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### March 1983

**THE VALLEY** Tourist Bureau broke its own all-time record in February, serving 58,290 visitors in that month alone....the most visitors ever served in a Texas tourist bureau in a single month. The Valley-border area is winding up the most outstanding winter-visitor season in history. Anticipating the area's surge of popularity, the highway department opened the newest tourist bureau in Harlingen in 1980. Travel & Info Division Director **Tom Taylor** said, "Some very persistent, competent tourism authorities have invested years of effort toward results of this kind. And as a state tourist-promotion agency, we put in our oar, too. We've always known the Valley-border region was a star in Texas tourism. The past season just confirms it," he added.

**HISTORICAL GALVESTON**, recognized for its historic preservation efforts over the past 10 years, has done it again. The Center for Transportation and Commerce announced its newest attraction - a restored 1922 steam locomotive - with a weekend of activities planned for April to celebrate its homecoming. Festivities will be highlighted Saturday, April 16, with four-mile rides from the old Sante Fe Union Station to the newly restored sailing vessel, the *Elissa*. Profits from the sale of tickets will go toward future restoration projects at the Center. Among other attractions, barber-shop quartets and jazz bands will be on hand at the 1932-style depot to give visitors a real feel of the age of steam. The Center for Transportation and Commerce, funded by The Moody Foundation, represents a \$7-million pledge to preserve our state's transportation history.

**WET 'N WILD**, the world's largest water theme park, now under construction in Arlington, will open May 14. Among dozens of water activities, the 35-acre park will feature the Kamikaze water speed-slide which, park operators say, "can satisfy Texans' thirst for the biggest and best." Riders will get a view of Six Flags Over Texas and Arlington Stadium from 60 feet in the air before their 300-foot slide into a 70-foot-long pool. The Kamikaze was introduced four years ago at the Wet 'n Wild park in Orlando, Florida, after President and founder **George Millay** studied and rode speed slides all over Asia and Europe. He says the Kamikaze brings to Texas the best aspects of all the slides he studied.

**NUEVO LAREDO DOWNS** (horse and dog track) opened March 12. Kennel owner **Japson Pettit** of San Angelo says it's an "A No. 1" track....with six kennels, each holding 150 dogs and a veterinary clinic on the grounds to take care of the dogs. **Pettit**, who's been working with dogs since 1949, said facilities rank among the best. Laredo Tourist Bureau Supervisor **Leo Garza** said \$25 million was spent building the area's newest tourist attraction, and added that races will be announced in English and bets will be exchanged in U.S. dollars. "For \$2 each way, the Laredo Metro System will take visitors directly to the track, leaving from the major Laredo hotels," **Garza** said. Nuevo Laredo Downs is open Thurs-Sun, with dog races starting each day at 6:45 p.m., and quarterhorse and thoroughbred races Sat & Sun at 1 p.m.

**THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS** in Houston is featuring what's being called "the most comprehensive exhibition of Pennsylvania German arts ever mounted." Presented by the Winterthur Museum of Delaware and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the 1683-1850 display has never been viewed west of the Eastern seaboard, with many pieces being on display for the first time. Pennsylvania Germans, also referred to as Pennsylvania Dutch, began arriving in 1682. In the 18th Century, "Dutch" was a word used to describe Central Europeans from the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Their diverse backgrounds are shown through variations of well-crafted furniture, paintings, manuscripts, musical instruments, tools, metalwares, glass, textiles and ceramics. The Pennsylvania German art can be seen in Houston through May 15.

**TRAVEL & INFO** Tourist Literature Editor **Richard Pierce** said six of the recently revived 10 *Texas Travel Trail* folders are now ready for distribution. The popular folders, which have been out of print for the past few years, follow the previously established highway routes. "But," **Pierce** said, "we've placed greater emphasis on geological features, flora, and wildlife along the way." The Trails tell travelers what to do and see along the routes, while making the history of each area come alive - so much alive, in fact, there are times you feel you're holding the reins of a horse rather than the wheel of a car.

**AND DICK ROBERTS**, assistant Tourist Literature editor, said the semiannual *Calendar of Texas Events* covering the April - September period has been received from the printer. "The new calendar is added proof that there's something for everybody here in Texas," said **Roberts**. The assortment of events - such as wild flower trails, rodeos, Shakespearean plays, symphony concerts, home tours, Germanfests, cookoffs, arts & crafts shows - seems endless. For a free copy write *Calendar of Texas Events*, P.O. Box 5064, Austin, TX 78763.

