

# Perspective

**Transportation News**  

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**January 1999**















# PERSPECTIVE 1999



**Members of the Walker County maintenance crew pose outside their facility in Huntsville circa 1940.**

## Transportation NEWS

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**W**elcome to the fifth edition of *Perspective*, the "yearbook" that every other year takes the place of the January edition of *Transportation News*.

Although *Perspective* is produced by the folks who bring you *Transportation News*, it requires the support of districts, divisions and offices. And if not for the dedicated employees of the General Services Division print shop in Austin, you would not be reading this today. We hope you enjoy this edition of *Perspective*. Regular publication of *Transportation News* will resume in February.



## From the Executive Director

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**W**e all need to take time and look at our performance. It makes us better people, a better agency. And, while many are quick to point out our faults or problems, we don't often have time to look at our accomplishments.

This issue to *Transportation News* called *Perspective* gives us that opportunity. It has given me the chance to look at the previous two years and consider all the Texas Department of Transportation has done.

We are challenged each day to produce the best overall transportation system possible. Highways may be the backbone of this department, but we must consider all avenues of travel. It's important we think in terms of multimodalism in serving our various customers.

Studying commuter rail between Austin and San Antonio, funding facility improvements at the Gaines County Airport in Seminole and transporting the public on the Texoma Area Paratransit System are only a few of the essential elements of this agency's commitment to transportation.

Working with other agencies, including federal, state and local governments, has been and will continue to be a key factor for us to accomplish our mission.

Texas is finally getting a fairer share of federal dollars with the passage of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21). This increase in federal funding will go a long way in helping us meet our demands.

Under the new legislation passed last summer, Texas gets \$1.9 billion a year in federal highway funding. We will receive an additional annual average of \$250 million in transit and \$15 million in highway safety program funds.

Even with this additional money, we will continue looking for ways to stretch the taxpayers' dollars. We'll look hard at toll road projects as a way to provide us an option for alleviating congestion in our major metropolitan areas in a shorter



**Heald**

amount of time.

We now have a means for helping local entities with projects through the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB). Much like a private bank, the SIB offers eligible cus-

tomers a range of loans and credit enhancement services. More importantly, it will reduce time and money for transportation improvements.

Moving our customers along metropolitan highways has gotten "smarter." Traffic management in at least seven areas of the state uses Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). It is almost commonplace to see cameras, antennas and overhead message boards along metropolitan highways.

Mobility within the state and at the border continues to be a priority. Eleven corridors along our Texas Trunk System will be developed to improve intrastate travel. We are also addressing transportation opportunities along the border with our neighbors to the south.

I am amazed at the growth that has occurred during the last two years. I would never have imagined TxDOT would prepare \$2 billion worth of plans and specifications for construction as we did in each of the past two fiscal years.

We have also increased the amount of recycled products in construction projects, greeted more visitors to our state at our Travel Information Centers and issued more permits and vehicle titles.

Our department's successes and accomplishments in the districts, divisions and offices were possible only through the ded-

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**I would never have imagined TxDOT would prepare \$2 billion worth of plans and specifications for construction as we did in each of the past two fiscal years.'**

ication and hard work of our employees.

In addition to meeting the routine demands of our work, TxDOT employees have gone beyond the call of duty. That has been evident over the past two years as our employees assisted with wildfires, tornadoes and floods in various parts of the state.

Serving the public has been TxDOT's legacy for more than 80 years, and, in 1997, we had a chance to celebrate our department's 80th anniversary. We joined former employees and many of our customers at open houses throughout the state to review eight decades of transportation accomplishments. It gave us an opportunity to look at where we have been and where we are going.

Through the years, our mission of providing a safe, effective and efficient transportation system has remained unchanged. I am confident we have the talented and skilled employees to continue to meet this challenge as we prepare for the next millennium.



## Abilene District

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In an effort to enhance transportation systems in the Abilene District, district employees strive to produce services and improve all facets of transportation. In addition, an emphasis on training and safety practices has vastly improved the quality of service employees provide to the public as well as to themselves.

Although numerous construction projects have been completed in the past two years, a few stand out as examples of the pride the district takes in strengthening the bond between the Texas Department of Transportation and local municipalities.

One such project was a long time coming. And when completed, the town celebrated with ribbon cutting ceremonies. Sweetwater for years had been trying to get approval for the reconstruction and widening of Musgrove Street under the Union Pacific Railroad. Finally, in 1997, construction began. This project was especially important to the townspeople because, in addition to raising the bridge and increasing clearance for truck traffic, it widened the street to four lanes. Sidewalks were added to provide safe access to schools and businesses.

Another example of the district's desire to assist rural communities is the reconstruction and drainage improvements at the post office square in downtown Stamford. Because the square is a registered historic district, special care was taken not to harm the square's significance. Brick roadway pavers that marked the narrow driving lane around the post office were salvaged and reused in the crosswalks at all four corners of the square. Safety, serviceability and aesthetics of the downtown area has been improved with the construction of two lanes of roadway around the post office, drainage improvements, new traffic lights, ADA access to all the businesses on the square, improved parking areas, and landscaping.

Of the 53 construction contracts let in

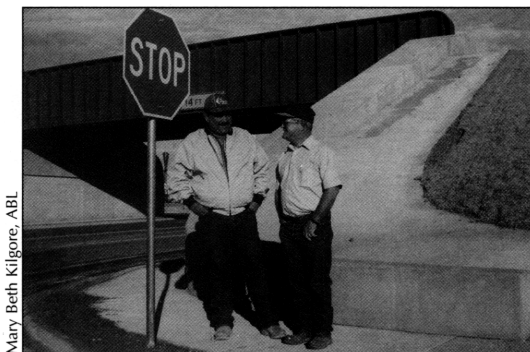
### **AT A GLANCE**

- **District Engineer:** Bill Hale, P.E.
- **Main number:** 915-676-6800
- **Counties:** Borden, Callahan, Fisher, Haskell, Howard, Jones, Kent, Mitchell, Nolan, Scurry, Shackelford, Stonewall, Taylor
- **Area Engineers:** Dan Richardson, P.E., Abilene; David Elmore, area office manager, Big Spring; Art Barrow, P.E.; Joe Higgins, P.E., Hamlin; Mike Molter, P.E., Snyder.
- **Employees:** 360
- **Centerline miles:** 3,644
- **Lane miles:** 8,293
- **Registered vehicles:** 228,951

1997 and 1998 totaling more than \$78.9 million, many more reflect the cooperation between TxDOT and the local communities.

An example of this cooperation is the glass cullett used in the road base in Abilene. The district was selected as TxDOT's test site due to the large quantity of glass already collected and the efforts of our local Abilene Clean and Proud coordinator. The pilot program featured the cooperation between the city that collected the glass, a private company that picked up and stored the glass, and Dyess Air Force Base, where the glass was crushed and the cullett stored until used by the contractor.

Each year, due to the hard work of the engineering staff, the district has been awarded an increasing amount of letting money. Up almost 100 percent from just a few years ago, this money has made it possible to let vital safety projects such as the widening of Loop 322 around Abilene from a two-lane to a four-lane divided highway. The completion of Loop 322, a major route from South Abilene to Interstate 20, is in its second phase with the third phase scheduled to be let next spring. This route carries traffic to the Taylor County Coliseum as well as the expanding regional airport.



Mary Beth Kilgore, ABL

**Rene Rivera of Knight Construction Company, left, and Billy Tarter, chief inspector for Snyder area office, check out the pedestrian walkway built in conjunction with the Musgrove Street underpass in Sweetwater.**

The district, combining three contracts and two contractors, broke ground in the fall as center median crossovers were built in preparation for the replacement of two bridges on the Winters Freeway, the busiest highway in Abilene with 40,000 vehicles each day. Along with bridge replacements, the \$12.5 million project includes upgrading ramps and frontage roads along the freeway as well as construction of a drainage system. Construction is expected to take three years.

The district maintenance office is among the top in letting maintenance contracts. Twenty-nine strategy 144 maintenance contracts totaling \$7.5 million were awarded in just one year. In addition, 63 routine maintenance contracts for a total of \$4.3 million were also let. Then in 1998, the district let 70 contracts for a total of \$10.9 million. The 1998 figures were enough to place the Abilene District high in total maintenance lettings.

Three enhancement projects were completed and another one began during last couple of years. Right of way was acquired for the T&P Freight Warehouse project in Abilene; the copper roof on the Shackelford

County Courthouse in Albany was replaced; and the exterior restoration and construction of a Visitors Center at the Jones County Courthouse in Anson was completed.

During the last call for projects, historic restoration of World War II Hangar 25 in Big Spring was selected. This \$574,000 project is well under way and was expected to be complete by the end of 1998.

Abilene's focus on public transportation continues to grow and in one instance was grandly rewarded. At this time the district helps coordinate programs for 18 transportation providers. Of these, one is urban; two are rural; and 15 serve the elderly and disabled.

The urban carrier, CityLink of Abilene, was selected as the Most Outstanding Small Transit System in North American for 1998 by the American Public Transportation Association.

Automation labored long and hard to connect all maintenance offices to the LAN in order to give them real-time access to the district headquarters. They also installed a second hard drive devoted completely to electronic manuals.

Among other procedures developed was Sybase SQL training for several districts in the state enabling us to share the costs among several districts. The district developed a Web site where current local information can always be found.

One giant step for the safety program occurred when a safety program was implemented that authorizes Leave for Outstanding Performance for those who achieve safety goals. The outcome of this program resulted in a \$400,000 reward for lowest third-party accident rate in the state.

— Mary Beth Kilgore



## Amarillo District

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**A**s the northernmost district in Texas, the Amarillo District is a crossroads for commerce within a five-state trade area.

On any given day the truck traffic on Interstate 40 might consist of a fleet of military vehicles en route to training in California; a double-wide mobile home on its way from Arkansas to Arizona; countless loads of finished goods making the trek from the busy rail yard in Amarillo to consumers in the north, south, east, and west; thousands of recreational vehicles traveling to the mountains of Colorado or the southern regions of Texas; and of course, hundreds of truckloads of cattle headed to Texas Panhandle feed lots or beef packing plants.

The Amarillo District borders New Mexico and Oklahoma and maintains roadways at 27 ports of entry into the state.

I-40 carries more than 50 percent truck traffic in rural areas and is increasingly showing its age. Built almost 40 years ago, the famous "Route 66" is receiving much-needed attention through several road and bridge rehabilitation projects.

In November 1998, the district awarded a \$21.7 million construction contract for rehabilitation and new concrete pavement at the I-40 and I-27 interchange just south of downtown Amarillo. The project includes some significant safety improvements to an interchange that carries more than 146,000 vehicles per day. The project is expected to be completed in about three years.

In 1997, a delegation of community leaders traveled to a Texas Transportation Commission meeting in Austin to extend gracious thanks for providing accelerated funding to complete Loop 335 around Amarillo and to request funds to improve U.S. 70 between Perryton and Pampa. The commission answered the need for increased mobility in the area. In 1998, the commission also included U.S. 87 on its list of Texas Trunk System Phase I Corridors.

Amarillo's Loop 335, a project that has

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Mark E. Tomlinson, PE.
- **Main Number:** 806/356-3200
- **Counties:** Armstrong, Carson, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Gray, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Oldham, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman
- **Area Engineers:** Joe Chappell, PE., Amarillo; Kenneth Petr, PE., Dumas; Don Day, PE., Canyon; Jerry Raines, PE., Pampa
- **Employees:** 410
- **Centerline Miles:** 3995
- **Lane Miles:** 9225
- **Registered Vehicles:** 326,751

been in the works for more than 40 years, will finally become a continuous loop when the last segment is completed in the summer of 1999. Future plans for Loop 335 have been mapped out by the Value Engineering Team of TxDOT, the Federal Highway Administration and the city of Amarillo which completed a study in 1998. TxDOT aggressively is pursuing the engineering group's recommendation to expand Loop 335 so that it will be able to handle projected increased traffic in the rapidly developing southwest quadrant of Amarillo.

As part of the district's community relations efforts, TxDOT employees helped distribute more than 500 bicycle helmets throughout the Panhandle, checked hundreds of child safety seats, and welcomed more than 1,200 fourth-graders into the Amarillo District office as part of TxDOT's 80th anniversary celebration.

TxDOT is a lead organization in the Panhandle Safe Communities Coalition and the Potter/Randall Safe Kids Coalition — two groups committed to reducing the number of needless injuries in the area. TxDOT employees participated in the Safe Kids' major fund-raiser, a 24-hour relay race.

The Amarillo District received numerous awards during the past biennium



Tonya Detten, AMA

**Crews work on Amarillo's Loop 335, a project that has been in the works for more than 40 years. The continuous loop is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 1999.**

including two Awards of Merit from the Texas Safety Association; the "Hats Off Award" from the Texas Alliance for Minorities in Engineering's Amarillo Chapter; recognition from the Intelligent Transportation Society of Texas for Innovative Deployment of Weather Monitoring Technology; TxDOT's High Flyer Award recognizing three Armstrong County Maintenance employees who built a portable laydown machine out of recycled and surplus materials; and recognition at the TxDOT Disadvantaged Business Enterprise/Historically Underutilized Business Conference for "Outstanding Contributions to the DBE/HUB Program." Individuals within the district were also recognized for outstanding performance fulfilling their job duties.

— Tonya Detten

## Atlanta District

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**L**ife just keeps getting busier as the Atlanta District heads toward the new millennium and the new transportation challenges it will bring.

With additional funding coming from the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) and another record setting single-year construction schedule, it seems employees will have little time for breaks. The fiscal 1999 letting schedule is estimated to be \$97 million and is topped by a \$40 million project to complete the Texas side of Loop 151 around Texarkana — which hopefully will be the location of Interstate 49 through the city.

Completion of the loop around Texarkana also will help ease some of the congestion of trucks through the area since the inception of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1992. Between 1993 and 1997, truck traffic on U.S. 59 through the district has increase as much as 50 percent in some areas. The Atlanta District hopes to get additional funding to continue upgrading U.S. 59 from TEA 21, which has designated the highway at the future route of Interstate 69.

Despite the toll on highways from the heavier truck traffic, the district continues to maintain a high standard of roadways through an emphasis on preventive maintenance. A coordinated seal coat program helps to prolong the life of many paved roadways even through wide fluctuations of temperature and moisture conditions in East Texas.

Additional maintenance funding during the past several years has also allowed the Atlanta District the opportunity to introduce a milling and inlay and microsurfacing program to repair the rutted areas of pavement caused by heavy trucks, again prolonging the life of many roadways before they have to be totally rehabilitated. Increased use of contractors for maintenance work also helps to free maintenance employees for what they are needed most

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Elvin Rousseau, PE. (interim)
- **Main number:** (903) 796-2853
- **Counties:** Bowie, Camp, Cass, Harrison, Marion, Morris, Panola, Titus and Upshur.
- **Area Engineers:** John Baker, PE., Atlanta; Michael Anderson, PE., Carthage; Kenneth Williams, PE., Gilmer; Steven Juneau, PE., Marshall; Roger Ledbetter, PE., Mount Pleasant; Kenneth Icenhower, PE., Texarkana.
- **Employees:** 360
- **Centerline miles:** 2,670
- **Lane miles:** 6,277
- **Registered vehicles:** 269,310

— to maintain the highways.

The Atlanta District also is working to make highways easier to navigate through the introduction of state-of-the-art technology, like using infrared sensors and computer operated cameras on signals to help move traffic more smoothly. Improvements in signage also keeps motorist aware of where they are and lead them where they want to go.

Traffic safety is also being stressed. The district plans to use a \$3 million budget for traffic safety in fiscal 1999 and 2000 to help prevent run-off road accidents by improving edge markings and installation of radar-equipped advance-warning signals to alert drivers when they are traveling too fast for an approaching curve. A grade separation will also be constructed at a busy intersection on U.S. 59 in Marshall.

Working environments have also improved for district employees. Three sections have moved into new offices during the past three years and another is in the planning stages. Several other offices have also been remodeled to make a more pleasant work area for employees. The district is in the process of renovating the outside of several buildings — constructing raised





Marcus Sandifer, ATL

**Recent renovations to several offices not only provide a much better work environment for employees, but also save the state money in maintenance and energy costs through the use of better insulation. The Atlanta District estimates it will save about \$172,000 in maintenance costs over the 20-year expected life span of the siding and roof materials.**

metal roofs on top of leaky flat roofs and putting siding on the exterior walls. Not only does this greatly improve the looks of the facilities, it also better insulates the buildings and saves on the cost of maintaining them.

Yes, life looks pretty busy for the new millennium, but the Atlanta District stands ready to meet the challenge.

—Marcus Sandifer

## Austin District

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**A**ustin is number 1! So says *Fortune* magazine, which, in November 1998, named Austin the number-one city for business in North America.

Besides business, Austin continues to be a haven for filmmakers (Lonesome Dove, Hope Floats, Courage Under Fire), a home to matinee idols like Matthew McConaughey and Sandra Bullock, and headquarters to many world-class musicians (Willie Nelson, Marcia Ball). It is also the site of an exploding computer, semiconductor and microchip industry. IBM, Dell, Motorola, Samsung and AMD, to name just a few, have facilities in this Central Texas boom town. Add the state's government and the University of Texas to the mix and the Lone Star State's capital city is a rapidly growing concern. And that growth extends outward as well. Williamson County, just north of Austin, is the second fastest growing county in the United States!

This is an area that includes everything from the spectrally beautiful Texas Hill Country in the west to Giddings in the east, where the topography begins to start its long descent toward the Texas Coastal Plain. Tourist meccas such as picturesque Fredericksburg, the mystical and mythical Enchanted Rock, the LBJ Presidential Library, The Governor's Mansion and the shimmering waters of six different Highland Lakes draw tens of thousands of tourists to the region every year. It is where Alamo survivor Susannah Dickinson is buried, as is Confederate Gen. Albert Sydney Johnston. Johnston bled to death at Shiloh, Tennessee, while insisting his surgeon tend to wounded Union soldiers before himself. His splendid marble sarcophagus in the Texas State Cemetery was the creation of famed sculptor Elizabeth Ney.

This all spells great news for the business community and chambers of commerce, but it means hustling to stay ahead

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** William Garbade
- **Main number:** (903) 796-2851
- **Counties:** Travis, Camp, Cass, Harrison, Marion, Morris, Panola, Titus and Upshur.
- **Area Engineers:** John Baker, P.E., Atlanta; Michael Anderson, P.E., Carthage; Kenneth Williams, P.E., Gilmer; Steven Juneau, P.E., Marshall; Roger Ledbetter, P.E., Mount Pleasant; Kenneth Icenhower, P.E., Texarkana.
- **Employees:** 360
- **Centerline miles:** 2,670
- **Lane miles:** 6,277
- **Registered vehicles:** 269,310

of the curve for the Austin District. With an estimated 1,000 new residents moving to Austin every month, transportation is a hot issue.

The Austin District sprawls across 9,500 square miles of the state's midsection. Motorists drive 11.2 million vehicle miles daily in Travis County alone, and 22.6 million vehicle miles are traveled each day districtwide. Six percent of all the registered vehicles in the state reside in the Austin District. Interstate 35, NAFTA's primary highway, bisects the Austin District on its way up the heartland of the United States.

All of this means not a day goes by in which the employees of the Austin District don't have plenty to do. The city of Austin will open its new airport to passenger traffic next spring. Access to the new facility has become an important issue. One of the major thoroughfares in south Austin to the airport will be the intersection of Ben White Boulevard (Texas 71/U.S. 290) and Interstate 35. Scheduled for reconstruction in the fall of 1999, the new interchange will feature direct connection ramps that will facilitate the flow of traffic between downtown and the new Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

The continuing reconstruction of U.S.



Chris Bishop, AUS

**The intersection of U.S. 290/Texas 71 and Interstate 35 in Austin is scheduled for reconstruction in the fall of 1999.**

183 from a four-lane divided highway to a freeway section will also improve mobility to and from northwest Austin. This corridor is one of the fastest growing areas in the city. U.S. 183 will also be converted to a freeway east of I-35 to Texas 71, which provides another major highway to the new airport.

History abounds in the Central Texas. In fact it's nearly everywhere you look. You can still visit downtown Round Rock where notorious outlaw Sam Bass was gunned down by Texas Rangers. Or travel further west toward rustic Blanco and Mason. Here, the ghosts of whiskey-breathing cowboys might still be heard as they tear open the hot summer sky galloping from here to eternity. With a keen eye toward preserving precious state treasures, the Austin District has overseen the dramatic improvements to the Texas State Cemetery (the Arlington of Texas) through a federal Enhancement Program, has rebuilt a historic bridge in Georgetown to modern standards while retaining its original gothic arches and made one of the state's most stunning scientific discoveries

when it uncovered the remains of a prehistoric woman while building a farm-to-market road.

The Austin District also spends millions of dollars every year to protect some of Texas' most important environmental assets. Whether it's the pristine waters of Barton Springs Pool or the Edwards Aquifer, the district has made some quantum leaps in the science of water protection. In some cases, where the necessary technology did not exist, the district developed it.

Wherever you are in this, the crown jewel of Texas, you got there through the efforts of the Austin District. Whether you're in Willow City listening to a coyote arguing mournfully with the twilight or traveling through the capital city on the nation's busiest Interstate, the men and women of this district are always there. Day and night. Fair weather or foul. Seen or unseen. Continuing a tradition of service and excellence that stretches back to 1917.

— John Hurt



## Beaumont District

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**T**ransportation plays a very important role in this coastal district. Southeast Texas is home to petrochemical complexes, three ports and more than a quarter of a million people.

Five major correctional complexes including a federal "super-prison" are based in the Beaumont District. Of course, recreation and tourism play an important role in the economy of the area. The district's two freshwater lakes lure anglers from around the world. The Gulf Coast and its attractions brings thousands of people from around the country. Without a strong infrastructure, the area would be economically crippled. The Beaumont District works hard maintaining its Interstate, highways and roads.

The Beaumont District, under the federal "Rails to Trails" program, is making great strides in its goal to widen more than 90 miles of U.S. 69. Using an abandoned portion of the Southern Pacific Railroad corridor, the district will soon begin reconstructing U.S. 69 to a four-lane divided highway. When complete, the controlled-access highway will include hiking and biking trails winding through some of the most scenic areas of Southeast Texas. The improved highway will also have a positive impact on the economies of Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Orange as well as many communities along the corridor. The new and improved highway would also play a vital role in evacuating when a hurricane threatens the area.

Work continues on widening Interstate 10. The highway is one of the busiest east-west routes in the United States. The district is improving several miles of the Interstate in Chambers and Orange counties. Plans are being developed to rebuild a section of the highway from Beaumont to Vidor. The estimated \$70 million project will go far to meet the transportation needs of the tens of thousands of people who travel the Interstate every day.

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **District Engineer:** Walter Crook, P.E.
- **Main number:** (409) 898-5745
- **Counties:** Chambers, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Tyler.
- **Area Engineers:** Duane Browning, P.E., Beaumont; David Bruno, P.E., Jasper; Edward F. Seymour Jr., P.E., Liberty; Howard Caldwell, P.E., Orange; Robert Conner, P.E., Port Arthur; Charlotte Warner, P.E.; Silsbee
- **Employees:** 391
- **Centerline miles:** 2,291
- **Lane miles:** 5,343
- **Registered vehicles:** 456,915

One of the district's proudest accomplishments is the refurbishing of the Rainbow Bridge. Built in 1938, the bridge was dubbed the tallest bridge in the south. Today it sports a new deck, wider lanes, improved lighting and new paint. Paralleling the Rainbow Bridge is the cable-stay Veterans Memorial Bridge. It handles all eastbound traffic while the Rainbow Bridge handles all westbound traffic. The bridges stand as a tribute to modern engineering and the history of Southeast Texas.

— Marc Shepherd



Marc Shepherd, BMT

**The Veterans Memorial bridge, a cable- stayed bridge, parallels the Rainbow Bridge, built in 1938.**

## Brownwood District

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**D**edication and conscientious efforts of employees continue to place the Brownwood District consistently in the top ranks of the statewide safety program.

In fiscal 1997, the statewide Rodeo Championship was awarded to David Bitner of Brownwood, and fiscal '98 ended with Brownwood being the only district to place in one of the top three positions in each of the three safety categories.

