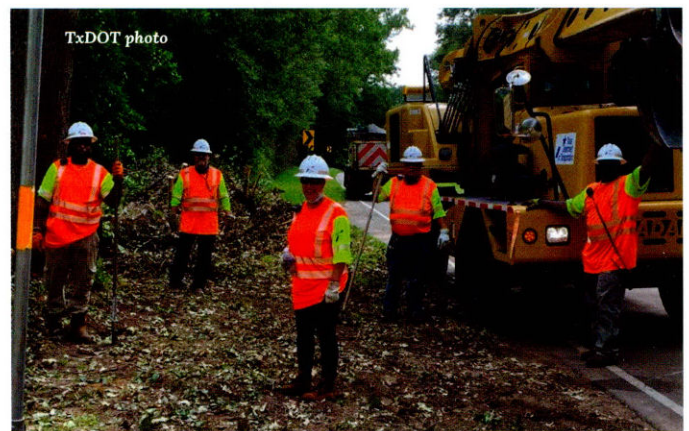
One crew member saw Alyssa heading toward the road and immediately called to stop all traffic.

Alyssa's mother, Tyler, had been working on patching their fence when the puppies crawled out. Her heart dropped when she saw Alyssa in the front of the yard.

"Some people go 80 miles an hour on that road. I don't even let her play in the front," said Tyler.

The crew immediately halted work and began collecting the puppies that had entered the work zone as Alyssa watched frantically only feet from the road. After five minutes or so of rounding up puppies, the litter and Alyssa were safely away from the road and the crew went back to work.

"When we saw the girl, we could foresee what was coming. I think all of our parental instincts kicked in and we knew it was time to take action," said Shon Manchac, general transportation technician.



The Jasper Maintenance Crew in the Beaumont District protected a little girl and a litter of puppies who ran into a road near their worksite.

Tyler said she understands how hard the crew works and appreciates everything they did.

"They were great! They cared! They stopped in their tracks and helped," she said.

Alex Estrada, Beaumont District safety officer, was also onsite that day and witnessed the event.

"I am so proud of our crews! This is an example of how committed our TXDOT frontline workers are to truly be their brothers' keepers, not only within the TxDOT family, but also with the public," said Estrada. "Here is a perfect example of why we plan our work and work our plan. The 'Play of The Day Morning Meeting Checklist' proved to be a vital tool in this success story." ■

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. ■

SEVERE STORMS

bring record-breaking rain to El Paso District



Problem areas kept crews busy around the clock during the storm. Here crews work to clear a flooded section of Doniphan Drive.

El Paso District teams are used to responding to monsoon flood emergencies, but this August Mother Nature doused the area with relentless record rainfall for days on end. Storms lasted from Aug. 12-22. They hit the El Paso area first, then other areas like Marfa and Presidio.

While there was advanced warning, the results and sudden impact caught many drivers off guard. Roadways around the city quickly started flooding, overwhelming storm water systems and making some areas impassable.

The Emergency Operation Center was activated, maintenance crews went into 12-hour shifts and HERO drivers enhanced efforts by getting stranded vehicles off roadways. Teams encountered water up to their chests, pumped water off the road and cleared drains.

"I just keep thinking there's a drain that needs clearing and I need to get there. I carry a measuring stick and if the water gets too deep, I know other equipment is needed," West Area Maintenance Assistant Supervisor Alberto Lara said.

Crews worked to keep roads passable and closed those that became impassable, calling for traffic control at various locations. Roads like I-10 and U.S. 54 had vehicles submerged and were closed due to flood waters. Transmountain Road closed due to falling rocks and mountainside waterfalls.

"I've seen severe weather before as I'm used to flooding," said El Paso District Engineer Tomas Treviño. "But these floods were different — just walls of water coming at you carrying a lot of debris and with a lot of velocity."

Teams encountered water up to their chests, pumped water off the road and cleared drains.

The district used the Microsoft Teams chat to great effect, keeping personnel and leadership informed, and sharing images from TransVista cameras and from the crews in the field. The Public Information team used these photos to enhance Twitter and Facebook posts to keep drivers

and media informed, providing dramatic firsthand looks at the fast-changing conditions. Images captured unimaginable scenes, magnifying reach across social media platforms.

In rural counties, crews saw roads turn into rivers and chunks of mountains block roads. The district's Special Crew used specialized equipment and a massive loader to move boulders while plows were used in Presidio to clear debris.

"I have lived out here for almost 25 years, and I've never seen or even heard of water running over the road where the two Border Patrol checkpoints are located," said Alpine Area Engineer Chris Weber.



The El Paso District's Special Crew used specialized equipment and a massive loader to move boulders off roads like FM 170 near Lajitas.

In El Paso County, as waters subsided, crews worked to clear roadways as quickly as possible, pumping off pooling flood water, clearing away sand and debris and filling potholes. Post-storm activities across the region included clearing rockslide remnants in Lajitas, plowing away sand and patrolling long stretches of roadway. Maintenance crews across the district were still busy long after the clouds were gone.

Mother Nature also left behind some incredible scenes of rejuvenation. The usually brown Transmountain turned green from lush desert flora. ■

I AM AN ... ASSISTANT MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR



EL PASO DISTRICT



Alberto Lara, West Area Office assistant maintenance supervisor with the El Paso District, has grown his career at TxDOT for more than 24 years. He came from Zacatecas, Mexico, with training in urban construction and in search of the American Dream. "Lara," as everyone knows him, worked two jobs in maintenance and construction fields before joining the Fort Worth District as a temporary maintenance technician. He transferred to the El Paso District in December 1998 as an entry level technician in the West Area Office section that he now helps supervise. Lara and his wife, Lulu, enjoy spending time with their four children and their dog.

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU DO ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS AS A MAINTENANCE SECTION ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR.

I help lead a team of 26. I begin my day with a morning safety meeting with our crew to review any issues, day team assignments and group Stretch and Flex. That's followed by a meeting with our section supervisor to review any complaints or issues. Then it's time to head out to the field to check on crews and any problem spots. My office duties include ordering materials, paying invoices, shopping for supplies, working on staff schedules and traffic control plan requests. If there is an emergency, like severe weather or a crash, I also respond with our team.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING IN THE EL PASO DISTRICT?

I will never forget the day my hiring manager told me that with commitment and dedication, I could one day become a supervisor. I appreciate that the most about TxDOT. You always learn something new and TxDOT provides the opportunity to grow your career no matter where you're from or who you are. I took advantage of trainings and took time to learn from others. I also know how to drive each vehicle in our maintenance fleet from truck to loader to dump truck. What has really helped me was starting at the bottom and moving up because I learned in each position.

WHAT SKILLS AND ABILITIES ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOUR JOB?

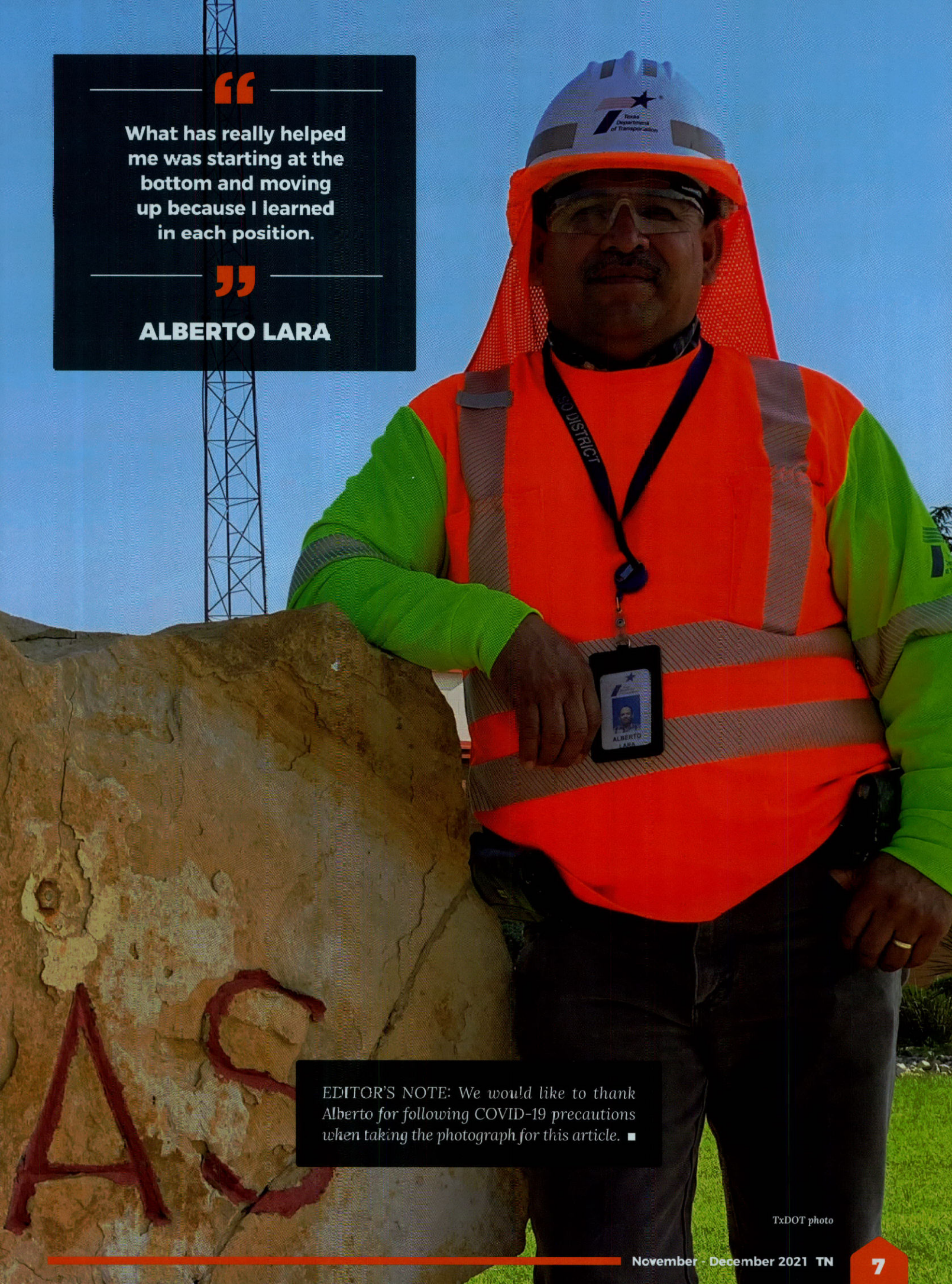
It is important to train others and share your knowledge. That requires patience and dedication. Communication, relationship building and knowing when to take a time out is also key. If I don't know the answer or know how to do something, I always look for help. Never forget where you came from and where you started.

