

Digital license plates in production

Specialty tags first to come off the line

By Meredith Leffingwell
Vehicle Titles and Registration Division

In the days when "horseless carriages" puttered along, the cost of a new automobile was less than \$900 and the vehicle registration fee was 50 cents.

Many vehicle owners made their own license plates of wood or leather. Others went to blacksmith shops for custom-made tags.

It was 1917 when the legislature created the Texas Highway Department to collect motor-vehicle fees that would be used to build roads. That marked the beginning of the department's Vehicle Titles and Registration Division.

Texas has come a long way since then. The prison system in Huntsville has been manufacturing license plates since 1935. Inmates use blanking presses, straightening machines, drying ovens, and embossing machines.

Now TxDOT has begun using a new digital system for making license plates. The state-of-the-art process generates high-quality plates on laser printers. Texas, after Iowa and Montana, is only the third state to install such a system.



A new digital license plate system implemented by TxDOT in February produces a flat plate with a rimmed edge and easy-to-read lettering. Texas is the third state to adopt the technology, which is operated by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to produce low-volume personalized and specialty plates.

The system is being used to manufacture specialty, collegiate, and personalized plates. These are mostly one-of-a-kind designs or plates produced in small quantities.

The new plates look a little different from those produced by the embossing method. Except for a rimmed edge, the digital plates are flat and have a new easier-to-read typeface.

TxDOT receives orders each year for more than seven million general-issue plates. These will continue to be manufactured in the established embossed style.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice, which operates the plant where the plates are made, installed the digital system at the Wynne Unit (Huntsville) in January.

■ See New equipment, Page 4

TxDot Roundup

ENJOY SUMMER: Summer is always a good time to get out and enjoy Texas, and with new events starting almost every day, finding something to do is easy.

The season brings food festivals, rodeos, fireworks, hot air balloons, parades, barbecue and chili cook-offs, concerts, car shows, exhibits, plays, sporting events, and more.

A thorough list of June, July and August events is available in the Summer 2002 Texas Events Calendar, including numerous Independence Day events planned between June 28 and July 7 throughout the state.

Summer also is a time to celebrate cultural heritages. Experience the music, food and dances of Germany at a Night in Old Fredericksburg July 19-20 or of Czechoslovakia at Westfest Aug. 31-Sept. 2. Travelers also can immerse themselves in 40 different cultures at the Texas Folklife Festival June 6-9 in San Antonio. Those with

more-modern appetites can sample the food and entertainment offerings of two metropolitan areas at A Taste of Dallas July 12-14 or A Taste of El Paso Aug. 11.

This also is a good time of the year to enjoy some stars. "Little Graceland" honors "the King" with music, impersonators, and memorabilia at the Elvis Festival Aug. 17 in Los Fresnos. The Roy Orbison Festival June 7-8 in Wink remembers the man who made the words "Pretty Woman" famous. Farmersville salutes a hometown hero and all veterans with a parade and more on Audie Murphy Day June 20.

The Texas Events Calendar is free and can be received by calling 800-452-9292 or by writing to Texas Events Calendar at P.O. Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009. The calendar also can be picked up at any one of the 12 Texas Travel Information Centers. Events also are listed on the Intranet at three sites:

(dot.state.tx.us), (traveltex.com), and (texas-highways.com).

TOP PROJECTS: The American Road and Transportation Builders Association, at a May event in Austin, recognized Texas transportation by singling out the state's top infrastructure projects of the 20th century. The group also hailed TxDOT's Dewitt C. Greer, former highway engineer and transportation commissioner, as the state's top public official of the past century for his advocacy of transportation development and investment. The association, also known as ARTBA, observes its 100th anniversary this year. It conducted a national survey to identify the top transportation infrastructure projects and public officials in all the states. For Texas, the listing included Interstate 35, the Port of Houston, and the Dallas-Fort Worth

■ See TxDOT Roundup, Page 3

Straight Talk

Focus on safety as basic as 1-2-3

TxDOT encourages department employees to be safety-aware. Think safety. Act safely. Be safe.

Attention to safety is at the core of what we do. Through our agency, Texas taxpayers spend millions each year to ensure safety in transportation systems serving our fellow citizens.



Mike Behrens

One of our main goals as an organization is to help reduce the number of deaths on our highways and to make transportation (in all its forms) as safe as possible.

As we make this effort, we know that we can achieve success only by joining with those already determined to work safely. We cannot do it alone. To ensure that injuries are reduced and that lives are saved, this effort requires that the agency and all employees become partners.

As an expression of the value we place on safety all year long, we pay special attention to safety in the TxDOT workplace during the 123 days of May, June, July and August. The department's Occupational Safety Division uses this time to encourage all TxDOT employees to think safety, to act safely, and to be safe.

Each of us must support TxDOT efforts

to build and sustain safety where we work. That is as true for an office worker in the Greer Building as for a flagger controlling traffic in a highway work zone.

I hope that each TxDOT district, division and office will accept the Occupational Safety Division's challenge that calls for a collision-free and injury-free summer.

Safety specialists in the division remind us that it is up to each TxDOT employee to see that 2002 is the safest summer in the department's history.

Here is some more information that you may find of interest:

Collisions and injuries increase during the summer. We attribute this mostly to the increase in roadwork and to the large number of inexperienced employees (summer hires) who work for the department during these months. New employees and summer hires are in a high-risk group for injuries and collisions because of their inexperience.

The Occupational Safety Division reminds supervisors of their responsibility to see that employees receive an orientation in workplace safety. This orientation includes completion of Form 1746 (Drivers Orientation and Evaluation Certification).

All safety rules and procedures that apply to regular employees apply to summer hires, temporary workers, and anyone else who works for the department.

As part of their responsibility for safety in the workplace, supervisors should ensure that employees receive and use the appropriate personal protective equipment when necessary.

The department's safety specialists urge supervisors to make sure that employees and summer hires receive a copy of "Handbook of Safe Practices," which contains general safety rules and procedures.

They urge special attention for those employees who set up traffic-control devices on Texas roadways.

Safety meetings during the "123 Safe Days of Summer Campaign" are essential to the safety and health of every TxDOT employee. The Occupational Safety Division recommends that safety meetings focus on being aware of high-exposure and high-risk areas, on preventing collisions, and on learning from the hard lessons resulting from accidents.

The division is a resource available for your use. Safety meetings can use safety-focused videos produced by TxDOT. The videos cover topics such as the summer awareness campaign, mobile work-zone operations, defensive flagging, and a new video on defensive driving.

Our Occupational Safety Division offers these resources and more. Use them. Learn from them. Share them.

Remember, the life you save may be your own. Please, have a safe summer. ★

Commissioner describes options to improve financing for mobility

Transportation Commissioner John Johnson was invited to appear before the House Transportation Committee in March to outline funding options for needed mobility improvement projects. He made it clear that TxDOT was not endorsing any of the ideas, merely laying out possibilities. Following are excerpts from his remarks, to be continued in the next issue:

■ There are a number of potential options to fund the Texas Mobility Fund. These options can include only funds that are not currently dedicated by the constitution. For example, no motor fuel taxes and no vehicle registration fees can be directed to the Texas

Mobility Fund. Many existing transportation fees that do not currently go to fund transportation in the state could be dedicated to a specific revenue source such as the Texas Mobility Fund.

