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Road art lures eyes of Texas

Pages 8-11

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN



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- Nichols resigns commission post, Page 3
- Spotlight: Retiree into lamps, Page 4
- Sinkhole closes Tyler highway, Page 12

On the cover:

The Texas "Lone Star" icon adorns roadways throughout the state. These decorative stars attract attention at State Highway 30 and Interstate 45 in the Bryan District. More and more, the public welcomes these and other touches on bridges, overpasses, columns, and in landscaping along highways.

TxDOT photo by Maury Jacob

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Straight Talk

Nichols bids farewell

by Mike Behrens

Executive Director



Mike Behrens

As you've probably heard, Robert Nichols resigned last month after eight years of service on the Transportation Commission. I will miss him. In fact, we will all miss the man we call "the employee's commissioner" for his eagerness to travel to all 25 TxDOT districts, appear at countless legislative hearings, and take on a lot of tough, time-consuming and vital issues.

This department and our mission mean a lot to Robert. He proved it time and again through his diligent work on behalf of Texans and transportation. Before he departed on June 30, Robert still had a few things he wanted to say to all of us. So this month I am foregoing my regular column to offer some excerpts from his resignation letter so you can hear one last time from Robert Nichols.

"Dear Governor Perry,

It is with great regret but no hesitation that I resign my position with the Texas Transportation Commission, effective June 30, 2005, at 8 a.m.

...It has been one of my life's greatest honors to have been appointed by both you and former Gov. George W. Bush to this position of responsibility that impacts the daily lives of Texas citizens and businesses. ...

I leave with the confidence and knowledge that the department is in its best shape in decades. ... Currently a project is under way, either large or small, every six miles on the Texas highway system. Most importantly, without additional employees or raising fees or taxes, the commission has increased production and safety to the benefit of Texans.

...The administration, under the leadership of Mike Behrens, is outstanding. The men and women running the divisions, districts and other offices are intelligent, motivated and stable. The employees ... are some of the most dedicated with whom I have ever worked. Their willingness to go the extra mile for the citizens of Texas is unmatched. I will truly miss them.

As I travel, I will never look at a highway or road crew the same again. ...

*Sincerely,
Robert Nichols"*

Robert Nichols resigns from commission

by Judith Curtis
Associate Editor

AUSTIN — Robert Nichols announced his resignation from the Transportation Commission, effective June 30.

Nichols, first appointed to the commission by Gov. George W. Bush in 1997, was serving his second term after his reappointment in 2003 by Gov. Rick Perry. The former Jacksonville mayor said he was stepping down to run for a state senate seat.

He said he felt it improper to remain on the commission to vote on projects within that senate district.

“Everyone in this state and particularly its senate and house members recognize this guy is not a show horse,” said Ric Williamson, chair of the commission. “But he is the best workhorse the transportation commission has ever had.”

During his eight-year tenure on the commission, Nichols focused on various issues on behalf of TxDOT. Among them were changing the point of collection of gasoline taxes,

establishing corridors throughout the state on the Texas Trunk System, and working on legislation to relocate and preserve rail corridors.

Dubbed the “employee’s commissioner,” Nichols made it a point to visit all 25 TxDOT districts to meet employees and educate himself on the issues of importance in those areas. He also visited 156 TxDOT maintenance offices during his travels through the state.

Nichols made his announcement at the beginning of the June commission meeting, and made his departure effective immediately following his remarks and those of his fellow commissioners.

Declaring that the department is “in its best shape in decades,” he attributed that in large part to TxDOT employees.

“The men and women of the Texas Department of Transportation are some of the most dedicated with whom I have ever worked,” he said. “Their willingness to go the extra mile for the citizens of Texas is unmatched. I will truly miss them.” ☺

Letter from the editor by Mike Cox

The London terror attacks occurred just as we worked to close out this issue. The final death toll had not yet been determined, but already the subway and bus bombings had been called the worst attack on the British capital since World War II.

This incident underscores several things worth thinking about:

■ The Atlantic Ocean is the equivalent of a mere puddle when it comes to communication and cause-and-effect. Rescue workers still labored to recover bodies and remove the injured from smoke-filled tunnels beneath London as Texas newspapers, including the *Austin American-Statesman*,

posted on their Web sites reports from Texans who happened to be in London at the time of the attack. These dispatches from non-journalists came via e-mail, since London’s cell and landline phone system had been paralyzed in the aftermath of the attack.

■ Despite the six-hour time difference between London and most of Texas (add another hour for El Paso), anyone with Internet access could read the London Times’ coverage as easily as their own newspaper. This is yet another example of how our big, blue marble has shrunk in a figurative sense to BB size.

