

Sept. 2003

T TRANSPORTATION NEWS

September 2003

Volume 29 Number 1

TEXAS STATE DOCUMENT
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At work, at home, at play

Plastics, paper, bags and string

Special coverage – pages 4 - 7

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN



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This issue – after reading and sharing

On the cover:

Like it says, recycle this issue.
But only after you've read it
and shared it with others.

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RECYCLE

Transportation News is published by the
TxDOT Public Information Office
125 E. 11th St., Austin, TX 78701-2483
Phone: (512) 463-8588
Circulation: 17,808

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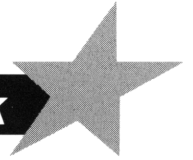
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Buddy Allison

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Straight Talk**Preserving precious resources**

by **Mike Behrens**

Executive Director

I learned growing up that most things had more than one use — and often multiple lives. My mother bought chicken feed in sacks that we used on our place in West Point, Texas. After they were emptied, those sacks would appear somewhere else later in another form.

Sometimes the former feed sacks would be stitched up into a new garment or a window covering. The string holding the sacks together was also preserved for a future use such as tying up a package to send to a relative.

Even before the word “recycling” was popular, my mother did instinctively what we at TxDOT do very consciously and very well. She re-used or recycled because it saved money and preserved precious resources.

As one of the largest state agencies in Texas with access to and a huge effect on our natural resources, TxDOT adheres to values that have created an entire industry out of resource conservation. Because so many of the materials and products we use also come from recycled sources, this department has myriad opportunities to support a sustainable society. Indeed, it's good business to be good stewards of the environment.

I am going to recycle a slogan that TxDOT has adopted for its anti-litter campaign — Don't Mess with Texas. It can take on added meaning: that we will not waste our resources and we will be frugal with our funding. Please continue the excellent job you are doing at TxDOT to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

As I wrote this month's column, hundreds of TxDOT employees had indicated their intention to retire as of Aug. 31 under the incentive program offered by the 78th Texas Legislature. Final figures will be available later in September. I wish everyone who has served TxDOT and is retiring the best. The people of TxDOT are among the hardest working I have ever encountered, and I appreciate the vast amount of knowledge that you have passed on to the rest of us. We hope to make you proud by continuing to provide the finest transportation system in the nation. You have shown us how.

“Don't Mess with Texas. It can take on added meaning: that we will not waste our resources and we will be frugal with our funding.”

TxDOT helps avert disastrous train wreck

by **Mike Cox**
Editor

No news may be good news, but it seldom makes headlines.

Only a few people realize how close Sugarland came to disaster on the morning of July 23, when TxDOT played a role in preventing a situation that definitely would have been bad news.

It started with a call to Sugarland's police/fire communications center at 7:11 a.m. A truck had stalled on a grade crossing. Having a truck stuck on a railroad track is never a good thing, but Sugarland emergency personnel soon realized the situation was much worse. At 44.2 miles an hour, a westbound freight train was approaching the crossing. To further complicate matters, the truck was full of sodium hydroxide, a hazardous material.

The dispatchers on duty would

not have known about the train if it had not been for a state-of-the-art monitoring system paid for by TxDOT.

The agency got funding two years ago for railroad track-detection equipment as part of a Texas Transportation Institute intelligent transportation system (ITS) research project. Using Doppler radar and other detection equipment, the system identifies a train, clocks its speed, direction of travel, and its arrival time at a particular point.

As soon as she realized what was about to happen, the fire department dispatcher contacted the railroad tower. The railroad said it would try to stop the train, but recommended placing flares on the track at least a mile from the intersection where the tanker truck was stalled.

Unfortunately, the police department had no units close to the scene. But a wrecker driver had heard the

radio traffic and was able to light flares and signal the train to stop.

"Had it not been for the railroad monitor located in communications, and quick actions by the communications personnel, the situation... could have been not only devastating but possibly fatal," says Sugarland communications supervisor David C. Spilman.

Sally Wegmann, director of transportation operations for the Houston District, agrees. "The train barely stopped," she says. "If it had hit the tanker, it would have been an extremely toxic spill."

This incident will go down as the first time this still-developing technology has paid off in Texas.

"We'll take this system and build on it," Wegmann says. "Our next step will be to figure out how to get this information inside emergency vehicles and to travelers so they can detour." ☼

Letter from the editor

We've received quite a few compliments on our August coastal issue, but a couple of alert readers found we were all wet in our claim that Texas has the third-longest coast.

The truth is, Texas only has the sixth-longest coastline.

The third-longest claim came from a June 24 press release issued by an agency that should know, the Texas General Land Office. "Texas, with its 367 miles of gulf beach," the press release reads, "has the third longest coast in the nation."

The number of miles the GLO claims is correct, but when you compare the other states, this is how it washes up:

- Alaska: 6,640 miles
- Florida: 1,350 miles
- California: 840 miles
- Hawaii: 750 miles
- Louisiana: 397 miles
- Texas: 367

Even excluding Alaska and Hawaii, Texas would be No. 4, not No. 3.

The splash you just heard was the editor walking the plank for not having checked the GLO claim before printing it. Thanks to everyone who took time to make me coast-wiser.

★ ★ ★

As long as we're talking about numbers, a survey done last May shows that nearly 9 out of 10 Texans (89.1 per cent) are using their safety belts. That compares with 80.4 per cent in April 2002. And when the state's safety belt law first went on the books in 1985, estimated usage was only 15 per cent!