**THE SECOND ANNUAL** Texas Senior Games for ages 50 and up will be held May 18-21 at the U.T.-Arlington Campus. Exec Director **Hal Geldon** said, "Last year we had 611 participants coming in from all over the state. We're expecting an even greater turnout in '83." Among the 48 scheduled events are golf, ten-

nis and track & field competitions, bridge, Ping-Pong and dance contests. Texas Senior Games is supported by such agencies and organizations as the Governor's Commission on Physical Fitness, Texas Recreation & Parks Society, the *Dallas Morning News*, and the American Association of Retired Persons. For four days of fun and fitness write Texas Senior Games, P.O. Box 676, Richardson, TX 75080 or call 214/231-6889. Applications must be postmarked by May 11.

**TUNE IN** to a new weekly radio program, "Texas Highways," produced by the Travel & Info Division in cooperation with the Texas State Network. Audio-visual Section Manager **Geoff Appold** said the 10-minute program, features both department- and travel-related subjects – ranging from traffic safety and highway litter to Texas history, personalities and special events. "We're getting pretty good coverage in the rural communities," **Appold** said, "with more stations picking up the show every week. It's something we work hard at and take very seriously. We feel there's a real need for this type of program. I hope a few more metropolitan stations catch on to us soon." The show is now being broadcast over 40 TSN AM stations across the state.

**DALLAS/FORT WORTH** Airport now has a new information service for visitors – motorists can receive reports on parking availability, weather conditions, and general airport info by tuning their car radios to 530 kHz. D/FW Exec Director **Ernest Dean** said, "This is an extremely low-powered radio signal, designed to cover just the airport and the area immediately around it." The new station is licensed under FCC regulations that allow nonprofit agencies to broadcast information to assist travelers.

**THE LAGUNA MADRE MUSEUM FOUNDATION** in Port Isabel has taken possession of a shrimp boat to be remodeled as a walk-through museum. The vessel was donated by Port Isabel's Merchants Marine Bank. Spokeswoman **Karen Johnson** said they'll soon be calling for volunteers to help scrape, clean, and paint the boat....and that after the shrimper is "museum-worthy" a contest will be held to name her. Donations of numerous old photos, historic documents, Indian artifacts of the area, and an old sailing vessel's bell and foghorn have already been accepted as museum exhibits.

**DALLAS** will have a new state park if **Ned Fritz** has his way. **Fritz**, a well-known Dallas nature lover, proposes joining 1,000-acre Rochester Park along the Trinity River in South Dallas with other surrounding natural areas. And Rep. **Al Granoff** is sponsoring a bill to do just that. If passed, this bill, now before the State Legislature, would designate this area as Trinity State Park and would fulfill **Fritz's** vision of a major natural sightseeing attraction right on the outskirts of metropolitan Dallas.

**SPRING IS HERE!** And everything's coming up wild flowers. Wild flowers everywhere! And they've been coming up in some parts of Texas since early March. In a special wild flower edition of *Texas Highways* magazine, **Tommie Pinkard** writes: "This year you'll see even more wild flowers along the highways than in the past...Our recent mild, wet winter promises a bumper crop..." And **Tom Allen**, research director of the National Wild Flower Research Center, said if a mild spring continues into summer, we'll have bluebonnets into mid-June. This year's April issue of *Texas Highways* magazine has 16 full-color pages filled with wild flowers.

**BOX SCORE** – Because of the surge of Winter Texans this season, the *Valley* visitor totals are still soaring.....up 41.2% over visitors served in February of last year.....followed by a 32.0% increase at the *Laredo* bureau. Though totals at the *Orange* bureau are down 6.4% from last year, counselors still served more than 29,000 visitors in February. Severe snow storms in the Panhandle are blamed for the 5.5% decrease at *Amarillo*. A complete bureau-by-bureau tabulation follows.

Bureau	Month Total Visitors	Variation*	Year Total Visitors	Variation*	Bureau	Month Total Visitors	Variation*	Year Total Visitors	Variation*
Amarillo	7,248	- 5.5%	15,405	+ 2.7%	Orange	29,082	- 6.4%	57,756	- 8.7%
Anthony	24,411	+29.4%	46,770	+24.4%	Texarkana	18,762	+10.3%	39,726	+ 8.0%
Denison	10,476	+ 7.5%	22,215	+10.3%	Valley	58,290	+41.2%	107,796	+45.4%
Gainesville	16,593	- 5.4%	33,843	-12.2%	Waskom	17,517	- 3.2%	36,933	+ 2.9%
Langtry	7,860	+ 8.8%	14,067	+ 6.2%	Wichita Falls	9,762	+ 5.7%	19,008	+ 3.5%
Laredo	16,578	+32.0%	30,501	+26.4%	<b>Bureau Totals</b>	216,579	+13.8%	424,020	+12.5%
Capitol	24,486		53,361		Austin Office (mail, phone, walk-ins)	9,208	- 21.2%	16,577	- 32.6%

\*Compared to last year



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