The district focused on other safety issues by partnering with local law enforcement to hold bicycle rodeos, Halloween safety programs and Selective Traffic Enforcement Projects. Project Graduation is always a source of pride and BWD served 22 schools in 1997 and 23 in 1998.

Support operations continue to show leadership in many areas with the shop rate ranked as one of the best in the state and a preventive maintenance program, which continues to save taxpayer dollars. BWD shared top honors with San Angelo in 1997 for alternative fuel usage and in 1998 Brownwood stood alone by having the highest percentage of alternative fuel usage statewide at 81.8 percent.

Always mindful of the budget and the need for better money management, the district accounting office successfully developed a Budget Forecasting Program. This program gives district money managers a convenient way to stay informed about their individual budgets as well as giving district management a projected view of the budget. Brownwood's district warehouse and purchasing department has been described as "premier" with well-managed stock accounts and exemplary customer service.

All the major construction projects for this district have required right of way purchases and the workload has resulted in the growth of the Brownwood ROW section from three employees to seven in the last few years. ROW has acquired approxi-

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **District Engineer:** Lynn G. Passmore, P.E.
- **Main Number:** ( 915) 646-2591
- **Counties:** Brown, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Lampasas, McCulloch, Mills, San Saba, Stephens.
- **Area Engineers:** Bryan Raschke, P.E., Brownwood, Howard Holland, P.E., Lampasas Bryan Neaves, P.E., Eastland
- **Employees:** 251
- **Centerline miles:** 2659
- **Lane miles:** 5733
- **Registered vehicles:** 124,601

mately 126 parcels of land in the past two years and has a target of 385 additional acquisitions to meet future needs.

Although BWD is one of the smallest districts in the TxDOT family, the ROW section has shown exceptional performance by exceeding the challenges given to them.

Two Enhancement Program projects were finished in 1997-98. The first project was a landscaping project at the Comanche County Courthouse which was finished in August 1997. An old city water well dating from the late 1800s was unexpectedly uncovered. It has been refurbished and is now safely accessible for public view in the courthouse square. The second project is a \$1.4 million restoration of the Santa Fe Railroad depot in Brownwood. This project refurbished the depot through a partnership between TxDOT, RBR Construction of Weatherford, Brownwood Civic Improvement Foundation and Corgan Associates of Dallas.

The district now has two new maintenance office buildings, both of which were much needed additions. Sept. 12, 1997, was a day of celebration and excitement for the San Saba Maintenance, which held an open house for its new office building. Brown County Maintenance is also pleased to have its own building and held open house



Michael Blevin, BWD

**The Brownwood District recently opened a new maintenance office in San Saba.**

in June 1998.

Brownwood was one of three districts that piloted a program to process locally let routine maintenance contracts. This process shifted the contract processing duties previously performed by the General Services Division to the individual districts.

Brownwood now lets, awards and executes local Routine Maintenance Contracts. This process allows the contractor to start jobs quicker and enhances the communication between the district and the contractors while reducing problems during the bonding or execution phase.

Safety and mobility were focal points for several projects in BWD. A safer intersection with smoother traffic movement was created by widening and adding a left turn lane at the busiest intersection in the district, U.S. 377 and Farm-to-Market Road 2524, and striping, traffic signals, and landscaping were improvements made at the intersection of U.S. 377 and Crockett Drive.

BWD continues to show its commitment to excellence by consistently having good

Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) scores. U.S. 183's final phase will be completed this year. Safety was the main emphasis for bringing U.S. 183 to current standards. With wider lanes and improved sight distance, a safer roadway from Goldthwaite to Lampasas has been constructed.

— *Sandra Parker*



## Bryan District

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Fiscal 1997-1998 was a busy one for the Bryan District, one in which a number of roadway sections were rehabilitated, or widened to four lanes with median separation. The year also marked a change for the district, as a growing population thrust it into the urban district category.

For those who believe in omens, the winning of the first Commitment to Excellence in Design Performance for an urban district, in the district's first year as such, could not have seemed luckier. But it takes hard work – not luck – to efficiently spend about \$76 million on 53 projects involving 866 miles of roadway, as the Bryan District did last year.

One project capturing public interest was the widening of Business 6 in Bryan-College Station, the district's busiest thoroughfare. While motorists' patience wore thin at times, the results are highly popular. Motorists now have six travel lanes, a raised center median with wide turn bays, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, storm sewers, a sound barrier and other amenities. The approximately 1.2-mile project was finished in June 1998 at a cost of about \$5 million.

Another highly visible Brazos County project was the widening of Farm-to-Market Road 2347, also known as George Bush Drive. The roadway's four travel lanes and raised median came in handy for the November 1997 opening of the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Throngs of visitors and dignitaries – including five past and current presidents, and six first ladies – tested the widened roadway to its limits. The \$4.6 million project was completed in June 1998, stretches about 1.3 miles, and includes storm sewers, curb and gutter work, signalization and landscaping.

In Robertson County, the restoration of Texas 6 through Hearne proved harder than expected. After milling the asphalt overlay, the underlying concrete was seen

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Lonny G. Traweek, PE.
- **Main number:** (409) 778-2165
- **Counties:** Brazos, Burleson, Freestone, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Milam, Robertson, Walker and Washington
- **Area Engineers:** David McCannon, PE., Brenham; Patrick Williams, PE., Bryan; Wesley, Jasek, PE., Hearne; and Tom Hunter, PE., Huntsville
- **Employees:** 361
- **Centerline miles:** 3,044
- **Lane Miles:** 6,835
- **Registered vehicles:** 279,784

to be worse than expected, forcing rapid action due to constant traffic on the roadway, and the impact on businesses. The approximately 2-mile-long project was finished in August 1998 at a cost of about \$2.5 million.

Recently, a mining company funded a Freestone County road relocation project, prompted by lignite deposits beneath existing right of way. This meant moving part of FM 2570 and building a new 2.67 mile stretch. Plans for the \$1.86 million project were reviewed by TxDOT, which also inspected the project, completed in fall 1998.

The extension of FM 1791 in Walker County will bring Huntsville one step closer to having a loop around the city. Construction of the 2.5 mile, approximately \$3 million project is under way, and expected to end in fall 1999. The extension is a rare, entirely new roadway section meant to relieve traffic congestion at the intersection of Texas 30 and Interstate 45.

The Park Road 12 project at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park, in Washington County, was completed in March 1998 at a cost of about \$1 million. A new roadway, hiking trails, additional parking and realignment of existing road-



Maury Jacob, BRY

**Landscape pavers have been added on one of the new raised medians of the Business 6 project in the Bryan District. Laying the pavers was one of the final tasks in the approximately \$5 million project.**

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ways were parts of the project. The project benefits visitors to the park, where the Texas Declaration of Independence was signed March 2, 1836.

— *Paul Sturrock*

## Childress District

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Tucked away in one of the upper corners of Texas is the 13-county Childress District. The district's 252 employees serve a small resident population of 43,000 citizens and much larger mobile population accumulating a total 2.2 million daily vehicle miles traveled.

In this remote district, everyone understands the vital importance of surface transportation facilities. Many of the little towns scattered across the area's rolling plains are without doctors or medical facilities and a sick child means a long trip to a city. A Friday night often means a 250-mile round trip for the town's football team and fans. The district's employees take great pride in being able to bring quality highways to their neighbors and families. The district employees have manifested their pride in numerous ways with many notable accomplishments focused on district goals for safety, quality, service and productivity.

Clyde Harper, district traffic section supervisor, and Carolyn Carrick, district safety coordinator, have worked together to train every maintenance and construction employee in traffic control and assist with routine quality control inspection of in-house and contracted traffic control setups, making the work place safer for the traveling public and crews.

Gary Mizer, Munday area engineer, has focused his efforts on improving the quality and reducing the costs of seal coats in the district. He has examined maintenance costs and construction costs and developed a way to analyze seal coating alternatives and most effectively use the district's preventive maintenance allocations.

Drought-stricken west Texas was the site of many range fires in 1998. The Texas Forest Service called upon the skilled employees in the district on numerous occasions to fight fires in the area. More than 8,450 staff-hours were logged in 1998 on fires.

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** David B. Casteel, PE.
- **Main number:** (940) 937-2571
- **Counties:** Briscoe, Childress, Collingsworth, Cottle, Dickens, Donley, Foard, Hall, Hardeman, King, Knox, Motley, Wheeler
- **Area Engineers:** Danny Brown, Childress; Gary Mizer, Munday; Roy Wright, Wellington
- **Employees:** 252
- **Centerline miles:** 2,497
- **Lane miles:** 5,403
- **Registered vehicles:** 39,940

Jim Freeman, district planning and development director, has focused on productivity and cost effectiveness of design. Faced with the district's largest ever construction lettings, Freeman examined processes and procedures and working with a talented group of designers changed from a decentralized design operation to doing 85 percent of the district's in-house design centrally. His cost for preparing plans, specifications and estimates are among the lowest in the state and ambitious letting schedules have been met and projects accelerated.

District special crews and maintenance sections have worked together to stretch the available construction dollars by performing heavy maintenance and reconstruction on more than 60 miles of farm-to-market roads and low-volume state highways.

Several accolades have come home to Childress during the past two years. These have included the Litter Gitter Award (Copper Break State Park, Hardeman County), Gibb Gilchrist Award (Terry Keener, operations director), and an Associated General Contractors Project Award (Kenneth Patterson, Wellington Area Office). The district has specially recognized several employees for outstanding



Kevin Stillman, TRV

**Childress District employees celebrate the groundbreaking for a new complex with Rick Perry, newly elected lieutenant governor, Texas Transportation Commission member Robert Nichols and commissioner member Anne Wynne's executive assistant Ron Davis. The complex is scheduled to be completed by December 1999.**

efforts supporting district goals including Jackie Taylor (automation) , Andy Zarate (Dickens maintenance section) and Beau Buchanan (district design office).

— *Barbara Seal*

## Corpus Christi District

Balmy breezes, roaring surf and sunshine welcome visitors, travelers and trade to the Corpus Christi District. A diversified and growing economy, intermodal transportation facilities and extensive educational opportunities all contribute to an area that is positioned for future growth and serves as an important link in the International Trade Corridor.

TxDOT is a vital partner in developing the multimodal transportation system. The Corpus Christi District serves as the middle of the hourglass that is bringing trade north and south from the borders through Texas. Texas 44/U.S. 59 provides a direct connection between the Port of Laredo and the Port of Corpus Christi. U.S. 77 and U.S. 281 provide the north-south connection to the Rio Grande Valley while U.S. 59 serves as the east-west connection to Houston.

When the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st century (TEA-21) was passed by Congress, it designated nearly 275 miles of additional Interstate type facilities in this 10-county district. These facilities will serve increasing traffic needs generated through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Work is already well under way to identify areas along these routes where additional right of way will be needed, environmental concerns are present, or routes have been developed to a stage they could quickly be moved to contract.

Texas 44 is a vital roadway connection between Corpus Christi and Laredo. It is included as a part of the Phase I Texas Trunk System. Planning is nearly complete for a relief route at Alice since separating local traffic from truck traffic is a high priority for the community. A consulting firm is preparing the environmental assessment and schematics. Soon studies will begin on a Texas 44 Relief Route at Robstown to respond to increasing demands from high truck volumes and provide continuity along this important trade route.

Increasing traffic volumes along many

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Billy D. Parks, P.E.
- **Main number:** (512) 808-2300
- **Counties:** Aransas, Bee, Goliad, Jim Wells, Karnes, Kleberg, Live Oak, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio
- **Area Engineers:** Chris Caron, P.E., Alice, George West sub-office; Bryan Wood, P.E., Corpus Christi; Ralph Condra, P.E., Karnes City; Bill Reitmann, P.E., Sinton
- **Employees:** 425
- **Centerline miles:** 2,762
- **Lane miles:** 6,674
- **Registered vehicles:** 399,170

roadways are confirming that major emphasis needs to be directed to maintaining and improving the current roadway system. Some two-lane roadways need to be upgraded to divided routes, some four-lane routes to freeways and many of rural routes need wider pavements and shoulders. We continue to give special emphasis to safety and have many improvements included in the Hazard Elimination Program.

Serving north-south traffic, a U.S. 281 relief route west of Alice will be completed during the spring of 1999. This project has been developed over many years. The existing U.S. 281 route through Alice was recently upgraded to four lanes.

An important connection to multimodal transportation, the Joe Fulton International Trade Corridor, is one of three Texas Port roads that are being studied by a consultant. The Fulton Corridor is a proposed new facility that would extend along the undeveloped north side of the Port of Corpus Christi to tie Interstate 37 to U.S. 181/Texas 35. This roadway would provide another link from the Interstate to the Port of Corpus Christi to serve the increasing trade from Mexico, Laredo and the Rio





Becky Kureska, CRP

**The JFK Causeway in Corpus Christi was impassable after heavy rains produced flooding in October 1998.**

Grande Valley. It would also provide a connection that bypasses downtown Corpus Christi and affords an alternate route to the Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge. This project would provide direct linkage between highway, marine and rail transportation. It would facilitate the transfer of goods into and through intermodal facilities.

The Port of Corpus Christi is the sixth largest port in tonnage in the nation. Containerized cargo and general cargo docks are supplemented by oil docks and bulk terminal docks along with a public elevator that is one of the most efficient in the nation. The port owns 26 miles of railroad tracks that are operated and jointly served by the Union Pacific System and the Texas-Mexican Railway Company. Proposed improvements would provide a direct rail connection between the existing Union Pacific line and the Corpus Christi Terminal Association Interchange Yard along the north side of the ship channel.

In addition to needs generated by an improved economy, the district's proximity to the Gulf of Mexico and the number of low-lying areas requires constant diligence

and attention toward emergency evacuation routes. The John F. Kennedy Causeway, which stretches between the Corpus Christi mainland and North Padre Island, is inundated by seasonal high tides and approaching storm surges. A consultant is preparing the environmental assessment and schematic for a proposed improvement that will raise the causeway to a roadway elevation of at least nine feet. When this process is finished, plan development will begin.

Improvements to other routes that will safely carry residents and travelers away from the coast in advance of an approaching storm are also in various stages of development. Severe flooding the past two Octobers point up the need for a comprehensive planning effort to identify and remedy low-lying roads and structures to improve safe evacuation and travel.

— *Becky Kureska*

## Dallas District

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The year 1999 will mark more than the passing of the century in the Dallas District. It will mark almost a century long project, or at least in our eyes. At long last, improvements to Dallas' North Central Expressway (US 75), will be complete. The \$450 million project to remove 28 ramps and widen the highway from four to eight lanes would transform the outdated corridor into a virtual torpedo tube through north Dallas.

The plan was hatched in 1988 and broke ground in 1990. No project in Dallas has been this extravagant, extreme, costly, or publicly criticized. Five separate but concurrent projects, all with complex phasing, had to be completed during off-rush hour times in order to allow the 150,000 vehicles that utilize it daily to continue traversing the old roadway.

Overall this project has made headlines nationwide for another reason. During excavation of main lanes in the Lemmon Avenue area an historic cemetery was unearthed launching a year long archaeological dig. Since then, TxDOT has contributed funds for the re-establishment of the neglected cemetery as well as the memorial and the Freedman's Cemetery Fund.

This project could be considered the century's benchmark with three of the five sections finishing early and the other two sections finishing on time. Central is only one snapshot in the huge portrait of construction here in the Dallas District.

On the heels of the North Central Expressway tradition for notoriety are the Trinity Parkway Corridor improvements. With more emphasis on growth to the underutilized southern Dallas area, finding a way to improve this heavily utilized travel corridor which is comprised of two major highways crossing over the Trinity River south of downtown seems like a task for a deity, not a department.

Residents of Dallas have long noted the

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Jay R. Nelson, PE.
- **Main number:** (214) 320-6100
- **Counties:** Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Kaufman, Navarro, Rockwall
- **Area Engineers:** Darwin Myers, PE., Corsicana; Claude S. "Butch" Jones Jr., PE., Dallas Southwest; Larry D. Tegtmeyer, PE., Dallas Northwest; Patrick Ellis, PE., Dallas Northeast; Claud P. "Buz" Elsom, III, PE., Denton; William Hale, PE., Hutchins; Jan M. Heady, PE., Kaufman; William C. Lovil Jr., PE., McKinney; Alvin Barton, PE., Waxahachie
- **Employees:** 1,068
- **Centerline:** 3,288
- **Lane Miles:** 9,581
- **Registered vehicles:** 2.6 million

mote-like quality of the flood plain surrounding its southwestern side. The I-35/I-30 Mixmaster interchange is mostly bridges with the I-30 segment being depressed north of the river. These roads were designed in the 50s to connect the interstate highways and keep them out of the mud of this flood plain.

The Trinity Corridor is an ambitious project which was pushed through the MIS stage last year. The plan relies heavily on a tollway to alleviate downtown traffic traveling east and west on I-30 and an extension of the Woodall Rodgers Freeway allowing more north/south traffic flow.

Including the \$246 million capital bond program money contributed by the city of Dallas, this endeavor will have an estimated total cost of \$1.2 billion. The first project to alleviate traffic congestion in the canyon broke ground this year.

Another major project in line to break ground before the millennium is the LBJ Highway project (I-635) interchange at U.S. 75. It will alleviate a vicious traffic backup due to antiquated clover leaf ramps and replace the three-level interchange



Michael Amador, TRV

**This pavilion and spherical concrete bollards are located on the Mockingbird Bridge over Dallas' North Central Expressway. They are examples of some of the cutting edge architectural amenities on the unique roadway which will be complete at the turn of the century.**

with a five level fully directional interchange. The estimated cost of this mammoth undertaking for all four phases is \$167 million and Phase I is scheduled to break ground by 2000.

Construction-leery commuters who viewed the project model at TxDOT's booth at the Texas State Fair this year commented to weary department employees that "as soon as it's built, ya'll will tear something else up...job security, huh!" As amazing as it sounds, with continual funding this project should be completely finished in eight years. This intersection is in the middle of the 23-mile long I-635 corridor which is one of four major travel corridors in the district currently under study for traffic improvement.

Major impact projects like these are just the beginning for Dallas. With more emphasis on public transportation, the district partners with the North Central Texas Council of Governments; Dallas Area Rapid Transit and North Texas Tollway Authority more than ever. All of these agencies are either involved or closely watching the four major investment studies under way in the planning office at Dallas.

In other news, ending a 13-year litigation stalemate, this year U.S. District Judge

Barefoot Sanders ruled to lift an injunction that held up the Texas 161 project, a proposed 10-lane thoroughfare from I-20 to I-30, and 12 lanes from I-30 north to Texas 183 (Airport Freeway) in Irving.

ITS is coming on-line to the internet, the operation moved into its own satellite center and boasts 42 cameras. Twenty-six Courtesy Patrol officers are dispatched from the control center which has recently been dubbed DalTrans following a series of focus group meetings.

Dallas' current monthly construction cost is at the \$25 million mark and is expected to exceed \$30 million by the millennium. A total of \$ 1 billion worth of projects are under construction and that figure is expected to continue to rise with these big projects in the forefront. Effective infrastructure is something that is built once; but continues to evolve. As the Dallas District looks with relief at several high-profile projects coming to an end, it stays in high gear just trying to keep up with demand. Total district maintenance costs are estimated to hover around the \$47 million mark by 2000.

— Michelle Releford

## El Paso District

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This past year has brought vast challenges to the El Paso District (ELP), not only in the construction and maintenance of quality highways, but also in the enhancing and beautifying of our environment.

New District Engineer Maribel Chavez is leading the El Paso District into the millennium with three new facilities and an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) scheduled for inauguration by the summer of 1999.

Construction of the new district office complex is expected to be completed by August 1999. The new building is located off Interstate 10 near Horizon City. This 100,400 square foot building will house about 180 employees.

The East Area office recently moved into a new building where the Maintenance Section Office is now housed. October 1998 is the month the West Area office moved into a newly renovated building which also houses their Maintenance Section.

The \$7 million ITS project includes a new two story traffic management center (7,500 square feet) located adjacent to the new district complex.

The El Paso Traffic Management System will cover approximately 38 miles of I-10 and eight miles of U.S. 54. More than 200,000 vehicles travel daily through these highways. Included in this project are lane control signals and 30 surveillance cameras.

What makes this system unique is that it will include satellite centers at the El Paso Police Headquarters and El Paso City's computerized signal control center. The district is providing off site pan, tilt, and zoom (PTZ) capabilities to the city at three locations: City Hall, 911 Police Center, and the Traffic Signal Maintenance yard. Although TxDOT has total control of the system, the city will be able to PTZ and view what is happening on I-10 and

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **District Engineer:** Maribel P. Chavez, P.E.
- **Main Number:** (915) 774-4200
- **Counties:** Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Presidio
- **Area Engineers:** Thomas Mangrem, P.E. - Alpine  
Bobby Steeds, P.E.-El Paso (rural)  
Carlos Ahumada, P.E.-El Paso (urban)
- **Employees:** 373
- **Centerline miles:** 1,860
- **Lane miles:** 4,595
- **Registered vehicles:** 413,813

U.S. 54.

In June 1998, the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission and their Mexican counterpart, in conjunction with TxDOT completed the replacement of the International Bridge of the Americas. The \$12 million new bridge consists of four structures: two structures of four lanes each for light traffic, and two structures of two lanes each for commercial traffic. These structures include northbound and southbound pedestrian walkways.

Currently, about 27,000 passenger and 10,000 commercial vehicles cross the bridge daily in each direction. Pedestrian traffic to the United States is approximately 1,400 per day.

On July 1, ELP kicked off the first field test in the state to use shredded tires in highway embankments.

The Loop 375 Bridge Embankment Project presented the city wide scrap tire disposal problem as a potential, reliable resource for road and bridge construction. About 6,000 tons of tire chips are being used as fill in the Loop 375 bridge embankment project.

This project features two methods of using tire shreds in construction of the bridge embankments. In two of six section, three inch shreds were mixed with equivalent amounts of soil. In another section, 12



Photo courtesy TRV

**About 27,000 passenger and 10,000 commercial vehicles cross from El Paso into Mexico daily in each direction. Pedestrian traffic to the United States is approximately 1,400 per day.**

inch shreds were wrapped in geotextile fabric much like a burrito.

In September of this year, ELP led the awareness effort to warn travelers against taking weapons into Mexico.

Twenty 3-foot by 3-foot signs, with a logo of a pistol inside the international "no" symbol - a red circle with a red slash across it, were put up throughout El Paso. The cost of the signs were estimated at \$15,000.

El Paso is the first district to put up this type of sign and has become a model at major international border crossings.

The El Paso District continues to be a pioneer in innovative projects and embrace the challenge of all projects with enthusiasm and positive attitudes.

— *Frank DeSantos*



## Fort Worth District

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From massive freeway interchanges to winding mesa roads, Fort Worth District personnel face a wide variety of challenges when designing, building and maintaining the state highway system in this nine-county area.

In rapidly growing Tarrant County, expanded freeways and interchanges are being built to accommodate the ever-increasing number of vehicles congesting major transportation arteries such as Interstate 35W, Interstate 30, Texas 121 and Interstate 820.

Construction on the I-30/I-35W Interchange in Downtown Fort Worth and the I-820/Texas 121/Texas 26/FM 1938 Interchange in Northeast Tarrant County have moved into their most crucial phases. While most of the work on the approaches to these two busy interchanges has been completed, contractors are now building new, improved connectors that cross over some of the Metroplex's most demanding roadways.

Other long-awaited projects such as the extension of Texas 360 frontage roads from Mansfield to the Ellis County Line and the widening of Texas 114 through Southlake are also on the horizon in FY 1999. Both will provide much needed relief in highly populated areas and provide improved routes to and from Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. In addition, construction will be completed in 1999 on the state's third traffic management center. The high-tech center, known as TransVISION, will allow operators to provide up-to-the-minute information to motorists, further reducing congestion, pollution and delays to motorists.

