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TEXAS TRAVEL LOG

State Department of Highways and Public Transportation, Austin, Texas

Government Publications
Texas State Documents

FEB 01 1990 pl

Dallas Public Library

January Travel & Information Division, P. O. Box 5000, Austin, Texas 78763 512/467-3722 1990

VISITORS TO TEXAS are continuing a trend that has been evident for years, much to the delight of the Texas tourist industry. The 1989 Auto Visitor Survey, just released by the Travel and Information Division, sampled more than 3 million visitors who stopped at our 12 Travel Information Centers. It verified that short-term visitors, those who stayed in Texas less than 30 days, are spending more time in Texas — an average stay of seven days, up six percent over the same period last year.

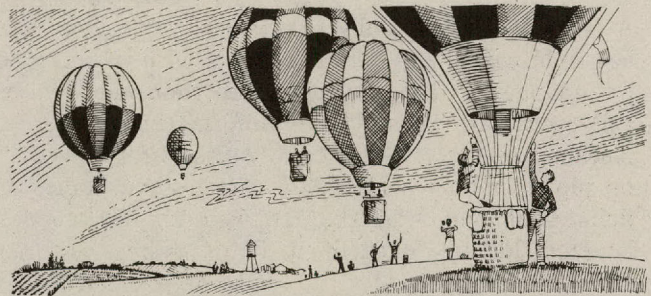
THE REPORT identifies the visitors' origins, rates the 30 top Texas destinations, and includes breakdowns of visitor spending, miles driven, activities, demographics, and other statistical data, all broken down into the four seasons. For a free copy of this profile of the Texas auto visitor industry, write *Texas Auto Visitor Survey*, P. O. Box 5064, Austin, TX 78763.

NEW YEAR'S DAY marked the first day in the life of the new Travel Industry Association of Texas. The new organization is a merger of the Discover Texas Association and the Texas Tourist Council. Chairman of the TIAT board is Tom F. Herring, Jr., while Jim Battersby remains as Interim President/Executive Director until such time as a new permanent executive director is selected. Battersby has announced his retirement effective April 1. The association is slated to move from San Antonio to new quarters in Austin during June.

SLATED TO OPEN THIS MONTH is Beaumont's new Texas Energy Museum. The museum will provide displays and archives on the oil industry, combining both The Western Company and Lamar University collections, valued at some \$6 million. Opening date and guest speaker to be announced. Call 409/833-0247 for details.

SOME ITEMS OF INTEREST GLEANED from the recent South Texas Study Tour: In *Corpus Christi*, the Hans Sutter Wildlife Park is new, just off Ocean Drive at West Oso, and the new Padre Island National Seashore's Information Center is open at Malaquite Beach... The King Ranch is going after visitors in a big way, with a new five-mile drive featuring cowboys working cattle and horses, a new visitor center, and a small ranch museum. And walk-in visitors are now welcome at the ranch's Henrietta Memorial Museum in downtown Kingsville, while the nearby Peeler Hall of Horns adjacent to the Conner Museum displays more than 250 mounts of North American game.

TEXAS TRIVIA: What was Katherine Stinson's claim to fame?



AND THERE'S MORE! Visitors will want to stop at the Brownsville C&VB's Information Center on US 77/83, browse the burgeoning Brownsville Historical Museum, and ride the tram at the Gladys Porter Zoo.... South Padre Island's Isla Blanca Park is a large one, operated by the county, with complete facilities for all types of camping right on the water.... And in Harlingen the Rio Grande Museum, Marine Military Academy, Iwo Jima Memorial and Museum, and the Confederate Air Force Museum are within blocks and within walking distance of each other. Have fun!

Around the Centers



The holiday season found our folks at the Travel Information Center at Waskom involved in nearby community activities. Center manager Melissa Heard was a judge at the Jefferson Christmas parade, while counselor Tonji Rudd helped judge the merchants' division of Marshall's Wonderland of Lights. Meanwhile, counselor Darlene Jones did double duty as a Wonderland of Lights tour guide.

In order to serve Winter Texans who are escaping the frozen northlands, our Valley Travel Information Center at Harlingen will extend its hours of operation through March 31, closing an hour later than usual at 6 p.m. daily. Manager Sam Martinez says the later closing hour should make it more convenient for Valley residents and visitors alike to take advantage of the travel services offered at the Center.

