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TRANSPORTATION NEWS

January 2004

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TRANSPORTATION NEWS
JAN 2004



FEATURE PRESENTATION:
TxDOT and the movies
page 6

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN
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On the cover:

OK, we staged the shot. TxDOT employees weren't really taking a movie break on state time. But a TxDOT enhancement grant is helping to get Beeville's venerable Rialto Theater back in operation. Shown here, from left, are Richard Valderrama, Ken Wilson, Cecilia Amthor, Duane Caruso and Hilarío Chapa III, all of the Beeville Maintenance Office.

TxDOT photo by Geoff Appold

Contents

Straight Talk.....	2
Rialto Theater.....	3
Letter from the editor.....	3
De-icing project.....	4
New commissioners named.....	5
TxDOT at the movies.....	6
TxDOT Roundup.....	8
Letters.....	9
Service Awards.....	10
Calendar.....	11
Backtracks.....	Back Cover

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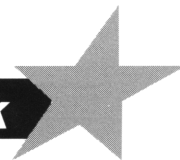
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Straight Talk



TxDOT contributes to vibrant economy

by **Mike Behrens**

Executive Director

Every day on our roads, rail lines, at our ports and in the airspace overhead, thousands of goods and products move through the state to assure Texans of a quality way of life — and to keep our economy healthy.

All this happens in large part because of what we do every day at TxDOT. We provide one of the finest transportation systems in the world. In the process, we help drive the Texas economy.

That's hundreds of billions of dollars worth of goods and products spanning numerous industries: agriculture, construction, oil and gas, manufacturing. In everyday terms, that means you have milk in the refrigerator when you want it, the paint you need to freshen up your house on the shelf at the home improvement store, fuel in the pump at the gas station down the street, and the medication you expect the pharmacist to have on hand to treat that illness.

Safe and efficient transportation systems in the age of just-in-time delivery among businesses — and a similar expectation with consumers — are vital to our economy. They also help get us to our jobs, our kids to school and our exports to market.

Our state's economy wouldn't be the same without such a system. A key example is the pivotal role played by transportation in helping Texas land the \$800 million Toyota production plant in San Antonio, which will begin construction this year. Gov. Perry made sure the deal took place by funding Toyota's request for a second rail line at the plant. The Transportation Commission, for its part, made sure that millions of dollars in roadway expansion and improvement funding went to the San Antonio area to assure the efficient movement of employees, supplies and the pickups that will be manufactured there.

Some 2,000 jobs at the Toyota plant alone will boost the local economy. The plant is expected to add \$2.4 billion to the Texas economy over the next decade and more than 5,000 additional jobs from support businesses that spring up as a result of the plant's Texas location.

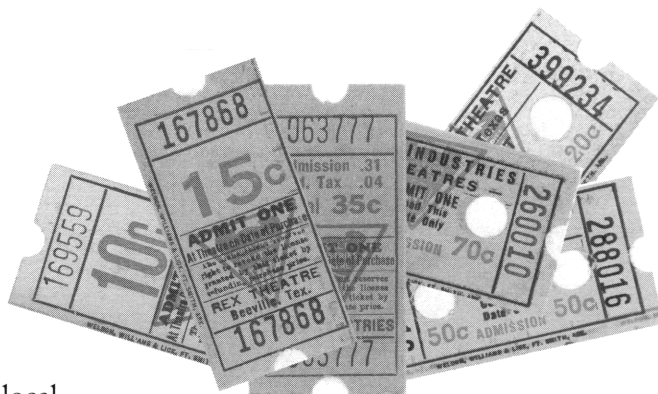
If we think about it for a while, we can all come up with scores of activities and services that wouldn't take place without our current transportation system. A few examples are:

- Taking off from work on a Friday afternoon for a weekend out of town
- Having a safe evacuation route from hurricanes or tornadoes
- Receiving daily mail and package delivery
- Knowing that emergency vehicles can arrive at the scene in time to save lives

We've come a long way from the day in 1937 when Texas' first farm-to-market road was built (in Rusk County) to help bring the farmer out of the mud so he could sell his products in the marketplace. Yet the concept of acting as a catalyst for commerce, prosperity and a good quality of life remains high on our list of imperatives at TxDOT.

We link Texas with the world. As a result, our state's vibrant economy can continue to grow while we at TxDOT help make everyday life happen for the state. Thank you for all that you do, day in, day out. ★

TxDOT behind the scenes of theater revival



by **Mike Cox**
Editor

When the curtain goes up in Beeville's restored Rialto Theater, in a figurative sense, TxDOT will be standing in the wings.

The Hall-Rialto Preservation

(Some fine print: The Rialto project didn't take any money away from fixing potholes or building new roads. These federal dollars were specifically earmarked for projects selected for the Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program. Projects had to have a relationship to the transportation system by either function or impact. Other details of STEP, see page 11.)

Association added local funding to \$65,000 in enhancement federal dollars from TxDOT to return the exterior of the venerable movie house to its former glitz. The show won't go on until the association comes up with more money, but Beeville civic leaders are applauding the help they got from TxDOT and are confident they will complete the Rialto's renovation.

"Finishing the interior is going to take another \$600,000," says Dr. John Hester, association president.

"Our dream is to open in 2005. I'd say right now we're somewhere in the fourth to sixth inning of the game."

The Rialto, designed by Beeville architect W.C. Stephenson, opened on Aug. 19, 1922, with a showing of the silent movie "The Three Musketeers" starring Douglas Fairbanks. The 726-seat theater cost \$25,000 to build. Seeing a movie cost a dime, maybe all of a quarter if you wanted popcorn and

■ See **RIALTO**, Page 11

Letter from the editor

Flanked by the Timmerman Elementary School's Safety Patrol, Commissioner John W. Johnson last month unveiled two new specialty license plates that will help fund TxDOT's Safe Routes to School program.