Tarrant County's closest neighbors, Hood, Johnson, Parker and Wise counties, are also experiencing growing pains as a result of the area's continued development. Roads originally built to accommodate rural towns and help farmers and ranchers transport their products are moving more

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Steven E. Simmons, P.E.
- **Main number:** (817) 370-6500
- **Counties:** Erath, Hood, Jack, Johnson, Palo Pinto, Parker, Somervell, Tarrant, Wise
- **Area Engineers:** Marc McEndree, P.E., Erath/Hood,/Somervell; Jack/Wise (vacant); Joe Fossett, P.E., Johnson; Mark Schluter, P.E., North Tarrant; Jimmey Bodiford, P.E., Palo Pinto/Parker; Harvey Oppermann, P.E., South Tarrant
- **Employees:** 752
- **Centerline miles:** 3,090
- **Lane miles:** 8,128
- **Registered vehicles:** 1.5 million

and more vehicles each day. Employees in these areas are working to design and construct new facilities that will relieve current and future congestion, as well as maintain and repair existing roadways.

In Johnson County, contracts are expected to be let this year on two projects that will widen U.S. 67 from Cleburne to the Ellis County Line. This route, which is on the Texas Trunk System, will be upgraded from a two-lane roadway to a four-lane divided facility. Construction also began on U.S. 67 in Erath County from Stephenville to Dublin in fiscal 1998.

Major widening and expansion plans are already in the works for U.S. 380 and Texas 114 in Wise County and Texas 144 in Hood County. Because of increased vehicle and truck travel through these areas, the roadways have long outgrown their capacity. Also, construction of a bypass around Granbury is tentatively scheduled to begin in fiscal 2000.

Construction also began this year on two vital farm-to-market roadways in Parker County. The main lanes and shoulders of FM 730 from north of Weatherford to Azle will be widened, and FM 3325 will be extended four miles to Interstate 20 near



Geoff Appold, TRV

**Amid the rolling hills west of Fort Worth, near the Tarrant/Parker County Line, Interstate 20 carries more motorists than ever to and from outlying counties. The Fort Worth District continues to meet the challenges of increased congestion in these primarily rural areas by upgrading outgrown highways and farm-to-market roadways.**

the Parker/Tarrant county line.

In the mostly rural areas of Erath, Jack, Palo Pinto and Somervell counties, the focus remains on maintaining and upgrading an aging system of highways and farm-to-market roads. Since the repeal of the national speed limit in 1995, crews in these areas have been working to enhance safety on these mostly two-lane roads by rehabilitating main lanes, widening shoulders and improving signage.

The hard work and dedication of Fort Worth District employees have not gone unnoticed. For two straight years, the district has won TxDOT's Metropolitan District Design Excellence Award presented at the annual Transportation Conference in College Station. In 1997, Director of Traffic Operations Wallace Ewell was awarded the prestigious Dewitt C. Greer

Award. And Erath County Maintenance's Sharon Makarwich won the state's 1998 Adopt-A-Highway Litter Gitter Award.

Other accomplishments include the Fort Worth District Courtesy Patrol being honored for 25 years of dedicated service on Tarrant County highways and the District Lab winning the 1996 Texas Quality Initiative Achievement Award for Innovation.

However, one of the district's most shining moments came in July 1998 when over 40 selfless employees from Palo Pinto, Parker, Erath and Jack Counties put their lives on the line to battle a 6,000-acre range fire in rocky Palo Pinto County. Crews worked around the clock building fire guards and keeping equipment in good working condition.

— Chad Lorange

## Houston District

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The Houston District has entered a period of historic change. With the departure of pro football, a magnificent new baseball stadium rises out of the warehouse district in the northeast corner of downtown.

Local leaders are committed to build a new football stadium near the Astrodome for a new National Football League team. The historic Rice Hotel in downtown has reopened, but as a loft apartment building. The freeways built in the 1950s and '60s are being rebuilt as these structures approach the end of their design life.

Like the new high bridge at Surfside in Brazoria County, in their stead is a very real improved product. The Houston District has replaced the older "new high bridge at Surfside" with a facility constructed without beams, making it the second largest segmental bridge in Texas and a bargain at only \$14 million. Nearly a mile long and with a clearance of 73 feet over the Intracoastal Waterway, the new landmark will replace the older structure.

The future of the Houston District is filled with these projects:

**The Galveston Causeway** — A \$70 million construction of a totally new facility that will replace the existing bridges over the causeway scheduled to begin after 2002.

**The Katy Freeway** — A \$1 billion series of projects to widen Interstate 10 from I-610 West to the Brazos River beginning in 2003; this project will make use of the railroad right of way purchased by TxDOT in 1992.

**The West Loop** — After 2002, the department will begin \$145 million worth of construction on the West Loop in the Galleria area.

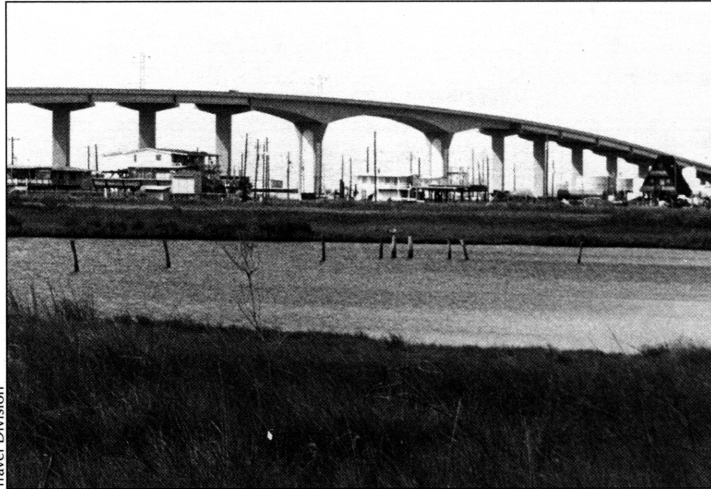
**The Southwest Freeway** — Between Greenbriar and Downtown, U.S. 59 will be rebuilt and the depressed portion of the highway that currently goes under Hazard, Woodhead, Dunlavy and Mandell will be extended beneath Montrose Boulevard.

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Gary K. Trietsch, PE.
- **Main Phone Number:** (713) 802-5000
- **Counties:** Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Montgomery and Waller
- **Area Engineers:** Clifford Halvorsen, PE., Central Houston; Jose' Ramirez, PE., Galveston County; Larry Heckathorn, Brazoria Area Engineer's Office; James Hunt, PE., Fort Bend County; Michael Alford, PE., Waller County and Northwest Harris County; Charles Gaskin, PE., Montgomery County; Ruben Martinez, PE., North Harris County; Quincy Allen, PE., East Harris Area; and Maureen Wakeland, PE., South Harris County
- **Employees:** 1,455
- **Centerline miles:** 2,665 (3.46%);
- **Lanes miles:** 8,721 (4.76%)
- **Registered vehicles:** 3 million

These two projects together will cost more than \$53 million.

However, in the fall of 1996, the Pierce Elevated was reconstructed through downtown Houston and this project was different from previous replacement projects for very significant reasons. The Pierce Elevated is the downtown section of I-45 and is a prime connector for other freeways in the downtown area. Dismayed by the prospect of years of reconstruction in the downtown area, alternative solutions finally provided the right combination of workable strategies. First, completely elevated, the whole structure was removed from the system and all traffic diverted from the highway during construction. Secondly, the contract was awarded as a two-part process: the contractor bid on the work and on the calendar — it was a least-price/least-days bid that made the difference. In addition, a fully funded public information campaign was included. Upon completion, the contractor had won the



Travel Division

**Aesthetically pleasing, the new high bridge at Surfside on Texas 332 in Brazoria County is trimmed with blue and tan to reflect the surf and sand of the beach community. A technologically advanced design, the bridge is also environmentally friendly with fish trails and wetlands threaded between its columns.**

largest incentive awarded ever earned in the state of Texas. Since its completion, the success of this project has already been recognized by the Houston Branch of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the public information component won the Texas Public Relations Association Silver Spur Award for Non-Profit Organizations.

The Houston District has consolidated its working relationship with both the Harris County Toll Road Authority and the Grand Parkway Association. In the '90s, the Houston District and Harris County Toll Road Authority completed the long-awaited southern portion of the beltway. After a dormant period, the Grand Parkway Association has renewed its effort to identify and acquire the proposed right of way in the Fort Bend-Brazoria-Galveston County segments, extending the completed roadway from the Katy prairie in west Harris County through Richmond-Rosenberg to Dickinson and League City on Galveston Bay.

Current projects have stressed the need for improved accessibility to regions in the six-county area that were previously underserved. In the Clear Lake area, NASA Road 1 is under improvement from

Texas 146 in Seabrook to the Johnson Space Center. In the future, a \$22 million project will relocate NASA Road 1 on a new alignment between I-45 and FM 270 to be let in 2000. South of Houston, U.S. 90A will be reconstructed. In May 1998, the Houston District began the conversion of South Main (also known as U.S. 90A) from a multi-lane facility to a limited-controlled access freeway from I-610 to the Beltway. Work has continued to improve Texas 249 as a six-lane freeway northwest through Harris County directly to the Montgomery County line at Tomball.

The Houston District is an experienced designer navigating the future and striking a balance between the needs of the community, newly energized environmental concerns and the pressures of high population density construction restraints. The recent past has brought significant success to an agency already familiar with quality planning, expert design and public success.

— Norm Wigington

## Laredo District

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The year 1998 was an amazing one for Laredo District employees, who faced numerous challenges and opportunities.

At the same time, the district has maintained the needs of the traveling public by providing and maintaining the best transportation system in the country.

On March 17, 1998, after months of planning, the Laredo District hosted the 1998 Regional Maintenance Conference. More than 350 employees representing district, area and maintenance offices from around the state gathered to attend a two-day conference in the "Gateway to Mexico."

In August 1998, the Laredo District faced one of its biggest challenges. Tropical Storm Charley overwhelmed San Felipe Creek in Del Rio and left residents with overturned vehicles, shattered homes and debris.

More than 150 volunteers from the Texas Task Force of the Texas Engineers Extension Service of Texas A&M University searched homes for bodies. Residents tell stories of rescues and lives lost. Jim Palmer, Water Works Superintendent for the city of Del Rio, and Texas Department of Public Safety Trooper Richard Fernandez didn't think twice when they climbed into a front-end loader and risked their lives to rescue 18.

The National Guard rescued more than 51 residents from buildings and trees. At the same time, local residents used boats and additional equipment to assist. At first count, more than 150 people were reported missing. More than 600 men, women and children turned to the Del Rio Civic Center for shelter. Three other shelters were opened at local schools and churches to accommodate residents. As of Sept. 22 more than 2,100 Del Rio residents registered as homeless. More than 936 homes have either been totally destroyed or must be demolished due to safety reasons.

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Luis A. Ramirez, P.E.
- **Main number:** (956) 712-7400
- **Counties:** Webb, Dimmit, Duval, La Salle, Maverick, Kinney, Zavala, Val Verde
- **Area Engineers:** Juan D. Villarreal, P.E., Laredo; Gregory C. Howard, P.E., Carrizo Springs; Robert Parker, P.E., Del Rio
- **Employees:** 248
- **Centerline miles:** 2,236
- **Lane miles:** 4,766
- **Registered Vehicles:** 170,186

The Laredo District immediately established a 24-hour hotline to respond to questions and concerns from the traveling public. District office employees kept rotating shifts so that someone was always available to answer questions regarding road conditions. The Highway Condition Report was updated continually to provide motorists with the latest travel information.

In the end, the death toll was nine with six people missing. Tropical Storm Charley affected many lives. Residents continue to look with disbelief at the wrath that mother nature left behind. The task of rebuilding and healing is on everyone's mind.

"I am very proud of the efforts of all the employees of the Laredo District and grateful to the districts and divisions that assisted," said Laredo District Engineer Luis Ramirez. "The department is fortunate and has employees that come together without any hesitation during a crisis. Employees quickly went where they were needed in both Del Rio and Laredo. There are many hidden heroes and the district is grateful to everyone."

In addition to hosting conferences and fighting flood waters, the Laredo District effectively used all of the district's maintenance funds to improve roadway conditions and to complete all seal coat and





Kevin Stillman, TRV

**Father and son watch the waters of the Nueces River rise following heavy rains from Tropical Storm Charley in August 1998.**

overlay projects in record time.

During the 1998 Transportation Conference, local talent Rosa Trevino, District Maintenance Engineer, was recognized for her excellence in highway engineering and was presented with the Dewitt C. Greer Award.

On Oct. 1, 1998, the Laredo District reported more than \$82 million of construction projects in progress or completed representing the 10th largest construction volume in the state. Plus, there are two additional international bridges under construction. The city of Eagle Pass is in the process of constructing a second international bridge and the city of Laredo is building bridge four and a fifth being considered.

— *Cristina Flores Guevara*

## Lubbock District

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**F**inally! Lubbock's East-West Freeway is scheduled for construction in fiscal 2002.

Recently, the Texas Transportation Commission approved \$17.8 million of Strategic Priority Funds for the district's first freeway project, the West Loop 289 interchange. This project includes widening the West Loop from four to six lanes from 34th Street to Slide Road to accommodate the increase in traffic which will flow from the new freeway.

In addition, design consultants are making progress on construction plans to build the \$273 million freeway. Dannenbaum Engineering Corporation of Fort Worth and HNTB Corporation of Dallas were hired last year to complete the plans for Lubbock's future east-west access.

Dannenbaum is designing the \$40 million West Loop 289 Interchange, and the Fort Worth company has already completed a set of schematics for the project. TxDOT will pay Dannenbaum \$3.3 million. HNTB is working on the \$143 million freeway portion from the west loop to Interstate 27.

"HNTB's priority, right now, is to concentrate on drawing up plans for the portion of the freeway that runs through the Texas Tech campus," explained Kerry Miller, area engineer for the Lubbock Urban TxDOT offices.

Besides the Commission money, the Lubbock District also received several million in demonstration funds for two projects approved recently in the TEA 21 bill. Congress approved \$20 million for the freeway project from Memphis Avenue to University Avenue, and \$7.2 million for the rerouting of Indiana Avenue. Because these are federal funds, TxDOT will manage the Indiana relocation project.

The Lubbock District has divided the freeway project into 12 separate projects and five phases. Phase One, which is the Loop 289 interchange, is divided into three

### AT A GLANCE

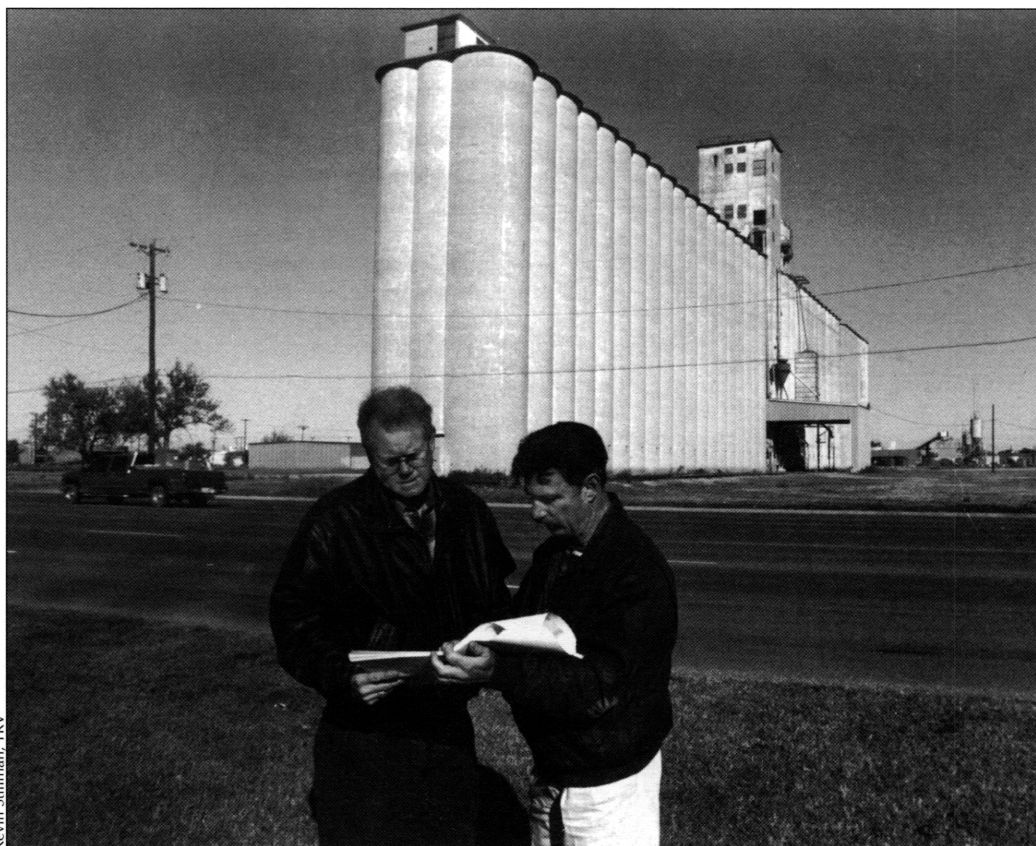
- **District Engineer:** Carl Utley, PE.
- **Main number:** 745-4411
- **Counties:** Bailey, Castro, Cochran, Crosby, Dawson, Floyd, Gaines, Garza, Hale, Hockley, Lamb, Lubbock, Lynn, Parmer, Swisher, Terry and Yoakum
- **Area Engineers:** Jim Combes, PE., Brownfield; Stevan Perez, PE., Littlefield; Frank Phillips, PE., Lubbock Rural; Kerry Miller, PE., Lubbock Urban; Mike Craig, PE., Plainview. The same as last year
- **Employees:** 474
- **Centerline miles:** 5,134
- **Lane miles:** 11,907
- **Registered vehicles:** 347,922

projects for a total of \$25.8 million.

To date, the Lubbock District has spent almost \$30 million on right of way acquisition and \$7.1 million on the drainage system for the freeway. The district has also contracted with two design consultant firms and are paying them \$12.8 million to develop detailed plans for the freeway project.

In other construction, the district now has more than \$84.5 million under contract including such projects as the \$18 million rehabilitation of eight miles of U.S. 84 in Garza County and the \$6.9 million rehabilitation job for U.S. 84 in Lamb County. Lubbock is spending \$6.1 million to widen and rehabilitate 82nd Street (Spur 313) in Lubbock from Frankford Avenue to Alcoe Avenue, and \$6 million to build the Wolforth overpass at the Brownfield Highway and 82nd Street. During the next 12 months, Lubbock will spend more than \$60.2 million on highway improvements.

Lubbock District employees are committed to excellence in job performance. That commitment earned the district the 1996 Journey Toward Excellence Award, which is presented annually at the Transportation Conference in College Station.



Kevin Stillman, TRV

**Claude Kneisley, left, Lubbock District right of way administrator, and Jerry Cash, engineer, review plans in front of the Burrus Grain Elevator on Fourth Street. TxDOT purchased the historical structure earlier this year as part of the right of way acquisition for the East/West Freeway. The elevator is scheduled for demolition in the summer of 1999.**

More importantly, Lubbock has 474 dedicated, talented employees that make it an ideal place to work. It's really the people that make the place. And Lubbock has great people.

— Penny Mason

## Lufkin District

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The Lufkin District continues to place a high priority on safety for the traveling public, and for its employees. This can be seen in several projects and or events throughout the district.

In the summer of 1997, the district reached an amazing 100 percent injury reduction rate for the months of May through August 1997. The district was recognized for achieving the greatest percent reduction rate during the summer rate period compared to the previous three-year summer injury rates.

Doug Huss of the district's San Augustine area office was recognized and presented with an award for submitting and winning a Hazardous Materials poster contest, sponsored by the Occupational Safety Division. The contest was designed to help spread the word for occupational safety in a creative and interesting way. The poster is to be displayed in all 25 districts.

A unique and intriguing rest area was opened fall of 1997, just north of Livingston in Seven Oaks, off of U.S. 59 N. The rest areas serve both northbound and southbound traffic. What is so intriguing about the rest stops is they each have a mural on the wall that displays an Indian portrait. The murals are representative of an Indian chief and an Indian feather dancer from the Alabama-Coushatta Indian tribe of Texas. The murals are made out of tile. It's as if looking at a classy puzzle that has been put together ever so elegantly. Each rest area rests on approximately 30 acres with wonderful landscaping and shrubs. The location is good and provides easy entry and departure for 18-wheelers and standard vehicles offering ample parking space.

Construction is progressing on several projects in the district. On U.S. 69N, a major project has gotten under way and is approximately 40 percent complete. Upon completion of this project, main lanes and feeder roads will be added to enhance the

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** David L. Justice, P.E.
- **Main number:** (409) 634-4433
- **Counties:** Angelina, Houston, Nacogdoches, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity.
- **Area Engineers:** Cheryl Flood, P.E., Lufkin; Herbert Bickley, P.E., Livingston; Chester Still, P.E., Nacogdoches; Clark Slacum, P.E. San Augustine
- **Employees:** 318
- **Centerline miles:** 2,826
- **Lane miles:** 6,257
- **Registered vehicles:** 225,285

existing roadway and address congestion. This project is expected to be complete in the spring of 2001.

The next four projects are all a part of the U.S. 59 Corridor initiated as an operational and safety improvement to U.S. 59.

A relief route east of Diboll is estimated to cost \$35 million proposing to lessen traffic in the downtown area of the small city. The project is length is 7.1 miles.

In Corrigan, a 7.8 mile relief route project, assisting traffic through the city without having to go downtown through several traffic lights, will cost an estimated \$52 million. Traffic will be routed to the west side of Corrigan.

The existing highway in Shepherd will be converted to freeway capability with a new railroad overpass on the south end. The 9-mile project is expected to cost some \$75 million.

The I-69 Master Plan from Nacogdoches to Lufkin will tie into the Diboll relief route and extend to Garrison. Schematic development for this project will begin in early spring. It is a 52-mile project averaging \$420 million in construction costs.

The new federal legislation designated Interstate 69 along the U.S. 59 Corridor in



Carlisza Frazier, LFK

**This rest area north of Livingston in the Lufkin District was designed to recognize the cultural influence of the Alabama-Coushatta tribe has had on the area. The rest area also features an exhibit of tribal figures.**

this part of Texas. These projects are sure to address the congested areas adding relief and allowing through traffic to continue without delay. After the congested areas have been addressed, then a connection between each project will be established. Traffic on U.S. 59 is expected to double in the next 20 years.

— *Carlisza Frazier*

## Odessa District

In his poem, "Mending Wall," Robert Frost said, "Good fences make good neighbors." If he had been a Texas Department of Transportation engineer in the Odessa District, he might have said, "Good highways make good neighbors."

That is the case in Odessa and Midland, a combined 250,000 population metropolitan statistical area, located in the heart of TxDOT's vast 18,353-square mile Odessa District.

The latest intercity travel figures testify to a growing linkage in the economies of the two cities and the improved transportation infrastructure has resulted in a spurt of growth in the two retail business communities.

TxDOT construction has provided the centerpiece for that growth, linking the one-time rivals with the completion of a third route (Texas 191) between the two cities' new business districts. Traffic counts on Interstate 20, Business I-20, and Texas 191 put daily intercity travel figures at 48,000 vehicles — up 6,000 vehicles from just two years ago.

In turn, increased activity has created new demands on the urban transportation infrastructure. As a result, TxDOT is continuing to forge eastward with Loop 250 in Midland, and construction crews for major national chains continue to race mile-for-mile with contractors along the newly built sections of four-lane divided highway to build new retail outlets.

In Odessa, engineers have designed and are overseeing urban mobility projects to extend John Ben Sheppard Parkway to Loop 338 and 52nd Street to Loop 338 — projects that are creating the impetus for an Odessa version (and mirror image) of the Midland retail district.

Consultants are at work studying the I-20 corridor from east of Midland to west of Odessa, examining improvements that will eventually lead to new commercial growth in both cities along the Interstate corridor.

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Jose E. Morales, P.E.
- **Main number:** (915) 332-0501
- **Counties:** Andrews, Crane, Ector, Loving, Martin, Midland, Pecos, Reeves, Terrell, Upton, Ward, Winkler.
- **Area Engineers:** Paul Hoelscher, Fort Stockton; (vacancy), Midland; Daniel Dalager, Odessa; Doug Eichorst, Pecos.
- **Employees:** 337
- **Centerline miles:** 3,302
- **Lane miles:** 7,964
- **Registered vehicles:** 283,106

Other consultants are studying a further extension of Loop 250 eastward to link it with I-20 east of Midland, as well as a major interchange at I-20.