■ Some of the funds which could be considered for the Texas Mobility Fund include the Motor Vehicle Inspection Fee, the Drivers License Fee, the Driver Record Information Fee, Motor Vehicle Certificates Fee, the Special Vehicle Registration fee for Oversize/Overweight Vehicles, the Motor Vehicle Sales and Use Tax, and the Motor Vehicle Rental Tax.

■ Increasing the base fee of a 2060 Permit to \$2,000 would generate roughly \$36 million for the State Highway Fund. This is something that could be considered for the Texas Mobility Fund.

■ An increase of one cent to the Motor Fuel Tax rate would generate roughly \$140 million each year for Texas, with around \$102 million of this going to the State Highway Fund. Similarly, if the Diesel Fuel Tax were increased by five cents, approximately \$141 million would be generated for the state with \$106 million of that going to the State Highway Fund. ★

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Got news?

Did your district newsletter run a story you think other TxDOT employees would enjoy reading? Do you know of a co-worker with an interesting hobby? We want your story ideas. To contribute, contact your district public information officer. He or she can pass it along to us. Or you can contact Tim Cunningham by phone at (512) 463-8955.

Submission info

- District employees should discuss potential submissions with their public information officer.
- Submissions must be received by the second Friday of the month preceding publication.
- Copy: send as e-mail attachment to TCUNNIN as Microsoft Word document (.doc) files.
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The more things change the more they stay the same

Greer letter addresses frontage roads

By Ann Zeeck
Public Information Office

As the Texas Transportation Commission reviews proposed frontage road rules after a series of well-attended public hearings across the state, this issue shows its persistence in the department's history.

A box of memorabilia recently donated by former Deputy Executive Director Kirby Pickett to the TxDOT Historical Exhibit contained a 1967 letter from Dewitt C. Greer, long-time state highway engineer and transportation commissioner. He was responding to an inquiry about frontage roads near Hillsboro.

Parallels between Greer's reply 35 years ago and the rules on frontage roads that were proposed to the commission last December are striking.

In his letter, Greer explained that before 1956 the department built frontage roads as needed or, in some cases, as desired.

However, the Federal-aid Interstate Highway Act of 1956 placed strict regulations on frontage roads. They could be built only under certain conditions:

- "To un-landlock the remainder of a tract of land where a portion thereof was taken in the right of way and the remainder has no ingress or egress to a public road." (*Under the rule proposed in 2001, a frontage road may be built where there is no other feasible means to resolve a landlock condition on the remainder of a parcel of land that has a value exceeding the cost of the frontage road.*)
- "Where the appraised severance and/or other damages equal or exceed the estimated cost of the frontage road, and damages are

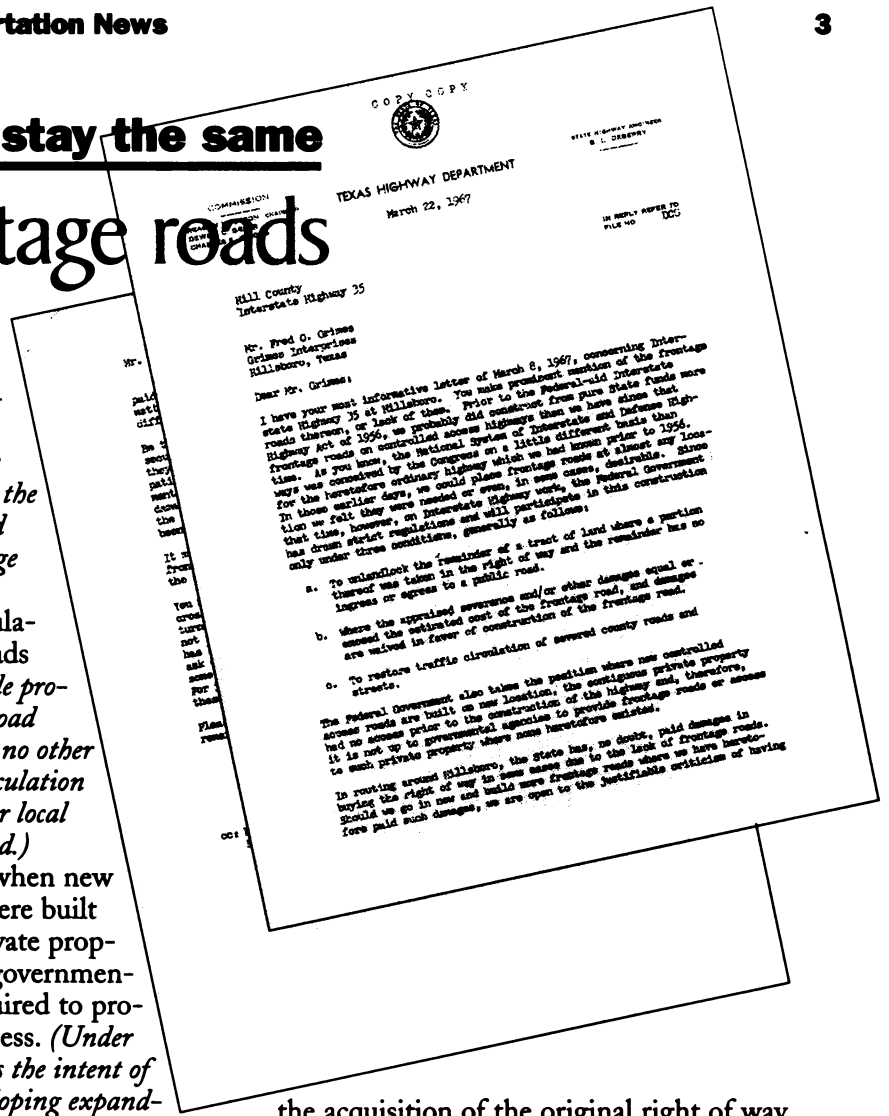
waived in favor of construction of the frontage road." (*Under the rule proposed in 2001, a frontage road may be built when the anticipated cost to purchase the right of access control would exceed the cost of the frontage road.*)

● "To restore traffic circulation of severed county roads and streets." (*Under the rule proposed in 2001: A frontage road may be built where there is no other feasible means to restore circulation of local traffic due to state or local roads or streets being severed.*)

Greer also noted that when new controlled-access roads were built where the contiguous private property once had no access, governmental agencies were not required to provide frontage roads or access. (*Under the 2001 proposed rule, it is the intent of the department when developing expanded controlled access facilities that if a property owner has access to the system prior to the expansion then the property owner would have access to a frontage road on the system after development.*)

In a few instances, Greer wrote, the state successfully obtained federal approval for additional frontage roads when they were justified, but had to pay all construction expenses (no federal participation).