A bowl of red, carefully preserved on ice from the last chili cookoff at Terlingua, was a surprise treat for manager Skip Birkner and counselor Patty Lukens at our Texas Travel Information Center in Anthony recently. One of the contestants served it up piping hot from his motor home stove, much to delight of our staffers. "It was mighty good," laughed Patty, "even if it didn't take the blue ribbon!"

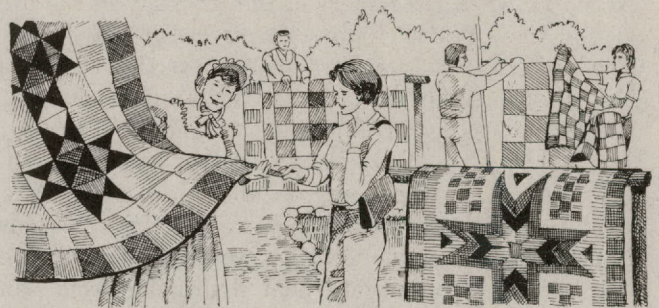
Manager Leo Garza of our Travel Information Center at Laredo has completed the Texas A&M Hospitality Instructors Course and is gearing up for his first training session for the Laredo Hotel/Motel Association.

A young couple, their preacher, and friends recently gathered at the Texas state line marker outside our Texas Travel Information Center at Gainesville, where the couple exchanged wedding vows. It was the first marriage at our new facility there. Following the ceremony, the happy pair visited with our travel counselors and gathered information for their honeymoon trip!

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING VISITS to our Texas Travel Information Center at Anthony recently was by Paul and Joyce Wick. The couple was en route home following a visit to the Alamo at San Antonio and the San Jacinto Battlefield near Houston. Wick, a descendant of Oliver T. Brown who fought in the battle that won Texas' independence from Mexico, presented manager Skip Birkner and counselor Patty Lukens with a copy of a handwritten letter by Brown, together with a typewritten copy. The letter recounts Brown's trip to Texas as a member of Sherman's Kentucky riflemen and his participation in the Battle of San Jacinto.

A MUST FOR DALLAS AREA VISITORS is the new booklet *Over 100 Fun Things to Do & Where to Find Them* published by the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau. The colorful brochure divides the fun into 11 categories, ranging from Places of Interest and Sports Centers to Theaters and Shopping. Contact the Dallas C&VB at 214/746-6679 (or 1-800-C-DALLAS) for a copy.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION, the first Thanksgiving in Texas referred to in our November issue of *Texas Travel Log*, held on May 23, 1541, in Palo Duro Canyon appears to have been the first such **religious** ceremony of thanksgiving. We're told that the first Thanksgiving **feast** in Texas was held at what is now present El Paso on April 20, 1598, by Don Juan de Onate's expedition to celebrate their reaching the Rio Grande.



ANSWER TO TEXAS TRIVIA: In 1912 the 22-yr.-old San Antonio woman became one of the first female pilots in the United States. Katherine Stinson was the first woman to fly an airmail route, the first skywriter to perform at night using fireworks, and the first to do the loop-the-loop. An international celebrity by 1918, her endurance flights won her fame as the greatest woman pilot in the world. All this some five years before Charles Lindberg even started flight training!

PRIDE OF MISSISSIPPI, a new cruise ship operating out of Galveston, had her maiden voyage December 8. (See *Texas Travel Log* for Nov. 1989.) For ticket information call Ticketron at 1-800-284-5780. For other information call Sammy Clark at 409/765-7755.

ALSO OPERATING OUT OF GALVESTON Tuesdays through Sundays is the cruise ship *Europa*. Call 1-800-688-7529 for ticket information, and 713/445-5883 for additional details.

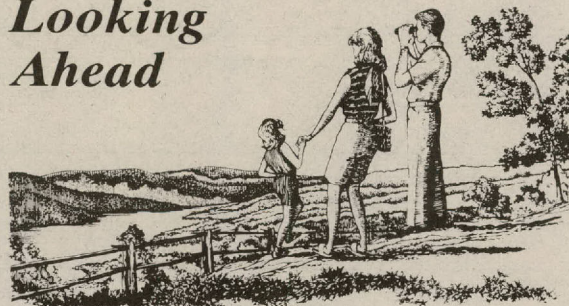
THE OLD JAIL ART CENTER at Albany, some 35 miles northeast of Abilene, has announced an extensive exhibition schedule through Summer 1990. Recently accredited by the American Association of Museums, the museum's outstanding traveling exhibits are well worth a side trip to this West Texas town. Call Robin Cotter at the museum for details about current and coming exhibits; 915/762-2269.