“

What has really helped me was starting at the bottom and moving up because I learned in each position.

”

ALBERTO LARA



EDITOR'S NOTE: We would like to thank Alberto for following COVID-19 precautions when taking the photograph for this article. ■

TxDOT photo

DELIVERING EXCELLENCE: Enhancing delivery of projects is always a priority at TxDOT



TxDOT is constantly working to make the project delivery process more efficient and effective.

Project delivery is a short description for TxDOT's huge core mission: Getting transportation projects developed, designed, constructed and opened for public use. Enhancements in technology are providing better tracking, communication and flexibility for TxDOT's project delivery efforts.

"Texans have provided funding and created TxDOT to plan, develop and execute the delivery of projects in the State Transportation Program to move people and goods. TxDOT is not needed if it cannot efficiently deliver transportation projects. We constantly work with the public, businesses and industry partners to improve processes, procedures and resources to deliver the right projects based on projected funding as quickly as possible," said Chief Engineer Bill Hale.

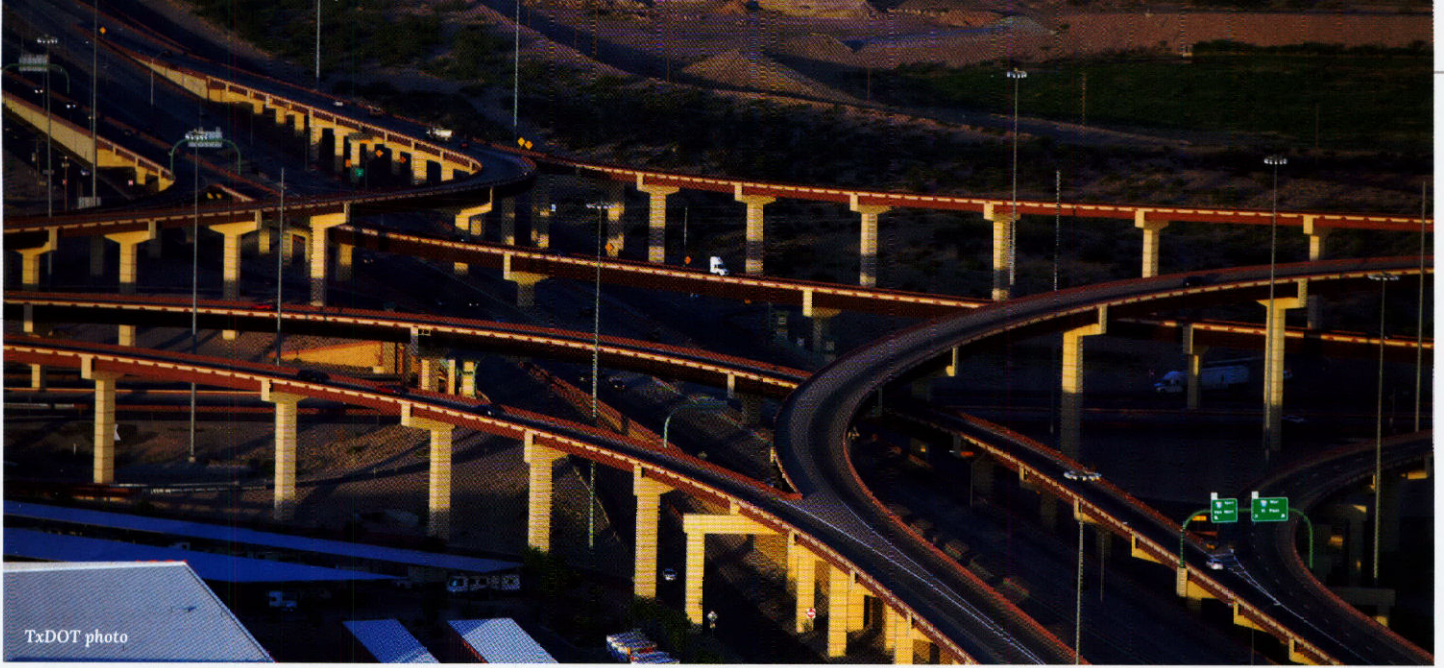
At TxDOT, project delivery refers to all phases of developing projects from feasibility studies and environmental clearance to design and construction planning to right of way acquisition to letting and construction. It is TxDOT's construction process from the beginning to the end.

"Project delivery can be a long process that is not always understood by the general public," said Brian Barth, deputy executive director for program delivery at TxDOT. "A big project in a metropolitan area could have a timeframe of seven years or more, if things go smoothly."

TxDOT is constantly working to make the project delivery process more efficient and effective. Key areas in those efforts include tracking projects, communicating about projects and providing flexibility when managing projects.

Tracking projects effectively through the project delivery phases helps keep them on schedule. In addition, the agency frequently has opportunities to deliver more projects than planned. Additional sources of funding, like federal programs and stimulus packages, can become available at short notice. Also, bids that are lower than anticipated can free up funding for other projects. A good tracking process helps the agency take advantage of these opportunities.

In the past, TxDOT tracked projects through several legacy systems but in 2019 this functionality was consolidated in TxDOTCONNECT. Also known as the



TxDOT photo

Flexibility is becoming more important to take advantage of opportunities to deliver more projects.

Modernize Portfolio and Project Management initiative, TxDOTCONNECT is the agency's custom-built system for managing the delivery of transportation programs, projects and right of way. The system marked a leap forward in productivity.

"TxDOTCONNECT allows visibility into the progress of each and every project we are working on for everyone involved," said Barth. "It has been a huge benefit for us in tracking our projects."

Communication is another important component of project delivery that TxDOT continues to improve. Communication during the project development process

is crucial as the agency needs to keep stakeholders, elected officials, partners and the public informed.

Another key piece of communication is with the agency's industry partners like contractors and consultants who need to know about upcoming projects so they can prepare to bid for them.

Internal communication on projects is also vital to getting projects completed efficiently. TxDOTCONNECT is helping to improve communication and collaboration among teams. The system includes automatic notifications at different stages of development for a project. Automated workflows streamline internal communication on projects and trigger discussions and collaboration.

Finally, flexibility is becoming more important in project delivery as the agency looks to take advantage of opportunities to deliver more projects. The agency is working to develop more projects than it can currently accommodate in its budget to have projects ready to go on short notice, a strategy called overprogramming. Most importantly, the projects must be a good mix of sizes and types across all the districts and the districts need the resources to get those projects prepared.

"Typically, it's been kind of a scramble to find additional projects when we get these funding opportunities," said Barth. "Now we are using a process that Bill Hale has nicknamed rack 'em and stack 'em. We are getting a good variety of projects ready that we can move quickly into letting or onto the shelf. Contractors are beginning to ask about our rack 'em and stack 'em plan, and it's music to my ears."

Project delivery is part of TxDOT's core mission and improvements in technology and adjustments in planning are helping the agency be better than ever at Connecting You With Texas. ■



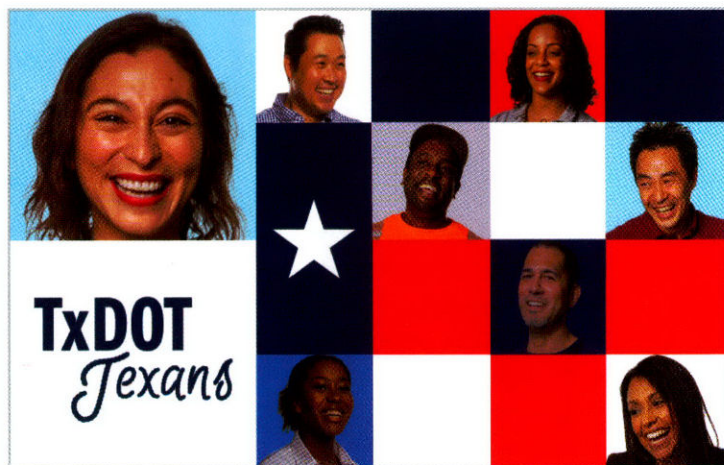
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Project delivery is TxDOT's construction process from the beginning to the end.

EMPLOYEES ARE PEOPLE, TOO in social media videos



Becky Ozuna is one of the employees profiled in TxDOT Texans.



The TxDOT Texans campaign shares personal profiles of TxDOT employees on social media.

If you ever spend time with co-workers outside of the office, you're likely to find a genuine, thoughtful and incredibly talented person behind the cubicle. That's exactly what the new TxDOT Texans social media campaign is aiming to show.

"I'm a huge Selena fan. People should know that about me. A lot of people do know that about me," Don't mess with Texas® Campaign Coordinator Becky Ozuna said.

Becky Ozuna was one of the first to be profiled in the new TxDOT Texans campaign. The goal of the campaign is to show the people of Texas that TxDOT employees are Texans just like them. Communications Division team members interview TxDOT employees, and then share those videos on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with the hashtag #TxDOTTexans.

Ozuna was one of the first to be profiled, but former TxDOT Executive Director James Bass kicked off the campaign before his retirement.

"I am a Bass that cannot swim. Never learned," Bass said in his video.

Traffic and construction delays happen across the state and that can be frustrating for drivers. Unfortunately, sometimes people can take those frustrations out on TxDOT employees. They may not realize that TxDOT employees aren't just cogs in the machine. They're people like anybody else who drive the same roads and have the same issues. They also have some fascinating hobbies.

"I used to sing for a band here in Austin called Frennetica, back in 2005," Ozuna said. "It was a really fun and weird time. I am not that fun anymore."

Other TxDOT Texans include a reggae singer, steer wrestler, barking cat owner and Mr. Potato Head collector.

"We want this campaign to be fun and lighthearted," Media Relations Section Director Veronica Beyer said. "We want to humanize TxDOT, which means showing who people really are when we capture their unscripted personalities on camera, including the outtakes. We hope after the recordings, our featured TxDOT Texans will have forgotten they were being recorded, and even had a little fun."