"Where this was done," he continued, "it has been necessary that the Department have the property reappraised and if, in the opinion of the appraiser, damages were paid in



the acquisition of the original right of way due to the fact that no frontage roads existed, the benefiting property owner has been required to return to the State the amount of such damages." ★

Do you have something for the TxDOT Historical Exhibit? To discuss the donation or loan of an item, contact Ann Zeeck, Public Information Office, 512-463-5308, or e-mail azeck@dot.state.tx.us. The exhibit, which celebrates TxDOT's rich heritage through artifacts and stories, is in the bottom floor of the Dewitt C. Greer Building, 125 E. 11th Street in Austin.

TxDot Roundup

Continued from Page 1

International Airport as the top transportation projects of the past century.

NEWS NOTES:

■ Terry McCoy, P.E., has been selected as Burnet Area engineer in the Austin District. A native of Burnet, McCoy earned bachelor's degrees in agri-business (Tarleton State University, 1982) and in civil engineering (Texas A&M University, 1988), and a master's degree in civil engineering (University of Texas, 1994.) He began work with TxDOT as a summer hire in 1982. He comes to his assignment from the Bexar Metro Area Office where he was an assistant area engineer. His father, William J. McCoy, retired from TxDOT as supervisor for the Burnet County Maintenance Section in 1993 after 34 years of service.

■ Mark Longenbaugh, P.E., has been appointed as the new director of transportation planning and development for the El Paso District. Longenbaugh has worked in the District Design Office since 1981 when he began as an engineering assistant in the Central Design Office. His most recent posi-

tion was that of district design engineer. He holds his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from New Mexico State University (1981).

■ Wade Odell has moved to the Research and Technology Implementation Office to fill the position of research engineer for traffic operations. His new responsibilities include supporting all activities associated with the department's Traffic Operations Research Management Committee. He had worked 17 years in the department's Traffic Operations Division. In the division's Traffic Engineering Section, he was responsible for several aspects of TxDOT-sponsored research projects. He has served as both a project director and project adviser. Odell holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in civil engineering from the University of Texas at Austin.

■ Ann Irwin has been appointed deputy director of TxDOT's Environmental Affairs Division. She also manages the division's Project Management Section. A 24-year veteran of TxDOT, she began her career as an engineering technician in the Design Division's Archeology Section. In 1999, Irwin was selected to receive the Raymond E. Stotzer Award. Before coming to TxDOT, Irwin worked for 10 years managing the

archeological resources lab for Washington State University. She has worked on many archeological digs in Wyoming, Washington State, Texas, and in Spain. She holds degrees in English and anthropology from the University of Kansas, and a master's degree in anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania.

■ James M. (Mitch) Pope has been selected to direct the Technology Infrastructure Management Section. He is a 1984 graduate of Southwest Texas State University with a bachelor's degree in computer information systems. He began his TxDOT career in the Consulting and Technical Support Branch as a programmer apprentice and he has held various positions within the department's Information Systems Division.

■ TxDOT recognizes someone each year for outstanding service in the interest of public transportation in Texas. John Milam, president and chief executive officer of VIA Metropolitan Transit based in San Antonio, received the award this year. Milam has been with VIA Metropolitan Transit for more than 24 years and is in his 29th year of public transportation service. ★

New equipment steamlines specialty plate-making

Continued from Page 1

Production began in February.

The system can produce two million plates a year, said Allen Goolsby. He is the manager for Vehicle Titles and Registration Division operations at Huntsville. For now, however, annual projections call for fewer than 200,000 of the new plates.

In February, the system turned out 1,500 specialty, collegiate or personalized plates. In March, the system produced 3,000 plates. "These numbers will increase each month as new plates are approved for use," Goolsby said.

Each year, TxDOT issues more than 100,000 specialty plates in more than 100 styles. By April, the Huntsville prison was producing 11 types of specialty plates using the new method. The Lone Star Proud for Kids plate was the first produced with the new method.

The new plate making system offers several advantages. A chief benefit is that customers won't have to wait as long to get new plates. Once the system is fully in place, delivery time of plates will drop from one month to one week.

When the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division rolls out the new upgrade for the registration and titling system next year, customers will be able to order specialty plates online or directly from county tax assessor-collectors. They can do this when they register their vehicle. This will save time by ending the current two-step process to order plates.

The manufacturing facility also is getting a computer system to manage vehicle-registration information. When operating, the system will link the division's Special Plates Branch and the Huntsville facility. As the branch receives information based on registration and titling transactions, that information will then move electronically to Huntsville.

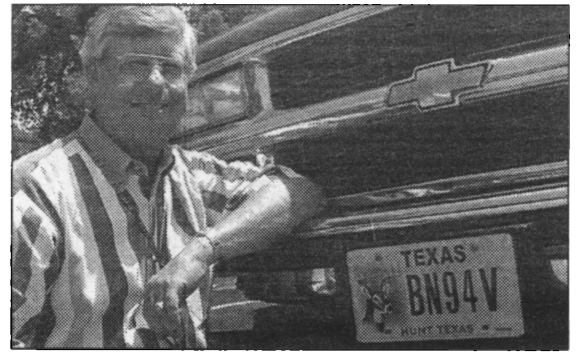
This digital plate-making system also will streamline the process of filling special-plate orders. "This system will eliminate keying errors on the Huntsville end and will ensure the accuracy of customer-order processing," Goolsby said.

Another benefit: Because it puts an end to the use of paints, dyes, lacquers, and solvents in the manufacturing process, the new system is easier on the environment.

"The finished digital plates are nearly flawless, which reduces the number of remakes," said Goolsby. "Inventory of all the various types of specialty-plate sheeting is slowly being eliminated as plates are converted to digital format and are approved for use."

Mounting the new plates on vehicles also should be easier for the customer since there is no metal to warp or twist, he said.

Joey Matesic, a special-project administrator, was one of the first TxDOT employees to purchase a digital license plate. He bought the Texas Parks and Wildlife plate that features a white-tailed deer when his registration renewal was due in February.



Joey Matesic shows off his specialty plate.

Matesic said he had always wanted to have a specialty plate but none of them appealed to him as much as the white-tailed-deer plate.

He likes having a deer on his license plate and he thinks digital is the correct way for the department to be moving. "It's the way of the future and uses the latest technology for license-plate manufacturing," he said.

His new digital plates may be state of the art, but he said so far he has not heard a word about them. "I don't think anyone has even noticed." ★

Texas Specialty License Plates

■ TxDOT's Vehicle Titles and Registration Division (VTR) administers the specialty license plate program. Applications are processed through VTR's Special Plates Branch.

■ TxDOT issues more than 100 specialty license plates.

■ Special plates are created through statute by the state legislature.

■ The sale of specialty and personalized plates totaled \$6.3 million in FY 2001.

■ VTR works closely with the various interest groups to design their license plate, including colleges and universities, and others, as directed by the legislature. Approval of specialty license plate designs is coordinated with law enforcement to ensure legibility.

