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March 1984

BIZARRE TEXAS WINTER WEATHER continued to take its toll on highway travel last month. Visitor totals at the Texas Tourist Bureaus were 6.0% below services provided in February of last year. The freeze of the Valley citrus crops sent many Winter Texans home early this year, lowering visitor totals at the Valley bureau by 24.8%. Still, in spite of continued snow flurries in the Panhandle, the Amarillo bureau provided 13.3% more services last month over the 1983 number. A complete bureau-by-bureau tabulation follows the last item in the *Texas Travel Log*.

NEARLY A THOUSAND EVENTS are listed in Travel & Info's just-released *Calendar of Texas Events*. *Calendar* editor **Dick Roberts** said this latest edition spans the Texas sun season from April through September. The variety of ways Texans have fun is shown through dozens of listings of arts and crafts shows, volks-marches, chili cookoffs and rodeos. Go to Refugio for a frog-jumping contest, or to Clute for the Great Texas Mosquito Festival. **Roberts** said increased interest in nostalgia and historic preservation is evidenced by some 20 cities where tours of gracious old homes are scheduled.

FOR MORE THAN A QUARTER CENTURY, the semiannual *Calendar of Texas Events* has been known as the authoritative listing of festival happenings. Texans and out-of-state visitors consult the *Calendar* daily to find out what's happening, where, and when. You can pick up your free copy at any of the 12 Texas Tourist Bureaus. Or write Box 5064, Austin 78763.

THE 29TH ANNUAL Texas Travel Counselors Conference is just days away. Some 90 DHT and AAA travel counselors and other travel personnel will gather at the Waco Convention Center April 16-19 for what promises to be the best TTCC ever. **Don Clark**, Travel & Info Division, said numerous special guests have been invited to this year's conference. Counselors will learn about trends in the Texas hotel and convention industries; hear from **James Bell** of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department about the newest state parks, and learn about tourism in the Trans-Pecos region from **Jack Skiles**, Roy Bean Visitor Center manager. And a representative from the Baylor

Theater Department will speak to counselors on "Sparkle and Bubble for the 50th Time." That's not all these folks will have to absorb during the short four-day meeting . . .

ROUND TABLE discussions will be led by representatives from the Texas Bed & Breakfast operation; *Texas Highways* magazine; TTDA; DTA; the Texas Sesquicentennial Commission; Texas Assn. of Campground Owners; Historic Hotel Assn., and AAA. And **Dick Roberts** will present the annual "Travel Industry on Parade" slide show, giving counselors up-to-date info on new Texas attractions. A familiarization tour of the Waco area is planned, when counselors will visit museums and libraries, take a cruise on Lake Waco, and learn about shopping, dining, and tourist facilities.

THE DISCOVER TEXAS ASSN. again will sponsor the popular Travel Fair the final day of the conference. This is a full-fledged exhibit with booths manned by participating DTA attractions, cities, campgrounds, hotels and motels. The DTA Travel Fair gives counselors that final boost of information before heading home.

RIDE THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY TRAIL to the April 28 grand opening of Texas' newest wildlife refuge. Wildlife Wilderness, near New Braunfels, is a 150-acre drive-through facility, complete with a petting pen for children and adults alike. And a refreshment stand and gift shop will be on hand for guests. Owners **Leonard** and **Violet Voges** said their ranch is the home of both exotic and native animals. "I'm very proud," said **Violet**, "I just became the momma of a baby camel." The **Voges** are excited about their new venture and say they'll welcome visitors seven days a week, year round. Wildlife Wilderness is seven miles off IH-35 on Texas 306 to Canyon Lake. For info on group rates write Star Route 3, Box 14, New Braunfels 78130. Or call (512) 964-3388.

IN DALLAS, the Fairmont Hotel was one of seven hotels in the nation named a Mobil Travel Guide Five Star Award Winner. **Arnold Fury**, manager of travel programs for Mobil Oil Corp., said, "Our winners are distinguished by their dedication to exceptionally high standards and superior hospitality. The Award recognizes these establishments as having reached the pinnacle of the food and lodging industry. They truly represent the best in the country." This is the sixth year the Fairmont has received this prestigious award.

A \$132-MILLION EXTENSION of San Antonio's River Walk may be in the works. The City Council gave informal approval for the project, which would be part of a flood control program. An artificial lake near the San Antonio Museum of Art would be added and a dam and pier would be built at the Brooklyn Avenue crossing. If approved by various boards and commissions, the work could begin as early as next year. It is expected the plan would take five years to complete.