The highest usage of any major metropolitan area was Garland, with 93 per cent compliance. Interestingly enough, just to the west in Tarrant County, the lowest percentage was reported in Arlington, 84.5 per cent.

Here's the most important number: Every percentage point of increase in safety belt usage translates to 25 lives saved and nearly 600 injuries prevented in Texas traffic crashes

The survey revealing these good numbers was undertaken for TxDOT's Traffic Safety Office, which worked with the Department of Public Safety in the successful "Click It Or Ticket" campaign earlier this year.

★ ★ ★

A final set of numbers: Some 5,300 state employees had indicated they planned to retire by the end of August, including about 650 TxDOT workers. Not yet calculated: Total amount of calories consumed at all the retirement parties.

Good luck to all the TxDOT retirees from those of us with a few years left. ☼

— Mike Cox

TxDOT leads in recycling and conservation programs

by **Woody Raine**
and **Anne Russell**
General Services Division

The structural steel TxDOT uses in guardrails, bridges and construction rebar may be the reincarnation of old cars, appliances, and even damaged guardrail. Reflective glass beads in striping paint came from crushed windshields and other window glass. Fly ash added to concrete for strength and durability represent the remains of burning coal in power plants.

Through its General Services Division, TxDOT has been recycling, re-using, and buying items with recycled content long before the department's formal Roadmap for Recycling was created in 1994.

TxDOT recycles and buys recycled products to comply with laws and rules and to meet its vision for "providing comfortable, safe, durable, cost-effective, environmentally sensitive, and aesthetically appealing transportation systems that work together."

Recovery and re-use of materials is good business — and big business — particularly with used equipment, scrap metal and scrap paper. It also can make roads safer, smoother and less costly to build.

For example, using crumb rubber in asphalt paving can:

- Enhance ride smoothness
- Improve traction and rainwater runoff
- Lower roadway maintenance frequency and cost
- Put troublesome scrap tires to good use
- Reduce noise

In addition, TxDOT's recycling activities save the department money — some \$400,000 just on remanufactured toner cartridges. Recycling can even generate revenue.

As the third-largest state agency in Texas, with a budget of \$5.7 billion, TxDOT has the potential for

helping drive recycling trends throughout the state. As noted in the September/October 2002 issue of *E Magazine*, the total spending of some 87,000 federal, state and local governments across the country represents approximately 18 percent of the gross domestic product.

Compost provides a robust example. According to *BioCycle Magazine*, TxDOT is the largest compost user in the country. Over the past three years, TxDOT used 320,197 cubic yards of dairy manure compost, an amount that helped jump-start the business practically overnight. Statewide, the total amount of compost used reached nearly 800,000 cubic yards.

Involvement in the compost market serves several vital purposes for TxDOT.

First, because composting of dairy manure helps to alleviate a significant environmental problem in areas of the state with concentrated runoff from dairy operations, Environmental Protection Agency grants are available to both the department and contractors.

Second, compost benefits roadway construction and maintenance budgets by accelerating re-vegetation along roadways, conserving water and slowing erosion.

TxDOT's search for nontraditional, yet affordable, construction materials led to many innovative projects over the years.

The Houston District saved

money by crushing its old concrete pavement for re-use locally rather than shipping in aggregate from Central Texas or the Yucatan.

In 1998, the El Paso District constructed an embankment using tire shreds from nearly half a million tires.

Last year, the Fort Worth District stabilized a slope on Interstate 30 with 3,600 scrap tires bundled into bales. The slope was topped off by a restorative layer of erosion control compost to promote re-vegetation.

TxDOT continues to examine the potential of new recycled products. The Traffic Division and the Pharr District worked with a manufacturer to develop delineator posts made from scrap tire rubber and recycled plastic that are as durable as the traditional options — but the materials are cheaper and easier to install.

Lufkin, Corpus Christi, and Bryan districts are testing anti-vegetation mats, also made from scrap tire rubber, to reduce the amount of mowing and herbicide spraying needed around guardrails and signposts. Less mowing saves labor and helps reduce air pollution.

Favoring durable products, recycling recovered materials, and buying and using high-quality recycled products helps TxDOT achieve its vision. At the same time, recycled products can reduce disposal costs, save money and generate revenue for the state. ♻

Please share your recycling ideas with us

Transportation News would like to know how you use the 3 Rs of conservation — reduce, re-use and recycle — at work or at home to conserve our resources.

You may have eliminated buying certain products altogether. You may concoct your own earth-friendly cleaning materials. And you may have a great new use for plastic jugs that we need to know about.

Please share your tips with us so that all TxDOT employees can add to their repertoire of "green" practices.

We'll post your ideas on TNews Online for all to see. Be sure to include your name, district, division or office and a phone number in case we have questions for you.

E-mail: jourti1@dot.state.tx.us

Recycling heroes promote super savings for TxDOT

by **Tim Cunningham**
Public Information Office

From their lair of office cubicles, the department's recycling superheroes go about their business as part of the General Services Division. Their job: encourage everyone in the department to find ways to save resources, especially by recycling.

While the three Rs of conservation (reduce, re-use, recycle) are invisible on their workday garb, the three-R mantra is etched in their minds. It's there next to WNNW for Waste Not, Want Not.

When duty calls, or given an opening in conversation, they will remind you of the many benefits produced through recycling. As they battle the dark forces of throwaway consumerism, of waste and inefficiency, they use their powers for good to help change attitudes and behaviors.