■ Applications for specialty plates are available at the county tax assessor-collector's office; the 17 VTR regional offices statewide; and by calling VTR at (512) 465-7611.

■ View the specialty plates and download application forms for plates by going to TxDOT's Internet site at www.dot.state.tx.us.

Certified title copies: new rules strive to reduce fraud

By Roger Polson

Vehicle Titles & Registration Division

You buy a used car from a seemingly trustworthy person. The price is right. It's the car you have always wanted. After you pay cash, the seller signs the back of the certified copy of the original title and off you go.

A few days later, after you file for a title in your own name, the police arrive with a tow truck to haul off your newly acquired pride and joy. You paid for a stolen car and for a certified copy of title issued fraudulently to an unauthorized person — a car thief.

The certified copy of title is valuable because it's considered a negotiable document. That means it's as good as the original title. It also means that the person possessing a certified copy of title can sell the vehicle or use it as collateral for a loan.

Last October, TxDOT adopted administrative rules that tightened requirements for issuance of these certified copies. These rules took effect this February. Under state law and the new rules, applicants for certified copies of title now must prove their identity by presenting a form of federal or state identification with a photo. They also must provide a completed Form VTR-34 with an

original signature.

"What we need is positive proof that the applicant is who they say they are, and that the applicant has the legal right to the certified copy," said Harry Morgan, director of field operations for TxDOT's Vehicle Title and Registration Division. Morgan oversees operations in the division's 17 regional offices in Texas.

If there is a lien recorded on an original title, only the lienholder or legally designated agent can apply for a certified copy. If a lienholder's employee signs the application, proof also is required of that person's affiliation with the lienholder. That could be a letter of authority on the company's letterhead, a business card, or a copy of a company photo ID.

If the Form VTR-34 is executed through a power of attorney, it must be accompanied with a copy of identification from the person signing the power of attorney and the person signing the form. Businesses operating through a power of attorney also must provide a letter of signature authority on original letterhead, a business card, or a copy of employee ID.

The Vehicle Titles and Registration

Division now processes applications for the certified copies of title in the division's regional offices. Result: applicants presenting a proper form of identification receive their copies sooner. These applications are being processed within five days of receipt.

One problem with this change is that the shift to regional processing coincided with the increased requirements for proof of identification. This resulted in a rejection rate of about 40 percent of all mail-in applications. Most of the rejected applications lacked proper proof of identity.

"We are seeing the number of rejects drop as applicants become more familiar with the new procedures," Morgan said. "Eventually, the process will mean faster service and an end to issuing the certified copies of title to unauthorized people."

He said they require a person's name, a photo, and a signature. "All additional information, including the address, ID number, birth date, and expiration date can be marked out. We are being respectful of the privacy issues involved. This is all about protection of property and the integrity of the vehicle title laws," Morgan said. ★

Commission OKs funding for enhancements

The Texas Transportation Commission has approved more than \$155 million for transportation projects designed to enhance scenic, historical, natural and cultural resources in communities across Texas.

The projects are part of the Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program, also known as STEP. It provides funds for non-traditional transportation projects such as facilities for bicycling and pedestrians, landscaping and scenic beautification, historical preservation, and environmental mitigation.

TxDOT administers the federally funded program for the state.

"This is a great tool for enhancing the quality of life in communities around the state without burdening the limited amount of traditional transportation funds available," said John W. Johnson, transportation commissioner.

Enhancement projects are eligible for federal reimbursement of up to 80 percent of allowable costs, including planning, design, environmental mitigation, property acquisition, construction and administrative expenses. For reimbursement of eligible costs, preliminary project work must be authorized in advance by the Federal Highway Administration.

The approved projects were selected from 315 eligible projects nominated last year by local authorities across the state. Projects are evaluated for quality, transportation value, and benefits.

The following lists selected projects grouped by TxDOT districts. Dollar amounts have been rounded and indicate federal funds devoted to each project.

ABILENE: 1911 T & P Railroad Depot Visitor Center and Transportation Museum (\$1.2 million); Crossroad Exhibit Hall and Lecture Room (\$76,800).

AMARILLO: Canadian Visitor Center and Main Street/FM 2388 Restoration (\$2.1 million); Amarillo Rails to Trails (\$2.7 million); Stratford Main Street Project (\$1.9 million).

ATLANTA: Downtown Texarkana Streetscape Enhancement (\$0.4 million); Downtown Hughes Springs Enhancement (\$0.4 million); Historic Jefferson Visitors and Multimodal Transportation Center (\$1.1 million).

AUSTIN: Johnson City Trail (\$0.5 million); Old Town Buda Pedestrian Facility (\$0.8 million); Northern Walnut Creek Trail (\$2.0 million); Cottonwood Trail, Phase 2 (\$0.5 million).

BEAUMONT: Port Arthur Pedestrian Trail, Phase 2 (\$1.6 million).

BROWNWOOD: Historic Breckenridge Main Street Rehabilitation (\$1.1 million); Great State of Texas Historical Transportation Complex (\$2.3 million); Old Cora Pedestrian Information Center (\$95,883).

BRYAN: Brenham Greenways (\$1.8 million); Cameron Hike and Bike Trails (\$1.1 million); Hearne Station Depot Rehabilitation, Phase 3 (\$0.2 million).

CHILDRESS: Renovation of the Quanah, Acme & Pacific Depot - Roaring Springs (\$0.9 million); High Plains Bison Visitor

Center (\$0.7 million); Knox City Pedestrian and Bike Trail (\$0.1 million).

CORPUS CHRISTI: Port Aransas Hike and Bike Trail (\$0.3 million); Rockport Pedestrian/Bicycle Pathway (\$0.3 million); Fulton Mansion Visitor Center (\$0.5 million); The Depot - Transportation Museum and Visitor Welcome Center (\$0.7 million); Ingleside Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathway (\$1.3 million); Bay Trails, Phase 3 (\$1.0 million).

DALLAS: Melissa Pedestrian Walkways Project (\$1.0 million); Katy Trail - White Rock Station Extension (\$3.8 million); LBJ/Skillman Station Pedestrian Bridge (\$1.3 million); Santa Fe Trestle Trail (\$2.9 million); Spring Valley/Coit Pedestrian Amenities (\$0.6 million); Tenison Trail - Phase One of the East Dallas Veloway (\$2.3 million); Rowlett Main Street Sidewalk and Streetscape (\$1.1 million); Timber Creek Trail (\$1.4 million); Historic Rogers Street Bridge Rehabilitation (\$0.4 million); Grand Prairie Lone Star Hike and Bike Trail (\$3 million).

EL PASO: Sul Ross Pedestrian/Bike Trail (\$1.7 million); Rio Grande River Trail (\$3.1 million); Safety City (\$0.1 million).

FORT WORTH: Moments in Time Trail, Phase Two (\$0.7 million); Main Street Revitalization - Weatherford (\$2.0 million); Town Creek Hike and Bike Trail (\$3.2 million); West Berry Village Pedestrian Improvements (\$1.2 million); Arlington Veloweb Improvements (\$0.1 million); Burleson Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail (\$1.6 million); Oak Grove Trail (\$1.2 million); Downtown Decatur Pedestrian Enhancements II (\$0.6 million); Ninth St. Pedestrian and Streetscape Enhancements (\$1.1 million).