Long-range plans in the district also call for expansion of Texas 349 from Midland to Lamesa, and improvements along a corridor from Lamesa to the Odessa-Midland MSA — to include eventually a new relief route connecting Texas 349 with Farm to Market Road 1788 just north of Midland International Airport.

TxDOT also is playing its part as a "good neighbor" to the environment with highway rehabilitation projects that include massive amounts of recycled tires in roadway resurfacing. Along a 14-mile stretch of U.S. 385 between Odessa and Crane, rubber from more than 200,000 recycled tires were used in the hot-mix design to create one of the most comfortable "rides" in West Texas. The project earned Odessa Area Engineer Dan Dalager an honorable mention from TxDOT's Environmental Affairs Division in the 1998 Environmental Achievement competition.

TxDOT employees in the Odessa District constantly challenge themselves and each other to find ways to better design, build and maintain its portion of





Glen Larum, ODA

**Construction on a bridge/overpass on Loop 250 at Texas 349 is the latest phase in extending Loop 250 around Midland's north side.**

the state highway system and enhance the impressive legacy handed down by previous generations of TxDOT employees.

— *Glen Larum*

## Paris District

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The Paris District began an aggressive program three years ago in the development of a five-year Strategic Plan.

The plan consisted of five strategic goals: rehabilitation of the Farm-to-Market Road System; Preventative Maintenance Program; Bridge Replacement Program; Sign Upgrade Program; and the Employee Morale Program.

After three years into the plan, the following goals will be met at the end of fiscal 1999:

- 681 lane miles of farm-to-market road have been rehabilitated;

- six-year cycle for sealcoat resurfacing program

- 33 on-system and 29 off-system bridges will be let to contract;

- 2,292 centerline miles of signs will be replaced; and

- Employee morale has increased by more than 20 percent during a period when the workload has tripled with no additional employees.

The Paris District is most proud of its accomplishments in its highway letting program. After having the sixth-highest letting volume in the state in fiscal '97 with \$90 million, and the fourth-highest letting volume in fiscal '98 with \$110 million, the district was recognized as having the largest improvement in pavement conditions in the state.

The Paris District will continue to depend on its five-year strategic plan to provide a structured and proactive program for managing their highway system.

As part of the strategic plan and an effort to improve customer service district wide, District Engineer, Thomas Ellis initiated a work group to review the district's practices for handling complaints, and devise a tool to measure the communities attitude toward the district.

The assignment included the following tasks:

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Thomas D. Ellis, P.E.

- **Main number:** (903) 737-9300

- **Counties:** Delta, Fannin, Franklin, Grayson Hopkins, Hunt, Lamar, Rains, Red River

- **Area Engineers:** Glenn Daniel, P.E., Paris; Bonham, Clarksville, Cooper;

- John Yant, P.E., Greenville, Emory;

- Bobby Littlefield, P.E., Sherman;

- Ernest Teague, P.E., Sulphur Springs, Mt. Vernon

- **Employees:** 350

- **Centerline miles:** 3,994

- **Lane miles:** 7,198

- **Registered vehicles:** 288,744

Review the current procedures for handling of complaints in each maintenance and area office

Make recommendations on how to improve the overall process of handling complaints

Develop a survey to measure customer satisfaction

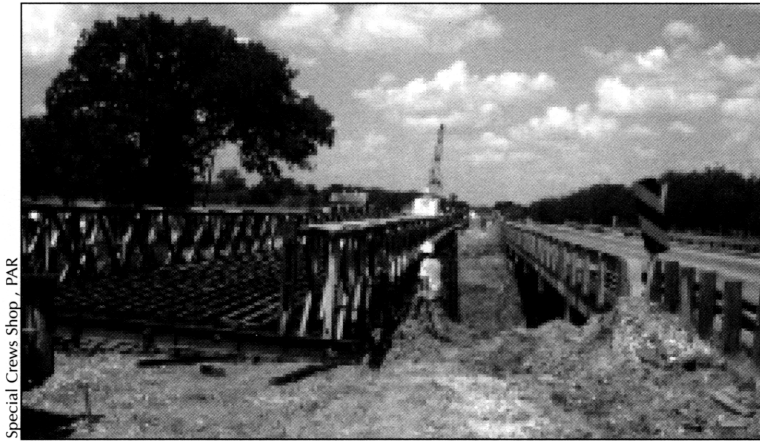
Develop a performance standard for customer satisfaction

Identify activities to promote customer satisfaction by employees

Develop a speakers bureau for the district

The Paris District continues to update its Community Relations Plan and monitor its progress.

June 1996, the Paris District installed 1,200 red light-emitting diodes (LEDs) in 160 traffic signals in its nine-county area. This resulted in a 30 percent reduction in electrical costs and reduced lamp replacement calls by 50 percent. The red LEDs have a 5-year life span compared to the 10-month life span of an incandescent lamp. The savings from replacing the red lights every 10 months has resulted in a \$60,000 power savings per year in the 160 traffic signals. The Paris District is installing the



**One of the five strategic goals in the five-year plan includes the Bridge Replacement Program. Here, Baily bridges are installed on Texas 11 in Grayson County during construction of new bridges.**

last of the green arrow LEDs in Sherman. Upon completion, a total of 135 existing green arrows will be replaced with LED arrows.

Cost saving methods that manage and utilize the district's resources continue to be a part of the Paris District's program. In 1998, Jerry Keisler, Director of Transportation Operations, was awarded the Richard H. Oliver/Gene W. Sparks award for his innovative traffic techniques. With the use of these new traffic signal lens', Keisler dramatically reduced the maintenance costs and saved the Paris District thousands of dollars.

Over the past year, the Paris District has installed 225 Green ball LEDs. These LEDs

have been placed at high volume, high speed locations. The cost of the green ball indications is still relatively high, but the pay back is still within the warranty period. The Paris District will continue to replace the green LEDs district wide, as money and time permits.

— Audrey Andrews

## Pharr District

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The Pharr District (PHR) represents an international crossroad for a diverse region encompassed by Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico.

The North American Free Trade Agreement's (NAFTA) impact demands a unifying element to move people, goods, and services across binational interrelated corridors. Multimodal project development has been the goal of the district and commitment of its employees with a high emphasis on customer service and satisfaction.

Upgrading approaches at international bridges is vital in providing a continuity in mobility at international crossings. PHR invested \$20 million to improve the connectors to the Gateway and Los Tomates international bridges in Brownsville and Los Indios International Bridge in Los Indios. An additional \$11.6 million has been spent to improve connectivity from the Pharr International Bridge to the McAllen Foreign Trade Zone area.

Periodic meetings, forums, seminars, and workshops are held with local, state, and federal state agencies and their counterparts in Mexico to improve truck crossing ratification to prevent loss of goods and services.

Public safety and security is promoted and improved through connective multimodal transportation services such as:

- Traffic safety improvements totaling \$2.2 million to replace traffic signs, traffic signals, and install illumination;

- Completion of the Brownsville Railroad Relocation Project to eliminate 78 railroad crossings in Brownsville's downtown area;

- Improvements to three commercial service airports in Edinburg, Port Mansfield, and Hebbronville totaling \$2.6 million;

- Authorization of \$5.1 million to reconstruct or replace nine bridges and approaches throughout the eight county

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Amadeo Saenz Jr., P. E.
- **Main Number:** (956) 702-6100
- **Counties:** Brooks, Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, Starr, Willacy Zapata
- **Area Engineers:** Albert Quintanilla, P. E., Hebbronville; Mario Jorge, P. E., Pharr; Arnold Cortez, P. E., Cameron/Willacy/Kenedy Counties
- **Employees:** 371
- **Centerline miles:** 2,098
- **Lane miles:** 5,365
- **Registered vehicles:** 499,084

area

- Installation of a \$1.3 million Surveillance and Incident Detection Program at the U.S. 83/U.S. 281 Interchange in Pharr; and

- Installation of a \$500,000 Cathodic Protection System at the Queen Isabela Causeway to determine the most effective system to protect the substructure against corrosion.

The district continues to promote an aggressive traffic safety program at the local and international level through traffic safety campaigns to include:

- Spring Break "Safe 'n' Sober" at South Padre Island;

- "Give Us A Brake" throughout the eight-county area, especially along the border; and

- "Buckle Up Campaign" ongoing at the schools, health fairs, career days, and at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show.

External customer service and satisfaction is a priority for the district. Public meetings and hearings provide a duo-perspective from and for our customers with collective input from the three Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

Training to afford equitable involvement to historically underutilized businesses (HUBs) and disadvantaged business enter-



Stephen P. Walker PHR

**Pharr District was recognized as runner-up for the Environmental Achievement Award for the reconstruction of this Brooks County rest area. The rest area also recently won an award from the American Institute of Architects.**

prises (DBEs) are held at the district complex. Fiscal 1997-98 expenditures reflected over \$34 million awarded to HUBs and DBEs.

Environmentally sensitive projects implemented included the reconstruction of the Brooks County rest area. The \$1.2 million project will welcome an additional 120,000 winter Texans this year.

Enhancement projects totaling \$2.8 million will contribute to PHR's external and internal customers, as well as international customers. They included the Hidalgo Pumphouse, Port Isabel Lighthouse, Rare Antique Engine and the Downtown Streetscape Project in Brownsville, the Roma Restoration Project and Edinburg's Hike and Bike Trail. To reach many of these destinations the customer may utilize one of PHR's 14 public transportation systems.

Partnering with cities affords cooperative and collective multimodal transportation agendas. For example, on the upgrad-

ing U.S. 83 Expressway to a six-lane facility, the city of McAllen endowed \$1.7 million to PHR's \$39 million.

The district's recently built Cameron/Willacy/Kenedy counties area office in San Benito will provide an additional point of contact for our customers.

PHR's informative process includes keeping elected officials informed on all projects, programs, and activities of the department. Legislative briefings are held annually to provide a proportionate viewpoint suitable to their constituencies' needs and those of TXDOT's with periodic information mailouts.

The district takes pride in its service and employees. Customer satisfaction is an oath the district employees are committed to. The 21st century's challenges will affirm the employees pledge to serve and satisfy.

— Mary Bolado

## San Angelo District

Communicating the TxDOT vision to the more than 150,000 residents in its 15 counties is evident throughout all the departments of the San Angelo District.

Whether conducting a public information workshop to inform residents of proposed changes in a highway's design to promoting TxDOT at Angelo State University's Career Day, efforts of the employees of the San Angelo District reflect the TxDOT vision every day by:

Providing a safe transportation system throughout the 19,065 square miles of the San Angelo District;

Ensuring a desirable workplace in its 15 counties;

Using efficient and cost-effective work methods for the 286 employees;

Promoting a higher quality of life through partnerships in all the communities in the district.

During the past two years, the district's vision of promoting a safe and efficient highway system in San Angelo can be measured by the progress of the U.S. 67 - Houston Harte Freeway. Representing a vision of the leaders in this community in 1968, voters approved capital improvement bonds of \$3 million, followed by acquisition of right of way in 1972 that eventually relocated 350 households.

This initial investment in creating a freeway through the city began with frontage road construction throughout the corridor in 1979 and was completed in 1991 at a cost of approximately \$27 million. A second phase of construction in late 1997 completed main lanes that span the Concho River, U.S. 87, and the South Orient Railroad.

In early January 1998 the ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the completion of the \$11.5 million project demonstrated proof of TxDOT's vision of promoting a higher quality of life through partner-

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Walter G. McCullough
- **Main number:** (915) 944-1501
- **Counties:** Coke, Concho, Crockett, Edwards, Glasscock, Irion, Kimble, Menard, Reagan, Real, Runnels, Schleicher, Sterling, Sutton, Tom Green
- **Area Engineers:** Karl Bednarz, P.E., Junction; Paul Chevalier, P.E., Sonora; Donald Peterson, P.E., San Angelo
- **Employees:** 286
- **Centerline miles:** 3,190
- **Lane miles:** 7,110
- **Registered vehicles:** 149,696

ships. The project included the award-winning high performance concrete structure spanning U.S. 87 and the North Concho River. Honorary participants in the ribbon-cutting ceremony included TxDOT staff members from San Angelo and Austin, local city leaders, and elected state officials.

Progress along Houston Harte Freeway continues daily as press releases announce temporary detours as concrete is placed to create new bridges along the rest of the corridor. Planning for future main-lane development involved two public information workshops and a public meeting during a five-month period to inform local residents of proposed changes to the original schematic that was designed in 1968.

Partnerships are also evident in communities with landscape projects in several counties throughout the district. Ribbon-cutting ceremonies demonstrate cooperative projects between the San Angelo District, city government, and volunteer groups. These projects include the 200 percent Wool Capital Landmark in San Angelo, the depiction of the mission Presidio San Luis de Amarilla in Menard, the landscaped areas at both entrances to





Patsy Maddux, STT

**A reporter interviews San Angelo Area Engineer Donald Peterson about possible changes for the Houston Harte Freeway.**

Christoval, and street scaping with boulevard style tree planting in both Sonora and Eldorado.

Other examples of promoting a safe transportation system in this district involved employees responding to emergencies and natural disasters in 1998. The first incident involved a roll-over of a tractor-trailer rig carrying hydrogen fluoride acid, 30 miles east of Sonora on Interstate 10. During the five days that involved a 42-mile detour around the spill, a team of employees from Sonora and other San Angelo maintenance sections worked together to distribute more than 11,200 detour maps to motorists. This effort also involved a partnership of Sonora sheriff and DPS officers working with TxDOT employees to communicate the reasons for the detour along the Interstate.

The second incident involved rescue efforts by TxDOT employees when a pick-up with a camper carrying more than a dozen passenger attempted to negotiate Texas 41 in Real County, which was flooded from rains produced by Tropical Storm Charley. Thanks to the efforts of five the

San Angelo District employees, many lives were saved, according to Area Engineer Karl Bednarz. Their efforts were recognized at the annual Transportation Conference in October 1998 by awarding Harold Bingham, Gary Davenport, Chris Gorbett, Frank Munsinger, and Pablo Rubio TxDOT's Extra Mile Award. A standing ovation by the members of the audience communicated their reaction to the San Angelo District employees for placing their lives on the line for Texas motorists, according to District Engineer Walter McCullough.

"An obvious statement of TxDOT's vision...a desirable workplace...is evident every day as our employees work together in their jobs, communicating to the residents in our counties that they are proud to be a part of the TxDOT family," McCullough said. Employees also relay this message while away from the job through their support of community events such as the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life or the American Heart Walk and their volunteer work for Project Graduation, in which area high schools offer chemical-free graduation parties.

Another TxDOT vision which involves desirable work methods is addressed by a new incentive program introduced in the San Angelo District in the fall of 1997. A committee selects an Employee of the Quarter, based on nominations from co-workers, which acknowledges employees for their creativity and efforts in promoting TxDOT's mission to work cooperatively with Texas motorists.

The TxDOT mission and vision statements that are framed on the walls of the San Angelo District are definitely communicated every day throughout this district.

— Patsy Maddux

## San Antonio District

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**T**he San Antonio District (SAT) Courtesy Patrol marked its 20th anniversary providing emergency assistance to motorists on San Antonio's freeways.

TxDOT's Courtesy Patrol has helped an estimated 5,000 drivers annually since its inception. They also remove about 10,000 articles of debris a year helping to prevent even more accidents. A dozen employees now work six different shifts keeping at least two trucks on the freeways at all times.

After a six-month drought, the western part of the district suffered flooding in late summer. Then in October, in excess of a "100 Year" flood struck the San Antonio area. Twenty inches of rain fell in a two-day period causing extensive damage and loss of life. US 281 in north central San Antonio remained closed for three days due to flooding from record levels of water behind Olmos Dam, which protected the downtown area. TxDOT crews worked around the clock monitoring roads, placing barricades and cleaning up debris throughout the district.

TxDOT has been working closely with the Greater Kelly Development Corp. on the ongoing privatization of Kelly Air Force Base, the city's largest employer. The district's role has been assisting in planning for the enhanced transportation access needs for the redevelopment of Kelly AFB, as it changes from a restricted base to a commercial center.

This effort was accomplished with the oversight of the Kelly Transportation Task Force, a series of public-input meetings, and the preparation of a thorough study of access needs and formation of a coordinated plan to provide the needed access. TEA-21 demonstration funds will be used for the first of these projects.

A \$34 million project to expand IH 10 to eight and 10 lanes in northwest San Antonio was completed in 1998. A new

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** John P. Kelly, PE.
- **Main Number:** (210) 615-1110
- **Counties:** Atascosa, Bandera, Bexar, Comal, Frio, Guadalupe, Kendall, Kerr, McMullen, Medina, Uvalde, Wilson
- **Area Engineers:** Carl Friesenhahn, PE., Hondo; Bill M. Tucker, PE., Kerrville; Gregory A. Malatek, PE., New Braunfels; David Neshyba, PE., Pleasanton; Dale R. Stein, PE., David R. Balli, PE., San Antonio; Frank P. Holzmann, PE., Seguin
- **Employees:** 765
- **Centerline miles:** 4,161
- **Lane miles:** 10,267
- **Registered vehicles:** 1.3 million

interchange at Medical Drive over I-10 was part of the project, improving access to the South Texas Medical Center, also a major employer.

The first major project of the I-410 and US 281 interchange near the airport began in November 1997. At a cost of \$15.4 million, it includes building four new bridges over I-410, the first phase of a fully-directional interchange. The second major section of the Wurzbach Parkway is nearing completion by the end of 1998. The \$23.1 million project extends the parkway from Nacogdoches Road to I-35. The Wurzbach Parkway will ultimately be a six lane divided "super-street" parallel to Loop 410 in north San Antonio, and is planned to mitigate congestion on Loop 410.

TxDOT's TransGuide ITS has expanded along US 281, Loop 410, and IH 10, bringing a total of 53 miles on line by the end of 1998.

TransGuide also unveiled its latest innovations including in-vehicle navigation units, traveler information kiosks, a real-time traffic conditions web-site and LifeLink (two-way video, audio and data



Bill Frost, SAT

**The San Antonio District has been working closely with Kelly Development Corp. on efforts to privatize Kelly Air Force Base, the city's largest employer. Above is the Kelly Base Multimodal Center. The district's role has been assisting in planning for the enhanced transportation access needs for the redevelopment of Kelly AFB, as it changes from a restricted base to a commercial center.**

teleconferencing between ambulances and hospitals).

Two other programs include AWARD, or Advance Warning to Avoid Railroad Delay and the travel tag program. AWARD is designed to alert motorists of potential railroad delays near freeway exits.

The real-time travel tag program involves distributing radio-beam activated tags to volunteer drivers in San Antonio to help determine average travel speeds in the city on routes not covered by freeway speed loop detectors.

TransGuide continues to garner national and international recognition for the district and for TxDOT.

— Maggie Rios

## Tyler District

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When the Texas Highway Department came into existence in 1917, the Tyler District was not one of the original districts, or "divisions" as they were called at that time.

The eight counties of the Tyler District were within the boundaries of the Dallas Division. It was not until 1922 that a Tyler Division was formed.

W.E. Hutson was appointed Tyler's first division engineer on Jan. 1, 1922. On Jan. 1, 1924, D.L. Hogan began his first of two assignments as division engineer in Tyler. Hogan left the department to work as a city engineer in December 1924. Joe J. Estill led the Tyler Division from Dec. 1, 1925 until Feb. 28, 1927. Hogan returned to the leadership of the Tyler Division again March 1, 1927 and served until July 10, 1929.

On July 11, 1929, D.C. Greer became the Tyler Division Engineer at the age of 27. Greer remained in the Tyler Division until Nov. 15, 1936. It was during that time that the Texas Highway Department began to reflect its present status. In 1932, the number of divisions increased from 18 to 25 and remained that way until the Del Rio District was closed in 1982. In 1936 Greer was transferred to Austin to begin his career as state highway engineer. He was replaced in the Tyler Division by James G. Lott, who remained until Dec. 31, 1939. During Lott's stay in Tyler, the territorial title of "division" was changed to "district."

Jim Douglas became Tyler District Engineer on Jan. 1, 1940, and held the position for only seven months, the shortest tenure of any Tyler District Engineer. A.C. Gentry took over the reins of the Tyler District on Aug. 1, 1940. Gentry remained at the Tyler office through the war years and up to the Interstate era.

In October 1958, Gentry retired from the department, and W.W. Potter was assigned to the Tyler District. Under Potter's leader-

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Mary M. May, P.E.
- **Main Number:** (903) 510-9100
- **Counties:** Anderson, Cherokee, Gregg, Henderson, Rusk Smith, Van Zandt, Wood
- **Area Engineers:** Bernie Dodd, P.E., Athens; Walter Smith, P.E., Jacksonville and Palestine; Raymond P. Jaap, P.E., Longview; Michael Schneider, P.E., Mineola; Clifford Mouser, P.E., Tyler
- **Employees:** 395
- **Centerline miles:** 3,642
- **Lane miles:** 8,415
- **Registered vehicles:** 528,118

ship, 83 miles of I-20 were built at a cost of about \$40 million, this being the longest section of Texas I-20 east of Dallas. In buying right of way through the East Texas oil field, the department had to buy eight oil wells costing up to \$23,000 per well. Potter was the Tyler District Engineer for more than 23 years, the longest tenure of any Tyler District Engineer. Upon Potter's retirement on Feb. 28, 1982, Bobby Evans became the ninth district engineer to head the Tyler District. Under the direction of Evans the Adopt-a-Highway program was created and spread across the nation and other countries. Upon the retirement of Bobby Evans in 1993, Mary May became the 10th district engineer.

The Tyler District has a proud past. Many of its employees have been leaders in the highway industry. The 1976 Gibb Gilchrist award went to District Administrative Engineer Paul Lockhart Jr. In 1986 Billy Jack Rushing won the Lady Bird Johnson award. Gene Adams, assistant district engineer (now Atlanta District Engineer), was the winner of the 1990 D.C. Greer award. In 1993 Mark McClanahan won the Lady Bird Johnson award again for the Tyler District. During the 1998



**Tyler District Complex employees pose in front of the original District Office, which was named after A. C. Gentry.**

Transportation Conference, the Tyler District was recognized by the Design Division by being presented the Commitment to Excellence in Design Performance. Many programs that were started in the Tyler District are being practiced statewide. The Adopt-A-Highway Program, which has received numerous state and national awards, originated in Tyler.

Knowing that there are many changes that will be occurring under our new system as the Texas Department of Transportation, the employees of the Tyler District stand ready for the challenge ahead. Our purpose in Tyler is the same as

always, and that is to offer the highest form of transportation facilities to the citizens of East Texas.

— *Tammy Stidham*

## Waco District

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**K**eeping pace with transportation needs has meant rebuilding and expanding many highways in the Waco District.

One of the district's most visible priorities is Interstate 35. In Waco, a \$17 million project to widen and reconstruct a two-mile section was completed in July 1998.

I-35, which now has six lanes through Waco, carries the most traffic in the district with nearly 80,000 vehicles a day.

Plans for similar upgrades to more than 80 miles of I-35 throughout the district are under way. Because of this enormous task, the district is setting up a special project office to handle project development and assist with construction inspection. These improvements to I-35 are expected to take at least 10 years to complete with a price tag in excess of \$500 million, which is by far the largest undertaking this district has experienced.

This upcoming Interstate construction is also the impetus for the district establishing a rural Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). This network of dynamic message signs in Hill, McLennan and Bell counties will provide drivers advance notice of travel conditions.

Maintaining the Interstate and all state highways in the district is an ongoing challenge. One project to extend the life of a section of I-35 in Bell County received special recognition in 1997.

A resurfacing project from Belton to the Williamson County line earned the 1998 Texas Quality Hot Mix Asphalt Pavement Award in the Large Overlay category for Outstanding Achievement in Quality Construction of Hot Mix Asphalt Pavement.

Another project in Bell County was also recognized for its environmental merit.

Waco received the department's 1998 Environmental Achievement Award for its preservation of a historic pony truss bridge.