Many outtakes are kept in the final edit to keep these videos fun and engaging to the public.

"I'm really boring, I don't know why y'all asked me to do this," Ozuna said in the video.

Like Ozuna, employees may think they're boring but everyone has a story to tell about their lives. Just like the people we serve, we all have talents, interests, frustrations, families and friends. There's just one difference: We're not just Texans, we're TxDOT Texans.

Know someone who would be a good TxDOT Texans profile? Contact MediaRelations@txdot.gov. ■

Agencywide survey

PROVIDES VALUABLE COMMUNICATION INSIGHTS

The Executive and Employee Communications Section of the Communications Division was able to gain valuable insights thanks to an agencywide survey distributed in September. A total of 978 employees from divisions and districts across the state responded to the survey, which allowed employees to give feedback on internal communications products such as *TN Magazine*, *TN Minute* and *TN+*.

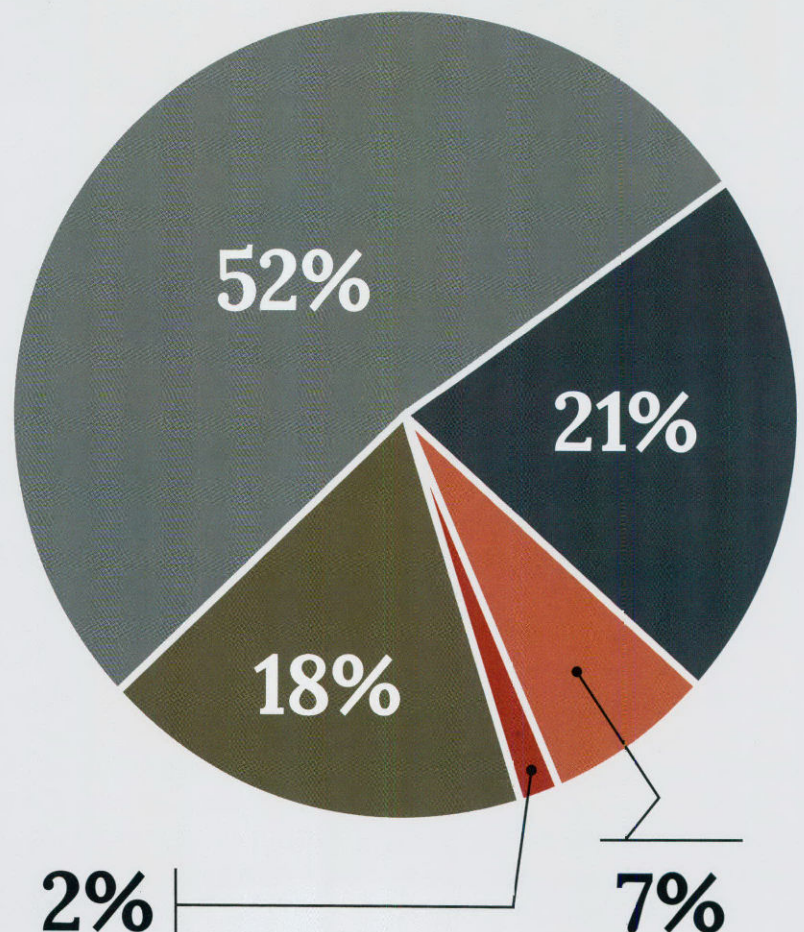
Thanks to the feedback, the EEC team gained many insights that will help improve internal videos, publications, intranet sites and more.

Some of those insights include:

- 70% of those who responded said they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with internal communications at the department.
- The Executive Director Videos are popular with employees. 92% said they watch the Executive Director Videos and 76% responded they had an “excellent” or “good” impression of the videos.
- Top choices for internal communication tools employees would like to see more of include Videos from administration (57%), Stories on Crossroads (52%) and Email (46%).

The EEC team would like to thank all the employees who took time to take the survey. We will continue to use the feedback to improve internal communications. ■

Overall, how satisfied are you with internal communications at TxDOT?



TRAINING BRINGS ATTENTION TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Austin District employees at a 2019 training event.

The Austin District Human Trafficking Awareness Training Initiative is the product of collaboration and a commitment to improving services, products and processes, while obtaining tangible results.

TxDOT provides human trafficking awareness training during New Employee Orientation. In 2019, the agency joined a statewide effort to end human trafficking. This training inspired the Austin District program team to expand the educational material made available to TxDOT employees and include contractors and other industry partners in training initiatives.

The Austin District program team collaborated with the Human Resources Division and other divisions to create collateral – vehicle placards, stickers, handouts and bilingual wallet cards – that included information about recognizing labor trafficking. These were shared at a 2019 in-person

kick-off event held during National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. This event included Gov. Greg Abbott and First Lady Cecilia Abbott as featured speakers as well as Dr. Noël Busch-Armendariz, a human trafficking survivor and nationally recognized subject matter expert from the University of Texas at Austin. Attendees also saw a video detailing a first-hand account of a possible instance of labor trafficking discovered by Austin District employees.

The Human Trafficking Awareness Training Initiative is an annual endeavor. Expanding the initiative, the Austin District program team created refresher training material for supervisors to review each calendar year.

The Austin District program team also worked with the Creative Services Section of the Communications Division to develop a Human Trafficking Awareness Training Initiative web page



Human trafficking survivor Benz Adriano was one of the featured speakers at the kick-off event.

featuring the training material. The site includes toolkits and turn-key event packets for public information officers interested in hosting their own events. In addition, the Human Resources Division is developing a Human Trafficking Workgroup at TxDOT.

The COVID-19 pandemic didn't prevent the Austin District program team from continuing their mission. They adapted presentation materials and learned new skills to enable them to host a virtual human trafficking awareness event.

Most recently, the team collaborated with Gov. Abbott's Child Sex Trafficking team, the Department of Public Safety and the Governor's Commission for Women to develop educational material on timely topics. The Austin District program team will present this material at virtual and in-person events including the safety conference for the Associated General Contractors of America.

The team also worked with Executive Director Marc Williams and TxDOT's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Program to bring attention to World Day Against Human Trafficking in Persons, an international day of recognition founded by the United Nations. A memo was sent to the entire organization and bilingual social media content was created. Content developed by the Austin District and TxDOT's social media team inspired nine other districts to create posts of their own. The Austin District program team led the effort to "like" and "retweet" each other's content, ultimately expanding the overall reach of the message for the entire organization.



Deputy District Engineer Mike Arellano for the Austin District at a 2019 human trafficking training event.

Next, the Austin District program team is researching the feasibility of pre-loading all TxDOT cell phones with the latest human trafficking reporting tool, iWatchTexas. This tool is being promoted by Gov. Abbott's office and is managed by DPS.

The impact of the Human Trafficking Awareness Training Initiative is evident from the number of questions received regarding the subject matter and the requests for additional educational materials. The Austin District program team recognizes the important role the people in the transportation industry have in identifying and reporting instances of human and labor trafficking. ■

HELPING HAND:

TxDOT crews travel to Louisiana after Hurricane Ida

Hurricane Ida made landfall at Port Fourchon, La. on August 29 as a Category 4 storm and left behind a trail of destruction second only to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development needed help and TxDOT crews answered the call.

A total of 40 employees from six districts – Atlanta, Beaumont, Bryan, Dallas, Houston and Tyler – deployed to five LaDOTD districts over the course of three weeks to help heavily affected areas. TxDOT crews would spend a week at a time in Louisiana assisting the local employees. TxDOT also deployed 43 units of equipment during that time.

The Lufkin and Paris districts and Fleet Operations Division mechanics were on standby – ready and willing to support in any way they could. The Maintenance Division took the lead on coordinating the efforts with the LaDOTD. Also lending support were the Occupational Safety, Support Services, Procurement and Communications divisions.

The Atlanta District sent Traffic Systems Specialist Paul James and Equipment Mechanic Jacob Hurt to conduct routine maintenance in the Bossier City area. James and Hurt worked in several different parishes and were always accompanied by LaDOTD employees from the local district. The crews meshed together easily.

“It was a privilege for my bosses to approve me to go and represent TxDOT. The people in Louisiana are great. Like us, they have goals to meet and timelines, and they show up. They work as a group to accomplish a goal,” James said.

For Hurt, the devastation left behind by Hurricane Ida made a major impression.



(Left to right) Jacob Hurt and Paul James of the Atlanta District traveled to Louisiana to assist after Hurricane Ida.



(Left to right) Barney Courtney, Jay Castleberry, Wesley Burdette and Keith Canady were deployed from the Beaumont District to help after Hurricane Ida.



TxDOT photo

The Bryan District sent Carl Schroeder (left) and Quinn Ashworth to help in Louisiana.

“A red light would be facing out in the field after Ida spun it like a carousel wheel. They had to straighten up everything the wind had twisted,” Hurt said. “There were 18 wheelers in swamps.”

General Transportation Technician Kevin Howard of the Dallas District was among eight of the district’s sign and signal crew members who made the trip to Louisiana. They were tasked with keeping traffic moving in areas not directly hit by the storm.

“I took the opportunity because I know how it is. I know the devastation of the aftermath of a hurricane, so helping was a no-brainer,” Howard expressed.

Having been born and raised in Louisiana, Howard knows a thing or two about hurricanes.