The "God Bless America" and "God Bless Texas" plates were shown off for the first time at a press conference in Pflugerville on Dec. 17. Timmerman Elementary will be an early beneficiary of the safety program, which is funding sidewalks and other traffic improvements that will make it safer for children going to and from the school.

The new plates are available for \$40 annually (plus another \$40 if personalized), with \$32 of every sale going to the state highway fund to enhance school safety.

A fix, a clarification and a caveat

The fix: A story in the November/December issue of



TNews inadvertently transferred one of our employees nearly halfway across Texas. Lee Dhone, first-place winner of the 2003 Truck Roadeo, is from the Lufkin District, not Childress.

The clarification: Though Phillip Swager Associates prepared the plans for the new safety rest area in the Childress District, the Old West concept was the brainchild of TxDOT architects and engineers in the Maintenance Division.

The caveat: Please keep in mind that when we try to simplify a complicated issue — the various nuances of House Bill 3588 or tolling come to mind — we are not publishing law or policy. We are paraphrasing and, despite careful editing, we might misinterpret something or make something so easy to understand that it's no longer technically accurate. In other

words, the actual wording of the statute or policy is what counts.

Cream and sugar?

TxDOT keeps Texans moving. But coffee is the fluid that helps many of us get going in the morning, not to mention staying awake while checking the pavement along Interstate 10 between Junction and Fort Stockton. Or from Austin to Dallas.

So, for all TxDOT coffee lovers and our colleagues in the transportation industry, here's some good news: After years of being told we drink too much coffee, a recent study by the Harvard Medical School shows that drinking six cups or more of caffeinated coffee can reduce by up to 50 percent the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. (Sorry, the reduction for female coffee drinkers was only 30 percent.)

I'd write more, but it's time for another cup of joe.

—Mike Cox

Fluid ready to de-ice roads in Amarillo

by **Bill Powell**

Public Information Office

When cold winds howl and ice and snow make travel risky, the Amarillo District's Mike Taylor helps keep motorists safe. As the district's director of operations, Taylor worked for several years to get a machine that keeps dangerous ice and snow from accumulating on roadways. This winter, his persistence paid off — he got the machine he wanted, and drivers are getting safer roads.

Taylor collaborated with Area Engineer Ron Johnson and maintenance supervisor Ken Prestidge to buy a de-icing machine that would do the job of the snowplows and salt-spreading trucks in keeping roads clear.

When icy and snowy weather approaches, the remotely controlled machine prepares the particular section of road to fight the formation of hazardous ice. Once the de-icer is spread, says Prestidge, vehicles are less likely to skid there.

Using the special machinery, operators apply magnesium-chloride, an anti-icing fluid, from two 1,200-gallon tanks. The liquid flows to pipes embedded in the treatment area. The pipes, spaced at 500-foot intervals are attached from under the pavement to nozzles on both sides of the concrete barrier at the road's center. Vehicles traveling the roadway spread the fluid across both lanes of the road. This protects the area treated and extends a half mile outside the area.

Most TxDOT districts facing ice and snow conditions use magnesium-chloride in some form. The substance is spread either as a liquid or employed in a dry, granular

It's not snowing — yet. But when it does, a stretch of U.S. 87 in Canyon, equipped with the first de-icer built into a Texas road will be ready. A solution of magnesium and chloride is pumped to nozzles located in the median strip. The nozzles spray the solution onto the lanes; passing vehicles spread the solution to prevent ice and snow-build-up.



form, bringing the same de-icing results as the liquid while supplying traction for vehicles as it melts.

This substance is applied using trucks, sometimes mixed with a sand and salt mixture called “chat.”

Amarillo's de-icer controller is so technically advanced it can be activated from any personal computer

“Cost savings of the system are in the numbers, ... I don't see a downside to the use of this equipment.”

— **Ken Prestidge**

with a modem and a password. The technological advantage doesn't stop there; sensors on the roadway monitor wind speed, temperature, precipitation and dew point. When winter weather demands use of the equipment, the anti-icing machine will set off an alarm, alerting the system monitor.

Johnson and Prestidge went to Oklahoma last year to see how the machinery works. They decided to place the anti-icing machine at a mile-long hilly portion of U.S. 87 in Canyon near the West Texas A&M University stadium. The \$57,700 machine was ready for

action in early December although winter weather has yet to put it to the test.

The machine's benefits are many. In the test area, a location where jackknifed trucks and multiple accidents are frequent, it will remove TxDOT salt-truck drivers from harm's way. With the de-icing machine at work, TxDOT drivers can clear other roads. Its use will save \$500 in each snow-storm or ice storm as the two salt-spreader trucks and drivers are used elsewhere in a district averaging four storms a year.

“Cost savings of the system are in the numbers,” says Prestidge. Filling the two tanks with de-icing solution is about \$2,600 for the winter. Measure this against the \$2,000 cost per guardrail accident with an average of three accidents each winter. If the de-icer cuts the accident rate by one, the savings will almost cover the expense for the de-icing solution, he says. Prestidge added, “I don't see a downside to the use of this equipment.”

While the de-icing machine is not regarded as a pilot project, Prestidge says its success could lead other districts to try the device in their winter weather trouble-spots. ★

Two join expanded commission; Williamson to preside as chair

Corridor, toll roads seen as two goals

For the first time in its 86-year history, TxDOT has five commission members. And when the Transportation Commission meets in San Antonio on Jan. 29, the policy-making panel also will have a new chair.