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **District Engineer:** Richard Skopik, P.E.
- **Main number:** (254) 867-2700
- **Counties:** Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Hamilton, Hill, Limestone and McLennan.
- **Area Engineers:** James W. Cowan II, P.E., Belton; John Obr, P.E., Gatesville; Steven James, P.E., Hillsboro; Larry Stewart, P.E., Marlin; Duane Schwarz, P.E., Waco.
- **Employees:** 405
- **Centerline miles:** 3, 313
- **Lane miles:** 7,526
- **Registered vehicles:** 471,525

The bridge was moved from Dodd's Creek in nearby Coryell County to Campbell Branch in Salado. This renovated, 109-year-old structure now provides pedestrians safer passage along Farm-to-Market Road 2268, which is the heart of Salado's historic shopping district.

Finding new homes for historic bridges or building new roads around them has become common practice for the district's environmental section. In the past five years, about 10 historic structures have been spared from demolition.

The district's overall construction load remained above the \$50 million mark during the past two years. It reached a high of \$79.8 million in June 1997. The number of bidders vying for projects in the eight-county district has also risen.

More projects mean more plans and specifications need to be prepared. The district currently works with a dozen consulting engineering firms for planning, environmental and plan preparation services.

Several right of way and surveying consultants are also helping with the acquisition process to expedite projects for letting.

Work on two Texas Trunk System corridors in the Waco District will be accelerated as a result of recent action by the Texas Transportation Commission.



Randy Spear, WAC

**Waco received the 1998 Environmental Achievement Award for its preservation of a historic pony truss bridge. This renovated, 109-year-old structure now provides pedestrians safer passage along Farm-to-Market Road 2268.**

Texas 31 between Waco and Tyler and Texas 6 from Waco to Houston will be among the first in the state developed for widening to four lanes.

Along with highways, TxDOT facilities are also being upgraded. A new engineering/maintenance office was constructed in Gatesville in 1997. Construction of a similar facility in Hillsboro is slated to being this year.

Improving highway safety is an ongoing effort in the district. While employees consider safety in designing, building and maintaining highways, additional programs have been implemented to increase traffic safety awareness.

Five Selective Traffic Enforcement Programs (STEPS) are under way in the district. Approximately \$460,000 is earmarked for traffic enforcement, speed, underage drinking and drinking while intoxicated prevention.

The district takes an active role in protecting children and boaters. There are two established car seat loaner programs in place, as well as car safety seat inspections.

TxDOT's participation in the Boating

While Intoxicated Program helps curtail boating accidents. This cooperative effort with the Waco Police Department, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission has received national recognition.

Quality employees willing to lend a helping hand is what Waco native Richard Skopik inherited when he became district engineer in July 1998.

When disaster strikes, whether it is a wildfire, flooding or a tornado, the men and women in maintenance are ready to assist. These acts of kindness are generally directed to our neighbors within the district, but Waco employees and equipment are traditionally on the scene in other parts of the state.

The efforts of the employees often goes unnoticed, but their caring attitude, strong work ethic and professionalism are true examples of what it means to be a member of the TxDOT family.

— Helen Havelka



## Wichita Falls District

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Rapid growth and increasing traffic in Wichita Falls has been a growing concern of TxDOT employees of the Wichita Falls District (WFS) for many years. They feared it was but a matter of time before it would be too late to try to catch up with the increasing traffic, especially trucks, without causing major inconveniences to motorists and businesses alike.

In January 1999, their fears will start decreasing as construction starts on a 14-block overhead expressway on Broad and Holiday (U.S. 287) in the city. It will eliminate literally thousands of vehicles per day that would not have stopped in Wichita Falls anyway, except for the traffic signals necessitated by the heavy traffic.

Getting the overhead project approved was a community and regional effort. Numerous meetings were held, input was used from residents, churches and businesses along the route. Plans were drawn with the convenience of motorists an ever-present priority. The project should leave two ground lanes open each way at all times except when work necessitates a lane closure. Then the work will be scheduled for night-time hours when traffic is not so dense.

Heavy participation also was invited in the landscaping, colors and design of the structures. Citizens from throughout the region attended meetings, area cities endorsed the project as did Wichita Falls. Few problems were presented that couldn't be solved with cooperation between the community and TxDOT. Support was outstanding; opposition was minimal.

Plans call for a semi-cantilever inverted "T" design with the deck offset, one side farther over existing lanes than the other. The finish will "off the form," a smooth finish that resembles granite. Underneath, there will be recessed lighting and colored concrete on the walkways and right of

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Joe H. Nelson
- **Main Number:** (940) 720-7700
- **Counties:** Archer, Baylor, Clay, Cooke, Montague, Throckmorton, Wichita, Wilbarger, Young
- **Area Engineers:** Wayne Bell, P.E. Gainesville; Robert Garner, P.E., Graham; Buddie Rivers, P.E., Vernon; John Barton, P.E., Wichita Falls
- **Employees:** 315
- **Centerline miles:** 2,706
- **Lane miles:** 6,248
- **Registered vehicles:** 214,000

way. Illumination of the topside will be accomplished by installing it on the rails. Structure on the overhead's main section will be single column construction and only one exit ramp will be included. The ramp will provide access to the downtown area and to the Multi-Purpose Events Center and Agricultural Complex on the Wichita River.

With the completion of the overheads, about May 2002, three lanes will be available to through traffic each way 32 feet above ground level which will reduce ground-level noise in the churches and businesses along the route.

Even traffic control has been sophisticated to handle the fewer lanes available during construction. Every effort will be made, from start to finish, to make traffic flow as smooth and safely as possible. Interruptions to business access will be minimal.

Some expertise came from Austin in structural design, illumination and landscaping. Help also came from the Wichita Falls Area Office in the form of striping and signing plans. The remainder of the work was done in house by the WFS District Design Section headed by Davis



District photo

**Construction was expected to begin in January 1999 on a 14-block overhead expressway on Broad and Holiday (U.S. 287) in Wichita Falls.**

Powell, P. E. The crew worked six days a week for many weeks to ensure plans were ready in time for the November, 1998 letting.

Proud? Yes, the Wichita Falls District is excited and proud. It's been a long time in coming and well worth the wait.

Beautification continues to be a pleasant priority in the nine counties of the district. In Wichita Falls alone, some 17,000 trees have been planted in the past decade, many of them along TxDOT's roadways. Underground irrigation, flowers and native vegetation also enhance the roadside improvements. The combined efforts of city and state have provided some 200 beauty spots in Wichita Falls alone. The

district also works with smaller cities and communities on similar projects.

District employees are proud of their safety record the past few years. They put extraordinary efforts into the safety program and truck rodeo each year.

Maintenance is always a high priority for the district and the year saw two new facilities constructed and put into operation. The Cooke County and Wichita County Maintenance Sections and Area Offices are in new state of the art buildings which greatly enhance their everyday duties as well as the department image.

— Dale Terry

## Yoakum District

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As in many districts throughout the state, the Yoakum District has experienced changes in 1998. A significant personnel change occurred when District Engineer Mike Behrens was selected assistant executive director for engineering operations in Austin and Bruce Bayless became the new Yoakum District Engineer.

During the year, 26 projects were completed at a cost of \$36.2 million, and 30 projects totaling \$52.8 million were awarded.

Included in the projects completed was the replacement of the Union Pacific railroad underpass in Yoakum. The original underpass was constructed in 1930 at a width of 24 feet and a vertical clearance of 13 feet. The new structure, constructed by Capital Excavation, Inc., provides 16 feet of vertical clearance with a clear roadway width of 67 feet. The culmination of this \$2.1 million project came as a result of extensive communication between Union Pacific Railroad Company, TxDOT and local officials. The upgrade was first proposed in 1964 and, after many years of pursuit, it is finally a reality.

Another project, originally conceived in the 1960s, is now nearing completion is Loop 463 around the northwest side of Victoria. Two construction projects are ongoing with estimated completion dates of summer 1999. This facility is also a result of years of cooperation and communications between the TxDOT, city and county officials.

With the advent of ISTEA came two major demonstration projects in the Yoakum District. The segment of U.S. 87 between Cuero and Port Lavaca and the section of Texas 35 from Bay City to the Brazoria County line are being developed to provide divided four lane facilities. The projected cost of these completed, ongoing and proposed projects is \$70.2 million with an anticipated total completion date in winter, 2001.

### AT A GLANCE

- **District Engineer:** Melvin B. Bayless, P.E.
- **Main number:** 512.293.4300
- **Counties:** Austin, Calhoun, Colorado, DeWitt, Fayette, Gonzales, Jackson, Lavaca, Matagorda, Victoria, Wharton
- **Area engineers:** Larry Blazek, La Grange; Reuben J. Petrussek Jr., Victoria; Glen Dvorak, Wharton; Brian Schoenemann, Yoakum
- **Employees:** 376
- **Centerline miles:** 3,500
- **Lane miles:** 7,822
- **Registered vehicles:** 294,473

As can well be expected, the demand on right of way purchasing is extremely high with these and other expansion projects in the districts. The district is using three outsourced contracts to help acquire more than 300 parcels of property. This is a new concept to the district and, with assistance from the right of way division, the contracts appear to be heading toward a successful completion.

The Yoakum District received the Rural District Design Award for fiscal 1997 and 1998, an honor which was achieved through the efforts of many of the district's employees.

The Yoakum District takes pride in the "can-do" attitude of TxDOT's employees. The devastating flood in October 1998 truly brought this concept to the forefront. Virtually all district employees, as well as many from other districts and contractor personnel, combined to deal with the effects of this disaster. Through a concerted effort of all parties involved, the public was kept informed, roadways were repaired and reopened in a timely manner and no lives were lost in the district. This event, above all others, truly exemplified the family feeling for which TxDOT is so well known.

— Pearlle Bushong



District photo

**Work continues on Loop 463 on the northwest side of Victoria.**

## Administration

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The past two years have been ones of change departmentwide. Not since the Legislature merged the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation with the Department of Aviation in 1991 to create the Texas Department of Transportation has the agency witnessed such change.

On March 1, 1998, Charles W. (Wes) Heald became the Executive Director. Heald is a 38-year TxDOT veteran and the 18th person to head the agency since its inception in 1917.

One of Heald's first acts was a comprehensive reorganization of the agency, marking a return to what Heald called its core functions: planning, designing, building, maintaining and operating the state's transportation system.

Heald appointed Waco District Engineer Kirby Pickett as Deputy Executive Director to assist in the day-to-day operations of the department. Mike Behrens, Yoakum District Engineer, was named Assistant Executive Director for Engineering Operations. Cathy Williams, director of the Human Resources Division, was named Assistant Executive Director for Support Operations. They provide guidance for administrative functions, working closely with the districts, divisions and offices, and assist with setting department policy and procedures.

Top administration was not the only

area to feel the winds of change. From the top down, the department was reorganized to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Some divisions and offices were renamed to reflect their true roles, while others became sections within other divisions.

The Construction and Maintenance Division was split to form two distinct and separate divisions, once again raising Maintenance to division status and ensuring that TxDOT's maintenance function will receive emphasis.

The Business Opportunities Office became a section of the Construction Division, as did the Materials and Tests Division and the Research and Technology Transfer Office. The Automobile Theft Prevention Authority is now a section of the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division,

Management Services' on-line manuals support was assumed by the General Services Division, and its Strategic Planning function is now part of the Finance Division.

The Multimodal Operations Office became a section of the Transportation Planning and Development Division.

Last but not least, the Training, Quality and Development Division became a section of the Human Resources Division.

— *Jeff Carmack, Public Information Office*

## Audit Office

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The Audit Office (AUD) is an independent appraisal function for internal operations (Internal Audit Section) and for negotiated and cost reimbursement contracts and grants with external entities (External Audit Section).

As well as TxDOT policy and procedure, AUD is governed by professional auditing standards, and reviewed every three years for compliance with these standards by members of other transportation department audit offices.

External Audit performs approximately 400 contract audits a year covering about \$100 million of billed contract costs involving federal, state, and local government funds. Audit exceptions average \$1.5 million per year.

Internal Audit assists management by conducting independent and objective reviews of TxDOT operations and procedures to ensure they are functioning as intended. This section also works in con-

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Office Director:** Owen Whitworth
- **Main number:** (512) 463-8635
- **Sections:** Internal Audit, External Audit
- **Employees:** 24

cert with Internal Review Analysts (IRAs) in districts and divisions.

Based on legislative direction, the district and division IRAs submit plans and reports to AUD for summary reporting to the Transportation Commission. The IRAs have implemented a peer review program internal to TxDOT. This program is intended to provide compliance with professional auditing standards and increased value to management.

— *Charmaine Richardson*

## Aviation Division

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The Aviation Division's primary responsibility is to foster and promote aviation in Texas. The division carries out this responsibility through its federal and state grant programs for airport capital improvements and maintenance and through aviation education programs.

Recently, the division expanded its financial assistance management responsibilities to include Texas' 21 reliever airports, in addition to the some 260 general aviation airports that TxDOT had assisted in the past. The division is now responsible for the allocation of some \$43 million a year in federal and state assistance to local governments to be used for the improvement of their airports.

As TxDOT's Aviation Division continues its efforts to rebuild the statewide system of general aviation airports, increased attention is being focused on maintenance to ensure that, as the state's airports are rebuilt, the investment is protected through adequate maintenance. Recently, the Texas Transportation Commission approved a 100 percent increase in routine maintenance funding for local communities. A community can now receive a maximum of \$20,000 per year in 50/50 matching funds to maintain its airport.

By means of a federal grant, the division recently conducted an inventory of the operational sufficiency of runway lighting systems statewide. Members of the division's staff, using Pooling Board aircraft, flew many night flights noting the operation of lighting systems at each of the state's general aviation airports. A report will soon be published that will be provided to each airport owner. It is hoped that this report will encourage communities to provide better maintenance of their airport lighting systems.

To help ensure the availability of adequate public facilities on our state's airports, the division programmed funding

### AT A GLANCE

- **Division Director:** David S. Fulton
- **Main number:** (512) 416-4500 or (800) 68-PILOT
- **Areas:** Administrative, Aviation and Administration, Aviation Education Programs, Grant Administration, Planning and Programming, Project Management.
- **Employees:** 35

during fiscal 1998 for 13 terminal buildings at general aviation airports. The funding is granted on a 50 percent state/50 percent local basis to provide waiting facilities, flight planning areas, and to meet other needs of local and transient travelers and pilots.

To more fully become the focal point in state government for aviation matters, the Aviation Division organized and conducted meetings for representatives of 25 Texas cities to investigate ways to improve medium and small community scheduled air service. As a result of the meetings, the Texas Regional Air Service Task Force was formed to pursue efforts to improve regional air service. A \$400,000 grant from the Federal Aviation Administration has been obtained to assist in this effort.

During fiscal '98, TxDOT's Aviation Division was selected for a national FAA Pilot Program called Innovative Financing. As a result of being selected to participate in the program, TxDOT was awarded a \$1 million FAA grant to explore ways to better leverage federal funding for airport development. The division is well under way with its program to install 16 Automated Weather Observing Systems, 11 Visual Approach Systems, and five fencing projects to improve safety at several state airports. Funding for these types of projects, which is normally not available, was granted on





**Ed Oshinski, Jim Curl, Ed Mayle and Greg Miller of the Aviation Division's Night Time Airfield Lighting Evaluation Team inspected more than 300 airports across the state.**

a 75 percent federal, 25 percent local basis.

To fulfill its aviation education responsibilities, the Aviation Division participates in an International Aviation Art Contest to create interest among school children in the field of aviation. During 1998, 21 countries worldwide participated in the contest. In both 1997 and 1998, Texas had a first-place winner at the international level. Other aviation activities include division personnel participating in career days at various schools to discuss vocations in aviation.

The Aviation Division continued to increase services to Texas pilots and the general public by providing safety seminars, aviation education and training presentations. An expanded Internet site of the World Wide Web provides timely information to TxDOT contractors and vendors as well as to the public. A current listing of aviation web addresses, information for

instrument and visual flying, a calendar of aviation events, and a catalog of tapes available in TxDOT's aviation lending library are just a few examples of the information available.

In an ongoing effort to improve aviation services, the division is participating in several research projects including studying ways to provide better weather information to pilots and evaluating the needs of agricultural aviation at state airports.

The Aviation Division was honored recently by the selection of its director of Grants Management, Karon Wiedemann, as this year's recipient of the Raymond Stotzer Award at the 1998 Transportation Conference. The division takes great pride in Wiedemann's selection for this honor.

— Marie Peinado

## Construction Division

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The reorganization of TxDOT under its new Executive Director Wes Heald resulted in significant changes to what had been the Construction and Maintenance Division. The newly christened Construction Division (CST) was formed by the former Business Opportunities Program Office (now abbreviated CSTB), the Construction and Maintenance Division less the Maintenance section (now CSTC), the Materials and Tests Division (now CSTM), and the Research and Technology Transfer Office (now CSTR).

CSTB organizes the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) programs and provides one location to respond to all DBE/HUB issues. CSTB helps small businesses interested in doing business with TxDOT and provides assistance to TxDOT personnel and prime contractors with their efforts to increase small business participation in TxDOT contracts.

A major initiative taken by the CSTB was to host the TxDOT DBE/HUB conference. The purpose of the conference was to communicate with and educate BOP customers regarding the TxDOT procurement process and to build profitable partnerships for the 21st century. Approximately 1,000 participants attended the 15 workshops presented by TxDOT.

Another initiative taken by CSTB was to create the TxDOT DBE/HUB Liaison Committee. The state was divided into eight regions and two delegates were elected from each region. These delegates are owners of either DBE or HUB firms. The delegates meet regionally and in Austin on a quarterly bases to discuss issues that affect the contracting efforts of small businesses. The committee has visited more than 1,500 business representatives and have held numerous networking meetings at TxDOT district offices.

The mission of CSTM is to serve as a

### AT A GLANCE

- **Division Director:** Thomas Bohuslav
- **Main Number:** (512) 416-2500
- **Branches:** Business Opportunities Programs (Riverside 150), Construction (Riverside 200), Materials and Tests (Camp Hubbard), Research & Technology Transfer (Camp Hubbard)
- **Employees:** 290

cornerstone for materials quality for the Texas transportation system by providing service and expertise in materials testing, inspection and technology. This branch's employees are divided equally between Austin office and field operations.

The Austin office includes nine laboratory sections that test construction and maintenance materials and engineering/administrative support for field operations. Laboratory branches test more than 41,000 individual material samples each year.

Field operations include in-plant inspection of structural members and roadway items, sampling of various construction and maintenance materials, inspection of limestone rock asphalt, bituminous mixtures, and surfacing aggregates.

TxDOT, through its Research and Technology Transfer staff, coordinates \$18 million in transportation research, most at state-supported universities, making the program one of the largest in the country.

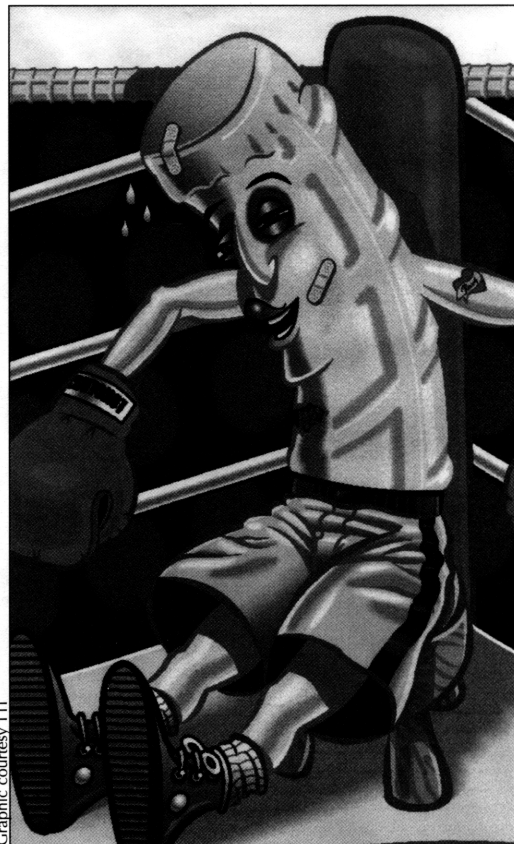
One of the major changes that CSTR underwent in 1998 was the department's increased emphasis on implementation — how research results can best be put to use to benefit TxDOT (cost-effectiveness) and Texas citizens (saving time, protecting lives, saving the environment). As part of this increased emphasis, CSTR staff will soon include two additional engineers so that progress of research projects may be followed more closely and products implemented in a more timely and complete manner. CSTR information specialists will

continue to develop implementation “packages” such as the “Rusty Rebar” posters and the “Vital Signs” campaign and track research milestones/benefits from project inception through actual widespread use of research products.

In the Construction section of the division, the efforts to implement the use of SiteManager continues to progress. This software program allows construction managers to keep job-related data on computer, making record keeping more accurate and convenient. The first district is due to begin operations by the summer of 1999, with one district added per month through 2001. Some projects on CICS will remain until they have been completed, at which time all construction projects will be on SiteManager.

These are only a few of the many ways in which the Construction Division provides the highest quality, most up-to-date service to its customers.

— Shirley Middleton



Graphic courtesy TTI

**Rusty Rebar, the poster boy for epoxy-coated rebar, was designed for placement in field offices to catch the attention of construction workers and TxDOT inspectors and brief them on the correct methods of handling epoxy-coated rebar.**

## Design Division

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**T**he mission of the Design Division is to provide quality design service to a wide range of customers.

Charged with the responsibility for guiding the development of construction projects, the division's duties begin with the initial stages of each project's conception, continues through to release of plans, specifications and estimates (PS&E) for construction bidding and beyond. From specialized bridge designs to forensic pavement analyses, the employees of the Design Division stand ready to assist in providing the finest transportation infrastructure possible for the taxpayers of Texas.

Fiscal 1997 and '98 were record-setting years for TxDOT and the division. In the past two fiscal years, combined letting volumes reached \$4.2 billion with more than 2,140 sets of PS&E reviewed and processed by division personnel.

The Project Services Section played a major role in this achievement. In addition to preparing advertisements, Notices to Contractors, processing proposals and coordinating plan reproduction for each set of PS&E, more than 1,700 special provision and special specifications for construction and maintenance contracts were processed and approved in fiscal '98. Another major accomplishment was to move Project Services' letting and advertising information to the Internet. This information is also loaded to the Texas Department of Economic Development's Web site 21 days prior to letting for all projects over \$25,000.

Design's Letting Management Office oversees the department's letting schedules and ensures that federal funds received by TxDOT are used prior to the funds' lapse dates. No federal funds have ever been turned back by TxDOT. As a matter of fact, Letting Management has been so successful in providing applications for and receiving federal funds,

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Division Director:** Robert L. Wilson
- **Main Number:** (512) 416-2601
- **Sections:** Bridge Design, Bridge Coordination, Consultant Contract Office, Design Administration, Field Coordination I, II, III, Geometric, Hydraulics, Landscape/Enhancement, Letting Management Office, Pavements, Project Services.
- **Location:** Riverside Annex and Bull Creek, Austin
- **Employees:** 208

Texas was awarded additional federal obligation authority in the amount of \$46.8 million in the past two fiscal years.

In addition to their primary function of overseeing project development and PS&E reviews, Design's field coordination sections participated in FHWA process reviews, research projects, design concept conferences, and as instructors in various TxDOT training courses.

The Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) has completed its sixth year of operation. In the Pavements Section, PMIS ride quality measurements on nearly 99 percent of the state-maintained system were used in data sent to Washington to help support federal apportionments to Texas. PMIS is also being used to certify the condition of the Interstate system, support development of the latest Revenue Needs Assessment in preparation for the 1999 legislative session, and to report performance measures to the Legislative Budget Board. This documentation is now being transferred to TxDOT on-line manuals for easier access and maintenance of the system.

The Landscape/Enhancement Section has developed new requirements for the Statewide Transportation Enhancement



Design Division

**Design Division bridge design and landscape personnel used computer visualization techniques to assist in public hearings for the Wichita Falls U.S. 277 elevated section. A multi-discipline team combined forces to meet the structural, geometric and aesthetic design needs of this downtown freeway project.**

Program and will administer its first program call under TEA 21 with an estimated funding level of \$100 million. The section's landscape architects work closely with district and division engineers to incorporate aesthetic, landscape and pedestrian element into construction projects. An example of this is the Wichita Falls elevated freeway section, which is scheduled to break ground this winter.