They also have a role in changing TxDOT practices as the depart-



TxDOT photo / Tim Cunningham

From Austin, these four recyclers lead TxDOT efforts to observe the three Rs of conservation (reduce, re-use, recycle): Woody Raine, recycling manager; Sam Reyes, recycling services coordinator; Anne Russell, recycling outreach coordinator; and Tony Tijerina, recycling program specialist.

ment moves increasingly to recover and use mountains of materials (crushed glass, scrap tires, office paper, compost, etc.). Their efforts spur enormous savings for the department and for Texas taxpayers.

This fearless foursome — Woody

“Super-Saver” Raine, Anne “Reduce” Russell, Tony “Re-use” Tijerina, and Sam “Recycle” Reyes — combine their powers of talent, skill, experience, and enthusiasm to

■ See Recyclers, Page 7

TxDOT foursome preaches, practices 3 Rs of conservation

The four people behind TxDOT's recycling program practice what they preach. Each will tell you that anyone can reduce, re-use or recycle. We asked them: How do you personally practice the 3 Rs?

ANNE RUSSELL, RECYCLING OUTREACH COORDINATOR

I use washable mugs and dishes at work and at home, instead of disposables. I take the bus and walk a lot rather than drive. Someday I hope we all recycle, and I would like to see more energy derived from wind and the sun.

WOODY RAINE, RECYCLING MANAGER

We shop at and host garage sales. We buy from and donate to thrift shops. However, our family's most important recycling step is buying recycled-content building products. For our attic, we purchased cellulose insulation made from old newspapers and other paper. Also, last summer, I built a fort for my son using composite decking boards made from recycled plastic and wood fiber. Most anyone can set aside recyclables fairly easily; buying the products is more important.

SAM REYES, RECYCLING SERVICES COORDINATOR

I've donated clothing, furniture and electronics to Goodwill. I've purchased and donated building materials at the Austin Habitat for Humanity ReStore — the building-materials recycling center for local builders and homeowners. I also have recycling bins for household items and participate in the City of Austin's recycling program.

TONY TIJERINA, RECYCLING PROGRAM SPECIALIST

I recycle aluminum cans, newspapers, and plastic bottles at my apartment complex. I take old clothes and shoes to Goodwill Industries and take old books and magazines to Half Price Books. I don't use disposable plates, cups, or utensils, but instead use and wash permanent kitchenware, minimizing the use of my dishwasher to about once a week. I save my bath soap when it gets too small to handle and use it for washing my hands in the bathroom lavatory. ♻️

TxDOT fleet helps create demand for clean vehicles

by Ann Zeeck

Public Information Office

A few decades ago, we relied on rotary dial telephones, vinyl record albums, and electric typewriters. Today it's cell phones, MP3s and home computers. And sooner than you think, we may trade in our traditional gasoline-powered vehicles for emission-free hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles.

"Ford's chairman has given the company a 2010 deadline to roll out its first fuel-cell vehicles," says April Dents, who stopped in Austin recently to meet with the General Services Division's purchasing director, Glen Hagler, and fleet manager Don Lewis. Dents is the southeast region sales manager of alternative-fuel vehicles for Ford Motor Co., supplier of TxDOT's bi-fuel vehicles.

"Our alternative-fuel vehicles serve as an air-friendly 'bridge' between past and future technologies," explains Hagler.

Alt-fuel vehicles have been around for more than 30 years, Dents says, and include two types: vehicles equipped with after-market conversion kits, and those equipped with bi-fuel equipment directly in the factory — also known as original-equipment manufacturer (OEM) vehicles.

TxDOT, Dents says, is Ford's largest single customer of OEM vehicles. General Motors pulled out of production several years ago, leaving Ford as the sole provider for the niche market. Dents says the company produces up to 10,000 alt-fuel vehicles per year, depending on demand. TxDOT ordered 255 bi-fuel propane vehicles and 71 bi-fuel natural gas vehicles from Ford in 2003.

Dents speculated that one reason bi-fuel vehicles have not become mainstream is the lack of

a cohesive alternative fuel industry — particularly propane.

"TxDOT was able to overcome that obstacle and develop a stable supply of propane for its fleet needs," she says.

TxDOT helped improve air quality through its purchase of alt-fuel vehicles, and it helped create a market for the environmentally friendly cars and trucks that may increase their use nationwide.

TxDOT's fleet consists of more than 1,200 OEM vehicles, with the remaining bi-fuel vehicles converted after-market. In 2002, however, after-market conversions became limited by new restrictions in the Energy Policy Act. Today, all conversion kits must be fully certified, which involves more costly testing. As a result, TxDOT has focused on acquiring OEM vehicles to support the different needs within the department.

"The Ford contract has been good for us because we get sales and service at the same place," says Don Lewis, fleet manager. In addition, Lewis says, OEM vehicles don't require as much maintenance and repair as the after-market conversion vehicles, which are being phased out of TxDOT's fleet as a result of stricter guidelines issued by the Environmental Protection Agency.