Gov. Rick Perry announced Jan. 7 that job was going to Ric Williamson, a commission member since 2001. He replaces John W. Johnson, a 1999 appointee of then-Gov. George Bush. In 2000, Bush named Johnson chairman.

Late last year, the governor filled two new slots on the commission created by the last session of the Legislature with its passage of Senate Bill 409.

Perry's appointees are Hope

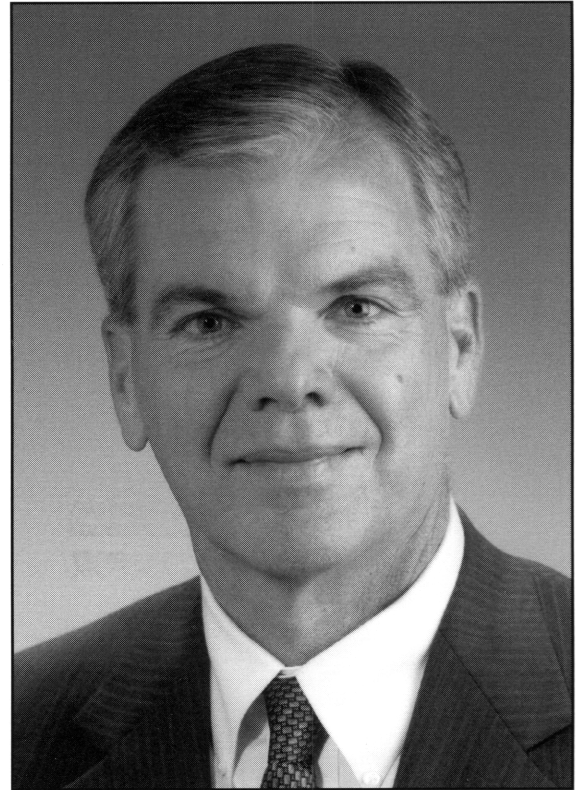
Andrade of San Antonio and Ted Houghton of El Paso. Houghton will serve through February 2009, while Andrade drew a shorter term ending in February 2007.

Currently vice president of Optima Care Inc., a home health-care company, Andrade served on the VIA Metropolitan Transit board in 1996-1997 and on the Texas Turnpike Authority board before it was folded into TxDOT. She was sworn in as commissioner Jan. 14 in San Antonio.

Houghton, the first El Paso resident ever

appointed to the Transportation Commission, owns an insurance and financial services company called ECHIV. He served eight years on the El Paso Water Utility/Public Service board and had been on the state School Land Board until Perry selected him for this new post. He took the oath of office as commissioner Dec. 24 in Austin.

"The governor wants us to focus on transportation infrastructure for the next



Ted Houghton

TxDOT photo

100 years," Williamson said in a recent interview with the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

To that end, Williamson said he will be focusing on two principal goals:

- Proceeding with development of the Trans-Texas Corridor, a 4,000-mile network of toll roads, high-speed rail lines and utility easements. The first segment of the corridor, a route roughly paralleling Interstate 35, is expected to be awarded this year.
- Encouraging the state's metropolitan areas to consider building toll roads, or converting existing roadways to toll facilities, to generate more highway money for their areas. ★

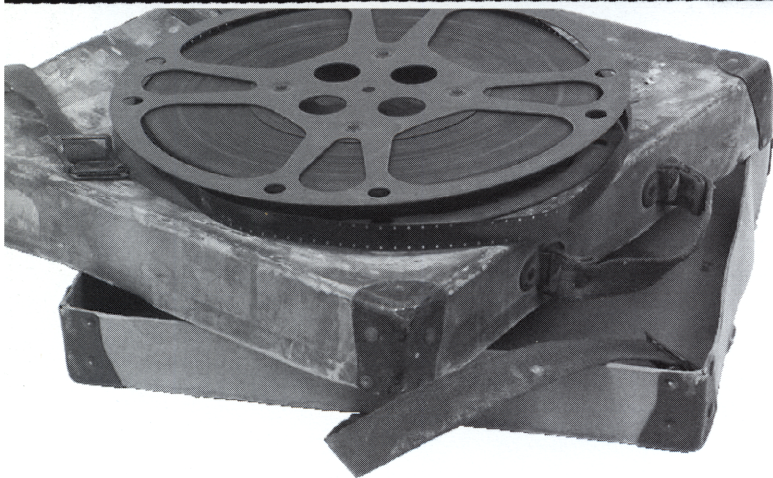


Hope Andrade

TxDOT photo

It's a wrap:

TxDOT always ready for a



by **Judy Curtis**
Managing Editor

TxDOT is seeing stars.

The state's roads, bridges and safety rest areas are increasingly featured in car chase scenes, road trip backdrops and airplane stunts in scores of Hollywood movies.

"Sometimes the thing we're trying to do doesn't seem possible," says Kevin Walker, location specialist at the Texas Film Commission. "But if there's any way possible, TxDOT people help make it happen."

Recently, for example, a scene in "Secondhand Lions" has a biplane flying under an overpass in Texas, an obvious TxDOT no-no from many safety and logistical angles. Nevertheless, the finished product contains exactly such a scene, shot in Taylor at the U.S. 183 overpass at State Highway 21. Actually, the biplane only taxied cautiously under the overpass. But thanks to post-production editing, the plane appears to hit top speed as it flies under the overpass and into the skies over Central Texas.

For a scene in the 1987 movie "Nadine," the movie's producers sought TxDOT's help for authenticity in one particular scene involving the title character, who accidentally ends up with a set of valuable plans for a proposed road. The bad guys chase her in pursuit of the plans for their nefarious, money-making scheme. In real life, the designs were returned safely into the hands of employees of the Austin District after the blueprints' three-second brush with Hollywood-style fame.