The award winning Bridge Design Section continues to be recognized for excellence in architectural and engineering design. In 1997, the section won in the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute's category for bridges between 65 and 135 feet with the Liberty Laurel Overpass design in Beaumont. In 1998, it won the category for bridges spanning greater than 135 feet with the Louetta Road Overpass design in Houston and a TQI Achievement Award for quality design. With more emphasis being placed on preserving and utilizing historic bridges, the section has worked with various districts in the rehabilitation of unique structures so they may start useful, new lives in the 21st century.

Some notable projects have been a lenticular pony bridge renovated and moved to downtown Salado from County Road 133 in Coryell County and a Pratt truss bridge renovated and relocated to a hike-and-bike trail west of Temple on Farm-to-Market Road 2305. Currently, renovations of suspension bridges over the Colorado River near Regency and over the Rio Grande at Roma are in progress.

The Consultant Contract Office implemented the pre-certification process for architectural, engineering and surveying services. The process is based on 76 working categories. Pre-certification information is available on the TxDOT Internet home page.

Every section of the Design Division is involved in updating and/or writing new manuals covering project development policy, process and procedural areas. Each functional area of the division will support a procedural manual with this effort expected to be completed by the spring of 1999.

— Doug Woodall

## Environmental Division

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The 60 employees of the Environmental Affairs Division (ENV) help district and division staff comply with myriad state and federal laws dealing with archeology and historical resources, water and biological resources, hazardous materials, air quality, noise abatement and public involvement issues. ENV does all this and more to ensure that TxDOT's programs and projects are sensitive to the environment.

ENV's Natural Resources Management Section (NRM) deals with a wide spectrum of biological and water issues. Recently, NRM staff oversaw the implementation of a protective signing system designed to alert TxDOT maintenance staff and contractors to the presence of federally listed plants in the right of way. The system is designed so that the signs are inconspicuous enough not to catch the attention of the public, yet prominent enough to alert maintenance crews that special precautions need to be taken.

The Project Management Section, which oversees the environmental clearance process for TxDOT transportation projects, has a new tool to use called the Environmental Tracking System (ETS). Developed by ENV's automation staff, ETS tracks the environmental clearance process of projects submitted to ENV by the districts. ETS keeps track of issues, commitments, comments, surveys permit requests, public involvement and agency coordination. ETS can also be accessed by district environmental staff to update the clearance process of individual transportation projects.

The Cultural Resources Management Section comprises the Archeology Branch and the Historical Branch. The Archeology Branch is in the advanced stages of developing a pilot geoarcheological model to be used as a tool to help locate likely prehistoric archeological sites in the Houston District. Called the Houston Potential

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Division Director:** Dianna F. Noble, PE.
- **Main number:** (512)416-3001
- **Sections:** Administration, Communications, Cultural Resources Management, Natural Resources Management, Pollution Prevention and Abatement, Project Management
- **Location:** Riverside Annex, Austin
- **Employees:** 60

Archeological Liability Map (Houston-PALM), the program will identify areas in the district where significant archeological sites are and are not likely to be preserved. Once completed, Houston-PALM will provide a tool for transportation planners to evaluate potential archeological sites and their consequences in the project planning stages.

The Historical Studies Branch evaluated the historical and engineering significance of approximately 10,000 non-truss type bridges across the state (metal truss bridges have been previously cataloged) to determine eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. This project was undertaken to speed up clearance for future transportation projects that may include the possible expansion or replacement of these bridges. Bridges eligible for the National Register must be preserved when possible. Project historians reviewed district files and photographed the bridges. The initial evaluation eliminated all but 148 bridges. The remaining bridges are being studied in more detail to determine if they have engineering or design significance.

The Pollution Prevention and Abatement Section (PPA) handles air quality, noise abatement, socioeconomics and hazardous materials issues that are part of TxDOT's transportation projects and daily operations.

PPA's Air Quality, Noise and Socioeconomics Branch staff have been

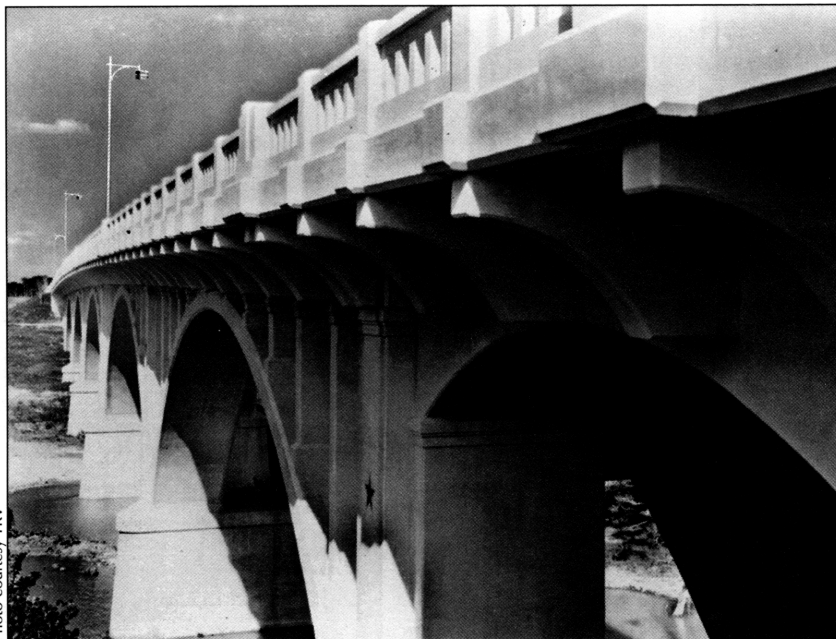


Photo courtesy TRV

**The Guadalupe River bridge in New Braunfels, a 10-span open-spandrel concrete arch bridge built in 1934, is one of 148 bridges under evaluation for National Register eligibility.**

involved in the implementation and dissemination of a new federal traffic noise model among TxDOT offices. New air quality guidelines are being revised and will be issued soon.

Hazardous materials are often encountered in the right of way of transportation projects, the legacy of improper disposal from gas stations, dry cleaners and industrial sites. Besides dealing with these issues, PPA's Hazardous Materials Branch has been especially busy assisting the General Services Division's Facilities Management Section with the Leaking Petroleum Storage Tank Program. Branch staff have acted in a technical review capacity to ensure that consultants follow proper procedures in dealing with 137 suspected sites of leaking underground tanks on TxDOT properties.

The Communications Section (COM) handles all internal and external communications for ENV, as well as training devel-

opment. COM staff developed and oversaw the implementation of the Environmental Pursuit class, designed to educate TxDOT employees about the environment. The class is taught by district and division staff to their co-workers, and breaks the traditional mold of TxDOT training to ensure an experience that is both educational and fun.

Districts perform a lot of work that preserves and protects the environment. In order to recognize their efforts, the Environmental Achievement Award was created. ENV staff oversaw the judging and presentation of this award during each of the past two years. This annual award recognizes the districts with the best examples of projects and programs that fulfill transportation objectives while protecting and enhancing the natural and human environment.

— Jim Dobbins



## Finance Division

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The Accounting Management Section continues to find more efficient ways to do business.

Despite having reduced the staff by three employees, an even greater number of financial reports and analyses are being produced within even shorter deadlines because of the dedication of our employees.

Due to the excellent quality of the department's annual financial report, the State Auditor has decided not to perform a financial audit for fiscal 1998. This is an extraordinary measure for a major agency such as TxDOT which reflects the excellence of our Financial Information Management System and procedures.

Our employees have been invited by the Comptroller of Public Accounts to make several Activity Based Costing and Financial Reporting presentations to other state agencies and state universities. These invitations are issued to the Accounting Management Section in recognition as authority experts and as a model for others.

### ■ Claims management

The Claims Management Section affects every employee in TxDOT because it includes the Employee Payments Branch, which is responsible for the department's payroll and the development of department policies and procedures for travel expenditures and processing travel expense payments. The Contractor Payments Branch processes payments to highway construction contractors and other contractors, and for right of way purchases. They also bill the Federal Highway Administration and others for their share of the costs of work performed by TxDOT. The Voucher Processing Branch processes every other type of payment made by the department, which include payments for materials, supplies, equipment, services, and the thousands of things that must be

### AT A GLANCE

- **Division Director:** Frank Smith Jr.
- **Sections:** Administrative Support, Strategic Planning, Accounting, Payment of Bills, Budget, Cash Forecasting, Revenue Accounting, and State Infrastructure Bank.
- **Locations:** Main Office,, 150 Riverside, Camp Hubbard, Building. 1
- **Employees:** 120

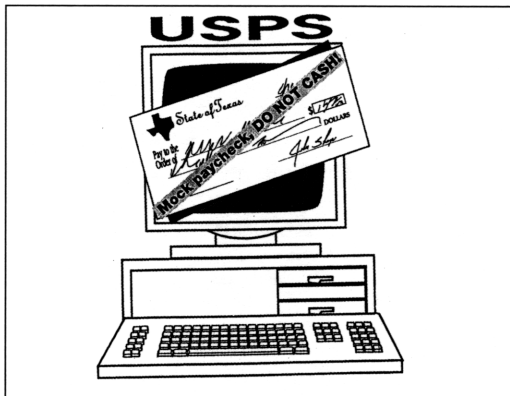
purchased for an organization the size of TxDOT to accomplish its mission.

The personnel of this section take great pride in their work, and are continually trying innovative ways to reduce processing time, increase volume, and/or to improve access to payment information. Recent large-scale innovations in this section include voucher imaging and the Uniform Statewide Payroll System (USPS).

### ■ Funds management

The State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) was created within the Funds Management section to make loans to local governments to advance transportation projects. To date, 12 applications have been processed, totaling approximately \$45.4 million.

Staff from the Budget and Forecasting Branch has automated the process for submitting budget requests. The Automated Funding Request (AFR) process was developed to streamline the former "memorandum" process. This automated request process significantly reduces response time and provides a quick electronic communication between offices statewide. The AFR process is available for all budget related requests involving the Finance Division. The response to the AFR process has been excellent, as users are finding it easy to use, and it has resulted in a quicker, more direct response to their funding requests. The GroupWise address for AFRs is "\$RQST-



FSMITH.”

Other undertakings by the budget staff includes producing and distributing a statewide summary report that recaps (from State Comptroller records) the status of merits and promotions, as they apply to the 1.7 percent salary cap mandated by the Legislature; updating and distributing the annual District and County Statistics (DIS-COS) publication; and conducting individual, personalized visits to each district to discuss their current and future budget needs. Data gathered from recent visits was used to build and produce the department’s FY2000-01, LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST.

### ■ Strategic management

With the 1998 reorganization, the Management Services Office became the Strategic Management Section of the Finance Division. We have continued some past duties and have also assumed some new responsibilities. Working closely with the Transportation Commission, we developed and published TxDOT’s *Strategic Plan 1999–2003: Moving Toward a Successful 21st Century*. For the first time, we have published a summary companion foldout that emphasizes the five commission priorities: optimize use of funds, maximize funding, preserve the investment,

support economic development and maintain and improve a high caliber workforce. Some of these priorities are outgrowths of the Transportation Needs Revenue Assessment, which was coordinated by Management Services.

Strategic Management Section has continued as project coordinators and directors for several cooperative research studies: innovative finance, the economic impact of ramp locations, the effect of megaships on the Texas multimodal and intermodal transportation system, and a source book of institutional partners.

In addition to working closely with districts, divisions, and offices in developing measures of success for the Strategic Plan and the Legislative Appropriations Request, the Strategic Management Section also collects and reports these measures to the Legislative Budget Office. We continue to provide decision-support to top executives and the commission through various studies, analyses and projects.

— Nancy Tuck

## General Services Division

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Since 1923, the General Services Division (GSD) has provided essential services to support the core functions of TxDOT.

The past quarter century brought the information age to TxDOT, and GSD contributed by implementing management information systems for materials and equipment. With the recent implementation of the Automated Purchasing System, TxDOT now has a full range of integrated, automated, real-time management information systems capable of tracking procurements through receipt, payment, storage, use and disposal.

At the core of TxDOT's purchasing efforts is the most technically competent purchasing staff in Texas state government. Over three quarters of GSD's purchasers are nationally certified as professional public buyers.

And with the recent implementation and distribution of more than 2,000 purchasing credit cards, TxDOT purchasers are better able to focus on the larger, more complicated purchases.

GSD also provides contract services to the districts and divisions, including the review and assembly of all highway construction and maintenance contracts, negotiating, training, maintaining databases, and providing a full-time help desk. These centralized services have proven to be invaluable tools in TxDOT's ability to put forth a professional and unified approach to contracting.

The ever increasing availability of information resource technologies has allowed GSD to reduce the handling of paper documents in all areas of business. GSD has converted many of TxDOT's forms and more than 20 of TxDOT's manuals to an electronic format, allowing documents to be transmitted, modified and used more effectively.

Even building services have been affected by the technology tidal wave. Aside

### AT A GLANCE

- **Division Director:** Lawrence J. Zatopek
- **Main Number:** 416-2001
- **Sections:** Division Director Staff, Riverside Annex; Purchasing, Riverside Annex; Supplies Management, Camp Hubbard; Centimeter Circle, Athens, Post, Seguin, Palestine; Support Services, Camp Hubbard; Headquarters Building Operations, Riverside Annex, Dewitt C. Greer Building, Camp Hubbard; Staff Services, Riverside Annex; La Costa, Centimeter Circle, DeWitt C. Greer Building. Camp Hubbard
- **Employees:** 282

from providing the normal building maintenance, housekeeping and security services for TxDOT's Austin headquarters, including 25 buildings and over 920,000 square feet, GSD monitors security systems for TxDOT districts headquarters through its state-of-the-art security monitoring system.

But not everything we do is computer oriented. If a needed product cannot be found in the open market, GSD's skilled craftsmen in the industrial shops are capable of fabricating specialized items such as custom wood products, gyratory presses, and herbicide spray units.

GSD directs several statewide programs including the management of TxDOT's 95,000 plus pieces of personal property valued at over \$700 million as well as the over \$40 million of consumable materials needed every year to run TxDOT's multi-billion dollar operation. GSD also facilitates the disposal of surplus property, which generates millions of dollars each year.

Even as GSD speeds along the information highway, we do not ignore the greener side of Texas. GSD spearheads two highly visible environmental programs — the alternative fuels and recycling programs. TxDOT's fleet of more than 17,000 units is



Division photo

**GSD's nationally certified professional public buyers are (front row) Marty Ortiz, CPPB; Rick Griles, CPPB; Jesse Castilleja, CPPB; Mike Labinski, CPPB; Karen Moore, CPPB; (back row) James Lockhart, CPPB; Ingrid Koressel, CPPB; Lynn Guisto, CPPB; Sandra Radosavijevic, CPPB; Karen Lewis, CPPB, CPM; Ron Eberhardt, CPPO; Vickie McHorse, CPPB; Johnie Muller, CPPB; Rudy Gomez, CPPO; Scott Koczman, CPPO; Al Farichild, CPPB; and Leigh Bailey, CPPB. Not pictured are Elaine Campbell, CPPB; Georgene DeVine, CPPB; Glen Hagler, CPPO; Gary Baisden, CPPB; Carol Griffith, CPPB; and Sil Romero, CPPO, CPM.**

one of the nation's largest governmental fleets, and possibly the largest alternatively fueled fleet in the nation. With more than 50 percent of TxDOT's on-road motor vehicles operating on alternative fuels, TxDOT displaced over 3.5 million gallons of gasoline and diesel in fiscal 1998.

And through massive coordination efforts, TxDOT recycles millions of pounds of paper each year and continues to search for ways to recycle many other less familiar recyclable materials like scrap tires, crushed glass, concrete, and compost.

Many of these items are being used in roadway maintenance demonstration projects across the state.

— Carolyn Shanley

## Human Resources Division

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The mission of the Human Resources Division (HRD) is to be responsive to the needs of our internal and external customers. During 1998, the division implemented or expanded several programs aimed at accomplishing this mission.

The Classification and Staffing Section continues to partner with the field to promote and ensure job equity and compliance with state and federal human resources-related laws. Increased focus on customer service resulted in adding Business Job Descriptions (BJDs) and Highlights to the Intranet, revising the Job Applicant Tracking System to make postings easier, and creating broader and more generic BJDs.

The Employment Opportunities Section focused its efforts on assisting the department in attracting and maintaining a qualified and diverse workforce. Section staff participated in state and national recruitment events and administered programs such as the Temporary Recruitment Program, Summer Employment Program, Conditional Grant Program, the Transportation and Civil Engineering (TRAC) Program, and Student Intern and Co-op Programs. The Recruitment Resource Directory was placed on the division's Intranet homepage to assist supervisors and managers in recruiting qualified applicants.

The Employee Relations Section wrote and distributed the Substance Abuse Program Training Manual to all Substance Control Officers and supervisors throughout the state and conducted four Substance Control Officer regional training workshops. The section also developed a Mediator Reference Handbook for all department mediators.

Our Employee Incentive Program received the Texas Incentive Productivity Commission's Excellence Awards for Technical Expert Evaluation and for

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Division Director:** Diana Isabel
- **Main Number:** (512) 706-6300
- **Sections:** Administrative Management, Classification and Staffing, Employment Opportunities, Personnel Administration, Employee Relations, Training, Quality and Development
- **Employees:** 125

Promotion & Publicity.

In 1997 and 1998, the Personnel Administration Section directed the human resources side of conversion to the Uniform Statewide Payroll/Personnel System (USPS). In an effort to improve efficiency and customer service, the Service and Retirement Awards process was decentralized. Additionally, the unemployment benefits process was decentralized reducing response time and input from the field.

The Training, Quality and Development (TQD) Section continued its trend of improving service to its customers in the field by offering 80 percent of all training classes at district sites.

The new courses developed included:

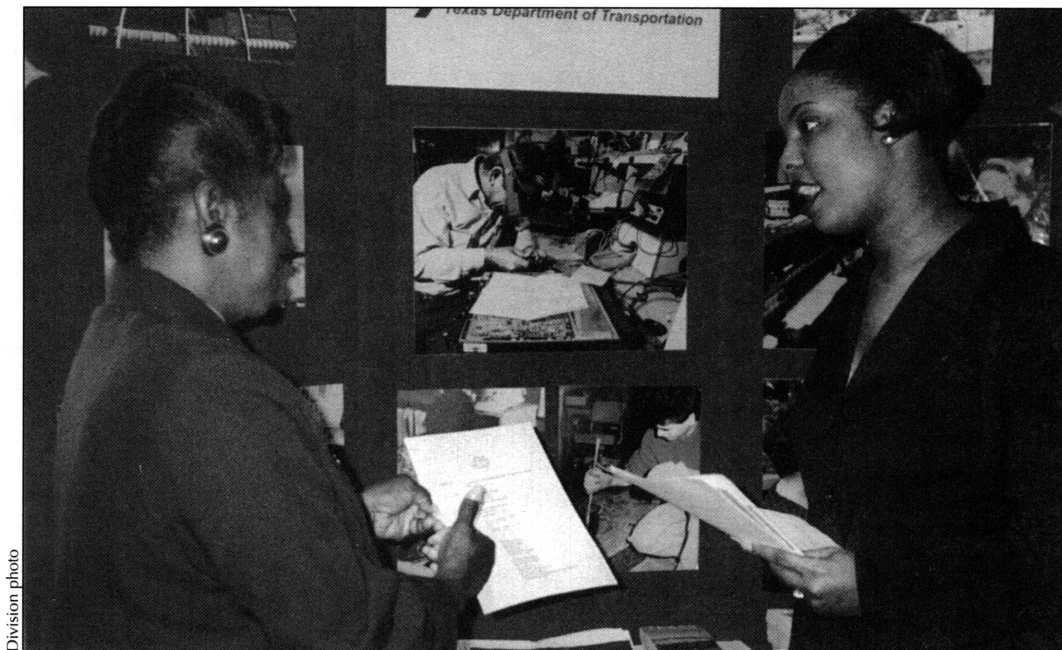
Leadership for Non-Supervisors, which provides non-supervisory employees with the skills to become leaders in their organizations.

Enhancing Your Presentation Skills, which provides interactive instruction on the skills necessary to deliver information in the most effective manner.

TQD also developed the on-line training schedule to include training courses from all divisions and special offices and the on-line training catalog.

The Administrative Management Section enhanced services to HRD customers by:

Developing a booklet on processing of an open records request to be used by the department open records coordinators



Division photo

**Marie Thompson of the Employment Opportunities Section shares information on TxDOT with a potential job applicant at a Job Fair at Paul Quinn College. Section employees represented the department at 155 job fairs or career days in 1998.**

(public information officers).

Revising all HR forms so that users can easily complete the forms online and spell check their work for accuracy.

Updating the online Human Resources Manual to include such major policy revisions as "Interviewing and Hiring," "Employee Evaluations," and "Complaints and Appeals."

The Strategic Management Resource Group:

Developed resources for supervisors on the HRD Intranet page on interviewing and hiring and employee evaluations.

Coordinated revisions to the Interviewing and Hiring and Employee Evaluation policies to streamline these processes.

— Donna Simmons

## Information Systems Division

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The Information Systems Division (ISD) provides information resource services to support TxDOT's administrative and engineering business functions.

The division manages and operates TxDOT's central computer, software and network facilities. ISD provides information systems and the technical expertise to support department personnel who use these systems. The division also manages one of the largest telecommunication systems in the state. Additionally it provides photogrammetry services in support of department design activities.

ISD continues to support the fully implemented Registration and Titling System (RTS). RTS is an automated point-of-sale system used by county tax assessor collectors and their agents to register and title motor vehicles. The system serves more than 400 production offices across the state. This complex system contains approximately 125 microcomputer programs and 400 mainframe programs that are maintained by ISD technical staff. Beginning in November 1998, ISD will be replacing 2,227 obsolete workstations statewide with new workstations. This effort is expected to be complete in March 1999.

The statewide local area network (LAN) has been enhanced to include district area offices. This statewide LAN encompasses more than 400 servers with communications hardware to support approximately 8,500 users across the state. GroupWise, TxDOT's statewide e-mail system, is now available in all districts, area office and Austin headquarters. One hundred ninety-one e-mail post offices and 9,672 user mailboxes deliver more than 100,000 email messages daily.

ISD maintains TxDOT's Web site on the Internet to provide current information to the public. More than 7,000 documents are maintained on this Web site. Major areas

### AT A GLANCE

- **Division Director:** Judy B. Skeen, P.E.
- **Main Number:** (512) 465-7491
- **Sections:** Administrative Services; Business Systems Development and Support; Customer Support, Engineering and Survey Systems, Information Management; Resource Management and Procurement Services; Strategic Planning And Project Support; Technology Architecture Design and Implementation; Technology Infrastructure Management
- **Employees:** 348

include statewide highway condition reports, employment opportunities, letting and contractor information, statewide and local news releases and advisories regarding TxDOT activities. This Web site receives more than 3.4 million hits per month.

ISD has completed the development of a help desk system that will be used for tracking and resolving problem calls received from the field. Initial implementation will be within ISD with staged implementation for the rest of the state to be complete in fiscal 1999. This system will allow for the logging of support requests, resolving and closing requests, escalating support requests to other levels of support and consulting with various support levels within ISD. The system will accumulate a database of incidents/resolutions that will be used to provide more quick and reliable customer service.

ISD is implementing the Geographic Information System (GIS) foundation across the department. This consists of implementing ArcView GIS software to access data from various transportation applications related to pavement and bridge functions. ArcView software will also serve as the platform upon which





Kevin Stillman, TRV

**Tim Hoffman, left and Justin Krause provide technical analysis and support for the department's local area network (LAN) which includes diagnosis and resolution of server hardware and software problems.**

enterprise applications will be developed and implemented. ISD will provide training to TxDOT GIS users statewide led by a team of ISD and vendor instructors in Austin to be completed in fiscal '99.