TxDOT has received national recognition for its use of alt-fuel vehicles. In 2002, alternative fuel was used in the department's bi-fuel vehicles 86 percent of the time. TxDOT's on-road fleet, particularly light-duty vehicles, has been in the forefront of statewide air-quality efforts thanks to focused efforts to purchase vehicles capable of using alternative fuel, Lewis says. ★

TxDOT recycling coordinators

Districts

Abilene: Dicky Wasson;
Amarillo: Alvin Kabetzke;
Atlanta: Joyce Michaelis;
Austin: David Mchugh;
Beaumont: Vickie Duke;
Brownwood: Earla Pallette;
Bryan: Lonnie Brothers;
Childress: Ross Butler;
Corpus Christi: Carlos Carrillo;
Dallas: Jim Crisp;
El Paso: Ron Groves;
Fort Worth: Felicia Luther ;
Houston: Sherry Randall;
Laredo: Olivia Garza-Gongoria;
Lubbock: Dennis Morgan;
Lufkin: David Pitts;
Odessa: Glen Larum;
Paris: Laverne Scholl;
Pharr: Danny Espinoza;
San Angelo: Ronnie Stringer;
San Antonio: Wilbert W. Moore;
Tyler: Linda Carlile;
Waco: Bruce Baker;
Wichita Falls: Julia Smith;
Yoakum: Maynard Wagner

Divisions & Offices

Aviation: Becky Bates;
Bridge: Judy Dean;
Civil Rights: Gina Lopez;
Contract Services: Sandi Moehlman;
Construction: Shirley Middleton, Laura Benningfield;
Design: Sheila Crawley;
Environmental Affairs: Don Hill;
Finance: Sylvia Antle;
General Counsel: Pam Mackenzie;
General Services: Woody Raine, Sam Reyes, Tony Tijerina, Anne S. Russell, Paul S. Alvis;
Human Resources: Tom Roy;
Information Systems: Ken Clark;
Legislative Affairs: Tonia Ramirez;
Maintenance: Staci Mckeehan;
Motor Carrier: Robert Frizzell;
Motor Vehicle: Helen Moore;
Occupational Safety: Toni Luther;
Public Information: Diana Ward ;
Public Transportation: Karen Dunlap;
Research & Technology Implementation: Martha Norwood;
Right Of Way: Mike Lertz;
Traffic Operations: Rosalinda Cavazos;
Transportation Planning & Programming: Cindy Smith, Rosemarie (Romy) Grimm;
Travel: Chante Bergmann;
Travis (North): Dianne Lindemann;
Travis (South): Lucas Short;
Vehicle Titles & Registration: Mary Ann Chapman

Toner toughens highway surfaces, mixes asphalt and recycling

by **Bill Powell**

Public Information Office

Waste toner once was considered useless. That changed, however, when TxDOT engineer Rakesh Tripathi proposed recycling the material to make Texas roads stronger.

Toner is a black powder that feels like confectioners' sugar. Made up of styrene and carbon black, toner is used in the process of making copies. Tripathi found that toner, when added to liquefied asphalt, could make road surfaces up to 40 percent stronger.

It was such a good idea that, in September 2000, Tripathi succeeded in getting for TxDOT a patent for the road-hardener. Acquisition of the patent was a first for TxDOT.

"It's a win-win situation when we

"It's a win-win situation when we use materials that used to be wasted." — **Rakesh Tripathi**

use materials that used to be wasted, saving money for both recyclers and TxDOT, while making our roads more durable," says Tripathi, assistant director of transportation planning in the Houston District.

A graduate of Bangalore University in India, Tripathi immigrated to the United States to attend Oklahoma State University. There he earned a master's degree in civil engineering, with honors, in 1994.

His idea for the asphalt mixture came to him during his graduate studies and was put to the test when he worked in the Waco district. In 1997, a mile-section of Valley Mills

Drive in Waco was paved, replacing a costly additive with the free waste toner.

When a cartridge is considered unusable, it's not entirely empty. Cartridge recyclers must remove the waste before refilling and then dispose of it somewhere. That somewhere used to be to the nearest dump or landfill. Copiers and printers in the United States generate 25,000 tons of waste toner per year. One ton fills five 55-gallon drums.

TxDOT engineers estimate savings to Texas taxpayers of up to \$1.3 million per year through toner recycling. "It's indicative of the TxDOT tradition of innovation," says TxDOT recycling manager Woody Raine, "that the agency looks for ways to conserve by non-traditional methods such as using toner in asphalt." ★

Recyclers saving TxDOT money and resources

Continued from Page 5

do good on an ever-expanding scale.

Sam Reyes, TxDOT's Mr. Recycling since 1994, is the man people turn to when they want to know where to find crumb rubber or waste toner for use in asphalt, or where tests are being undertaken of compost used to beautify the state's roadsides.

He handles questions like these, and more, with the sure hand of a super-hero. He's also quick to deliver rapid-fire facts to support his fight for conservation of resources. For example:

- Over the past four years, TxDOT saved \$400,000 by purchasing remanufactured toner cartridges instead of new cartridges.
- For roadway construction and

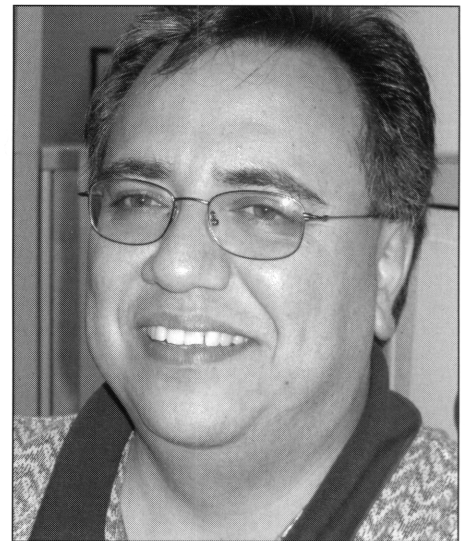
maintenance in fiscal 2002, TxDOT used more than 3.9 million tons of fly ash and 0.6 million tons of crushed concrete.