With budgets totaling \$2.4 billion from 1993 through 2002 for its Texas productions, the movie and television industries represent big business and jobs for the state. About half of that money is spent in Texas, according to Carol Pirie, assistant director of the Texas Film Commission. (The remainder goes toward, among other items, stars' salaries, post-production editing and marketing.)

During that same period, more than 500 film and television projects have been shot in Texas. Many have put TxDOT or Texas roads onto the big screen, though precise numbers are not available. Nevertheless, the subject of much of TxDOT's daily business has made the cut into numerous movie and TV titles. These include "The Streets of Laredo," "On the Road Again," "Roadie," "Back Roads," "Arlington Road," "The Road to Galveston," and last but not least "Traffic."

In the documentaries, commercials, TV shows, and major movies shot here, Texas roads, bridges, underpasses — and even TxDOT publications — have served as the backdrop to key scenes. Among them:

- The state's Yandell Bridge and U.S. 85 in the El Paso District. Hollywood crews built a temporary three-lane toll bridge on top of the existing bridge for "The Day After Tomorrow" (Denzel Washington), a thriller to be released this summer. Part of U.S. 85 was closed and filled with vehicles, more than 700 extras and 250 crew members.
- U.S. 87 near Canyon in the Amarillo District. This stretch of road hosted lights, cameras, carnival tents and lots of vehicles for the filming in 2003 of "Waking Up in Reno." The movie about two couples en route to a monster-truck show in Reno also called for shots at picnic and rest areas, which the Amarillo District supplied.
- A Texas travel map, used in "A Perfect World" with Clint Eastwood and Kevin Costner. Filmed in 1993, the movie was set in 1963, and the map had to be authentic. After some digging, TxDOT's Travel Division found a 1963 map that lent the desired

■ See MOVIES, Page 11

close-up

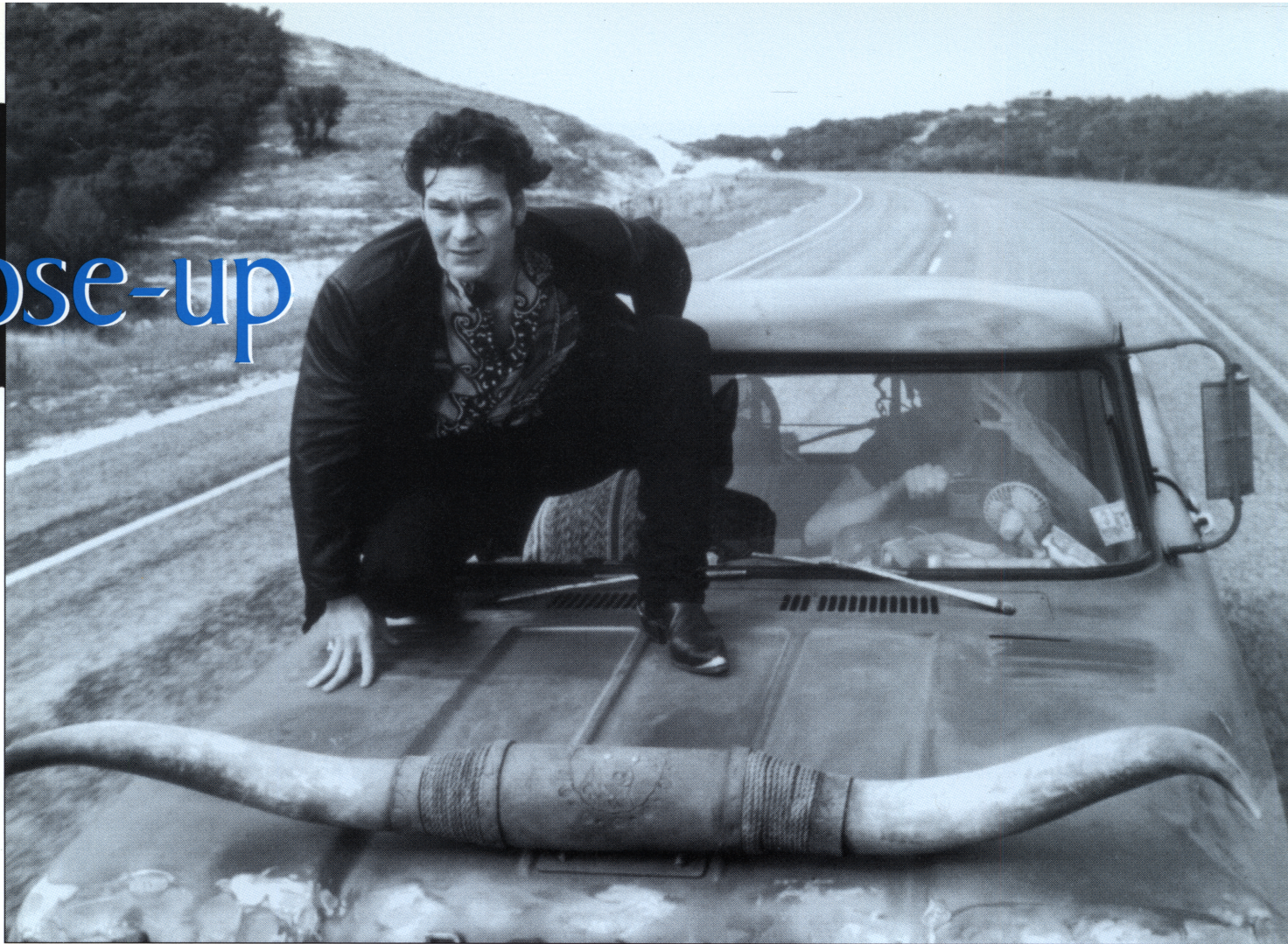


Photo courtesy of the Texas Film Commission

“Father Hood,” starring Patrick Swayze and filmed in San Antonio and Houston, is one of many Hollywood productions that uses Texas roads, bridges and rest areas as the backdrop for cinematic action.