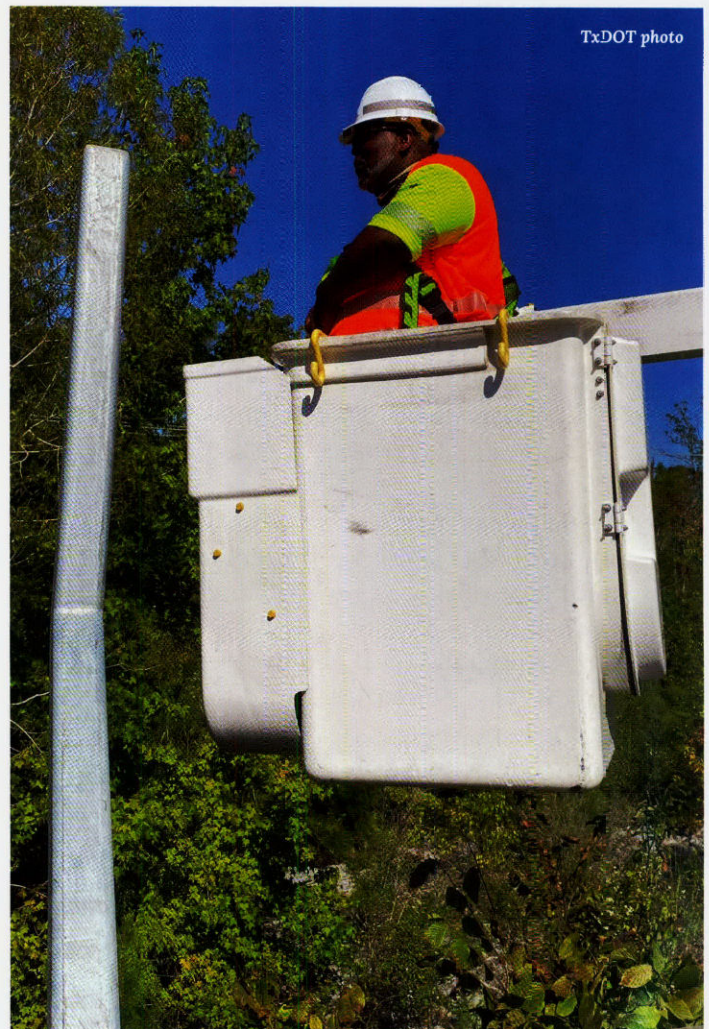
“I’ve been through it all my life. I had to run from them. I had to prepare for them not knowing if it’s going to hit or not,” he said.

It was Hurricane Katrina that led Howard to leave his hometown of New Orleans some 16 years ago and move to Dallas at 32 years old.

“My house was completely destroyed. It was just mold from top to bottom. Nothing was saved,” he said.

Howard’s commitment to helping other hurricane survivors started when he was first deployed to Corpus Christi along with other TxDOT staff after Hurricane Harvey crippled parts of Texas in 2017.

“It’s what we do and expect. It is an honor to serve the people of Texas and extend a helping hand to our neighbors in need,” District Maintenance Administrator Victor Songer said.



TxDOT photo

Kevin Howard of the Dallas District is from Louisiana and was eager to go back to help.



Pat Peloquin and Lee Roy Bryan (left to right in orange shirts) were among the Houston District employees sent to Grand Isle and other badly hit areas. With them are LaDOTD employees Roger, Damien, Jaqueline, Chance and Jonathon.

The Houston District sent eight crew members to work in some of the worst hit areas of Grand Isle, Houma and Morgan City.

“We worked with their sign and signal crews to repair damaged signs and replace signals,” said Tracy Schiller, maintenance crew chief. “There was no where you could look that you didn’t see some sort of damage. We saw trailer homes that were upside down and boats flipped over in the water. It was destruction everywhere.”

All the damage made it difficult to maneuver on the roads and rain and wind from Hurricane Nicholas didn’t help.

“It rained every day when I was there,” said Pat Peloquin, general transportation technician. “We had to be careful of downed power lines and debris was everywhere. It was a crazy but gratifying time. Everyone was pulling together to do the right thing.”

The LaDOTD staff and the people of Louisiana were very grateful for the help.

“Everyone we worked with was super nice,” said Schiller. “I would go back again to help. I’m sure they would do the same for us.”

The Tyler District sent six employees across the state line.

“This is the first time that I can remember that we’ve gone to another state to assist,” said Don McQuitty, bridge inspection specialist. “We were directed to send our best people to represent TxDOT well.”

They certainly did that! Thank you to everyone at TxDOT who responded to assist our neighbor. ■



Pat Peloquin sorts through the debris after Hurricane Ida.



Lee Roy Bryan inspects a damaged sign in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida.

TxDOT EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED AS Texans Caring for Texans

Each year, Texans Caring for Texans honors employees from state agencies across 26 counties in the Texas Panhandle for their efforts that positively affect their communities. This year, TxDOT employees from the Amarillo and Childress districts were among those recognized at the annual ceremony in August.

Frank Figueroa, the Channing maintenance section assistant in the Amarillo District, was recognized for helping a stranded motorist. He was patrolling roads during the first part of the winter storms that hit the state in February. He was on his second round, heading south on U.S. 54 when he noticed a vehicle on the shoulder facing against traffic.

After turning back and visiting with the motorist, Figueroa learned that the gentleman had been stranded for nearly four hours. His vehicle ran out of gas and he was lying down in his car with only a blanket for warmth. After a few phone calls, a fellow employee met Figueroa halfway with gas.

“Our maintenance barn was about 40 miles away from the vehicle, and the nearest fuel location was around 35 miles away in Dalhart,” said Bart Lamberson, Channing maintenance section supervisor. “Frank gave the motorist enough fuel to get him to a gas station. The temperatures were starting to get colder. If Frank hadn’t arrived when he did, the stranded motorist said he planned to start walking soon.”

Figueroa retired at the end of August after more than 26 years of service to TxDOT.

Also recognized as a Texan Caring for Texans this year was Dustin Graves, a general transportation technician with the Claude maintenance section in the Amarillo District. After finding out they couldn’t have their own children, Graves and his wife, Carolyn, started the process of becoming foster parents. In 2017, they became licensed foster care parents and immediately started an incredible new life. They have fostered 12 children and adopted four — three girls and one boy. They are hoping to adopt a premature baby they are currently fostering as well. The Graves said there have been a lot of ups and downs with tears and laughter, but it is well worth it.

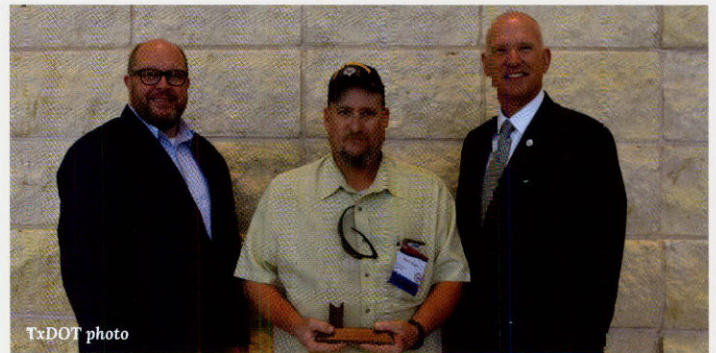
Annabel Jurado, a planner with the Childress District, was the third TxDOT employee recognized as a Texan



Frank Figueroa was recognized as a Texan Caring for Texans for helping a stranded motorist.



Annabel Jurado was honored for her work to support employees with financial burdens when they are faced with medical emergencies.



Dustin Graves (center) was recognized for his work with his wife fostering children. With Tim Bowles (left) and Dr. Todd Rasberry.

Caring for Texans this year. She currently serves as chair of the district’s Employee Advisory Committee. In that role, she is responsible for fundraisers throughout the year to help employees with financial burdens when they are faced with medical emergencies. Outside of work, Jurado serves as a volunteer for Court Appointed Special Advocates, a national association that supports and promotes court-appointed advocates for abused or neglected children.

“Our districts are fortunate to have several employees who are constantly giving back to the communities in which they serve,” said Amarillo District Engineer Blair Johnson. ■

WHEN TURNING 21 YEARS OLD is nothing to celebrate

November 7, 2000 was the last deathless day on Texas roads. Every day since, someone has died in a fatal crash on Texas roads and bridges. Sadly, Nov. 7, 2021, marks another year of daily deaths. In fact, based on reportable crashes in 2020, one person was killed every 2 hours and 15 minutes.

To help raise awareness of this tragic trend, TxDOT is continuing its #EndTheStreakTX campaign.

The #EndTheStreakTX campaign is just one way TxDOT is working to end traffic deaths.

The fatality rate on Texas roadways for 2020 was 1.50 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. This is a 18.94% increase from 1.26 in 2019. Texas experienced an increase in the number of motor vehicle traffic fatalities. The 2020 death toll of 3,896 was an increase of 7.54% from the 3,623 deaths recorded in 2019.

There were 12,107 serious injury crashes in Texas in 2020. The annual vehicle miles traveled in Texas during 2020 reached just over 260 billion, a decrease of 10.61% over the more than 288 billion traveled in 2019.

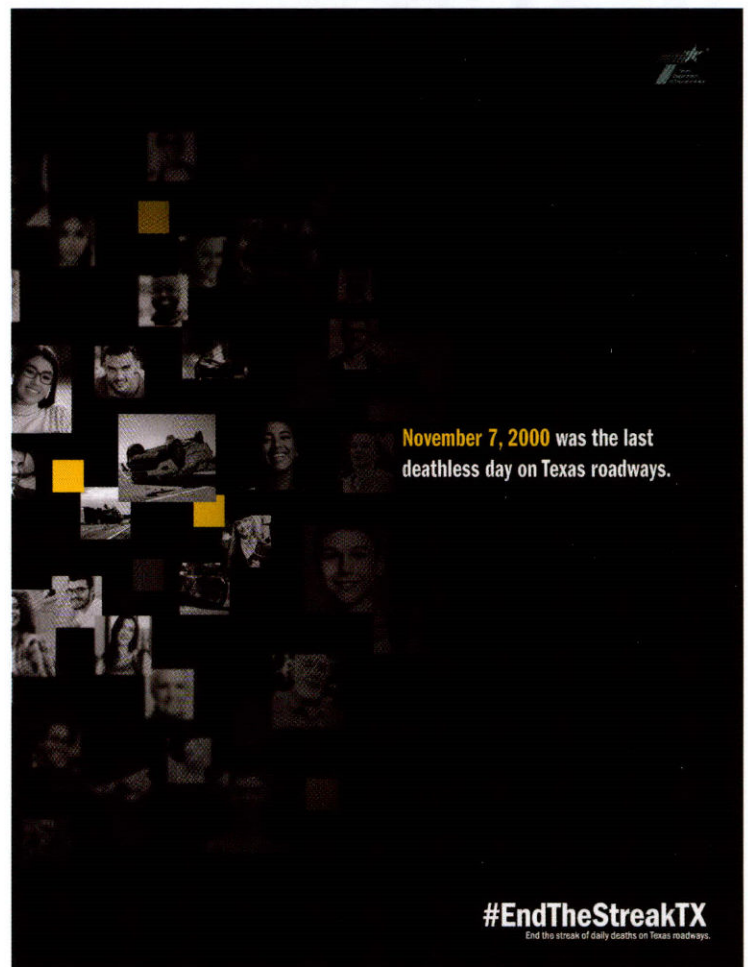
Fatalities in traffic crashes in rural areas of the state accounted for 51.03% of the state's traffic fatalities. There were 1,988 deaths in rural traffic crashes. Single vehicle, run-off-the-road crashes resulted in 1,354 deaths in 2020. This was 34.75% of all motor vehicle traffic deaths in 2020.