- The department also used 19,000 tons of reflective glass beads and 188,000 tons of steel — all of it recycled materials.

The Transportation Commission, in 1998, directed the department to purchase recycled-content products whenever available, when they meet performance specifications, and when they compete favorably on cost.

TxDOT purchases of recycled products and materials exceeded \$643 million in fiscal 2002, up from \$305 million in 2001.

For Sam Reyes, and the others on his team, no day is complete without some personal recycling or without encouraging others to begin the recycling habit. "TxDOT's recy-



TxDOT photo / Tim Cunningham

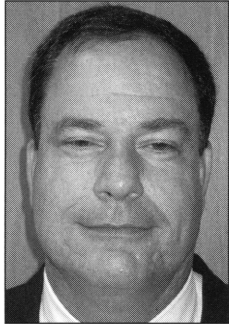
Sam Reyes, TxDOT's "Mr. Recycling"

cling site on the Internet," he says, "(www.dot.state.tx.us/gsd/recycle) has lots of ideas for people who want to become recycling super-heroes, too." ★

DAIGH LEADS AUSTIN DISTRICT

Robert B. Daigh has been appointed Austin district engineer, effective Sept. 1.

Daigh most recently served as deputy director and director of turnpike planning and development for the Texas Turnpike Authority Division. He has been credited



Bob Daigh

with moving the Central Texas Turnpike Project from route selection to design plans to construction. The project has been called "the single largest toll-road construction project in the nation."

Daigh began his TxDOT career in 1988 in the Austin District's Georgetown area office. He served as an assistant area engineer and a district programming and contracts engineer before promotion to the division's director of turnpike planning and development in 1999. He was named division deputy director in 2001.

Daigh graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1977.

SAN ANTONIO ENGINEER RETIRES

After more than 35 years of department service, John P. Kelly retired Aug. 31 as district engineer for the San Antonio District. He had held the post since 1993.

Under Kelly's leadership, the district implemented the TransGuide intelligent transportation system, recognized worldwide for its advanced technology. The district also was recognized nationally in the late 1990s for having the best-maintained highways in the country.

Kelly started his career in 1968 as a summer-hire engineering technician. He began working full time in the Dallas District in 1971 as a construction engineering assistant, bridge design engineer and roadway design

engineer. In 1981, he was named assistant district planning engineer, responsible for Texas 190 (George Bush Tollway). As the project manager of the North Central Expressway beginning in 1986, he was responsible for plans and development of the largest highway project in TxDOT history up to that time.

SAENZ TAKES ON BORDER ISSUES

Amadeo Saenz, assistant executive director for engineering operations, has added border issues to his roster of duties following the departure Aug. 31 of Ed Wueste, TxDOT's assistant executive director for border-trade transportation.

Wueste worked with the Pharr, Laredo and El Paso districts and the International Relations Office on border-trade transportation projects. He also chaired the Border Region Transportation Task Force to establish TxDOT's priorities along the border from Brownsville to El Paso. He became assistant executive director for border trade transportation May 1, 1999.

DAVIS HEADS MOTOR CARRIER

Carol Davis has been named director of the Motor Carrier Division, effective Sept. 1. Since 2002, she had been business services director for the division.

Davis began her TxDOT career in 1987 as an environmental review coordinator with the Design Division. She also served as an environmental quality specialist with the Austin District.

She graduated from St. Edwards University in 1993 with a bachelor's degree in communications. In 1997 she received TxDOT's Journey Toward Excellence Team Quality Award.

JOHNSON RECEIVES AWARD

Transportation Commission Chair John W. Johnson received the first Eddie Bernice Johnson Award for Excellence in Transportation Leadership at the Sixth Annual Transpor-

tation Summit in Irving last month.

The city of Irving created the award to honor individual dedication and years of effective and consistent service to transportation. Eddie Bernice Johnson is a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Dallas.

RESEARCH CHIEF RETIRES

Paul Krugler, director of TxDOT's Research and Technology Implementation Office since 2001, retired Aug. 31 after 30 years of department service.

Under Krugler's leadership, the Research Management Committee structure was reorganized, Technical Assistance Panel involvement was revitalized, university contracting procedures were streamlined, and recognition programs were initiated for outstanding performance by university and department personnel. Efficiencies resulting from 21 selected research projects saved the department an estimated \$322 million over 10 years.

Krugler received the Dewitt C. Greer Award in 1995 for engineering contributions during his tenure in the department's Materials and Tests Division, where he began his TxDOT career in 1973 in the Concrete Section.

TxDOT PRAISES VOLUNTEER

Penny Hall received TxDOT recognition in July, as the Adopt-a-Highway Award Volunteer of the Year. She regularly clears a two-mile stretch of FM 250, which also has a sign bearing her name as the person who picks up roadside litter there. Hall, who lives in western Cass County in TxDOT's Atlanta District, received the honor at the Keep Texas Beautiful convention in Dallas.

Hall and her parents remove trash from the roadway every week, spending nearly 500 hours picking up more than 100 bags of litter a year. They also have sown wildflower seeds to promote a more colorful roadside. ★

DIAMOND LANE by Kevin Eaker



Mail Drop

SAN ANGELO DISTRICT

From: Robert and Joyce Campbell
Sarasota, Fla.