Contingency planning efforts keep ISD prepared to address disasters that may cripple TxDOT's mainframe application and communication systems. In May 1998, a hot-site exercise successfully restored the TxDOT central data center to a hot-site in Philadelphia, Penn. This recovery was performed remotely from the Austin Disaster Recovery Operations Center. Users from the Beaumont, Brownwood and the Houston districts participated in varying

degrees to allow ISD to realistically assess the capability of the restoration strategy.

— *Scott Burford*

## Maintenance Division

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The year 1998 was an exciting year as selected employees from the Construction and Maintenance Division and the General Service Division were combined into the Maintenance Division.

The Maintenance Division can trace its roots back almost to the beginning of the department. Maintenance of the state's highways by state forces began on Jan. 1, 1923 and the original Maintenance Division was created a few months before that to develop the maintenance program and allocate the funds.

The division made many accomplishments during the short period since its recent development. Approximately half of the employees from the Facilities Management section of the General Services Division formed the Facilities Management section of the Maintenance Division. Facilities provides architectural services for all departmental buildings.

The Facilities Management section and the Maintenance section coordinated the development of a new Rest Area Improvement Plan that will guide the rehabilitation, reconstruction, closing and new development of rest areas across the state for the next 10 years. The division also led the effort to get funding for the rest area program with the resulting approval to use the federal enhancement program for building new rest areas.

The Facilities Management Section completed design and construction of more than \$60 million in facility projects providing new or remodeled workspaces for 24 maintenance sections, 18 area engineers, and seven other facilities such as Vehicle Titles and Registration offices and district labs. New offices were added at 11 district headquarters around the state, including a new complex for the El Paso District. Hard-working field employees were kept cool with 21 major air conditioning replacement projects and travelers were treated to 18

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Division Director:** Zane L. Webb, PE.
- **Main Number:** (512) 416-3048
- **Sections:** Administration, Maintenance, Facilities Management, Vegetation Management
- **Employees:** 69

rest areas and two travel centers. Austin division employees moved into newly remodeled offices as part of phase one of the consolidation plan.

The Maintenance Section supports the districts, divisions and the administration in managing the statewide maintenance function. This includes many extremely diverse activities including supporting routine maintenance contracting, the state-use program, maintenance management, establishing maintenance policies, maintenance budgeting, maintenance agreements and being the department's emergency management coordinator. The section was instrumental in acquiring an additional \$70 million for the districts' maintenance budgets. More than 800 people attended the two maintenance conferences coordinated by the Maintenance section, held in Laredo and Paris. The conferences were held shortly after the appointment of the new Executive Director Wes Heald and the creation of the new Maintenance Division. A highlight was the address by Heald and Texas Transportation Commission member Robert Nichols and the emphasis being placed on the maintenance function.

A record 434 state-let routine maintenance projects were processed and the division acquired the approval of the administration to increase the letting authority of districts from \$100,000 to \$300,000. The districts let 934 routine maintenance contracts.

The Maintenance Section coordinates the department's emergency management activities and 1998 was an extremely vio-



Photo courtesy Travel Division

**Flood damage such as this is frequently repaired using Federal Emergency Relief Funds acquired by the Maintenance Division.**

lent year for mother nature as a major drought affected most of the state and major floods occurred in Del Rio and Central Texas during the fall. Maintenance personnel from almost every district in the state provided assistance to the Texas Forest Service in combating range fires. As a result of major floods, 24 emergency maintenance contracts were processed for repair of damage to roads caused by flooding and for debris removal. Several hundred TxDOT maintenance employees with heavy equipment assisted numerous local governments during the cleanup of the Central Texas floods.

The largest effort was assisting Cuero, where, for two weeks following the devastating floods, more than 100 employees and heavy equipment from eight TxDOT districts assisted the city in removing and disposing of flood debris.

The division's Vegetation Management section serves as a source of statewide support and expertise on the management of the 800,000-plus acres of vegetated roadside within the transportation system.

This staff provides assistance to the districts in the many roadside activities which have a direct impact upon the environment

and our state's natural resources. The Vegetation Management section develops guidelines and training programs to help stabilize and revegetate disturbed portions of our roadsides, maintains approved product lists of erosion control products based upon extensive field performance research, and published numerous booklets on roadside vegetation management including the popular *A Practical Guide to the Establishment of Vegetative Cover on Highway Rights of Way*. The section also serves as a clearinghouse of information regarding the department's wildflower program.

The Vegetation Management section assists the districts in researching products and developing integrated vegetation management plans which utilize mechanical, chemical, cultural, biological and alternative treatment methods to effectively manage the roadside. Staff provides extensive training to more than 1,200 TxDOT employees annually on the safe use of pesticides and pesticide application equipment as required to control weedy or dangerous vegetative species, and works closely with the General Services Division shops in the design, fabrication and use of advanced, computer-controlled herbicide application equipment.

The Vegetation Management Section assist districts in development of management plans where threatened or endangered plant species exist on the rights of way. The section continues to manage the award program created by Lady Bird Johnson through the Highway Beautification Awards and the newly created Vegetation Management Awards.

The division is looking forward to the future and plans to continue to improve the support it provides to the districts, divisions and the administration.

— Joe Graff

## Motor Carrier Division

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In September 1998, the Motor Carrier Division turned 3 years old. Over the course of the past three years, the division has improved many aspects of its level of customer service.

The division is unique in that its customers are members of the motor carrier industry and the public. There are three branches within the division that deal primarily with external customers, and it is in these areas that great strides were made. Due to innovative tools and partnering efforts, the division was able to reduce the fax turnaround and telephone hold times for permit customers, and through these efforts, the division's Permit Branch reached an all-time high of issuing 505,380 permits during fiscal 1998. This was a 5 percent increase over the previous year and a significant accomplishment for the division. The average telephone hold time was less than 10 minutes during the last three months of fiscal '98, and the average turnaround on faxed permits was an hour or less.

In January 1998, three programs were implemented as a result of the 75th Legislature. These programs offer customers new methods of getting permits for oversize and overweight loads. They include the Motor Carrier Division's Internet web site, the Remote Permit System (RPS), and the Annual Envelope Vehicle (AEV) permit. The Web site averages 10,000 hits per month, and more than 2,000 permits are issued via the Internet monthly.

The department has also issued 856 AEV permits since the program's inception. This permit is available for vehicles meeting specific size and weight criteria and is valid for one year. As of October, there were 46 companies taking advantage of the RPS, which allows companies to process permit applications using a system similar to the one MCD permit officers use. To date, there have been 19,000 permits

### AT A GLANCE

- **Division Director:** Lawrance Smith
- **Main number:** (512) 465-3500
- **Sections:** Administrative Support; Human Resources; Commercial Vehicle Operations; Compliance and Enforcement; Oversize/Overweight Permit Operations Technical Support;
- **Employees:** 130

issued through the program. These new methods of permit issuance comprised approximately 30,000 of the permits issued from January through August 1998.

Two of the division's other branches that deal with external customers also accomplished significant goals. The Commercial Vehicle Operations Branch receives an average of 400 phone calls daily; registers more than 30,000 commercial motor carriers annually; and processes approximately 1,600 vehicle storage facility licenses per year. The Compliance and Enforcement Branch is responsible for investigating consumer complaints about vehicle storage facilities, tow truck operators, and household goods carriers. The branch's seven field auditors, located in four district offices across the state, investigated more than 1,000 consumer complaints over the past two years. On average, the branch receives more than 500 phone calls per week from consumers who want to file a complaint against a company.

Other accomplishments that had a significant impact on MCD customers were the efforts made to clarify, modernize, and streamline oversize and overweight permit rules and household goods carriers' rules. The department, in coordination with the Household Goods Advisory Committee, established under House Bill 1418 during the 75th Legislature, proposed changes to the household goods carriers' rules. These administrative rules were designed to pro-



**Motor Carrier Division's Compliance and Enforcement Investigator Michael Dewbre performs an investigation at a vehicle storage facility.**

protect customers of household goods movers from deceptive or unfair practices and unreasonably hazardous activities on the part of the movers, but at the same time, they also provide fewer regulations and more options, and reduce bureaucracy for the carriers. The committee, which met over a period of 10 months, had representation from the regulated community, the general public, and the department to help ensure effective communication among interested parties and provide valuable input into department rules affecting household goods carriers and shippers.

— *Ginnie Grayson*

## Motor Vehicle Division

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The four sections of The Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) ensure a sound system of distributing and selling motor vehicles in the state of Texas through licensing and regulating manufacturers, distributors, converters, representatives, lessors, lease facilitators, and dealers of those vehicles.

The various licenses necessary to market new and used vehicles in Texas are issued, as are dealer, manufacturer, and in-transit plates.

The Administrative Section receives and processes complaints and protests brought by licensees, usually involving issues between franchised dealers and manufacturers.

The Motor Vehicle Board is the final decision maker in these cases. The Texas Motor Vehicle Commission Code provides for this administrative forum for the disputes. During fiscal '98, the Administrative Section docketed and processed 28 new complex contested cases.

The Licensing Section is responsible for issuing and renewing approximately 19,000 licenses and collected more than \$7.6 million in license fees in fiscal '98. The Legislature added a new franchise license requirement for towable recreational vehicle manufacturers and dealers during the last session.

The Enforcement Section, whose investigators and attorneys are responsible for enforcing and prosecuting violators of laws relating to the marketing of motor vehicles, received more than 5,200 written complaints from consumers and licensees in fiscal '98.

There were 1,024 formal dockets filed, resulting in more than \$1.3 million in civil penalties being assessed.

At the close of fiscal '98, \$674,450 of these penalties were collected, and more than \$264,000 had been negotiated in reimbursements to consumers.

The Enforcement Section focuses on

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Division Director:** Brett Bray
- **Main number:** (512) 416-4800
- **Sections:** Administration, Enforcement, Licensing, Consumer Affairs
- **Employees:** 72

pursuing consumer complaints involving odometer rollbacks, failure to provide titles, and joining local, state, and federal agencies in cracking down on unlicensed dealers, or "curbstoners."

The Consumer Affairs Section administers the Texas Lemon Law.

The Lemon Law is provided to protect a consumer who has purchased a new motor vehicle with a defect or condition that creates a serious safety hazard or substantially impairs the use or market value of that vehicle before the expiration of the manufacturer's warranty.

It also applies to a used vehicle if the manufacturer's written warranty is still in effect. If the manufacturer, converter or distributor is unable to conform the vehicle to an applicable express warranty within a reasonable number of attempts, the MVD is authorized to order the vehicle be repaired, replaced, or repurchased.

During fiscal '98, the Consumer Affairs staff received and processed 1,111 complaints.

A video titled "A Consumers Guide to the Texas Lemon Law" is being distributed to consumers who file a complaint and is also used as a marketing tool by television stations that promote public service issues.

The video guides the viewer through the process from the beginning of a problem with the vehicle, through mediation with the help of a consumer adviser at MVD, to the time of a hearing by an administrative law judge if the matter is not resolved.

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The Consumer Affairs Section also participates in TxDOT's public awareness booth at the State Fair by distributing literature and souvenirs as a reminder that there is a Lemon Law in Texas.

— *Brett Bray*

## Occupational Safety Division

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**B**ecause of the efforts of the Occupational Safety Division, employee accident rates continue to decline.

The division is responsible for the department's employee safety/industrial hygiene program, aspects of hazardous materials' involvement that affect employee safety and health, the resolution of tort claims against the department, self-insured workers' compensation insurance program, and liability insurance for claims that arise from the use of motor driven vehicles and road building equipment.

The department has successfully reduced on-the-job injuries by 50 percent, as compared to fiscal 1991. The trend has resulted in the lowest lost-time rate recorded in department history, with 1.87 lost-time injury rate per 100 employees.

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Division Director:** Edwin M. Sims
- **Main Number:** (512) 416-3400
- **Sections:** Liability Insurance Claims, Tort Claims, Workers' Compensation, Safety/Industrial Hygiene, Hazardous Materials/Automation
- **Location:** Riverside Annex, Bldg. 150, Austin
- **Employees:** 37

The division continues to receive more than 1,000 tort claims (property damage and/or bodily injury) per fiscal year, but the "win" percentage in the number of lawsuits tried remains high.

## Public Transportation Division

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**O**n Sept. 1, 1998, the Public Transportation Division (PTN) celebrated its 10th anniversary. The division was created by Engineer-Director Raymond E. Stotzer Jr. in recognition of the need and importance that public transportation plays in the lives of all Texans and the significant role it plays in the state transportation system.

Today many of the division's original core functions remain the same. Those functions include updating a statewide comprehensive master plan for public transportation; providing financial and technical assistance; representing the state in public transportation matters; assisting in the development of transit policies and sponsoring transit research. Research projects include transit fare smart cards and an emergency management guideline manual

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Division Director:** Margot D. Massey
- **Main number:** (512) 416-2810
- **Sections:** Program Management, Planning and Support
- **Location:** Riverside Annex, Bldg. 150, Austin
- **Employees:** 17

for rural transit.

Working with transit operators and vendors, PTN staff assisted in creating and updating specifications for vehicle procurement. Specifications are available for a variety of vehicle types and were written to reflect the latest products available, as well as to maintain an open and competitive procurement process, to comply with federal and state laws regarding safety, and



the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Staff is available to assist agencies on general procurement issues, vehicle maintenance, and provide information on bidding procedures, purchase awards, and vehicle delivery.



**Rural transit is vital part of the state's transportation system.**

The Public Transportation Management System (PTMS), created and maintained by PTN, has proven to be an invaluable tool both financially and operationally. PTMS is a means of coordinating maintenance and inventory information for all the vehicles and transit facilities in the state's public transportation system. Financial data has been used to justify capital earmarks and maintenance information to comply with federal mandates.

PTN cohosted a Welfare to Work (WtW) symposium attended by the public transportation industry and human service agency personnel in August 1997. It should be noted that only 6 percent of current welfare recipients own automobiles and the remainder need reliable, convenient transit in order to join the workforce. Other sponsors of the symposium included the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Texas Transit Association, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and Texas Health and Human Services Commission. Division staff is taking the lead to assure that local and regional meetings are held and has assembled a toolbox of information on the Public Transportation TxDOT Web page, to facilitate local and regional WtW meetings and to disseminate information. The TWC has given PTN \$2.4 million to assist local workforce development boards and private industry councils in developing transporta-

tion strategies for the WtW eligible population.

A true partnership between the intercity industry, the public transportation industry, and TxDOT was formed when PTN met with members of the transportation industry to solicit ideas on the

types of intercity bus projects to fund. Perhaps one of the most important results of the process was the formation of the Texas Bus Association (TBA). TBA comprises 11 bus companies operating in Texas. These funds gave the members a beginning focal point for discussion and opened a dialog on many equally important issues they face such as NAFTA.

The Dallas Area Rapid Transit's (DART) light rail service began in June 1996 and the new Trinity Railway Express commuter rail line commenced operation on Dec. 30, 1996. The Trinity Railway Express represents the first major joint venture by the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth since the construction of Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. Service will extend to Fort Worth in 1999 and the airport in 2005. In 1996, PTN undertook rail oversight responsibilities for Texas.

Public transportation coordination efforts are under way in four service areas, funded in part with federal planning dollars. The primary focus is to coordinate public transportation between individuals and the various transit providers in the area. Goals include helping in the transition of welfare recipients to the workforce, establishing service in unserved or underserved areas, and using transit vehicles to the maximum extent possible.

## Right of Way Division

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The combined team of the Right of Way Division (ROW) and district ROW sections is one of the most important spokes of Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) wheel. The goal of this team is to provide fair, just compensation to property owners while implementing legislative and departmental mandates.

The development of the New and Revised Right of Way Acquisition Procedures has streamlined the acquisition process. The districts played an important role in the evolution of these procedures.

The preliminary acquisition process is improved by granting districts authority to approve right of way maps.

Reduced appraisal time is accomplished by giving districts flexibility in parcel value determination, plus responsibility and authority for establishing approved values. Efficiency is improved by providing a statewide fee appraiser contract, with division approval of appraisers and district issuance of fee appraiser work orders. Consistency is accomplished by providing statewide appraisal fee standards and revised Departmental forms.

Negotiations are improved by eliminating deed certification requirements, and revising and making the memorandum of agreement optional. The administrative settlement option contributes to efficiency and measurable reductions in eminent domain actions. Districts may approve administrative settlements below a certain value. The irrevocable possession and use agreement for transportation purposes reduces time to letting by eliminating a full negotiations cycle before full acquisition.

Eminent domain time-frames are reduced by elimination of unnecessary reviews, replacement of certain forms with industry standard ones, and improving communications between the Division, Districts, and Attorney General's office. An Eminent Domain Guidebook was devel-

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Interim Director:** A. James Henry, III
- **Main number:** (512) 416-2901
- **Sections/Branches:** Appraisal, Education and Manual Update, Engineering, Information Systems, Legal, and Resource Management
- **Employees:** 50

oped and distributed to all districts to enhance eminent domain submissions.

Utility adjustment is improved by giving Districts approval authority for utility adjustment contracts and utility joint-use agreements. Department/utility company interactions are facilitated through a utility memorandum of understanding and expanded education on the utility adjustment reimbursement process. In addition, the division is responsible for significant increases in funding for subsurface utility engineering (SUE) contracts.

Support to the districts is improved through the establishment of the Education and Manual Update Branch within the Division.

The Right of Way Information System (ROWIS) is the most inclusive acquisition tool extant. ROWIS users enter data and track the acquisition process from initial project setup to parcel value approval. A revised system, ROWIS98, is in development to expand ROWIS' capabilities, encompassing negotiations and eminent domain processes. Computer-generated documents and data reports for appraisal through eminent domain are other added values of this upgraded system.

The ROW Division enriched its portfolio of printed documentation. Revised booklets from the Utility and Beautification Sections have been implemented. The Appraisal and Review Manual was thoroughly updated. The Right of Way Manual



Division photo

**An intersection adjacent to land being purchased for right of way expansion in Houston is documented by ROW's Appraisal section.**

is being updated for inclusion in the Construction Project Development family of on-line manuals.

—*Mikail Davenport*

## Traffic Operations Division

The Traffic Operations Division (TRF), working with partners in the districts, is involved with improving the essential elements of the transportation system that our customers see and interact with every day — signs, signals, pavement markings, lighting, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and highway-rail grade crossings.

The Traffic Operations Division is also actively involved in improving the safety of the traveling public through the development and implementation of the Texas Traffic Safety Program. The work of the division affects not only motorists and pedestrians, but also commercial vehicles, railroads, and high occupancy vehicle lanes.

The division's Railroad Section works closely with the districts in improving highway rail-crossing safety, improving crossing surfaces, and securing access to railroad right of way for TxDOT maintenance and construction projects. Texas has approximately 11,600 public highway-rail grade crossings, more than any other state. About 4,800 of these crossings have train-activated warning devices while the remaining crossings use the standard railroad crossbuck sign as the primary warning device. In 1998 the program funded approximately 150 installations of active warning devices on Texas crossings.

The Railroad Section initiated a program in 1998 to work with local jurisdictions and railroad companies to identify and close redundant or unneeded highway-rail crossings. As part of this program, TxDOT can provide up to \$7,500 to cities or counties for improvements to nearby rail crossings or roadways when an existing crossing is closed.

The Traffic Engineering Section became the focal point for the development and approval of Nonradioactive Hazardous Material Routes after legislation passed during the 75th Texas Legislature, which

### AT A GLANCE

- **Division Director:** David T. Newbern, P.E.
- **Main Number:** (512) 416-3200
- **Sections:** Railroad, Management Support, Traffic Engineering, Traffic Management, Traffic Safety
- **Location:** Riverside Anex, Austin
- **Employees:** 106

named TxDOT as the state routing agency.

Traffic Engineering completed a revision of the department's Procedures for Establishing Speed Zones manual which allows district traffic engineers greater flexibility in setting lower speed limits under certain conditions.

The Traffic Engineering Section saw the Legislature make a contribution to work zone safety in Texas with House Bill 981. This bill doubled existing fines for traffic violations in work zones where workers are present. Appropriate signs were posted in mid 1997 notifying motorists that this new law would become effective on Jan. 1, 1998.

The Traffic Engineering Section continues to work on the development and implementation of new crashworthy barricades for work zones to meet federal requirements.

In the area of roadway illumination, the Traffic Engineering Section has hired a contractor to assist with the inspection of illumination systems and electrical work.

TRF's Traffic Management Section, working with the metropolitan districts, has initiated a statewide integrator contract to assist with the continued development of the statewide ITS program. This contract will assist TxDOT in the development and deployment of statewide ITS standards and uniform systems. The integrator program will also support the section's efforts in developing an Advanced Traffic



Division photo

**Chris Harris, Abdul Khan, Charles Owen and Joyce Seebock work on the department's Advanced Traffic Management System.**

both the Austin and El Paso districts.

The Traffic Management Section is also working with the districts to ensure that all TxDOT traffic management systems and related components are Year 2000 compliant. A comprehensive plan for the Y2K conversion has been completed and an inventory of all TxDOT field traffic control devices containing embedded chips is under way.

A contract for repairs to district radio towers is also being implemented by the Traffic Management Section to address major structural and operational problems identified as a result of a 1997 statewide inspection. The repairs contract will focus on improving the safety of our existing towers and ensure that they meet all applicable standards.

Traffic Management is also working closely with district staff to implement an Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) for ITS projects in both the Austin and El Paso districts. This system will provide for incident detection and management as well as surveillance of freeways from a traffic management center located at the district headquarters. This system was developed in-house by Traffic Management

programming staff.

The Traffic Safety Section, working in conjunction with traffic safety specialists in each district, implements the Texas Traffic Safety Program. This statewide effort invests approximately \$20 million annually to 12 program areas: Police Traffic Services, Alcohol and Other Drug Countermeasures, Emergency Medical Services, Occupant Protection Programs, Traffic Records, Roadway Safety, Motorcycle Safety, Planning and Administration, Community Safety, Public Information and Education, School

Bus/Commercial Truck Safety, and Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety. In 1998 the program executed more than 700 grants with law enforcement agencies, local jurisdictions, school districts, and other state agencies.

The Traffic Safety Section also provides grants to high schools under the Project Celebration program for drug- and alcohol-free prom and graduation events. More than 550 high schools statewide participated in the program in 1998.

During 1998 TRF also completed the 10th and final volume of the division's functional manual as part of our commitment to providing procedural documentation to users in the field. TRF is working to place all of these volumes on-line.

— Jim Cotton

## Transportation Planning & Programming

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The past years have been ones of change for the Transportation Planning and Programming Division.

The Multimodal Office joined the division and has now moved into Building 150 at Riverside. The Technical Services area of the Traffic Section has moved into new quarters in Building 42 and 42A at Bull Creek. Most of the rest of the division has settled into Building 118 at Riverside.

The division has completed a three-year inventory of the approximately 143,000-mile county road system of Texas. Global Positioning System (GPS) technology was used to locate coordinates on the system. Information will be verified with county officials in each county in the coming year and will be available for use in September 1999.

A new County Map Book of all the counties in Texas was completed in 1998. This is the first time that it has been produced in color. Copies are available for purchase in our Map Sales Office at the Riverside Annex.

A feasibility study is under way for the development of an information system known as PLANET (Planning Network Information System). This system will integrate division databases for on and off system roads with Graphics databases in order to utilize GIS applications for the production of specialty maps and reports.

A Statewide Traffic Analysis and Reporting System (STARS) project has been implemented, which will replace/integrate current legacy systems for traffic over the next five years. In addition, a passenger and freight flow model is being developed that will support statewide planning efforts including an ability to provide an ongoing assessment of NAFTA traffic.

This division held a statewide public hearing on the project selection process during 1998, and received Texas Transportation Commission approval for the 1998 Unified Transportation Program

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Division Director:** Alvin R. Luedecke, Jr., PE.
- **Main number:** (512) 486-5000
- **Sections:** Administrative; Data Management; Multimodal; Programming and Scheduling; Traffic Analysis; Transportation Systems
- **Employees:** 170

(UTP). The UTP is TxDOT's 10-year plan for the development of transportation projects across the state.

Additionally, this division lead in the development of criteria to select routes on the Texas Trunk System that will become four-lane divided highways. Eleven routes were approved by the commission in May 1998 as Phase One Corridors. A multistate study was also begun on Interstate 35 from Laredo, Texas, to Duluth, Minn., to assess the need for improved local intrastate and interstate operation within the corridor. An improvement plan to address those needs will be developed.