In-house production unit creates award-winning videos

While “Backing Safely” may lack the drama of, say, a “Star Wars,” or “Texas Chainsaw Massacre,” this TxDOT safety video stands tall next to its counterparts.

In fact, the award-winning video is among scores of productions from the Travel Division’s audiovisual section that educate, inform and save lives.

“We are fortunate to have a way to communicate with employees and the public without spending Hollywood-type dollars,” says Geoff Appold, section director of audiovisual production. “We have first-rate capability at a fraction of the cost.”

The audiovisual section completes as many as 24 videos a year and has earned, among others, Government Video Star awards, the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators Video Award, the International Television Association Silver Reel, the Texas Public Relations Association Silver Spur and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials award.

The section acts as TxDOT’s in-house production office, with four employees who help document commission meetings, inform district workers about endangered species and let the

TxDOT world know about the latest innovations in construction technology, for example. The AV section can take a project from script to graphics and voice-overs, and deliver the finished product, says Al Rubio, video production supervisor.

For help on a video project, contact any of the four members of the audiovisual staff: Al Rubio, Benard Stafford, Debbie Snyder or Bill Blanton. ★





EMPLOYEES BOOST SECC

Preliminary figures for the 2003 State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) show that TxDOT employees pledged and donated a record amount to the annual fundraising effort that benefits hundreds of charitable agencies. Final figures from the campaign will be available in May.

TxDOT employees donated more than \$315,000 to the campaign — an increase of 1.5 percent over record contributions by employees the previous year.

TxDOT Executive Director Mike Behrens praised all employees who participated in the campaign. "This record performance again shows the caring attitude of TxDOT employees across Texas," Behrens said.

CLARK FILLS CORPUS CHRISTI POST

Craig E. Clark has been appointed Corpus Christi district engineer, effective Jan. 1. He fills the position held by David Casteel, who earlier was appointed district engineer for the San Antonio District.

Clark had been the Childress district engineer since 2001. Before then he held such jobs within TxDOT as area engineer, engineer of field construction with the Construction Division, and director of construction in the San Antonio District.

He has been active with community-based Lions and Rotary clubs. While district engineer in Childress, he served on the committee to restructure the department's unified transportation plan and on the statewide committee reviewing toll components for the Trans-Texas Corridor Plan. He directed the architecture development of a rural intelligent-transportation system in coordination with other TxDOT districts in West Texas.

He began his career in 1982 in the Odessa District as an engineer assistant. He graduated in 1982 from the

University of Missouri with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

TOLL POTENTIAL SPURS REVIEW

The Texas Transportation Commission, at its monthly meeting Dec. 18, authorized TxDOT to evaluate a project during any phase of development or construction for consideration as a toll road. This includes new and expanded projects on controlled-access roadways.

State law allows TxDOT to study, design, construct, operate, expand, enlarge or extend a toll-road project as part of the state highway system.

Developing projects as toll roads can help bridge the gap between transportation needs and resources. Officials say toll roads can improve mobility and safety and that tolls help the state address transportation needs sooner.

COLLINS HEADS RESEARCH OFFICE

Rick Collins has been appointed director of the Research and Technology Implementation Office, effective Jan. 12. He fills the position held by Paul Krugler, who retired.

Collins had been director of the Traffic Engineering Section in the Traffic Operations Division since January 1997. He was responsible for guidelines associated with the design, placement and use of traffic-control devices.

Collins began his TxDOT career in 1982 as an engineering assistant in the Design Division. He also served as safety and programs engineer in 1987 and then as railroad liaison engineer in 1995.

He graduated with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1981 from Texas A&M University and received a master's degree in engineering from the University of Texas at Austin in 1988.

LENZ MOVES TO ABILENE DISTRICT

Russel W. Lenz has been appointed Abilene district engineer, effective Jan. 1. He oversees the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the transportation system in the 13-county district. He fills the position held by Bill Hale, recently appointed Dallas district engineer.

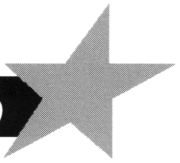
Lenz had been deputy district engineer in the Waco District. While there, he formed and implemented local safety review teams. He also pursued creation of the Waco Engineers Group, designed to help develop the skills of some of the district's engineers. Lenz began his TxDOT career as an engineering aide in the Austin District in 1979. He also served as design team leader, associate design engineer, and engineer of special design. He became assistant area engineer for the South Travis/Hays County Area Office in 1993 and was promoted to area engineer in 1994. He left the Austin District to become deputy district engineer for the Waco District in 1999. He received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1982 from the University of Texas at Austin.

SAFETY CAMPAIGN DRAWS PRAISE

The Traffic Safety Section, part of the Traffic Operations Division, was recognized in December with the Youth Initiative Award presented by the National Commission Against Drunk Driving in Washington, D.C.

The section received praise for its multi-media "Before and After" campaign to educate young people about the perils of drunken driving and about the importance of driving sober.

The national commission aims to reduce impaired driving and its tragic consequences by bringing together a broad coalition of groups and individuals sharing this common purpose. ★



AWARDS SPUR PRAISE

**From: Deborah Scott
Haslet, Texas**

I just read your online item for the "Extra Mile" awards. God bless those individuals who put the lives of the victims and potential victims before their own lives and safety. I would like to say they make me proud to be a fellow Texan. I will be more observant and more respectful of these, and other workers, on our highways. I know one day me, or someone special to me, may be in dire need. God bless them.