We are writing . . . you about one of your employees, **Robert Marquez**. We had a blowout in our recreational vehicle and were stranded on the roadside between Ozona and Sonora. Our cell phone was not operating, and our traveling companions returned to Ozona to call for assistance.

While we were waiting, Mr. Marquez stopped to inquire if he could give us assistance. We had already passed the time our roadside service should have arrived.

He said he was going to check on his return, and if we were still there, he would stop and stay with us until help arrived. Indeed, we were still there. At this time, he called another company to assist us, and then stayed with us until someone actually arrived. We felt very grateful that Mr. Marquez did come back to see that we

eventually got the roadside service.

We had two more roadside incidents on our return, and there was not one person who stopped to inquire if we might need help, so we know what Mr. Marquez did was unusual — as well as appreciated.

(This letter originally was sent to Hector DeHoyos Jr., Ozona maintenance supervisor.)

TYLER DISTRICT

From: Linda Roberts
Nacogdoches, Texas

I want to thank you again for your help with my flat tire. You could have driven on by and ignored my problem. You could have given me a ride and just dropped me off at a station. Instead, you went out of your way to help me. You changed the tire and followed me to safety. I just can't thank you enough. It's people like you that make the world a better place.

(This card was sent to Louie Lambeth, herbicide operator in the Jacksonville Maintenance Section. His supervisor, Billy Terry, sent a copy to the Tyler District office, which forwarded it to Transportation News.)

LUFKIN DISTRICT

From: Wanda Strauss
Lufkin, Texas

I would like to recognize two of your employees. I am a senior adult . . . and recently had a flat tire on FM 58. With no assistance near, two of your TxDOT employees (**Andrew K. Smith** and **Curtis W. Shoemaker**) stopped and changed the tire for me. I would like to express my appreciation for their assistance. It was beyond their call of duty. Both gentlemen should be commended for their helpful actions.

(This letter was sent to Dennis Cooley, Lufkin District engineer.)

STATE EMPLOYEE CHARITABLE CAMPAIGN

SEPTEMBER — OCTOBER 2003

TxDOT: Together We Care



Mile Markers

35 years

Franklin D. Allen – Atlanta
Carlos A. Ahumada – El Paso
Judy C. West – Finance
Joe L. Melson – Lufkin
Benito Reyna – Pharr
Robert W. Zaruba – Yoakum

30 years

Brenda A. Mitchell – Abilene
Wilbert L. Pawelek – Corpus Christi
Charles E. Wagnon – El Paso
Richard N. Bailey – Houston
Richard L. Norwood – Motor Carrier
Anselmo Morales – San Antonio
Sharon T. Bowden – Vehicle Titles & Registration
Howard A. Auzston – Yoakum

25 years

Wilkes A. Stevens – Amarillo
James E. Wilson – Brownwood
Clifford E. Bost – Corpus Christi
Francisco J. Partida Jr. – Dallas
Adolfo H. Mancha – El Paso
Judy C. Nash – Fort Worth
Virginia R. Potter – Fort Worth
Ruben L. Dorbecker – Houston
Manuel B. Francisco Jr. – Houston
Charles M. Levis – Houston
Dennis L. Schultz – Information Systems
Gilbert Alvarado – Lubbock
Jerry G. Cooper – Lubbock
James I. Marshall – Lubbock
Richard D. Pinkerton – Lubbock
Charles W. Cook – Lufkin
Aurelia P. Galvan – Odessa
Debra S. Smensky – Transportation Planning & Programming
Jerald J. Jolly – Yoakum
Robbin G. Odom – Yoakum

20 years

Craig A. Ash – Amarillo
Larry D. Fewell – Amarillo
Roberta A. Stanley – Amarillo
Parker N. Stewart – Amarillo
Antonio Orta – Austin
Nelda R. Eureste – Corpus Christi
Rudolfo Rivera Jr. – Corpus Christi
James R. Boyd – Dallas
Lee R. Richardson – Dallas
Brian N. Barger – Design
Barbara B. Ashcraft – Finance
Bruce K. Matussek – Finance
Jack D. Sherwood – Fort Worth
Thomas J. MacMorran Jr. – General Services
Jose M. Olvera – General Services
Thomas F. Geiger – Houston
Wayne S. Matthews – Houston
Raymond F. Zadowski – Houston
Arnulfo Flores – Laredo
Nathan S. Chrisman – Lubbock
Ramon Sandoval – Pharr
Mary A. Brown – San Angelo
Johnna D. Butler – San Antonio
Sandra S. Carmona – Texas Turnpike Authority
Larry K. Clark – Tyler
Richard D. Davis – Tyler
Larne S. Ellis – Tyler
Cecilia W. Chen – Vehicle Titles & Registration
Teresa S. Colquitt – Vehicle Titles & Registration
Gary D. Roller – Waco
Paul D. Frerich – Yoakum

15 years

John R. Grogan Jr. – Atlanta
Thomas S. Blackmore – Austin
William K. Dahmann – Austin

Editor's Note: At press time, some 650 TxDOT employees had indicated that they planned to retire as of Aug. 31. However, the Human Resources Department tells us that it will not have a finalized list until some time in September. Not wanting to leave anyone out, or to include someone who might have changed his or her mind, we have decided to run the list in October.