Sunday, June 21, Friday, August 14 and Monday, December 28 were the deadliest days in 2020 with 22 people killed in traffic crashes on each one of those days. October was the deadliest month with 382 persons killed.

In 2020, there were 958 people killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes where a driver was under the influence of alcohol. This is 25% of the total number of people killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes. The same year, there were 368 people killed in crashes involving distracted driving. This is a 3% decrease from 2019.

Texans can play a major role in ending fatal crashes with a few simple driving habits: wear seatbelts, drive the speed limit, put away the phone and other distractions and never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs. By taking these easy steps, Texas drivers can help end the streak of daily deaths on our roadways. Help spread the word by posting on social media with #EndTheStreakTX. ■

#EndTheStreakTX
End the streak of daily deaths on Texas roadways.



UNDERSTAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

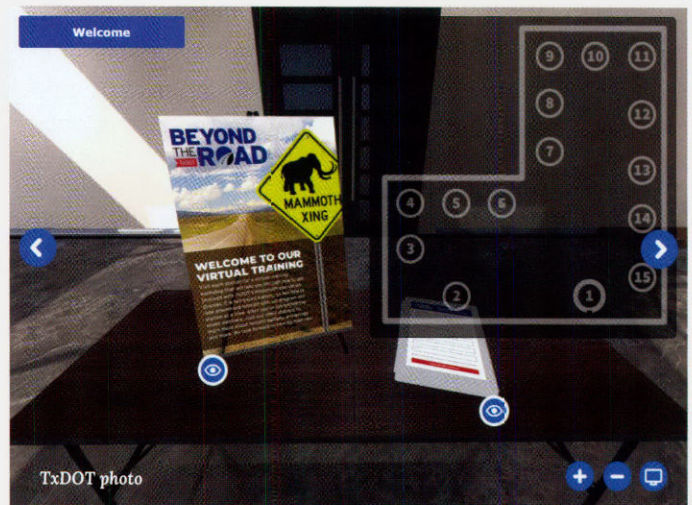
with new virtual training

A new virtual training platform offers insight into TxDOT's historic preservation efforts and hopes to increase public participation and understanding.

For more than 50 years, TxDOT has been identifying and evaluating historic and cultural resources beyond the road. Surprisingly, however, most people are unaware of the full extent of our historic preservation process. TxDOT does a lot more than construction and the Environmental Affairs Division is on a mission to get the word out about its environmental work through a new training platform.

Environmental work is guided by federal laws, like the National Historic Preservation Act, that require TxDOT to stop, look and listen for historic places along the roadside before construction ever begins. We evaluate historic buildings and bridges, archeological sites and cemeteries, sacred and religious landmarks, and historic objects and landscapes. This process of identifying and evaluating resources falls under Section 106 of the NHPA. Section 106 also requires public participation and the process can get very daunting, confusing and time consuming.

To help Texans better understand their role in the historic preservation process, TxDOT recently launched a Section 106 Virtual Training Platform. This self-paced training is very interactive and teaches participants about TxDOT, the Section 106 review process and how to share your input on projects. Through the virtual platform you can:



- Engage in several short webinars about historic preservation and the Section 106 process.
- Understand current archeological and historical projects.
- Download free brochures and outreach materials.
- Explore our federal and state partners' websites and resources.
- Learn about TxDOT's historic bridge program.
- Understand common project definitions.
- Provide feedback.

TxDOT continues its efforts to build a successful historic preservation program, but that effort also relies on public input and participation. Check out the new training platform and Roadside Chat webinar series on [TxDOT.gov](https://www.txdot.gov). ■

Finding your roadmap to self-care

Taking care of yourself is one of the most important parts of daily living and yet it can also be the most difficult to do. Making self-care part of your daily routine can be a game-changer for your mental and emotional wellbeing. Self-care is anything you do to take care of your mind and body. It's about engaging in activities that promote personal wellbeing and is an important aspect of stress management.

We can't care and be present for others if we don't pay attention to our own wellbeing. The best analogy for this is when we fly. The flight attendant goes through the safety protocols and when they talk about the oxygen masks, they say: "If you're traveling with children or someone who requires assistance, secure your oxygen mask first before helping others." It's the same in our everyday life. When we don't take care of ourselves, no one wins.

Funds Management Section Director Stuart Hanzlik with the Finance Division is a leader who focuses on the importance of self-care. He fits breaks and a healthy lunch into his daily schedule. He also takes advantage of the Exercise During the Day Program and exercises three times a week for 30 minutes. Hanzlik sees firsthand the self-care benefits of exercising.

"Taking a break to exercise helps me to mentally refocus, so I can better serve my team throughout the day," said Hanzlik.

He also encourages his team to engage in self-care activities.

"I remind my team that they need to take time out for vacations, use sick leave when they're sick, look after each other and encourage each other," he said. "I let them know that I am here for them if they need to talk."

After recently going through several surgeries, Hanzlik realized that self-compassion and affirmations are key to his daily self-care practice. Reading, drawing, spending time outdoors, creating time to laugh with his family and daily prayer have played important roles in his recovery.



Stuart Hanzlik with the Finance Division is a leader who focuses on the importance of self-care.

"Refocusing my mindset away from negativity and onto what I can still do and the ways I can continue to improve my situation has helped me to handle the mental challenge of a life-altering situation," he said. "It's important to have grace with yourself and keep doing your best."

Self-care takes purposeful effort but, in the end, it's always worth it! ■

**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. 17.



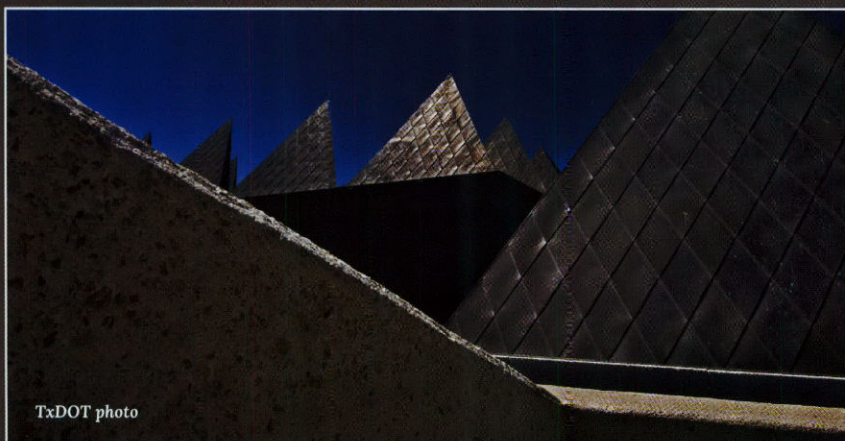
TxDOT photo

Identified:

Congratulations to our first identifier Chris Cowen (SJT).

Last edition's photo featured the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi. The original museum was designed by Philip Johnson and the pyramidal addition was done by Ricardo Legorreta.

Others identifying the photo were Aaron Arroyo (TPD), Sara Gonzalez (HRD), Joseph Hagler (LFK) and Ruben Garcia (CRP). ■



TxDOT photo

UPCOMING TxDOT EVENTS

Nov. 11

VETERANS DAY

(All agencies closed)

Nov. 18

**TEXAS TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION MEETING**

(Austin)

Nov. 24

DAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING

(Minimal staff required)

Nov. 25

THANKSGIVING

(All agencies closed)

Nov. 26

DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING

(All agencies closed)

Dec. 9

**TEXAS TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION MEETING**

(Austin)

Dec. 23

DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS EVE

(Minimal staff required)

Dec. 24

CHRISTMAS EVE

(All agencies closed)

TxDOTCONNECT

team receives statewide technology award



The TxDOTCONNECT team recently received an award for project excellence: (clockwise from top left) Brian Barth, Theresa Banic, Stacey Worsham, Deborah Morris, Erika Kemp and Benjamin McCulloch.

The TxDOTCONNECT team recently received an award for project excellence in the collaborative solutions category from the Texas Association of State Systems for Computing and Communications, or TASSCC. The association works to advance education and networking among professionals supporting information technology for the Texas public sector.

TxDOT Chief Information Officer Anh Selissen serves as president of TASSCC and presented the award to TxDOTCONNECT Program Director Erika Kemp at the TASSCC awards luncheon in August.

TxDOTCONNECT is the agency's custom-built system for managing the delivery of transportation programs, projects and right of way.

"To develop the TxDOTCONNECT system, we had to look at our jobs in new ways and learn a new technology so that we could let go of

legacy systems," said Kemp. "This required a great deal of communication and trust between all team members."

Deputy Executive Director for Program Delivery Brian Barth, who sponsors the TxDOTCONNECT system, thanked the many people who worked to create the TxDOTCONNECT system.

"Thanks to the hard work of this team, we now have a system that allows us to share information freely while planning transportation projects," said Barth. "This would not have been possible without the understanding of business processes and innovative ideas contributed by TxDOT staff, system developers and external partners."

The agency launched TxDOTCONNECT in early 2019 and recently deployed new functionality to support alternative delivery projects, major projects and categories of the Unified Transportation Program. ■

Katie Vick

PARIS DISTRICT

Katie Vick DISTRICT BRIDGE AND HYDRAULICS ENGINEER

Katie Vick, district bridge and hydraulics engineer with the Paris District, has been with TxDOT since 2015. A graduate of University of Texas at Arlington, where she received a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering, Katie spent nine years designing airplanes before coming to TxDOT. She recently started a new role coordinating bridge design and inspection. Before that, she was a designer for the district's in-house bridge and roadway projects and was promoted to design lead in 2019. She earned her professional engineer license in 2019, 13 years after she graduated college through TxDOT's Engineering Assistant Career Development Program. Vick and her husband Daniel have one daughter and one cat. They enjoy renovating houses and Vick also builds furniture. Katie's favorite movie is *Apollo 13*.



Why *Apollo 13*? What about *The Martian*?