BRYAN DISTRICT

**From: Ann & Bob House
Sunrise Beach, Texas**

Recently while riding our motorcycles near Crockett, my husband's Voyager lost its clutch fluid. Though the engine would start and run, it couldn't be shifted.

We rode my bike back to town and rented a trailer, and were attempting to load this heavyweight (700+ pounds), non-functioning touring bike up the ramp and inside when your employee, **Ricky King**, happened along and made the mistake of stopping when we waved him down.

Thus, he came to help us. He parked his truck behind us, turned on the warning lights, donned his safety vest, and waded right in.

Just wanted you to know that without him we couldn't have done it. He not only saved the day, but likely our lives in the process — and then he refused all but our profound thanks.

King is the assistant maintenance supervisor for Leon County in the Bryan District.

GOOD ROADS

From: Gerald Gaskins

I just wanted to send you a little message expressing my appreciation for the superlative road system in Texas. My brother and I entered your state from a neighboring state to the east. We were driving a truck pulling an auto transport, and I thought the truck

would be destroyed by the sorry highways in your neighboring state. We were petrified that these abysmal highways would continue into Texas, and our joy was virtually boundless when we discovered how wide and smooth your highways turned out to be. When I think of Texas in the future, I shall always remember your highways as the salvation of two weary and beat-up travelers.

This letter originally was sent to the State of Texas and was forwarded to TxDOT by the state's chief information officer, Carolyn Purcell.

CORPUS CHRISTI DISTRICT

**From: Richard Kelly
Center Point, Texas**

We had a spectacular blowout on Interstate 37 recently. My husband Richard (who is partially handicapped) and I were trying to change the tire along the frontage road when **Leonardo Villarreal** pulled up in his truck.

He helped us change the tire and directed us to a town where we could get a replacement.

I was so grateful because my husband was getting short of breath trying to undo those lug nuts. Afterward, my husband tried to give Mr. Villarreal some money, but he refused saying it was part of his job — the part he most enjoys.

We compliment him on his generous act, and wanted to let you know how much we appreciated him.

(Leonardo Villarreal, with TxDOT for 34 years, is a maintenance crew chief working out of the Sinton maintenance office.)

CORPUS CHRISTI DISTRICT

**From: Melvin M. Littleton
President,
Island Construction
Port Aransas, Texas**

My employees were doing a road bore under State Highway 361 recently, in front of the island in the Son United Methodist Church on Padre Island. We noticed that the sand under the bore was caving in and — before the road collapsed — we had to close the highway.

TxDOT's care for the safety of the

public, reaction time, help with traffic control, and furnishing us with barricades was beyond the call of duty.

Because of the professionalism of your personnel, what could have become a life-threatening situation was diverted.

My thanks go to **Pee Wee Solis, Victor Pinon Jr., Bill Reitmann, Armando Vosquez, Juan Montano, Rudy Riveria, Cliff Bost**, and all the other workers from TxDOT.

The letter was received by David Casteel, then district engineer in Corpus Christi and now district engineer in San Antonio.

WICHITA FALLS DISTRICT

**From: Jean Turnbow
Haskell, Texas**

I live in Haskell and was on my way to visit my son, who lives in Wichita Falls. I had gone through Seymour and had gotten some miles out when I had a flat. Being a 66-year-old lady with diabetes, and not knowing how to change a tire, I thought I was really in trouble. I had got out of my car and had just raised the trunk, when up drove **Casey Elliott**.

He changed the tire and the spare was really low. I had never thought to check the air in the spare tire. Casey said there was a farmhouse a few miles on up the road, and he thought they would have an air tank. He followed me, going very slowly, to the farmhouse and aired up the tire.

I had called my son on my cell phone and he was coming to meet us. Casey followed me until we met my son. Needless to say, my son bought me four new tires the next day!

While Casey was changing the flat tire, he insisted I get in his car with the air conditioning running. He was also thinking of my safety — he said he didn't want me to get hit by an oncoming truck. Casey was so kind and thoughtful. I wanted to pay him, but he wouldn't let me.

(Casey Elliott, with TxDOT for three years, is a maintenance technician working out of the Seymour maintenance office.)



Service Awards

40 years

William R. Gillaspay III – Houston

35 years

Maurice Farris – Childress
Ronald F. Hatcher – Childress
Carlos V. Chavez – El Paso
Vincent L. Hamilton – Fort Worth
Nancy C. Shaw – Houston

30 years

Claud P. Elsom III – Dallas District
Jim B. McGinnes Jr. – San Antonio
Susana K. Cable – Motor Carrier

25 years

Julia H. Thompson – Beaumont
Noel Ibarra – Corpus Christi
Edmond Flores – Dallas
Kenneth S. Keck – Fort Worth
Dock S. Gee – Houston
Rolando Hernandez – Houston
Sherry L. Randall – Houston
Mark W. Bates – Paris
Francisco E. Ramirez – San Antonio
Dwayne E. Tyner – Tyler
Inez H. Gaines – Waco
Patricia T. James – Yoakum
Nancy D. Lann – Transportation Planning and Programming
James L. Randall – Transportation Planning and Programming