Russell G. Morgenroth – Austin
Luis O. Herrera – Brownwood
Jose R. Gomez – Corpus Christi
Carolyn M. Harl – Corpus Christi
Reynaldo S. Villegas – Corpus Christi
Donald E. Bland – Dallas
Blake A. Wade – Dallas
Jo Ann Cottrell – Fort Worth
Lynn E. Haehn – Fort Worth
Michael D. Isbell – Fort Worth
Alfredo Valles – Fort Worth
Melanie M. Martin – Houston
Lynn Woods – Information Systems
Jimmy D. Carpenter – Lubbock
Gilberto V. Gonzales – Odessa
Darrell G. Hancock – Paris
Bradley L. Martin – Paris
Leah J. Rogers – Paris
Javier Rodriguez – Pharr
Candance L. Bierschwale – San Angelo
John H. Foster – Transportation Planning & Programming
Russell W. Haas – Travel
Mary D. Pinnell – Tyler
Mary A. Eschenburg – Vehicle Titles & Registration
Bobby J. Johnson – Vehicle Titles & Registration
Laura L. McBride – Vehicle Titles & Registration
Jim B. Reed – Waco
Ronnie M. Peters – Wichita Falls

10 years

Larry D. McIntire – Abilene
Daryl R. Haines – Amarillo
Bradley L. Powell – Amarillo
Donna H. Barnes – Atlanta
Barbara F. Wyatt – Atlanta
Sandra J. Sprinkle – Beaumont
Stephen W. Crim – Construction
Bradley F. Hurst – Construction
Jerry Jackson – Construction
Paul E. Maddox – Dallas
Terry D. Moore – Dallas
Yuan Ruo Wang – Dallas
Elizabeth B. Reyes – El Paso
Sylvia V. Mraz – Finance
Sandra S. Harris – Fort Worth
Ghasem A. Arjomandi – Houston
Annie J. Bob – Houston
Leonard E. Polk – Houston
Sara E. Barker – Human Resources
Michael D. Bundy – Human Resources
Jean Calvin – Human Resources
Bennie T. Uribe – Human Resources
Terry D. Dunlap – Information Systems
William T. Jenkins – Information Systems
James P. Pennington – Information Systems
Juan Gomez – Laredo
Claudia S. Gonzalez-liendo – Laredo
Carol J. Kent – Motor Vehicle
Jose V. Guerra Jr. – Pharr
Allen Bowie – Public Transportation
Diane Y. Rausch – San Antonio
Albert Garza – Travel
Janet D. Skamra – Tyler
James N. Tullos Jr. – Tyler
Jeffrey W. Williams – Tyler
Bruce W. Baker – Waco
Janice M. Jackson – Waco
Michael A. Rhodes – Waco
Jerry R. Thompson – Waco

5 years

Charles T. Harvey Jr. – Abilene
Linda K. Peavy – Abilene
Jason M. Preslar – Abilene
James H. Smith – Abilene
Mark A. Austin – Amarillo
Phillip K. Calhoun – Amarillo
Alvin E. Davis – Amarillo
Clifford L. Naranjo – Amarillo
Russell W. Stout – Amarillo
Jason L. Brecht – Austin
David R. Franklin – Austin
Christopher S. Johnson – Austin
Robert W. Mash – Austin
Mark W. Mohr – Austin
Corrie J. Frank – Beaumont
Percy Gilmore III – Beaumont
Renee M. Hicks – Beaumont
Robert P. Muse – Beaumont
Michael D. Hyzak – Bridge
Joe D. Riba – Bridge
David P. Farris – Childress
Robert V. Allen – Corpus Christi
Rodney J. Duve – Corpus Christi
Eusebio Galvan Jr. – Corpus Christi
Adrian Lopez – Corpus Christi
Joseph K. Ramsey – Corpus Christi
Saba Y. El-hawi – Dallas
Judith D. Garza-bosquez – Dallas
Teddy C. May – Dallas
Paula K. McGinley – Design
Roy C. Bell – Fort Worth
Jesus L. Espinoza – Fort Worth
Jerry L. Menzdorf – Fort Worth
Juan M. Reyna – Fort Worth
Richard D. Monroe – General Council
Kerry D. Hardy – General Services
Shawky S. Abushmeis – Houston
Beata G. Kwater – Houston
Thuy T. Luong – Houston
Joseph M. Martinez – Houston
Lisa M. Meredith – Houston
Laurie A. Shelton – Houston
Norma J. Baragas – Human Resources
Nikki N. Gordon-hawkins – Human Resources
Theresa M. Sykes – Human Resources
Scott A. Smallridge – Information Systems
Kimberly L. Greener – Lubbock
Trine Soto Jr. – Lubbock
David K. Beck – Lufkin
Stacey L. Cullen – Motor Vehicle
Jesus Banegas Jr. – Odessa
Amanda S. Gipson – Odessa
Travis A. Ball – Paris
Brett A. Bennett – Paris
Judy B. Sanchez – Pharr
Nina E. Kroeker – Research & Technology
John D. Burnett – San Angelo
Manuel L. Rendon Jr. – San Angelo
Troy D. Ruffin – San Angelo
Daniel E. Watters – San Angelo
Cindy M. Haynes – San Antonio
Ronald A. Johanningsmeier – San Antonio
De Ann M. Qualls – San Antonio
Bertha Deweese – Transportation Planning & Programming
Laura J. Crow – Tyler
Lloyd E. Garrett – Waco
Mary E. Lozano – Waco
Duaine H. Covert – Wichita Falls
Alexander J. Schroeder – Wichita Falls
Richard D. Guerrero – Yoakum

Recycling valor, Part 1:

After 30 years, TxDOT worker receives medal for bravery

by Marc Shepherd
Beaumont District

The Huey's blades sliced through the hot, humid air with a steady "thump, thump, thump." An armada of aluminum and Plexiglas, more than a hundred helicopters swarmed over the jungle toward Firebase Ripcord to rescue trapped U.S. soldiers whose mountaintop position had been overrun by Viet Cong.