HOUSTON: State Highway 288 Beautification in Freeport (\$1.0 million); Vince Bayou Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail (\$1.1 million); Southside Place/Bellaire Boulevard Beautification (\$0.5 million); Landscaping at State Highway 225 and Sens Road Exit (\$0.2 million); NASA Parkway Scenic Beautification (\$0.7 million); Greens Bayou Trail System (\$2.3 million); Houston East End Streetscapes (\$2.2 million); Buffalo Bayou Heritage Corridor - Shared Use Trail (\$3.0 million); Little White Oak Bayou Trail - Phase I (\$0.9 million); Columbia Tap - Union Station Shared Use (\$0.7 million); Old Spanish Trail and Griggs Road Landscape Project (\$1.6 million); Gulfgate Freeway Enhancement Project (\$2.0 million); The Westchase District Trail - North (\$3.9 million); Herman Park trail improvements (\$2.0 million); Hardy Toll Road Airport Connection Enhancement Project (\$1.1 million); Jersey Village - White Oak Bayou Transit Connection Trail (\$1.8 million); South Mayde Creek Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility (\$2.2 million); Harris County Transportation Plaza (\$2.8 million); San Jacinto Battleground Visitor Center (\$3.4 million); The Woodlands Town Center Pedestrian Corridor - South Side (\$1.8 million).

LAREDO: San Felipe Bicycle and Walking Trail (\$0.5 million).

LUBBOCK: Running Water Draw Hike and Bike Trail (\$1.3 million).

LUFKIN: Diboll Pedestrian and Hike and Bike Trails (\$1.4 million); Nacogdoches Streetscape and Sidewalk (\$0.9 million); Center Downtown Streetscape Project (\$0.8 million).

ODESSA: Midland TXU Easement Hike/Bike Trail (\$0.3 million); Historic Old Rankin Highway Visitors (\$1.5 million); Confederate Air Force (CAF) Museum and Display Hangar (\$2.3 million); Sanderson Depot - The Terrell County Transportation Museum (\$0.5 million); 20-E Transportation Corridor Enhancement Project (\$1.9 million).

PARIS: Denison Main Street Streetscape (\$0.3 million); Greenville Downtown Streetscape Project (\$1.2 million); Clarksville Historic Creek Walk (\$0.2 million).

PHARR: El Paseo de Santa Isabella (\$0.5 million); Central Parkway Trails at Paseo de la Resaca (\$1.2 million); Heart of Harlingen Pedestrian Linkage (\$0.9 million); Arroyo Hike and Bike Trail - Phase 2 (\$0.7 million); Hidalgo Pedestrian and Bicycle Access (\$1.7 million); World Birding Visitor Information Center (\$1.5 million); McAllen Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail Additions - Phase 2 (\$1.0 million).

SAN ANGELO: Ozona Visitor Center (\$1.1 million).

SAN ANTONIO: Salado Creek Hike and Bike Trail, Phase 2 (\$2.0 million); Spur 371/KellyUSA entrance (\$0.6 million); Hays Street Bridge rehabilitation, bicycle and pedestrian route (\$2.9 million); Gruene Road Hike/Bike Trail (\$0.6 million); Selma Stage Stop Station and Visitor Center (\$1.0 million).

TYLER: Grace Creek pedestrian and bicycle trails (\$1.3 million); Downtown Gladewater streetscape enhancement (\$2.3 million); Canton/First Monday Trade Days Streetscape Project (\$0.9 million).

WACO: Nolan Creek Hike and Bike Trail (\$1.7 million); Nolan Creek Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail (\$2.5 million); FM 1113 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility (\$1.2 million); Itasca Depot Visitors Center and Heritage Education Center (\$1.7 million); Groesbeck Streetscape Project (\$0.4 million); Brazos Riverwalk - University Cultural District Extension (\$2.3 million); Crawford sidewalks (\$0.3 million); Burlington-Rock Island railroad depot (\$0.2 million).

WICHITA FALLS: Sikes Lake pedestrian and bicycle trail (\$1.4 million); downtown Burkburnett enhancement (\$0.3 million).

YOAKUM: Downtown pedestrian walkways (\$0.6 million); sidewalks and pathway improvements at four locations (0.5 million); Southern Pacific - T&NO Railroad depot restoration (\$1.0 million); Pershing Square pedestrian facility (\$1.0 million).

STATEWIDE PROJECTS: Federal funds also were marked for use in a number of statewide projects. These include the Historic Bridge Preservation Program (\$3.5 million); Texas Heritage Trails (\$4.1 million); Phase 2 completion of birding/nature trails for South/Central Texas/Panhandle (\$0.5 million); and Prairies and Pineywoods Great Texas Wildlife Trails (\$0.8 million). ★

Letters

Paramedic offers his thanks for efforts aiding elderly woman

A tragic medical emergency occurred (late last year) seven miles south of Brownfield on U.S. 62/82. While most Brownfield residents were eating lunch or going about their daily business, Texas Department of Transportation employees stopped their work to come to an elderly woman and her daughter's aid.

On the way to Lubbock, the elderly woman stopped breathing. The TxDOT employees attended to her needs and started doing cardiopulmonary resuscitation without hesitation or due regard to their own personal needs or safety.

They didn't have to stop to help but they

did, and I want to thank them. Gentlemen, you were a tremendous help to my Emergency Medical Services partner and myself. Without your help, things would not have gone as well as they did. I know firsthand as a public servant that people do not get the thanks that they deserve. So, please let me thank you again for your unselfish act of kindness that you presented to me and the family in need on that afternoon.

Jason Phillips
Paramedic
American Medical Response

Working in the Lubbock District, maintenance technicians Rusty Pickett, JR Collins, John Ryan and Jerney Wenzel are the TxDOT people commended by the letter's author.

Police department earns praise for action against heavy loads

The Motor Carrier Division of the Texas Department of Transportation would like to take this opportunity to commend the Austin Police Department for its enforcement action on April 18, 2002. On that date, Austin police officers intercepted two separate super-heavy loads that were being transported over state and federal highways without the proper operating credentials. The loads exceeded the weight specified on their permits and could have posed a significant threat to public safety as well as the integrity of state-maintained roads along their route.