20 years

Ralph G. Stewart – Amarillo
Robert G. Campbell – Abilene
Danny A. Kierepka – Abilene
Susan M. McClain – Atlanta
Fred D. Woodall – Austin
Cleburne R. Haynes – Dallas
Asgeir Asgeirsson – El Paso
John R. Logan – Fort Worth
Richard S. Williamme Jr. – Fort Worth
Donald L. Bunch – Houston
Larry D. King – Houston
Rae T. Rhodes – Houston
Leonard L. Segura – Houston
Douglas C. Christensen – Lubbock
Nicanor R. Milan – Odessa
George A. Cooper – Paris
Charles M. Gonzales – San Antonio
Julio C. Moncivais – San Antonio
Willie Sassenhagen Jr. – San Antonio
Gregory S. Schwerdtfeger – San Antonio
Marvin S. Furnish – Tyler
Bradley K. Gruetzner – Tyler
Wynelle D. Peyton – Tyler
Harold W. Bateman Jr. – Waco
Larry J. Colclasure – Waco
Kenneth W. Anthony – Yoakum
Glenn R. Eilert – Yoakum
John C. Hoes – Construction
Javier J. Vela – Construction
Silvio J. Romero – General Services
Alfredo Marquez III – Transportation Planning and Programming

15 years

Randy J. Griffith – Abilene
Timothy P. Meador – Abilene
Randy F. Bishop – Atlanta
Russell G. Hartmann – Austin
Randel G. Lenz – Austin
Raymond E. Naivar – Austin
Alvin W. Holland – Brownwood
Pamela F. Grissett – Bryan
Rodney L. Murray – Childress
Antonio H. Gonzalez – Corpus Christi
Robert N. Roman – Dallas
Edmundo Valencia Jr. – El Paso

Ricardo D. Davidson – Houston
Audrey M. Rossi – Houston
Thomas E. Woolley Jr. – Houston
Rafael N. Mendoza – Laredo
Heriberto E. Medina – Pharr
Apolonio Ochoa Jr. – Pharr
Michael K. Anglin – San Antonio
Steven W. Hall – Tyler
Stephen K. Littlefield – Tyler
James D. Wicks II – Tyler
Donna M. Norris – Bridge
Lisa A. Anhaiser – Finance
Robert D. Blackwell – Maintenance
Kevin B. Stillman – Travel

10 years

Mary E. Kilgore – Abilene
Mark A. Liesmann – Austin
Mark W. Mikulenska – Austin
Jeffrey L. Snider – Austin
Jerry L. Rodrigues – Beaumont
Chad L. Bohne – Bryan
Ronnie L. Harris – Bryan
Patrick R. Schroeder – Bryan
Rudolph D. Supak – Bryan
Jenise K. Wilson – Corpus Christi
Gary G. Gilmore – Dallas
Wallace L. Johnson – Dallas
Enedina H. Alexander – Fort Worth
Keyurnath V. Gautam – Fort Worth
Thomas D. Moore – Fort Worth
James A. Rogers – Fort Worth
Pamela G. Collins – Houston
John N. Floyd – Houston
Anthony C. Mullins – Houston
Fernando B. Barrera – Laredo
Joe W. Murray – Lufkin
Patrick M. Ryan – Lufkin
Kristin O. Fortin – Odessa
Robert P. Godina – Odessa
Gilbert D. Herrera – Odessa
Stephen M. Langohr – Odessa
Ruben Agado – Pharr
Murphy T. D'Spain – San Angelo
Manuel Pina – San Angelo
Gina E. Gallegos – San Antonio
Shelli B. Thomas – San Antonio
Clinton R. Corley – Tyler
Paul W. Lewis – Tyler
Jim D. Waldron – Wichita Falls
Terry J. Willis – Wichita Falls
Marie C. Peinado – Aviation
Richard M. Young – Construction
Lydia C. Contreras – Finance
Jennifer D. Soldano – General Council Office
Jesse R. Castilleja – General Services
Liane E. Steele – General Services
Charles S. Johnson – Maintenance
Patricia L. Beard – Vehicle Titles and Registration
Enedelia R. Martinez – Vehicle Titles and Registration

5 years

Jana B. Flash – Abilene
Kenny D. Powell – Abilene
Rickey L. Estep – Amarillo
Levita C. Joyner – Amarillo
Jerry M. McGinnis – Amaillo
Billy R. White – Atlanta
Dewey E. Works – Atlanta
Jason R. Cavness – Austin
Teddy L. Hartman – Austin
Sean C. Schaefer – Brownwood
William T. Connor – Bryan
Sandra J. Hatcher – Childress
Jacob J. Longoria – Corpus Christi
Larry O. Sparks – Corpus Christi
Dan C. Cockrum – Dallas
Angela R. Collins – Dallas
Darien J. Goode – Dallas
Deborah K. Hicks – Dallas

Norman L. Manuel – Dallas
Jorge E. Oregel – El Paso
Franklin D. Burroughs – Fort Worth
Charles L. Cave – Fort Worth
Ted M. Harney – Fort Worth
Theresa A. Lopez – Fort Worth
Darrell C. Bowles – Houston
Thomas A. Dean Sr. – Houston
Dalia Dugas – Houston
Deborah L. McDermott – Houston
Matthew E. Stoops – Houston
Joe F. Ybarra – Houston
Felipe Mendoza Jr. – Laredo
Juan M. Ortega – Laredo
Lydia Segovia – Laredo
Hector R. Tamez – Laredo
Anselmo S. Ramos – Lubbock
Jeanna Lambert – Odessa
Edward G. Bingham – Paris
Charles E. Murphy – Paris
Carmen M. Mendez – San Angelo
Donald W. Deitch – San Antonio
William A. Lopez Sr. – San Antonio
Barry A. Turner – San Antonio
Erick H. Wildestorm – San Antonio
Ralph M. Miller – Tyler
Jeremy S. Reid – Tyler
Timothy C. Wilson – Tyler
Tony R. Johnson – Waco
David A. Mitchell – Waco
Carl F. Wilkinson – Wichita Falls
Cynthia F. Larkin – Construction
Joan E. Dragon – General Services
E. L. Imler – General Services
Barry L. Thormahlen – General Services
Cynthia L. Manchaca – Human Resources
Robin N. Usher – Human Resources
Ernest Marsh – Motor Vehicle
Saralind H. Mings – Research and Technology
Gabriela Ramirez – Travel
Edith Alvarez – Vehicle Titles and Registration
Juanita R. Bustos – Vehicle Titles and Registration
Dawna R. Eckwall – Vehicle Titles and Registration
Robert O'Neill – Vehicle Titles and Registration
Susan V. Wall – Vehicle Titles and Registration