Apollo 13 inspired me to become an aerospace engineer. It has a special place in my heart. *The Martian* movie would've been good if I hadn't read the book. The book was so good, and the movie just didn't live up to it.

You're stranded on a deserted island, and you can only bring three book series. Which ones?

Harry Potter, *Game of Thrones* and *Little House on the Prairie*. I'm excited to read *Harry Potter* and *Little House* to my daughter when she's older.

Who is your favorite *Harry Potter* character and why? And what house are you?

I like all of the Weasley family, but especially Mrs. Weasley. She manages a crazy and big family, and still extends her care to others outside her family. I am a Ravenclaw.

Fixer Upper or Property Brothers?

I will watch any of the do-it-yourself shows, but my favorite is *This Old House*. They actually show you how to do it, not just focus on the demolition and final product. Though my husband and I do home improvement work together, I started before we were married. It was a lot of YouTube, Home Depot, Lowes and just figuring it out. You just do it.

What's your current home improvement project?

We inherited my husband's family home in Oklahoma. It's a 50-year-old house that we are slowly renovating. We're renovating the kitchen right now, with hopes of adding on to the house eventually. I'm planning to build my own cabinets, which will be a new challenge. ■

Communications brings home three Transcomm Awards

The Communications Division took home three awards during the annual Transcomm Skills Contest presented in September. The Skills Contest is conducted annually by the AASHTO Committee on Transportation Communications to recognize the outstanding work of its public relations practitioners and facilitate an exchange of ideas. The contest is considered the premier competition in the transportation industry. The awards have become a standard of public relations excellence among state departments of transportation.

This year, TxDOT's #EndTheStreakTX campaign was honored for Best Use of Social Media in a Campaign. The video, "TxDOT Responds to 2021 Winter Storm Uri," took home Best Audio/Video Production - Internal. The Opening Session of the 94th Annual Transportation Short Course won for Best Special Event (Transportation).

Congratulations, winners!

SAN ANTONIO DISTRICT

SH 16 corridor gets safety improvements in San Antonio District

In September, TxDOT and area partners in San Antonio celebrated \$3.6 million of transportation investments along the SH 16 (Bandera Road) corridor from Loop 410 to Braun Road.

The SH 16 Safety Improvement Project aims to increase connectivity and enhance safety for pedestrians with the construction of new sidewalks, ramps, railing and bus pads. The project is a result of the MyLink Program, jointly funded by TxDOT and VIA Metropolitan Transit.

Texas Transportation Commissioner Laura Ryan led the ribbon cutting ceremony and was joined by San Antonio District Engineer Gina Gallegos, VIA Metropolitan Transit President and CEO Jeffrey C. Arndt, San Antonio Councilwoman Ana Sandoval, Leon Valley Mayor Chris Riley and key transportation stakeholders. ■



A ribbon cutting celebrated \$3.6 million of transportation investments along the SH 16 corridor in the San Antonio District: (left to right) Gina Gallegos, Jeffrey C. Arndt, Laura Ryan, Chris Riley, Ana Sandoval and Rep. Ray Lopez.

PHARR DISTRICT

I-69C/I-2 Interchange Project breaks ground in Pharr District

In September, elected officials and representatives from TxDOT and construction firm Dragados-Pulice Joint Venture took part in the groundbreaking of the Pharr District \$303 million Interchange Project. State Rep. Terry Canales called the I-69C/I-2 interchange reconstruction in Pharr a monument.

When the original interchange was constructed 30 years ago, the Hidalgo County population was 384,000. By 2010, it had doubled to 775,000 residents. The new modifications will alleviate heavily congested areas and address public safety concerns.

Dragados-Pulice Joint Venture will carry out the design, construction and maintenance of the approximately \$303 million I-2/I-69C Interchange Project in Hidalgo County, which will include improvements to 7.8 miles of roadway in McAllen, Pharr and San Juan to reduce travel time and improve mobility, safety and traffic operations. ■



Rep. Sergio Muñoz Jr., Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, Texas Transportation Commission Chairman J. Bruce Bugg Jr., Rep. Terry Canales, Pharr Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, Pharr District Engineer Pedro R. Alvarez, Justo Molina from Dragados-Pulice Joint Venture and TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams.

OVERLAY PROJECT

wins Quality in Construction Award for Amarillo District

The Amarillo District and contractor RK Hall Construction have been awarded the Quality in Construction Award by the National Asphalt Pavement Association, or NAPA. NAPA's Quality in Construction Awards recognize high-quality asphalt paving projects and are rated by independent engineers.

The Amarillo District's award is for the I-40/U.S. 60 hot mix overlay project in Potter County, a 4.5-mile-long project that had three bridges in each direction. The project began in June 2019 and was completed in August 2019. The project became eligible for the NAPA award when it was recognized by the Texas Asphalt Pavement Association in September 2020.



The I-40/U.S. 60 hot mix overlay project was awarded the Quality in Construction Award by the National Asphalt Pavement Association: Dumas Area Engineer Bernardo Ferrel (holding plaque, left) and Thomas Jones with RK Hall Construction (holding plaque, right) pose with the project crew.

Representatives from both TxDOT and RK Hall noted at a presentation in July that this is not an easy award to win, but that communication and teamwork played a big role in their success.

"It starts in the pit: Making the material, getting it right, hauling it to the plant, getting the design, stockpiling it, operating the plant right, keeping tolerances down, getting it out to the road and keeping the laydown machine moving," said Kenneth Petr, director of construction for the Amarillo District. "We appreciate RK Hall's desire to win this award."

Thomas Jones, area manager for RK Hall, noted that it was tough to get the right materials to blend, but teamwork and patience won out.

"That communication we have from top to bottom is a real asset," Jones said. "I'm really proud of everyone and this award."

This was the second Stone Matrix Asphalt overlay project for the Amarillo District. SMA is durable surfacing material used for roads with heavy traffic. Dumas Area Engineer Bernardo Ferrel, who served as assistant Amarillo area engineer during construction, said to winning this award speaks volumes. Ferrel attributed the project's success to RK Hall's Amarillo crew.

"They take pride in their work from making sure that the paver keeps moving to staying on top of potential issues that could arise. It shows the pride that the crew has out there wanting to make sure the job gets done and that it gets done right," Ferrel said.

This project will now compete with hundreds more across the nation for NAPA's prestigious Sheldon G. Hayes Award, which recognizes the country's highest quality highway pavements. ■

TxDOT PROJECTS WIN regional transportation awards



The U.S. 87 Truck Relief Route in the Abilene District was recognized for Operations Excellence.

TxDOT received regional recognition for two projects in the 2021 America's Transportation Awards competition at the annual meeting of the Western Association of State Highway Transportation Officials in September. Sponsored by AASHTO, AAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the competition recognizes state departments of transportation and the projects they deliver that make their communities better.

TxDOT's U.S. 175/S.M. Wright Freeway Phase 1 project was recognized in the "Quality of Life/Community Development, Medium" category. This category honors projects that provide significant benefits to the communities in which they are located, especially in the form of economic growth and the well-being of citizens.

This \$104 million project removed a highway and improved safety, mobility and the environment in a southern Dallas neighborhood. The existing freeway was transformed into a six-lane boulevard with traffic signals. The project also eliminated a section known as "Deadman's Curve" and created direct-connect ramps that funnel traffic onto I-45 and divert commuter traffic from the S.M. Wright Freeway. As a result, traffic volume decreased from 107,000 vehicles per day to about 40,000 per day, keeping drivers safer and restoring a community long divided by an elevated highway.

The U.S. 87 Truck Relief Route was honored in the "Operations Excellence, Medium" category. This category recognizes projects that deliver a well-functioning, reliable and safer transportation system through operational solutions.

The U.S. 87 Truck Relief Route, a \$70 million project completed in 2020, consists of a new four-lane rural expressway providing two lanes in each direction with a wide median. The truck-relief route is along the Ports-to-Plains corridor that stretches from Canada through the United States into Mexico. This corridor, which previously ran through downtown Big Spring, also handles heavy traffic due to Permian Basin oilfield activity. Roughly 30% of that traffic consists of trucks. The new relief route allows vehicles to travel at highway speeds and includes grade-separated intersections for a safer, less congested alternative while still allowing access to downtown Big Spring through Business U.S. 87. It also incorporates a three-level interchange at the I-20 intersection, allowing for the separation of U.S. 87, I-20 and frontage road traffic. Overall, drivers are now safer and experience less congestion.

Congratulations to TxDOT's honorees! ■

MODIFICATIONS IMPROVE TANKER TRAILER SAFETY in San Angelo District

TxDOT employees need to always keep safety as a top priority. And that's exactly what the San Angelo Special Jobs crew has done in the San Angelo District. They developed several modifications to the 5,000-gallon tanker trailers frequently used in operations to improve safety and efficiency.

The crew uses tanker trailers in a number of ways. They distribute a concentrated water-salt solution called brine onto roadways as a pretreatment for winter storms. They transfer and store water for wildfire operations and perform many other roadway tasks.

During inclement weather, the San Angelo crew noticed it was often treacherous to climb to the top of the tankers to insert a dropline to fill and check brine depth. They also noticed that the undercarriage of these trailers was taking a beating from the salt solution, causing many of the fittings and pipes to rust and erode.

As a result of these and other observations, the crew implemented the following improvements:

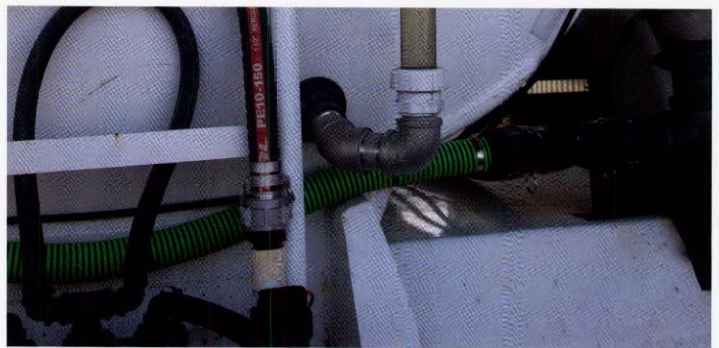
- Installed a sight glass with a float bobber inside the tube, so the fill level could be easily seen from the ground without having to climb on top of the tanker.
- Added a third mud flap on the rear of the tanker to better shield the undercarriage from brine.
- Combined lubriscal and diesel to create an undercoat spray to help lessen the corrosiveness of the brine on the undercarriage.
- Replaced all the fittings with stainless steel to prevent corrosion.
- Used two valves for the main spray bar to allow more volume flow, which allows the unit to drive at near highway speeds while pre-treating.
- Replumbed the unit so a secondary pump is not needed to load the trailer, making the unit self-sufficient.