■ See MORE LETTERS, Page 7

Service Awards

Abilene District

25 years
Merrie T. Rogge
20 years
David A. Hall
Gary W. Teichelman
15 years
Tommie J. Brown
Norman J. Herridge
Cindy R. Sparks
10 years
Jesus Cisneros
Darden L. Stokes
Imogene H. Watkins
Terri M. Wolaver
5 years
Theresa B. Conner
Norman L. Hall
Stephen T. Jones
Timothy L. Powers

Amarillo District

30 years
Peggy B. Vinson
25 years
Roger G. Kendrick
James A. Meaker
15 years
Bonnie K. Bass
Billy R. Hester
10 years
Robin E. Douglas
5 years
Samuel M. Cross

Atlanta District

20 years
Ricky L. Bogan
Robert A. Jones
Grady D. Steelman
15 years
Clarence Evans
Larry D. Whitworth
5 years
Matthew S. Smith
Michael S. Timmons

Austin District

20 years
Ernie C. Goerlitz
15 years
Thomas B. Brown
Michael B. Camus
Johnny L. Eddleton
Louis C. Hernandez
Mary C. McDaniels
Elba J. Nail
Robert E. Parker
Dale W. Turner Jr.
10 years
Gerald W. Barrett
James P. DeLeon
Elisa G. Garcia
Joe S. Hennig
5 years
Reginald J. Bell Jr.
Jerome M. Boado
John T. Buckley
John H. Dittmar
James T. Evertson
Mary T. Garrett
Shelby S. Sultermeier

Beaumont District

20 years
Donna H. Lewis
15 years
William J. Duffield Jr.
Lloyd E. Pierce

Brownwood District

15 years
Earla B. Pallette
5 years
Jim F. McNutt

Bryan District

25 years
Jerry R. Waters
20 years
Henry A. Ondrasek
15 years
Joe E. Pingleton
10 years
Neal R. Riddle
5 years
Jingzhi Feng
Joe V. Salvato

Childress District

10 years
Rickey L. Gonzales
5 years
Curt A. Coop
Carlos I. Lozano
David O. Newbrough
Alfred W. Oneal
Michael F. Williams

Corpus Christi District

15 years
Wayne L. Carpenter
Israel Gonzalez
10 years
Humberto V. Ruiz
5 years
Gary P. Janacek
David A. McDermott
Gary L. Pawelek
Richard E. Tuttle Jr.
Claro C. Ybarra

Dallas District

20 years
Donald E. Rush
Majid Sadjadpour
15 years
Greg P. Austin
Terry W. Bruce
Susan K. Johnson
10 years
Carlos E. Scott
Kenneth J. Shirley
Patrick A. Walker
5 years
Herman W. Childress III
William H. Compton
David A. Estep
Robert G. Guydosh
Nancy J. Hudson
Danny Sanchez

El Paso District

25 years
Gilbert Jordan
20 years
Peggy A. Birkner
Craig S. Warren
15 years
Guillermo Garcia
Gerardo Leos
10 years
Rolando E. Hernandez
Carlos C. Mendoza Jr.
Armida Sagaribay

Fort Worth District

25 years
Bobby J. Barbee
Gary J. Gossage
15 years
John S. Gibbs
10 years
Paula G. Gwaltney
Timothy S. Shuler
5 years
Kevin L. Bryson
Jeannie M. Dobbs
Joni L. Eastman
Desiree L. Lacy
Debra H. Ortega
Karen L. Schluter

Houston District

45 years
Carol J. Letz
30 years
Robert C. Faircloth
Travis K. Turner
20 years
Michael M. Bahm
Marietta F. Francisco
Willie J. Hubbard
David N. Rodgers
Charles R. Tompkins
15 years
Paul R. Bartholomew
James W. Koch
James L. Parnell
10 years
Verna K. Brown
Plus S. Tomdio
5 years
Michelle M. Johnson
Rogelio R. Rubico

Lubbock District

30 years
Ronald G. Davis
20 years
Dennis W. Morgan
15 years
Robert G. Davis
Tracey D. Spradling
10 years
Charles E. Frater
5 years
Merle R. Neal

Lufkin District

15 years
Hughie Burrell
Garry M. Harrison
Willie J. Wright
5 years
Nancy A. Smith

Odessa District

20 years
James L. Moore
15 years
Danry G. Webb
5 years
Steven D. Escamilla
Zane R. Honeyfield

Paris District

25 years
Van A. Cato
Bobby D. Cornelius
15 years
Leisha L. Hopkins
Larry D. Smith
5 years
Gustavo Escobedo

Pharr District

20 years
Leonel Barrera
Fernando A. Chapa
Steven A. Whybrew
15 years
Alejandro A. Munguia
5 years
Melba R. Ramos
Romeo Rosales
Humberto Uresti

San Angelo District

30 years
Patricia P. Jackson
25 years
Johnny S. Guadarrama
William K. Wiley
15 years
Raul H. Martinez
Ricky M. Ross
Frank E. Sparks
5 years
Ronald L. Nowlin

San Antonio District

35 years
Thomas E. Ortmann
30 years
Arthur G. Heinen
20 years
Bradley A. Eubank
Juan V. Gomez
15 years
Kelly J. Kenner
Daniel J. Reigrut
Tomas A. Romero
Myles S. Theis
5 years
Baldomero P. Ollerbidez

Tyler District

30 years
Jackie L. Hopmann
25 years
William R. Gill
15 years
Kerry D. Bushue
Marlin L. Cooper
Lonnie S. Kincaid
John R. Sigler
Walter H. Smith
Dennis P. Smith
10 years
Bobby D. Hutson
James B. Thom
5 years
Jose C. Rodriguez

Wichita Falls District

20 years
Kenneth W. Bozarth
10 years
Linda G. Tamplin
5 years
Joseph L. Camley
Bobby S. Watkins

Waco District

30 years
Richard A. Smith
25 years
Marrion E. Land
20 years
Duane A. Schwarz
15 years
Rodney D. Karasek
David Swinson III
10 years
Uvaldo E. Hernandez
Janice S. Jackson
Randy N. Roddy
5 years
Jimmie L. Warthen

Yoakum District

35 years
Fred E. Barnard
30 years
Jannette P. Hans
5 years
Richard D. Canik
David Jimenez
David W. Sternadel

Administration

5 years
Shawna C. Russell

Aviation Division

10 years
David S. Fulton

Bridge Division

10 years
Walter M. Black
Amy J. Ronnfeldt
5 years
David A. Mraz

Construction Division

15 years
David B. Belser
Mary C. Fitzpatrick
John E. Lane
Denise V. Maldonado
William M. Pecht
Steven D. Smith
10 years
James M. Barton
Michael D. Finger
George E. Lantz
Linda Paredez

Design Division

25 years
Sheila A. Crawley

General Counsel Office

20 years
Andrea C. Titus

General Services Division

15 years
John T. Pickard
Sandra Rodriguez
Joe L. Serrano

Human Resources Division

5 years
Amelia V. Arriens
Sarah A. Sanchez

Information Systems Division

5 years
Lien Thi hoang Pham
Mark Wright

Motor Carrier Division

5 years
Michal K. Barrada
Roland Lozano

Motor Vehicle Division

25 years
Timothy W. Bargsley
20 years
Joseph R. Shrawder
5 years
Jason S. Bellah

Public Information Office

10 years
Mark E. Cross

Public Transportation Division

20 years
John M. Cauley

Texas Turnpike Authority Division

15 years
John S. Breed

Traffic Operations Division

10 years
Cynthia L. Flores

Transportation Planning & Programming Division

30 years
Bob L. Jurak
15 years
Rodney L. Grimes
5 years
Michael D. Wojciechowski

Travel

15 years
Benard T. Stafford
5 years
Kimberly L. Blackwell
Inez De Luna
Allen M. Hayes

Vehicle Titles & Registration Division

30 years
Stephen W. Gary
20 years
Dawn P. Jarosz
15 years
David O. Jaso
5 years
David K. Isbell

More Letters

Continued from Page 6

The larger of the two loads weighed 321,000 pounds and was 67,000 pounds heavier than the weight specified on its permit. Research by the Texas Transportation Institute estimates that one 80,000-pound truck has the same impact on bridges and highways as 9,600 passenger cars. Based on this formula, the 321,000-pound load had close to four times that impact, or an impact equivalent to 38,000 passenger cars.