FOR IDEAS on how to plan your spring or summer vacation, look in the May issue of *Texas Highways* magazine. For a true water theme park experience, you'll be guided through three of the state's newest such parks - White Water parks in Grand Prairie and Garland, and Arlington's Wet 'n Wild. The magazine then will steer you over to nearby Irving where kids of all ages are invited to Sesame Place. The May issue will



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give you a brief history of roller coasters and then let you in on some of the best rides at Astroworld and Six Flags Over Texas.

FOR A DIFFERENT KIND OF ADVENTURE, the May issue will have a beautiful outdoor feature – Caprock Canyons State Park near the edge of the Texas Panhandle. Staffers **Tommie Pinkard** and **Randy Green** take you on a picture tour of this new state park, offering some area history and info on the wildlife and camping facilities at Caprock Canyons. “After you’ve seen this feature,” said editor **Frank Lively**, “you’ll pack and head for the Panhandle.” You’ll then be carried down to Waco for a peek at the Texas Ranger Museum and a suspension bridge there that’s older than the one in Brooklyn. *Texas Highways*’ May issue will hit the newsstands by mid-April. Or send \$1.50 to P.O. Box 5016, Austin 78763.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, the Texas Capitol no longer will be accessible to the public on a 24-hour basis. Capitol bureau manager **Brenda Behrend** reports the building will be closed to visitors from 9:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. daily. “This will not, of course, affect the free tours which will continue to be offered daily,” **Behrend** said. She added there has been some concern for our state Capitol’s safety since the bombing of the nation’s Capitol. Chief **R. S. Williams** of the Capitol Police said the closure is a means of tightening security for the building and for those employees who often work late.

EL PASO WELCOMED 16 Texas travel counselors last month for a two-day crash course on things to see and do in that largest U.S. city on the Mexican border. They visited the three old Spanish missions there, along with various museums and the Tigua Indian Reservation. They toured the city, learning about area attractions, shopping, and hotel and restaurant facilities. Counselors ate rattlesnake meat at Indian Cliffs Ranch and were guests at Cattlemen’s Ranch where they were served two-pound steaks.

A TRIP TO EL PASO, of course, is not complete without first hopping the border to Mexico’s fourth largest city, Juarez. And that counselors did, to attend the dog races, shop in Mexican markets, and experience Juarez nightlife. Capitol bureau counselor **Janice Leffall**, who can’t quit talking about that two-pound steak, said the experience in El Paso was “Fabulous!” “I can’t wait till someone asks me about that part of Texas,” she said, “so I can tell them all about El Paso.” The familiarization tour was cosponsored by the El Paso Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Travel & Info Division.

LAREDO BUREAU MANAGER Leo Garza was invited over to Nuevo Laredo for a grand tour of the Palacio Del Rio, that city’s newest luxury hotel. **Garza** said the four-star facility is complete with sauna, tennis and swimming, a nine-hole golf course, and a disco club. **Garza** has arranged to have some Texas travel literature displayed in the Palacio as a means of “luring tourists back over to our side of the border.”

BOX SCORE – While overall totals were down last month, nine of the 12 Texas Tourist Bureaus showed increases over the number of visitors served in February last year. And **David Linzey**, manager of the Travel Services mail operation, reported an 8.8% increase in literature requests over February 1983. **Linzey** attributed the increase to renewed interest in the 10 *Texas Travel Trails* and the just-released all-new *Official Highway Travel Map*. Capitol bureau figures are not included in bureau totals because of fluctuations when the legislature is in session.

| Bureau | Month Total Visitors | Variation* | Year Total Visitors | Variation* | Bureau | Month Total Visitors | Variation* | Year Total Visitors | Variation* |
|-------------|----------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|--|----------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|
| Amarillo | 8,214 | +13.3% | 15,363 | - 0.3% | Orange | 31,368 | + 7.9% | 60,597 | + 4.9% |
| Anthony | 21,435 | -12.2% | 39,894 | -14.7% | Texarkana | 16,173 | -13.8% | 32,424 | -18.4% |
| Denison | 12,177 | +16.2% | 24,681 | +11.1% | Valley | 43,860 | -24.8% | 87,801 | -18.5% |
| Gainesville | 17,010 | + 2.5% | 34,458 | + 1.8% | Waskom | 17,598 | + 0.5% | 35,160 | - 4.8% |
| Langtry | 7,995 | + 1.7% | 13,347 | - 5.1% | Wichita Falls | 10,482 | + 7.4% | 20,355 | + 7.1% |
| Laredo | 17,376 | + 4.8% | 30,636 | + 0.4% | Bureau Totals | 203,688 | - 6.0% | 394,716 | - 6.9% |
| Capitol | 25,344 | + 3.5% | 49,359 | - 7.5% | Austin Office (mail, phone, walk-ins) | 10,014 | + 8.8% | 15,607 | - 5.9% |

*Compared to last year



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