These improvements cost roughly \$700 per unit and will increase both efficiency and safety for employees who work with tanker trailers.

Thank you to the San Angelo Special Jobs crew members—Special Jobs General Transportation Technicians Jock Stewart and Wayne Smetana, Special Jobs Coordinator Curt Storey and Equipment Operator Derek Shropshire—for their innovation. ■



The San Angelo Special Jobs crew's modifications to the way tanker trailers are filled improved safety and efficiency: (Left to right, standing) Wayne Smetana and Jock Stewart. (Kneeling): Curt Storey and Derek Shropshire.



A sight glass with float bobber allows the fill level to be checked from the ground.



A third rear mud flap keeps brine away from the undercarriage of the tanker.

MILESTONES

SEPTEMBER SERVICE AWARDS

ABILENE

- 25 Erwin P. Session
- 20 Andrew Rodriguez

ADMINISTRATION

- 10 Benito Ybarra

AMARILLO

- 15 Johnny Olivarez Jr.
Devin J. White
- 10 Daniel L. Briscoe
Thomas R. Collins
Gregg S. Perez
Dannie Thompson Jr.
- 5 Kenneth Orthman

ATLANTA

- 35 Rickie Shields
- 20 Lora K. Martin

AUSTIN

- 25 Michael J. Dube
- 20 Salvador Calzoncit
Douglas Havins
Kevin L. McCoy
- 15 Paul Galvan Jr.
Joseph A. Muck
- 5 Brandice V. Lopez

BROWNWOOD

- 10 Chet M. Glasscock
Buddy L. Slayton

BRYAN

- 20 Ryan C. Jackson
- 15 Jerry J. Hernandez Sr.

CIVIL RIGHTS

- 5 Juanita Webber

COMMUNICATIONS

- 5 Victor Tran

CONSTRUCTION

- 35 Juan F. Urrutia

CONTRACT SERVICES

- 15 James B. Watson

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 5 Albert J. Serda

DALLAS

- 40 Mark L. Ross
- 25 Stephanie D. Ramsey
- 15 Lonnie L. Gaddis Jr.
Garry W. Peppard
Deborah K. Sides
- 10 Jeffrey W. Reese
Dereje A. Tesemma

DESIGN

- 20 James L. Godwin Jr.
Jane C. Lundquist
- 5 Suzanne Shangreaux

EL PASO

- 25 Thelma G. Ramirez

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 15 Jackie A. Ploch

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 20 Gregory J. Chargualaf

FORT WORTH

- 25 Donna R. Fowler
Nicholas Spencero
- 20 Frederick W. Gibson
- 15 Phillip R. Hays
Gilbert Vega Jr.

HOUSTON

- 20 Kristi L. Dornak
- 15 Nena Calvin
Raciel Castillo Jr.
Mario A. Diaz
Emmanuel Isonguyo
Johnny E. Matthews
Justin V. McCray
Catarino Perez IV
Michael A. Porras
- 10 Ijeoma W.
Ejezie-Anusiem
- 5 Anh Do

HUMAN RESOURCES

- 20 Janice E. Robertson
- 5 Gerald Salters

LAREDO

- 20 Christopher L. Kloss
- 5 Eloy Cardenas

LUBBOCK

- 15 Luis H. Peralez

LUFKIN

- 10 Jim S. Morris

MAINTENANCE

- 35 Robert Grona
- 30 Gordon Harkey
- 15 Rick S. Salazar

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

- 20 Susan D. Feudo

ODESSA

- 10 Johnny O. Jasso

PARIS

- 25 William S. Bolton
- 20 Billy J. Phillips
- 5 Conner Arthur

PHARR

- 20 Roberto Agueros
- 15 Reymundo Cantu
- 5 Michael A. Cano

RAIL

- 25 Orlando V.
Jamandre Jr.
- 5 Peter D. Espy

RIGHT OF WAY

- 15 Tonya J. Shaw

SAN ANGELO

- 25 George L. Noriega Jr.
- 15 Robert L. Hampton
Richard A. Holder

SAN ANTONIO

- 20 Juan M. Ruiz
- 10 Brian M. Witherell
- 5 Ann Barrios
Scott Fletcher

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 25 Byron Jones
- 20 Kurt W. Williams

TOLL OPERATIONS

- 10 Anna L. Ramirez

TYLER

- 15 Chris L. Tatum
- 10 Clinton E. Skillern

WACO

- 15 Sheldon G. Daniels
- 5 Julie A. Martinez
Melandy C. Smith

WICHITA FALLS

- 10 George R. Kreidler
Lance L. Pomykal
Shad W. Sturgeon

OCTOBER SERVICE AWARDS

ABILENE

- 20 Sergio M. Ruiz
- 10 David S. Brown
Christopher M.
Burchfield
Timothy A. McDowell
Sylvia Y. Robinson
- 5 Carlos Muniz
David Rodriguez
Brandon Urich

AMARILLO

- 25 Kelvin J. Britten

ATLANTA

- 20 Paul B. James
- 15 Norman E. Petrimoulx

AUSTIN

- 15 Michael E. Botzaritch
Jeremy W. Mikes
- 10 Sandra J. Creamer
Richard J. Kellogg
- 5 Daniel Cueto
George Lomas

BEAUMONT

- 15 Jeremy K. Smith
- 5 Flemon A. Jarrell
Tom E. Ross

BROWNWOOD

- 20 Michael A. Rogers
- 5 Jimmy Coolbaugh

BRYAN

- 25 Daniel P. Green
- 15 James B. Kreamer
Wade A. Tiemann
- 5 Daniel R. Colbert

CHILDRESS

- 25 Jeffery L. Smith
- 5 Chauncey E.
Hommel III
Juan R. Jaramillo
Justin K. Martin

COMMUNICATIONS

- 5 Sonja Gross

CONSTRUCTION

- 10 Gregory S. Williams

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 20 Amanda L. Longoria
- 10 Vance J. Brown
- 5 Jesse R. Robertson
John Wall

DALLAS

- 15 James W. Hall
Rumaldo Rodriguez
- 10 Michael E. Rust
- 5 Michael Bazie
William J. Fisher Jr.
Hram Mang

DESIGN

- 5 Javier De La Cerda

EL PASO

- 25 Juan R. Hartnett

OCTOBER SERVICE AWARDS

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 25 Mack Ballenger
- 10 Courtney K. Williams
Kristi Wink
- 5 Sarah Wiggins

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 10 Matthew L. Bush
Oscar Cedillo
Joe T. Ellis

FORT WORTH

- 40 Robert L. Kinney Jr.
- 30 Allen R. Boone
- 25 James D. Friels
- 20 Danny R. Blackburn
Ahmed H. Gaily
Cleo Cortez
- 15 Kent C. Garland
Erika J. Knox
- 10 Natnael T. Asfaw
Gary D. Beck Jr.
Gavino S.
Talamantez Jr.
Jason W. Thompson

GENERAL COUNSEL

- 5 Noviarini Campbell

HOUSTON

- 30 E. Joe Johnson
Tracy D. Schiller
- 25 Arya Chatterjee
- 20 Christopher A. Baker
Joe G. Segura

- 15 Tony A. Avila
Daniel C. Hampton
Raymond M. Heileman
Lynda K. Krueger
Patrick D. Layton
Vicki R. Marsh
Anthony W. Prestley
Robert N. Watson
- 5 Chigala Hekerem
Howard R. Suter

HUMAN RESOURCES

- 15 Julie K. Dickerson
- 5 Ana Powell
Elizabeth Saavedra

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 10 Melynda Olivares
- 5 Jason T. Henderson

LAREDO

- 15 Omar C. Pena
Luis C. Urbina
- 10 Ernie Jimenez
Saul Martinez

LUBBOCK

- 20 Thurmond Z. Davis
Anthony W. Self
- 5 Billy Wilson

LUFKIN

- 10 Steven Yates Jr.
- 5 Michael S. Clark

MAINTENANCE

- 10 Roberto Trevino Flores
- 5 Gerald L. Richmond

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

- 20 Corey C. Smyth

PARIS

- 10 Bryan D. Patterson
Jimmy E. Potts
Claude S. Tatum

PHARR

- 20 Manuel Rodriguez
Juan A. Sustaita Jr.
- 10 Celestino Hernandez Jr.

PROCUREMENT

- 10 Brent A. Haverlah

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING PROCUREMENT

- 5 Pamela Y. Mason

RIGHT OF WAY

- 30 Tommy Jones
- 15 Michael E. Elrod

SAN ANGELO

- 20 Richard L. Lange

SAN ANTONIO

- 40 Steven C. Simpson
- 25 Ronald P. Gutierrez
- 20 Bryan K. Williams
- 15 Ismail Perez Jr.
- 10 Carlos F. Arcila

TRAFFIC SAFETY

- 20 Ronald D. Fuessel
- 10 Ann S. Hatchitt
Frederic S. Summer
- 5 Bridgett D. Hlavinka
LaViza Matthews
Jessica Y. Wilkerson

TRAVEL INFORMATION

- 5 Anthony A. Archuletta

TYLER

- 15 Javier Elizondo
Drew Watson
- 10 David Thompson

WACO

- 25 Cassidy L. Bruce
Debra S. Lednický
- 10 Kendale B. Garrison
Phillip J. Gerik
- 5 Carrie Jackson

WICHITA FALLS

- 25 Robert W. Bullock
- 10 Anthony P. Boucher
- 5 Leighton L. Van Vacter

YOAKUM

- 35 Debra L. Vickery
- 25 Sheri L. Jacobs
- 15 Michael E. Machicek
- 10 Dustin M. Williams

JULY RETIREE REPORT

ABILENE

- 6 Marina Liza Tilley

ADMINISTRATION

- 24 Claude M. Lee

AMARILLO

- 27 Robert G. Hendricks

ATLANTA

- 10 Richard K. Neal

BEAUMONT

- 16 Cynthia L. Dougherty

BRIDGE

- 22 Agata J. La Rue

BROWNWOOD

- 26 Jerry Sandoval
- 21 John W. Reagan

CIVIL RIGHTS

- 16 Michael J. McElroy

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 10 Ricardo Garcia
Roel V. Perez

DESIGN

- 32 Armando Leyva

EL PASO

- 21 Ruben Florez Jr.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 21 Carlos H. Swonke

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 27 Erma Windham
- 10 Debra D. Nuckols

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 27 Stephen P. Tay or
- 22 David F. Aguirre
- 15 Jesus J. Vizcaino

FORT WORTH

- 16 Clint William Hunt

HOUSTON

- 32 Stephen L. Leffngwell
- 28 Rudy R. Damian
David S. Jeffreys
Larry R. Whittington
- 27 Vera Dee Rade
- 10 Patrick R. Jackson
Virgilio D. Ma-Ang

LAREDO

- 33 Rafael N. Mendoza
- 22 Eduardo R. Deleon
Crispin Razo

MAINTENANCE

- 29 Brian L. Dodge

ODESSA

- 24 Eduardo Benavidez
- 14 Herminia Gonzalez

PARIS

- 24 Pamela G. Stout

PHARR

- 31 Roel A. Vera
- 17 Arturo Martinez

SAN ANGELO

- 33 Romeo V. Perez Jr.