TEXAS HIGHWAYS FOR FEBRUARY, now at your newsstand, has a plethora of features in store for you, from accounts of the historic Butterfield Line to the art deco buildings of the Hall of State in Dallas' Fair Park. The nature scene concludes the two-part series on Texas birds and an insight into the work of the Texas Nature Conservancy. And you'll learn about some favorite bootie-shakin' honky-tonks, too! It's all you're for a mere \$2 a copy — or have it delivered for only \$12.50 per year. Fantastic.

EXTRAORDINARY EXAMPLES of Chinese ceramics from the 9th to the 18th Centuries will be on view at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth from December 23 through March 18, 1990. Comprising 56 superb works, the exhibition "Imperial Taste: Chinese Ceramics from the Percival David Foundation" displays outstanding specimens that epitomize the sophistication of Chinese taste rivaled only by the palace collections of Beijing and Taipei. Open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Call 817/332-8451 for additional details.

Looking Ahead



Towering more than 14 stories skyward, the latest and largest attraction at Arlington's Six Flags Over Texas, The Texas Giant roller coaster, will be fully ready for the theme park's March 17, 1990, opening. Park President Bob Bennet reports that each 28-passenger train will cover nearly a mile of track in just over two minutes, making The Texas Giant one of the fastest in the world.

First steps have been taken for a master plan to redevelop the area around the John F. Kennedy Causeway in Corpus Christi to Padre Island. According to Land Commissioner Gary Mauro, implementation of the plan will further enhance the island as a tourist attraction. Included in the ideas proposed for the area are a lighthouse-type structure offering a wide view of the island, a boardwalk along the Gulf of Mexico, restaurants, motels, entertainment, and a village shopping center.

Improvement of the quality of life and enhancement of the environment are the goals of a plan by the Lower Colorado River Authority. They plan to plant upward of 100,000 trees in 10 counties along the lower Colorado, with a first-year target of 15,000 to 20,000 trees, reports LCRA's Jim Parks.

Construction is under way for the new 38,000-sq.-ft. Museum of African-American Life and Culture at Fair Park in Dallas. Pending the opening of the new facility this Fall, this dynamic collection of art and memorabilia may be viewed at Science Place II in Fair Park. Founded in 1974 as part of the now-defunct Bishop College, the museum is the only one in the Southwest devoted to preserving and displaying African-American artistic, cultural, and historical materials. For more information call 214/565-9026.

THE SAN MARCOS CHAMBER offers a new videotape of that city's attractions, according to Sue Cohen manager of the city's successful visitor center.

Data as of December 31, 1989

Austin Office	For DHT This Month	For DHT This Year	For DOC This Month	For DOC This Year	Total Year to Date
Mail Services	6,002	100,379	9,058	777,764	878,143

Services to Travel Industry	Subscriber Inquiries This Month	Addresses Offered This Month	Addresses Transmitted This Month
DHT TRAX System	186	16,501	17,669

Official State Travel Magazine	This Month	This Month Last Year	This Year to Date	Last Year to Date
Texas Highways Print Run	427,550	410,160	5,191,925	4,828,178

Travel Center	Month Total Visitors	Percent Variation*	Year Total Visitors	Percent Variation*	Travel Center	Month Total Visitors	Percent Variation*	Year Total Visitors	Percent Variation*
Amarillo	5,607	- 5.5	121,629	- 3.4	Orange	32,358	+ 15.8	442,833	+ 8.2
Anthony	12,897	- 20.3	210,183	+ 2.7	Texarkana	20,637	- 4.6	316,824	+ 9.9
Denison	9,174	- 44.7	214,581	+ 3.1	Valley	24,471	- 17.9	330,732	- 5.2
Gainesville	21,051	- 3.7	339,585	+ 21.3	Waskom	27,558	+ 7.4	362,106	+ 13.5
Langtry	4,362	- 15.5	91,302	- 6.4	Wichita Falls	9,726	+ 5.0	180,423	+ 6.4
Laredo	13,089	- 52.0	238,170	- 17.7	Capitol	28,617	- 9.9	531,738	+ 0.3
					Center Totals	209,547	- 12.4	3,380,106	+ 3.4

*Compared to last Year

NOTICE!

Article V, Section 66C, H.B. 558, 66th Legislature, 1979, requires state newsletters to notify recipients in three consecutive issues that they must formally request the publication in order to continue receiving it. If you desire to continue receiving *Texas Travel Log*, please clip this portion (to include the mailing label) and return it to:

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