Crew chief Gordon "Sharky" Clark's chopper is the third one in. Below are hundreds of scared 18- and 19-year-olds. The Huey is their life-line, their only way out.

The skids haven't even touched the ground when dozens of terrified soldiers storm the helicopter. They frantically wrap themselves around the skids, throw themselves onboard, or grab anything they can hold onto.

A sergeant wielding a long pipe beats the troops away from the helicopter. It's the only way to keep them from overloading the aircraft. The rest will have to wait for the next chopper now circling and drawing heavy enemy fire.

Enemy machine-gun fire pelts Clark's helicopter. Panic sets in as the soldiers are forced off what they believe might be their last chance. And for some it will be. Enemy snipers are systematically picking them off. Life expectancy is measured in seconds.

A helicopter has exploded in a ball of flame, sending a large rumble across the valley and more than twenty young men to their fiery deaths.

Another blast, this one much louder and closer, throws Clark's helicopter sideways. A mortar has landed just 15 feet away. Smoke, dust and blood fill the inside of the

ship's cabin.

It's time to go. The pilot pulls his shrapnel and bullet-ridden machine slowly into the air. The overloaded Huey strains slowly upward with its cargo of scared and wounded soldiers.

As the Huey lands, medics rush to help the wounded. Clark's fellow crewmembers are astonished to find him still in the helicopter. During the Ripcord melee his radio was destroyed. Unable to communicate with him, Clark's crewmembers assumed he had fallen out.

★ ★ ★

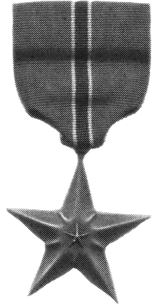
A TxDOT maintenance shed seems an unfitting place to talk about war. With a humming, clattering ice machine in the background, Clark, a soft-spoken maintenance technician with Anahuac Maintenance sums up his experience with the Ghostriders in Vietnam, especially Ripcord, in one statement.

"You're scared, you're shooting, and guys have been hit," says Clark.

A few days after the July 21, 1970 firefight, in a ceremony at Camp Evans, a general pinned the Bronze Star — one of the nation's highest honors — on Clark's uniform.

"They would pin it on our shoulder then take it off to save it for the other guys," Clark says. "They said when we got back stateside we would be given our medals."

But Clark's Bronze Star never came. Neither did any other of his service medals, including the Air Medal for Valor. At least not for 32 years. How he finally got them is another story.



To learn how Clark finally received his medal, please visit TNews Online at <http://crossroads.org/pio/tnol.htm>

Calendar

2003

SEPTEMBER

- 9-10** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 10-12** Advanced Public Procurement, San Antonio, GSD
- 17** Texas Vegetation Management Association CEU Workshop, Lubbock, MNT
- 18** Government Supply Chain, Austin, GSD
- 24** Adopt-a-Highway Luncheon, Austin, TVL
- 25** Commission Meeting, Austin

OCTOBER

- 6** Yom Kippur (optional holiday)
- 7-8** Equipment Admin/Purchasing Meeting, Austin, GSD
- 8-9** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 8-10** General Public Procurement, Plano, GSD
- 13** DE/DD/OD meeting, College Station
- 14-15** 2003 Transportation Short Course
- 16-17** Contract Management, San Antonio, GSD
- 23-24** Effective Contract Writing, Houston, GSD
- 26-29** Road Profilers User's Group Meeting, Austin, CST
- 30** Commission Meeting, Austin

NOVEMBER

- 3-6** Research Management Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI
- 4-5** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 5-6** Negotiated Contract Super Conference, Austin, CSO
- 6** Productivity-based Contracts, San Antonio, GSD
- 6-7** Competitive Sealed Proposals, Plano, GSD
- 7** Problem-solving, San Antonio, GSD
- 11** Veteran's Day (holiday)
- 15** Texas Recycles Day, Statewide, GSD
- 20** Commission Meeting, Austin
- 27** Thanksgiving Day (holiday)
- 28** Day after Thanksgiving (holiday)

DECEMBER

- 4-5** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 9** Research Oversight Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI
- 18** Commission Meeting, Austin
- 24** Christmas Eve Day (holiday)
- 25** Christmas Day (holiday)
- 26** Day after Christmas (holiday)

The complete TxDOT Calendar is on the intranet at <http://crossroads.org/pio/articles/calendar.htm>

backtracks



“No Fishing” apparently didn’t apply when the fish were biting. We’d like to learn where this picture was taken so we can try our luck. If you know anything about this photo, please let TNews know by calling Buddy Allison at (512)463-6397 or e-mailing him at balliso@dot.state.tx.us.



Last month’s mystery backtracks photo remains a mystery. Despite valiant efforts and numerous guesses, it still hasn’t been identified. The palm trees in the background scream a coastal venue, but none of our reliable sources has pinpointed the location of the scene. If you know anything about this photo, please let TNews know by calling Buddy Allison at (512) 463-8612 or e-mailing him at balliso@dot.state.tx.us.



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