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Movies: TxDOT dear to Hollywood

Continued from Page 6

authenticity to the movie.

The Austin District alone has been involved in more than 130 Hollywood productions since 1996. These include "Michael," "Hope Floats," "Spy Kids," and "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre," according to Bob Norment of the Austin District's maintenance division.

The El Paso District also has seen the sparkle of Hollywood glitter. In addition to its role in "The Day After Tomorrow," the district has been involved in providing location help with such movies as "Man on Fire" and "Courage Under Fire," with Denzel Washington, "Lolita," "Last Man Standing" and 1972's "Getaway."

The list goes on, and is likely to continue. Texas can "pose" as many different locales because of its varied terrain. For example, movies filmed here actually have passed

themselves off as such disparate locales as Mexico, Afghanistan, New York City and Iowa.

Says Norment, who serves as the Austin District's liaison with movie makers and the film commission, "Everything they have in Hollywood can be found here." Indeed, says one Hollywood studio location manager, "The Texas landscape is ideal for filming."

TxDOT's role in helping to keep those movie companies happy, says Pirie, also helps boost the state's economy. "We would hate to try to do business without TxDOT's help," she said. "TxDOT has been a huge part of our ability to sell Texas as a film-friendly state."

(Blanca Del Valle of the El Paso District and Tonya Detten of the Amarillo District contributed to this report.)

For more information on Texas at the movies, go to www.governor.state.tx.us/film/. ☘

Calendar

2004

JANUARY

29 Commission Meeting, San Antonio

FEBRUARY

10-11 Bid Letting, Austin, CST

16 President's Day (holiday)

18-20 Annual District Sign Shop Meeting, College Station, ATL

26 Commission Meeting, Austin

MARCH

2 Texas Independence Day (skeleton crew holiday)

9-10 Bid Letting, Austin, CST

25 Commission Meeting, Austin

30-4/1 2004 Construction & Pavement Conference, San Antonio, CST

31 Cesar Chavez Day (optional holiday)

APRIL

1 2004 Construction & Pavement Conference, San Antonio, CST

8-9 Bid Letting, Austin, CST

9 Good Friday (optional holiday)

14-16 Texas Aviation Conference, Austin, AVN

21 San Jacinto Day (skeleton crew holiday)

27-28 Statewide Maintenance & Traffic Operations Conference, Waco, MNT

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

Rialto revitalization puts TxDOT in the wings

Continued from Page 3

something to wash it down with.

One of only eight movie houses in Texas listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Rialto was modernized after a fire in 1935. This time John Eberson, a renowned theater designer whose work included the Majestic theaters in Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, added an Art Deco touch. The refurbished theater, with Beeville's first air-conditioning system, reopened on March 6, 1936, with Fred MacMurray and Sylvia Sydney in "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine."

During the Rialto's heyday, some of the biggest names in Hollywood made personal appearances to promote their films. John Wayne, Gail Storm, Jimmy Stewart, Keenan Wynn and Jeff Chandler all visited the Rialto.

The theater closed in 1986, standing

vacant until the Hall-Rialto Preservation Association bought it in 1991.

The Rialto's mid-1930s facelift featured red and yellow Vitrolite, a structural glass developed early in the 20th century. Vitrolite has not been manufactured in years, but the association hired St. Louis-based Tim Dunn, a Vitrolite specialist, to replace broken pieces with glass he salvaged in San Francisco.

The reopening of the old theater will be just the ticket for Beeville's tourism industry, says Teresa Holland, executive director of the Beeville Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau.

"We're very excited about it," she says. "It will be one more reason for people to visit Beeville and it will help revitalize our downtown and give us a performing arts theater." ☘

Enhancement program

Coordinated by the Design Division, transportation enhancement is a federally funded cost-reimbursement program for non-traditional transportation projects.

Eligible categories include bicycle and pedestrian facilities, landscaping and scenic beautification, historical preservation and environmental mitigation. Up to 80 percent of eligible project costs can be reimbursed by federal funds.

During fiscal 2002, the commission selected 117 projects across the state. Total funding for the period was \$155 million.

backtracks



This month's **backtracks** photo cautions drivers about convoys and tank crossings for 37 miles of U.S. 183. What we would like to know is which 37 miles — and during what time period. If you have information about this picture, contact Buddy Allison at (512) 463-8612, or by e-mail at balliso@dot.state.tx.us. ☉



Bridge Division engineer **Mike Hyzak** was first to identify last month's **backtracks** photo as the Whipple Truss bridge in Clifton. According to Hyzak, the Waco District is in the early stages of developing a restoration plan for the bridge.

The bridge was built in 1884 by the Wrought Iron Bridge Company of Canton, Ohio, and crosses over the North Bosque River on County Road 333 in Clifton, Bosque County.

More information about the bridge and the area can be found on the Internet at www.clifton.centraltx.com/history.htm.



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