Our mission is to provide for safe and effective movement of people and goods within the state, which depends heavily upon the preservation of the highway infrastruc-

ture. We are grateful to see that there are exceptional law enforcement agencies to help us achieve our goals.

Lawrance R. Smith
Director, Motor Carrier Division

Work on perimeter road draws praise for TxDOT

Please allow me to extend my personal thanks for your assistance to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice in overlaying our perimeter road with asphalt millings.

This road, which encircles our unit, is under constant patrol and is a vital security-related asset.

Today, because of your help, this asset has been restored to a level far beyond the condition it was in. I sincerely appreciate your assistance and value our inter-agency cooperation.

I would also like to recognize all of your staff who made this possible: Billy Jinks, Stephen Patin, Preston Ceasar, Gordon Clark, Jon Clark, Bill Clopton, Miguel Ortiz, and John Romano.

Kevin P. Estep
Senior Warden
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Beaumont, TX

Brian Dodge, a maintenance supervisor in the Port Arthur Maintenance Office of the Beaumont District, received this letter.

In Memoriam

Abilene District

Birl C. Cox
Maint. Constr. Foreman III
retired 1985
died March 10, 2002

Patsye B. Doty
Clerk IV
retired 1999
died January 10, 2002

Atlanta District

Bryce H. Clayton Jr.
Engineering Technician III
retired 1995
died March 11, 2002

Eddie S. Rhyne
Maintenance Technician II
retired 1975
died February 17, 2002

Beaumont District

Stanislaus Duplechin
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1984
died February 19, 2002

Robert T. Hare
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1985
died February 4, 2002

John C. McBride
Safety Officer I
died April 19, 2002

Floyd J. McKee
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1988
died February 26, 2002

Brownwood District

Robert L. Greer
Accountant III
retired 1987
died February 6, 2002

Bryan District

Howard G. Long
Administrative Assistant
retired 1984
died March 25, 2002

Corpus Christi District

Alfred S. Houdmann
Maintenance Technician II
retired 1990
died March 24, 2002

Dallas District

Mildred G. Brooks
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1993
died March 28, 2002

Walter O. Dyess
Maintenance Construction
Supervisor III
retired 1977
died February 21, 2002

William S. Pittman
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1978
died February 28, 2002

Leroy J. Wallen
Director III
retired 1993
died February 2, 2002

El Paso District

Pablo F. Martinez
Maintenance Technician II
retired 1980
died February 26, 2002

Ben E. Sanders
Trans. Maint. Specialist V
retired 2001
died February 18, 2002

Fort Worth District

Robert B. George
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1982
died March 30, 2002

James M. Gestes
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1994
died March 10, 2002

Houston District

Robert M. Doestch
Supervisor Motor Vehicle
Section
retired 1980
died January 23, 2002

Harvey H. Stauffer
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1987
died March 20, 2002

Odessa District

Jose O. Fuentes
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1976
died March 20, 2002

Paris District

Bobby G. Stone
Maintenance Technician II
retired 1991
died March 20, 2002

Pharr District

Rafaela B. Olivarez
Administrative Technician II
retired 2000
died February 9, 2002

San Angelo District

James Cochran
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1991
died March 11, 2002

Leonard L. Dragoo
Maintenance Technician II
retired 1971
died December 14, 2001

Milton E. McAnally
Maintenance Technician II
retired 1992
died February 10, 2002

San Antonio District

Ernesto Galvan
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1990
died February 10, 2002

Walter V. Grisham

Engineer III
retired 1986
died February 1, 2002

Tyler District

James B. Berry Sr.
Engineering Technician V
retired 1976
died February 18, 2002

Waco District

Robert W. Barton Jr.
Maintenance Technician II
retired 1975
died March 3, 2002

Leighton F. Cannon
Engineer III
retired 1984
died February 8, 2002

Andrew D. Denman
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1984
died March 20, 2002

Burford E. Turner
Maintenance Construction
Supervisor II
retired 1977
died March 4, 2002