SAN ANTONIO

- 22 Kurt E. Kunze
- 17 Dalia S. Garcia
Johnny E. Hernandez

TRAFFIC SAFETY

- 29 Cynthia L. Flores

TRAVEL INFORMATION

- 35 Donna J. Watson
- 10 Lyndol D. Irby II

WACO

- 17 Michael D. Cook

WICHITA FALLS

- 26 Michael L. Carriger
- 25 Paul E. Bennett

YOAKUM

- 28 Ernest Trevino
- 27 Randy J. Haas

MILESTONES

AUGUST RETIREE REPORT

ABILENE

- 29 Jesus Cisneros
- 19 Kessa J. Compton
- 15 Dennis J. Holland

ADMINISTRATION

- 17 Robin Ann Carter

AMARILLO

- 29 Kenneth S. Brewster
- 26 Frank Figueroa
- 21 Gary R. Morris

ATLANTA

- 28 Siong Z. Wong
- 27 Carl Preston
- 26 John E. Hines
- 13 Robert L. Jones

AUSTIN

- 29 Chuck A. Goertz
- 27 Mark E. Hoefelmeyer
- 26 Victor M. Vargas
- 25 William A. Schulle
- 24 John T. Buckley
- 23 Lorri Ann Pavliska
- 21 Michelle L. Romage-Chambers
- 8 Bruce B. Byron
- 4 Seyed Miri

AVIATION

- 18 Randy W. Zumbahlen

BEAUMONT

- 26 Earick S. Adams
- Vada M. Byford
- Sherry A. Craft
- 25 David G. Rebert
- 23 James D. Wilson
- 16 James H. Omstead

BRYAN

- 33 Maurice Maness

CHILDRESS

- 39 Martin R. Smith
- 28 Jimmy Hinojosa
- 27 Magdaleno Hernandez
- 24 Curt A. Coop

COMMUNICATIONS

- 36 Marcus E. Sandifer
- 30 Phyllis R. Chandler-Gordon
- 29 Mark E. Cross
- 21 Katherine A. White
- 14 Timothy A. Harriman

CONTRACT SERVICES

- 7 Lauren B. Dillon

CORPUS CHRISTI

- 34 Esteban Guerra Jr.

DALLAS

- 30 James M. Palmgren
- 29 Jerry M. Blakemore
- 28 Richard P. Barker
- 27 Maher M. Chanayem
- Samuel Saiz
- Ali R. Taheri
- 25 Madhab P. Banskota
- 21 Cynthia J. Graves
- 18 Donald R. Byrd
- Cornelia M. Haynes
- 16 Shane King

DESIGN

- 29 Rebecca A. Lucas
- 23 Mabel L. Wilson Penn
- 20 Karen J. Murski

EL PASO

- 33 Ricardo Romero
- 29 Pablo T. Salgado
- Hector T. Zuniga
- 28 Jose Y. Gonzales
- 27 Rodolfo M. Romo
- 22 Margarita Montes
- 17 Jesus M. Hernandez

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 25 James T. Abbott
- 22 James B. Ellis

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 38 Theresa D. Wilson
- 37 Katherine P. Clough
- 36 Barbara A. Ramirez
- 18 Deborah L. Blechert
- Pamela R. Miller
- 10 Pamela A. Jongeling

FLEET OPERATIONS

- 20 Tony J. Dillon
- 17 Chris L. McCandless

FORT WORTH

- 32 Judith B. Brown
- 26 Franklin F. Desai
- 19 Ngoc Thuy Thi Tran
- 13 Randell G. Brown

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

- 31 Tonia L. Norman

HOUSTON

- 40 Wayne A. Rentschler
- 35 Thomas E. Lev
- Stewart R. Wusterhausen
- 28 Chasem A. Arjomandi
- 27 Paula W. Moore
- 26 James M. McGuire
- 25 Dana D. Cote
- Lee H. Hamberry
- 21 Deborah A. Derong
- 15 Dalton Wayne Smith

HUMAN RESOURCES

- 29 Catherine M. Hostetler
- 24 Robert B. De La Rosa
- 3 Yolanda Nious

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 16 Melissa Ann Ruemke

LAREDO

- 28 Jose L. Franco III
- 23 Roberto S. Rodriguez Jr.
- 21 Arnoldo Garza Jr.

LUBBOCK

- 35 Stevan Perez
- 32 David L. Harper
- 29 Charles E. Frater
- 17 Karen S. Bradshaw
- 15 Joe B. McClanahan

LUFKIN

- 29 Ronnie C. Releford
- 25 Javier Hernandez
- 19 Jacky K. Hill
- 15 Stephen R. Thornton
- 10 James R. Dunn

MAINTENANCE

- 25 Marlon D. McGhee

MARITIME

- 25 Stephanie M. Cribbs

MATERIALS AND TESTS

- 38 Miles R. Garrison
- 25 Richard P. Izzo

ODESSA

- 30 Hector J. Aguirre-Luna
- 28 David J. Alvarez
- 27 Jorge D. Estrella
- 26 Cody B. Woodard
- 25 Eric J. Lopez
- 22 Daniel Aguirre
- 20 Yvonne O. Mora

PARIS

- 28 Sydney N. Newman
- 25 Daniel Blackmon

PEPS

- 34 Felix A. Lerma

PHARR

- 27 Rene Sanchez

PROCUREMENT

- 26 Guadalupe D. Cruz
- 23 Lynn M. Giusto

RIGHT OF WAY

- 21 Jo Ann Templeton

SAN ANGELO

- 23 Carmen Martin Mendez
- 21 Bobby G. Pearson
- 19 Francisco J. Mendez
- 6 Dickie R. Huey

SAN ANTONIO

- 35 Michael A. Coward
- 34 Samuel. Mendoza
- 32 Joe A. Yanas
- 27 Jesse R. Tamayo
- 25 Hector R. Ortiz
- 24 Beningo A. Lopez III
- Kent L. Skiles
- 23 Wilfred C. Jaimes
- 21 Morgan D. Ellis
- 20 Blake A. Bierstedt
- 16 Tony R. Botello

SUPPORT SERVICES

- 48 Mary M. Otahal
- 31 Rick N. Greer
- Anthony B. Harper

TRAFFIC SAFETY

- 34 Adrian W. Madison
- 29 Irene M. Webster
- 11 Ron R. Holt

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

- 35 Michael R. Hofferek
- 31 Glen E. Bates

TYLER

- 31 Stacie E. Holcomb
- 27 Charles N. Kirby
- 22 Ricky M. Alvis
- 19 Scott A. Alexander
- 16 Joe D. Watson

WACO

- 34 James G. Wagnon
- 32 Larry D. Kruger
- 31 Billy M. Tweedle
- 29 Randy N. Roddy

WICHITA FALLS

- 34 James R. Shelton
- 22 Jimmy R. Sanderson
- 15 Roy Dale Shelton

YOAKUM

- 32 George A. Eilert
- 21 David B. Stephens



IN MEMORIAM

CORPUS CHRISTI DISTRICT

Hector R. Rodriguez

Date of Death: 08/15/2021
Years of Service: 29
Retired: 1995

Patrick Norrell

Date of Death: 08/26/2021
Years of Service: 39
Retired: 2002

Jacqueline (Jackie) Tschoerner

Date of Death: 08/27/2021
Years of Service: 37
Retired: 1993

Ricky Littleton

Rockport Maintenance Supervisor
Date of Death: 9/17/2021
Years of Service: 36
Retired: 2014

DALLAS DISTRICT

Brent Owens

General Transportation
Technician
Date of Death: 09/22/2021
Years of Service: 17

Michael Rich

General Transportation
Technician
Date of Death: 09/21/2021
Year of Service: 1

HOUSTON DISTRICT

Andrew Johnson

Construction Inspector
Date of Death: 09/04/2021
Years of Service: 15

PHARR DISTRICT

Adalberto "Beto" Flores

Falfurrias Maintenance
Office Supervisor
Date of Death: 9/17/2021
Years of Service: 29
Retired: 1995

YOAKUM DISTRICT

Andrew Robinson

Equipment Operator
Date of Death: 08/22/2021
Years of Service: 24

Richard Ayala

General Transportation
Technician
Date of Death: 09/06/2021
Years of Service: 33

EMPLOYEES CHIME IN

What was your favorite holiday tradition as a child?

AMARILLO DISTRICT



JAMIE LEAVITT ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

"A favorite holiday tradition as a child was the family gathering on Christmas Eve and staying a few days. I was the youngest of four siblings, so the house was never boring."

FORT WORTH DISTRICT



AMY CAUSEY ENGINEERING ASSISTANT

"In addition to regular Christmas traditions, like baking tons of cookies and setting up the Christmas tree, my favorite holiday tradition when I was a kid was our big family reunion/Christmas party."

BROWNWOOD DISTRICT



LORI ROBINSON OFFICE MANAGER

"Growing up, we grew more excited as the tree was decorated, the lights were hung, candy was being made, and turkey and dressing was always a must. We always stayed Christmas Eve at my grandparents and anxiously awaited Santa."

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Texas litter-free.

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Photo by Renee Dominguez