The division has led in the implementation of legislation from the last session that reduces matching fund requirements for some counties. The commission has approved 43 projects in 15 counties that have been determined to be economically disadvantaged.

The annual Transportation Planning Conference hosted by TPP was held in San Antonio in 1998. It was the most successful conference yet with about 400 registered guests. Representatives from DOTs in Oklahoma, Florida, Louisiana, New Mexico and Kentucky were present as were as numerous federal officials from the FHWA, FTA, and EPA.

Several multimodal projects were implemented in 1998. The Austin-San Antonio Corridor Commuter Rail Study is under way and will assess the viability of passenger service on the existing Union Pacific



Kevin Stillman, TRV

**Cary Hall uses a Global Positioning System locator during a three-year inventory of the state's 143,000-mile county road system recently completed by TPP.**

line that parallels I-35. After extensive coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, an 8-mile-long protective seawall was constructed on Sergeant Beach in Matagorda County that will help prevent erosion, loss of property and protect high quality wetland habitat. A three-year bicycle training program for school children was also initiated in cooperation with the Texas Department of Public Safety.

— *John Barker*

## Travel Division

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Working together, the Travel Division's diverse responsibilities and talents provide professional information, products and services to the traveling public and to the department. This synergy was enhanced in 1998 when all of the Travel Division's Austin employees relocated to TxDOT's Riverside Annex.

The division produces a wide array of travel literature, which is distributed nationally and internationally to Texans, visitors and potential visitors to Texas. Approximately 1 million requests for travel publications are fulfilled by the division each year. A standard travel literature packet includes the Texas State Travel Guide, the Texas Official Travel Map, and the Texas Accommodations Guide.

The division expanded its reach with two new Internet sites, which are linked to the TxDOT home page. New sites premiered for *Texas Highways* magazine ([www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com)) and TxDOT's litter prevention programs ([www.dontmesswithtexas.org](http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org)).

*Texas Highways*, the state's official travel magazine, provides high-quality articles, photography, art and design encouraging recreational travel to and within Texas. Testament to the magazine's outstanding content are seven awards from the International Regional Magazine Association for 1997 publications. A readership survey conducted in 1998 shows that more than 70 percent of readers visited a place they read about in *Texas Highways* in the last 12 months.

TRV's travel counselors are the state's front-line ambassadors, welcoming motorists and providing travel counseling, routing assistance and road condition information at 11 Travel Information Centers located at major points of entry to the state and on the Capitol grounds in Austin. Altogether, TxDOT's information centers welcomed 3.5 million visitors in fiscal 1997 and 3.2 million in fiscal '98.

### AT A GLANCE

- **Division Director:** Doris Howdeshell
- **Main number:** (512) 486-5900
- **Sections:** Audiovisual Production, Automation Services, Travel Publications, Travel Services
- **Locations:** Austin, Amarillo, Anthony, Denison, Gainesville, Harlingen, Langtry, Laredo, Orange, Texarkana, Waskom
- **Employees:** 113

To continue to provide outstanding facilities for visitors, the Travel Division is in the midst of a Capital Improvement Plan for the information centers. Ground breaking ceremonies in February 1998 make the Orange Travel Information Center the sixth center under construction to improve and expand facilities. Along with Orange, information centers at Anthony, Laredo, Texarkana, Waskom and the Rio Grande Valley are currently under renovation or construction.

In March, the division dedicated the newly renovated and expanded Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center at Langtry, established in 1968. The Val Verde Historical Commission donated the Lillie Langtry Opera House to TxDOT in 1994. The Opera House has been historically restored and integrated into the Visitor Center, which features Judge Roy Bean's rustic saloon, courtroom and billiard hall, as well as an extensive cactus garden.

In addition to personal service at the information centers, TRV manages a toll-free phone number for travel counseling and emergency road condition information. Travelers can also access road condition information via TxDOT's Web site.

"Don't Mess with Texas" took a new turn in April 1998 when TxDOT contracted with Tuerff-Davis EnviroMedia as the agency of record for the litter prevention campaign. Research conducted by the agency indicates a new target market for





Michael Amador, TRV

**In March 1998, the Travel Division dedicated the renovated and expanded Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center at Langtry. The center features Judge Roy Bean's rustic saloon, courtroom and billiard hall, as well as an extensive cactus garden.**

the campaign — men and women ages 16 to 24. The research also showed that 96 percent of Texans are aware of the Don't Mess with Texas slogan and 91 percent want to see TxDOT continue the campaign.

TRV's Audiovisual Production Section provides professional photographic and video services to the Travel Division and TxDOT. Included in the section's services are travel photography, portraiture, video and photographic documentation, multimedia presentations, meeting support and film/video production. Current and archival images are housed in the Photo Library, where employees and customers from outside the department may order prints and other photo materials.

— Linda Levitt

## Turnpike Authority Division

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**T**exas Senate Bill 370, adopted during the 75th Texas Legislature held in 1997, simultaneously, abolished and recreated the Texas Turnpike Authority (TTA) as a new division of TxDOT.

TTA has the responsibility to study, design, construct, operate, expand and extend toll road projects as part of the state highway system. TTA, with the approval of the Texas Transportation Commission, has the authority to procure services from within or outside of TxDOT to accomplish any of these tasks.

The Turnpike Authority Board oversees TTA and its operations. There are seven directors on the board. Six members are appointed by the governor, plus the chair of the Texas Transportation Commission or a designee as an ex officio member.

The TTA board can study and develop turnpike projects on its own initiative or at the request of the Texas Transportation Commission and enter into contracts with similar authorities or agencies of another state with governor and commission approval.

The Texas Transportation Commission

### AT A GLANCE

- **Division Director:** Phillip E. Russell
- **Main number:** (512) 936-0903
- **Location:** Main Office, Austin
- **Employees:** 7

and the TTA board will work together to enhance Texas' transportation system. The two will work closely with regional toll authorities, cities, counties and municipalities to develop toll road projects in areas where transportation needs are greatest.

TTA is currently studying three Austin-area projects for development as toll roads: Texas 130, which would run from Interstate 35 north of Georgetown to I-10 near Seguin; U.S. 183A, which would run parallel to U.S. 183, east of Cedar Park and Leander; and Texas 45/Loop 1, which would run from Anderson Mill Road in north Austin to Farm-to-Market Road 685 southeast of Round Rock.

— Mark Cross

## Vehicle Titles and Registration Division

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**T**he Vehicle Titles and Registration Division (VTR) has more than 400 authorized employees at Austin headquarters and 17 regional offices statewide.

VTR's history goes back to 1917, when the division became TxDOT's source of income for building the first state highways. Today, the process collects more than \$2.9 billion from motor vehicle registration and titling fees. Of this amount, more than \$660 million is deposited in the state's Highway Fund to build roads and to fund other transportation-related projects. The state's 254 counties keep more than \$342

million for their role in processing registration and titling transactions for the department; this amount also includes the local county road and bridge fees. About \$1.9 billion in sales tax revenue goes to the General Revenue Fund.

VTR's responsibilities has grown in the past eight decades. Today, there are 16 million vehicles registered in Texas; the division also issues 5 million titles per year. VTR employees statewide also answer more than a half-million phone calls and respond to a half-million letters annually. Because of the division's unique nature, VTR staff are highly visible to the public.

This exposure incites VTR to find new and innovative ways of providing excellent customer service.

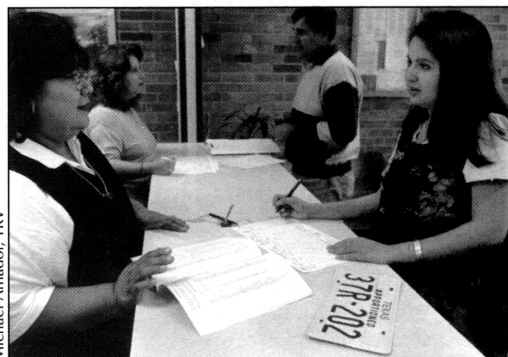
The division is meeting its challenge by incorporating the use of focus groups into many of its review processes. These focus group sessions made it possible for VTR to redesign its vehicle registration renewal notice using a format that was favorable to customers. The revised document debuted in 1997 and quickly gained the public's approval. Wide acceptance was a crucial goal, because VTR mails out more than 1.2 million of these renewal notices to customers each month.

Another significant achievement has been the statewide implementation of VTR's Registration and Title System (RTS), which was completed in August 1998. This system links the state's 254 county tax offices with the department's mainframe computer. RTS gives county staff point-of-sale access to motor vehicle data, enabling timely updates of that information. Registration records can be updated within 48 hours of the transaction. An application for certificate of title can be processed within five days from the time it arrives at the department. In an effort to ensure ease of RTS use by county personnel, VTR staffs a Help Desk; these operators provide guidance and support on operational and technical matters. RTS has enhanced TxDOT's image among the counties, the public, and VTR's partners in the motor vehicle industry and other jurisdictions.

VTR recently acquired the Texas Automobile Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) as part of TxDOT's reorganization. The match has been a good one, since there are a number of business areas that VTR and ATPA can work closely together, including vehicle titling documents, current registration information, salvage yard policies, and other areas. Funding for ATPA activities comes from a \$1 premium collected on each motor vehicle insurance

## AT A GLANCE

- **Division Director:** Jerry L. Dike
- **Main number:** (512) 465-7570
- **Sections:** Administration, Automobile Theft Prevention Authority, Customer Help Desk, Customer Information Services, Human Resources, International Registration Plan, Management Support, Microcomputer Support, Operations, Production Data Control, Special Plates, Special Services, Title Control System, and Vehicle Data Management
- **Regional Office Locations:** Abilene, Amarillo, Austin, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, Carrollton, El Paso, Arlington, Houston, Longview, Lubbock, Odessa, Pharr, San Angelo, San Antonio, Waco, Wichita Falls; Huntsville (inspectors)
- **Employees:** More than 400



Michael Amador, TRV

**VTR's 17 regional offices statewide provide support to the county tax assessor-collectors and the general public.**

policy sold by companies that do business in Texas.

ATPA's "Watch Your Car" campaign appears on billboards, radio, and television. ATPA funds grants that support law enforcement and prosecutors in the fight against auto theft. For fiscal year 1999, ATPA awarded \$10.2 million to 28 programs statewide.

— Mike Viesca

## Office of Civil Rights

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has become a leaner, more effective model of change within TxDOT.

Fifteen employees assigned to offices in Austin, Dallas and Houston reflect a wealth of experience, which has been gleaned from TxDOT, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Commission on Human Rights, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Air Force, and the U.S. Navy. These employees conduct complaint investigations, provide technical assistance, engage in semiannual staff visits, assist with new employee orientation training and make presentations from OCR's Advisory Information Module series. Three investigators also are involved with training TxDOT employees in the areas of Interviewing and Hiring, and Progressive Discipline.

In 1998, the TxDOT complaints and appeals policy underwent important revisions. Major changes in the process included provisions that make mediation an option for employees and there is no longer a specific applicant complaint process.

It has also been an interesting year for the investigation of civil rights complaints in that three major sexual harassment cases were recently decided in the U.S. Supreme Court. In *Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Service Inc.*, the Supreme Court unanimously held that same-sex harassment is actionable under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. In *Faragher v. the City of Boca Raton, Florida* and *Burlington Industries, Inc. v. Ellerth*, it was ruled that employers always are potentially liable for a supervisor's sexual misconduct toward an employee, whether the case involves quid pro quo or hostile environment sexual harassment. This information is disseminated by OCR during sexual harassment training and staff visits.

In addition, the Office of Civil Rights

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Office Director:** Jana Nava
- **Main number:** (512) 475-3117
- **Locations:** Main Office, Austin; Dallas and Houston Field Offices
- **Employees:** 15

AIM series was expanded with the inclusion of three new modules: "Employment Law Overview;" "Creating a Positive Work Environment;" and "Violence in the Workplace." The entire 10-module series serves to encourage consideration of good and workable approaches to fair, equitable and legal human resource management practices.

Looking to the new millennium, the Office of Civil Rights expects the number of investigations conducted will increase due to changes in TxDOT policy and EEO law. As a result, OCR will continue to expand and improve upon its proactive programs and activities in an effort to keep the expected increase of complaint investigations to a minimum.

— Jessie Ball



**The Civil Rights staff meets semi-annually.**

## Office of General Counsel

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) serves as chief legal counsel to commission members, management members, and their staffs. The mission of the office — to provide legal advice — has remained the same, although the position of General Counsel has changed hands. In 1997, Ed Shaddock retired and in 1998, Richard Monroe was appointed the agency's third General Counsel.

As the department's legal adviser, OGC presides over public hearings, serves as liaison to the Secretary of State and the Office of the Attorney General, serves as counsel during advisory committee meetings, and reviews legislation. Perhaps the most important function of the office is to render legal advice to districts and divisions on a daily basis. The office fields thousands of phone calls and written requests for opinions on subjects that range from construction to the environment to child support, including documents such as contracts, open records, personnel files, civil rights complaints, and vehicle title histories.

In the past two years, OGC has provided assistance with the legal aspects of several new programs and technologies for the department, including the development of the department's State Infrastructure Bank, toll roads, telecommunications in the right of way, and intelligent transportation programs. OGC has assisted in specific critical projects such as the Laredo 4 bridge and the San Antonio District's Model Deployment Initiative. OGC also served as legal counsel to the Texas Turnpike Board during its infancy, and was instrumental in creating the Legal Manual.

During the most recent legislative session, OGC assisted in successfully shepherding the department through the Sunset Review process. OGC also provided legal counsel through the reorganization of department and the transition to a new administration.

OGC has been appointed by the execu-



**OGC serves as legal and ethical advisor to the Texas Transportation Commission, districts, divisions and offices. Members of the office are, from left, (seated) Jennifer Soldano, Joanne Wright, Jack Ingram; and (standing) Richard Monroe, Linda Moales, Hal Talton, Diane Northam, Bob Jackson, Kathy Sutton and Pam Mackenzie.**

### AT A GLANCE

- **Office Director:** Richard Monroe
- **Main number:** (512) 463-8630
- **Location:** Main Office
- **Employees:** 11

tive director as the department's ethics advisor, and initiated that role by helping to produce and interpret a standard code of ethics for all employees.

— Jennifer Soldano

## International Relations Office

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The purpose of the International Relations Office (IRO) is to help TxDOT achieve its mission through support on international transportation issues to our districts, divisions, offices, management and commissioners.

In the context of Mexico's growing importance to Texas, IRO facilitates international activities related to TxDOT's core functions as envisioned in the TxDOT Strategic Plan and the Texas Transportation Plan.

The long term objective of these activities is to improve coordination of the following:

- All international communications and visits to TxDOT;
- Texas-Mexico border-related transportation infrastructure planning and programming;
- Texas-Mexico border-region construction, maintenance and operations;
- Cross-border technical and information exchange with Mexican border states and federal entities to improve the safe and efficient flow of traffic across the Rio Grande border;
- Border efficiency; and
- Texas-Mexico-Canada (NAFTA) harmonization of Transportation Rules and Regulations.

Texas Gov. George W. Bush recently appointed Henry Nevares, IRO director, as Texas' representative to the Land Transportation Standards Subcommittee (LTSS), a trinational group for developing standards recommendations for bus, truck, rail and hazardous materials transportation. TxDOT monitors and provides input to NAFTA negotiations through this subcommittee. The LTSS' last plenary session highlights included publication of a Joint Statement of Accomplishments noting exchange of motor carrier safety data and other achievements.

To date, the LTSS' major accomplishments include: a commercial driver's

### **AT A GLANCE**

- **Office Director:** Henry Nevares
- **Main number:** (512) 475-0716
- **Location:** Main Office, Austin
- **Employees:** 7

license agreement, driver logbooks and hours-of-service requirements, driver medical standards, a language requirement, rail safety, vehicle weights and dimensions regulations, an emergency response guidebook, hazardous materials transportation regulations and traffic control devices. Accomplishments of the Transportation Consultative Groups, working in cooperation with the LTSS to address issues not specifically standards-related, include: development of comprehensive handbooks for both freight and passenger carriers and the development of a computer database for the exchange of commercial driver's license information.

Recently, IRO coordinated the visit of Ing. Aguilar Alcérreca, Mexico's head delegate to the LTSS, to learn more of Mexico's efforts to prepare for the eventual full implementation of NAFTA and to brief Ing. Aguilar on current TxDOT regulations and laws regarding motor carriers.

IRO has also played a key role the past two years in the U.S.-Mexico Joint Working Committee (JWC). The JWC oversaw the \$2.5 million U.S.-Mexico binational transportation study, which concluded in April 1998. Until late 1997, the IRO director was the Texas delegate to the JWC. Since then, IRO has provided support to the Transportation Planning and Programming (TPP) director, the current delegate. In October 1998, IRO worked with TPP and the El Paso, Laredo and Pharr districts to coordinate U.S.-Mexico Information Seminars to provide an overview of binational study results and detailed information about port-of-entry (POE) case studies

in Texas.

One of IRO's most successful programs is the Border Technology Exchange Program (BTEP), in operation since 1994. Developed under the auspices of the JWC and funded by the Federal Highway Administration, BTEP was created to improve transportation along the U.S.-Mexico border region through technical information exchange.

Through BTEP, IRO, often in collaboration with TxDOT districts and divisions, has facilitated: binational meetings, technology transfer centers, workshops, site visits, conferences and courses in the areas of binational planning, design, construction, maintenance, value engineering, electronic communication, information systems and GIS. Future BTEP activities include new programs such as a 22-course Spanish curriculum and PROVIALS' continuous maintenance awareness program in Mexican states contiguous with Texas. More than 900 engineers and technicians have participated in Texas-based BTEP sponsored activities.

The IRO director co-chairs the Transportation Infrastructure and Communications Committee of the Gulf Coast Governors' Conference. This committee promotes cooperative relationships among member states and private-sector communities in support of NAFTA. IRO has also supported the governor's and secretary of state's offices in matters related to the border Governors' Conference and the U.S.-MX Bridges and Border Crossings Group.

IRO is also an active source of information for the Legislative Affairs Office as well as other offices, divisions and districts regarding legislative issues related to international transportation topics. IRO monitored the Border Efficiency Report that reviewed the status of ongoing and future initiatives along the Texas-Mexico border. IRO also has an oversight role in a present



**IRO coordinated the visit of Ing. Aguilar Alcérreca, Mexico's head delegate to the LTSS, to learn more of Mexico's efforts to prepare for the eventual full implementation of NAFTA.**

study reviewing TxDOT-Mexico institutional relationships.

As part of its exchange program, IRO has coordinated visits to TxDOT over the past two years of international transportation officials from Algeria, Australia, India, Korea, Kazakhstan, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

Additional future IRO activities include supporting the Texas Turnpike Authority Division on border-related projects, participation in the Texas international bridge approval process, increasing involvement in Automotive Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) work along the border, follow-up activities regarding border efficiency, increased translation work and activity related to legislative interest in NAFTA transportation issues.

IRO will continue to support TxDOT's districts, divisions and offices, the executive director, other high-level TxDOT managers, as well as the governor's and secretary of state's offices. IRO's involvement in international issues has grown over the past two years and is expected to increase.

— IRO staff



## Legislative Affairs Office

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Faced with a top-to-bottom review by the Texas Legislature and the challenge of rectifying inequitable federal funding formulas, the Legislative Affairs Office (LAO) found itself engaged on both the state and national fronts.

Working closely with the Texas Congressional delegation during 1997 and 1998, the focus of LAO's Federal Legislative Affairs Section was passage of a new federal transportation bill. LAO staff lived in Washington, D.C. for 18 months as the legislation wended its way through Congressional halls. The funding formula in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) was designed by TxDOT and endorsed by a coalition of other donor states. While TEA 21 has many important new components, the jewel in the crown is at least \$700 million more each year on average in funding for TxDOT.

The next phase of TEA 21 will be a concentrated effort to capture what is referred to as "discretionary funding." The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) will decide how those funds are spent each year, and TxDOT will seek its fair share for such state priorities as border infrastructure and trade corridors. Texas Commissioner of Transportation David M. Laney kicked off the Texas initiative by inviting the USDOT to hold a hearing on the matter in Houston in October 1998. Commission member Robert L. Nichols testified on behalf of the department at the day-long hearing.

Back in Texas, the State Legislative Affairs Section worked through a 75th Session that helped further define the way we conduct business. Without a doubt, the driving force for TxDOT was Senate Bill 370, the department's Sunset bill. Combined with the many other pieces of legislation that passed in 1997 (LAO tracked approximately 1400 bills), SB 370 set Texas transportation on a new direction with an updated road map. Some of the

### AT A GLANCE

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- **Sections:** Administrative, Federal Legislative Affairs, State Legislative Affairs
- **Location:** Main Office
- **Employees:** 13

more visible augmentations are the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB), electronic bidding capability, and temporary toll collecting. The bill also brought the Texas Turnpike Authority under the TxDOT umbrella. Other new laws from the 75th Session include increased fines for traffic violations in construction work zones, changes to the motor carrier regulations, nine new special license plates and the ability to dedicate truck lanes.

During the 1997-1998 legislative interim, LAO was involved in the work of 31 interim committees covering 80 issues. The Senate Interim Committee on Transportation spent much of its time reviewing the methods by which Texas funds transportation. Commissioner of Transportation David Laney and Commission member Robert L. Nichols worked closely with the committee as it held its hearings throughout the state. TxDOT expertise was also used in testimony before the House Transportation Committee, the Senate Interim Committee on NAFTA, the House Economic Development Committee, the House General Investigating Committee, the House Appropriations Committee, and the Senate Finance Committee.

The Legislative Affairs Office works throughout the department and with outside partners to produce a greater understanding of transportation-related matters within a legislative context. This work





**Texas Transportation Commissioner David M. Laney and Commission Member Robert L. Nichols testify on transportation funding before the Senate Interim Committee on Transportation on Aug. 4, 1998.**

often takes the form of testimony, correspondence, casework, outreach, detailed analysis, meetings, public events, and working closely with elected officials to better realize the department's mission.

— Anna Hayes

## Public Information Office

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“Telling the TxDOT story” is the mission of the Public Information Office (PIO). The office’s four sections work together to accomplish that mission.

PIO recognizes two audiences — one external and the other internal.

The Media Relations Section seeks to increase internal understanding of an support for the department and its activities through the news media. This section also supports district public information efforts.

Getting TxDOT’s message out regarding reauthorization of the federal transportation bill was a priority in 1997 and 1998 for the Media Relations Section. Working closely with the Legislative Affairs Office, PIO stayed in contact with Texas reporters in Washington, D. C., hammering home the Texas position of equity and flexibility during debate on federal funding, providing statements from Texas Transportation Commissioner David Laney and coordinating interviews with TxDOT officials.

Coordinating with the Traffic Operations Division, PIO developed media messages on speed limits, work zone safety and other traffic safety issues.

Working to build support among TxDOT’s external audience is also the goal of PIO’s Community Relations Section. Relying heavily on district and division input, CRS oversees the department’s complaint resolution process. The section also assists the Texas Transportation Commission and the department administration with correspondence and speeches. TxDOT generated speech materials are also made available to department employees via TxDOT’s intranet. This section also maintains the headquarters speakers bureau. This function provides TxDOT speakers on a wide variety of subjects to interested parties.

The section was busy helping the districts and divisions with their outreach efforts during town meetings related to the

### AT A GLANCE

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- **Location:** Main Office
- **Employees:** 15

federal reduction of the speed limits, the Sargent Beach revetment project dedication and the statewide 800-number customer comment phone line.

Community Relations also serves as the clearinghouse for headquarters volunteer efforts.

Serving TxDOT’s internal audience is the Organizational Communications Section. This section keeps TxDOT employees informed about changes within the department. *Transportation News* is the most visible tool for updating current and former employees about projects, policies and procedures, as well as publicizing their activities and special events.

PIO has made improvements to the Public Information Coordinator (PIC). News clips with department-related stories from newspapers across the state are now available electronically on the department’s intranet.

Supporting all these functions is the Administrative Services section. The section was instrumental in making the Public Information Coordinator (PIC) automated and available to more employees via the department’s Web site. It also established procedures for answering all department inquiries received via the Internet.

— Jeff Carmack









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