Finance Division

Joyce E. Cumpton
Accountant V
retired 2000
died February 5, 2002

General Services Division

Gerald L. Daugherty
Purchaser II
died April 19, 2002

Occupational Safety Division

Albert O. Wicker
Staff Services Officer II
retired 1991
died February 11, 2002

Right of Way Division

George L. Smith
Chief Accountant II
retired 1979
died March 7, 2002

James T. Noton
Right of Way Agent IV
retired 1982
died March 2, 2002

Travel Division

Richard T. Roberts
Program Administrator III
retired 1993
died April 24, 2002

Vehicle Title & Registration Division

Margaret B. Moos
Administrative Technician
retired 1981
died March 12, 2002

Retirements

March 2002

Houston District
Jesse F. Delgado
Radio Repair Technician II
10 years

John D. Hernandez
Engineering Technician V
15 years

April 2002

Brownwood District
Charles D. Barker
Transportation Maint. Spec. IV
28 years

Dallas District
Danny J. Jennings
Transportation Maint. Spec. III
31 years

Fort Worth District
Jerry D. King
Maintenance Inspector IV
20 years

Gaylon T. Steel Jr.
Maintenance Technician III
17 years

Houston District
Hughon L. Painter
Engineering Spec. V
17 years

Paris District

Michael D. Ribble
Engineering Spec. III
37 years

Pharr District

Jose A. Gonzalez
Administrative Technician III
34 years

San Antonio District

Robert D. Scheel
Contract Technician III
29 years

Clarence A. Czaplinski
Engineering Spec. II
37 years

Wichita Falls District

David W. Lawdermilk
Engineering Technician III
33 years

Yoakum District

Robert L. Dedear
Maintenance Supvr. IV
35 years

Audit Office

Gary L. Mosher
Auditor IV
19 years

Contract Services Office

Marvin C. Stromberg
Program Spec. III
11 years

Construction Division

Elizabeth A. Lann
Engineering Technician V
28 years

General Services Division

McKinley Clark, Jr.
Motor Vehicle Technician III
34 years

Information Systems Division

James D. Schuchardt
Engineering Technician V
32 years

Motor Vehicle Division

Larry James Dixon
Investigator III
7 years

May 2002

Amarillo District
Steve Sanders
Transportation Maint. Spec. III
32 years

El Paso District

Tomas R. Baraza
Maintenance Supervisor III
24 years

Frank G. Hartnett
Engineering Technician III
23 years

Laredo District

Francisco Vasquez
Engineering Technician
23 years

San Angelo District

Beverly J. McGuire
Administrative Technician II
21 years

Gary G. Gleghorn
Special Jobs Supervisor II
30 years

Heraldo F. Martinez
Transportation Maintenance Crew
Chief II
33 years

San Antonio District

Margaret A. Richards
Staff Services Officer I
35 years

Waco District

Jimmy W. Rhodes
Construction Inspection VI
39 years

Wichita Falls District

Paul D. Wolf
Engineering Technician III
15 years

Construction Division

Emily Jean Renner
Contract Technician II
10 years

Finance Division

Ruby W. Crenshaw
Accountant III
27 years

Vehicle Title and Registration Division

William J. Wilson Jr.
Program Administrator III
32 years

TxDOT workers face changes in insurance benefits Sept. 1

Editor's note: Recent action taken by the Board of Trustees of the Employees Retirement System of Texas affects TxDOT employees. The department's Human Resources Division has provided the following summary for employees who may have questions about changes in various insurance benefits.

The annual summer enrollment for insurance benefits for state employees and retirees is scheduled from July 15 through Aug. 23. All valid changes made during summer enrollment will take effect Sept. 1.

In April, the Board of Trustees of the Employees Retirement System of Texas announced its selections for providers of health insurance.

Trustees also approved increases in premiums without reducing any benefits. Even with moderate premium increases, ERS says, the state plan will not increase co-payments, nor make other changes in benefits.

Additionally, says ERS, employees will not see increases in premium costs for insurance such as for basic life and optional-term life, for short-term and long-term disability, nor for accidental death and dismemberment.

The state will continue to pay all of the health insurance premiums for full-time employees and eligible retirees for fiscal 2003.

The state will continue to pay half the cost of premiums for eligible, covered dependents. While the legislature has funded 50 percent of the increases for dependent coverage, the employee's share of dependent coverage will increase an average of 12.4 percent.

HealthSelect and HealthSelect Plus

HealthSelect now covers more than 56 percent of the state employees, retirees and their families.

HealthSelect Plus, retaining about 75 percent of its current membership, will continue for existing members in 22 counties. These are primarily in areas near Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio and Beaumont (excluding Hardin County).

Enrollment in HealthSelect Plus will be limited to stem the rising costs of the plan and to allow for a full review of its future.

Expenses for HealthSelect Plus exceeded revenue by about 3 percent in 2002. This followed an increase in rates of more than 26 percent the previous year.

The prescription drug program for HealthSelect and HealthSelect Plus will be consolidated under a single benefit manager, Merck-Medco, which now serves only HealthSelect participants.

Changes in HMOs

Approximately 10,000 state employees and their currently covered, eligible dependents are served by health-maintenance organizations (HMOs).

Overall, the reduced number of available HMOs is a reflection of the declining HMO marketplace. Beginning Sept. 1, only four HMO options will be available to serve the diverse areas of Texas.

Additionally, employees in counties where HealthSelect Plus will no longer be available will automatically move to HealthSelect (without evidence of insurability). These affected HealthSelect Plus employees will also have the opportunity to enroll in an

available HMO.

FirstCare will provide service in 55 counties in West Texas, the Panhandle and Central Texas. Scott & White, with its major medical center in Temple, will continue to provide service in 23 Central Texas counties. Community First will serve eight counties in the San Antonio area, and Mercy Health Care will continue to serve four South Texas counties in the Laredo area.

Dental recap

Employees and retirees will continue to have two options available regarding their choice of dental care providers.

The Dental Maintenance Plan (previously Prudential DMO) will be referred to as Aetna DHMO. Participants will experience about a 3 percent increase in premiums.

CIGNA Dental will administer the state's dental indemnity plan (preferred provider organization). Participants will experience a 4.7 percent increase in premiums.

TexFlex

The new vendor for the state's cafeteria plan, or the TexFlex flexible benefits program, will be PayFlex Systems USA Inc. (PayFlex), which is based in Omaha, Neb.

PayFlex will continue the program by which employees can pay eligible health and dental expenses or expenses for care of dependents with tax-free money. This is allowed under rules of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS Code, Section 125.)

PayFlex will provide a debit card with lower usage fees. PayFlex also will provide a less-demanding process for settling claims.

TexFlex participants will not be charged a monthly fee, other than regular fees for use of debit card.

To take advantage of the tax-free savings on medical expenses and for care of dependents, employees and retirees must re-enroll (or initially enroll) during summer enrollment.

State Kids Insurance Program (SKIP)

Participants must re-enroll to continue to have their children's health premiums paid with the state's subsidy.

Employees who participate in SKIP will not see a premium increase.

Depending on family size and income, some participants will pay a one-time annual enrollment fee of \$15. Others will pay \$15 per month toward the premiums for eligible children.

More information coming

More detailed information will be provided to employees through a personalized summer-enrollment notice by mail. Employees can also attend one of the 28 regional fairs scheduled from July 8 through Aug. 8. There they can review various publications for more information. Benefits coordinators also can attend the 2002 conference in Austin, June 17-20.

Employees also can learn about enrollment opportunities by attending agency benefits fairs or by viewing interactive conferences through the ERS website. ★

Next month: A discussion of possible future insurance benefits changes.

Calendar



JUNE

- 10-13** Research Management Committee Meeting, San Antonio, RTI
- 11-13** 2002 TxDOT Bridge Engineers Conference, Austin, BRG
- 17-18** Dispute Resolution Conference, Austin, CST
- 19** Emancipation Day (optional holiday)
- 23-26** TRB Access Management Conference, Austin, DES
- 24-26** Traffic Operations Conference, Dallas, TRF
- 27** Commission Meeting, Austin

JULY

- 2** Research Oversight Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI
- 4** Independence Day (holiday)
- 7-10** WASHTO Annual Meeting, San Antonio
- 7-10** A1F04 Noise & Vibration Summer Meeting, Austin, ENV
- 9** AAH Coordinator State Meeting, San Antonio, TRV
- 9-10** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 9-11** PMIS Visual Rater Certification Class, Dallas, CST
- 9-12** Keep Texas Beautiful Convention, San Antonio, TRV
- 16-18** PMIS Visual Rater Certification Class, Austin, CST
- 17-19** Public Procurement Management, Austin, GSD
- 23-25** PMIS Visual Rater Certification Class, Abilene, CST
- 25** Commission Meeting, Fort Worth
- 30-8/1** PMIS Visual Rater Certification Class, Austin, CST

AUGUST

- 7/30-8/1** PMIS Visual Rater Certification Class, Austin, CST
- 6-7** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 6-8** PMIS Visual Rater Certification Class, Corpus Christi, CST
- 13-15** PMIS Visual Rater Certification Class, Austin, CST

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

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