■ The tragedy in the United Kingdom is yet another example of how what happens in one part of the world today can affect all of us within moments. It also is a grim

■ See Page 12

TNotes

Panel names leaders

At its second meeting, the Trans-Texas Corridor Advisory Committee on June 29 elected Tim Brown as committee chair and Judy Hawley as vice-chair. Brown is a Bell County commissioner and Hawley is a Port of Corpus Christi commissioner. The 22-member panel focused its discussions on the ongoing environmental studies of TTC-35 and Interstate 69, compensation to landowners for right-of-way acquisition, and corridor-selection criteria. The next committee meeting is set for July 27 in Austin.

Commission acts

The commission bid farewell to Robert Nichols (see story this page) at its June meeting, and continued to employ the financing tools the legislature gave TxDOT for transportation-project completion.

The commission approved requests by officials from Bexar and Grayson counties to negotiate pass-through financing agreements with TxDOT for road improvements in their areas. Pass-through financing allows TxDOT to reimburse public or private entities for the cost of building new transportation systems

The commission also:

■ Approved the four-year, \$11.3 billion Statewide Preservation Program. The plan, 25 percent higher than the last such program, allocates \$8.5 billion to maintain highways and right of way, \$1.6 billion for bridge replacement and rehabilitation, \$402 million for improvements where railroads cross highways, \$766 million for safety projects and \$1.4 million for water and rail projects. “We must maintain the Texas transportation system and keep it working for the traveling public, as well as continue to plan for the future,” said Mike Behrens, executive director. “This plan helps us do that.”

■ Approved the 2006 Highway Safety Plan. The \$36 million plan will fund 170 traffic-safety projects including safety-belt protection, traffic enforcement, DWI countermeasures, and roadway safety.

— Judith Curtis, Associate Editor



'Play ball!' means 'go to work'

Abilene retiree recalls early days

by **Mike Cox**
Editor

ABILENE — These days, TxDOT hires people on the basis of their knowledge, skills and abilities. But back in the 1930s being able to throw a mean fast ball quickly got Burris "Boots" Beaty all the way around the bases in landing a state job.

Believed to be TxDOT's oldest living retiree, Beaty was born in Stamford on Jan. 20, 1912. He attributes his 93 healthy years — he doesn't even wear glasses — to never having smoked, drank, or taken coffee.



Beaty

Retired since 1977, he still gets up early every day, makes breakfast and works out on his exercise bike. Toward noon each day, he gets in his pickup and heads out for lunch.

Beaty may have grown up in Stamford, the self-styled "Cowboy Capital of the World," but his game was baseball, not working cattle.

"I don't know why they started calling me Boots," he said. "I've never worn a pair in my life. My daddy was a farmer, not a cowboy."

Beaty earned an early reputation as a fine third baseman in sandlot softball play, but having enough people to play proved to be a problem in a small town like Stamford. He came to Abilene and a job with the local Coca-Cola bottling plant, where he played on

a semi-pro team sponsored by the soft-drink retailer.

Laid off at the bottling plant after a year on the job, Beaty soon got an offer from the Highway Department. "They had a baseball team and they wanted me for that as much as anything else," he said.

A pitcher in hardball, he soon attracted the attention of professional scouts. "The Washington Senators tried to recruit me, but I had just gotten married and didn't want to go off to Washington."

Beaty worked for a short time in the Abilene District's mechanical shop until the foreman of the sign shop got fired for spending all day in a beer joint in Big Spring on state time. When told that he would be replacing the sign shop boss, Beaty protested that he didn't know anything about signs.

"You'll learn," his new boss told him. "And it wasn't long till I learned."

For the next 30 years, Beaty had a hand in producing every sign that went up in the 13-county Abilene District. He supervised two employees.

"They offered me a part-time job when I retired, but when I retired, I retired," he says. "My wife and I saw the country."

When his wife died, Beaty stayed in the house they bought 45 years ago. At 70, he remarried. His second wife died two years ago, he said.

Though twice a widower, Beaty hasn't given up on life. "I can't sit around and do nothing," he said. "I go to garage sales and buy old lamps and fix 'em up. If I don't have anything else to work on, I'll tear up a lamp and fix it again."

Burris' advice for folks still on the job at TxDOT is about another way to play ball: "Give 'em a day's work." ☼

Kudos

As seen in letters of gratitude received for quick, attentive action, the traveling public takes notice of TxDOT.

Here is one recent letter that praises TxDOT's attention to roadway safety.

In the **San Antonio District**, June Draper in an e-mail sent June 21 expressed her appreciation for median barriers:

"I just wanted to thank you for installing the concrete barriers on 1604 between Interstate 10 and I-35. This afternoon on my way home from the medical center, I was heading east on 1604 when a pickup that was headed west lost the trailer that he had been pulling. I watched it cross the westbound lanes and hit the barrier, and then the rear tires came over the barrier.

"Had those barriers not been there, the trailer would have hit the car in front of me broadside in the driver's door. Since it was evening rush hour, no telling how many cars and persons would have been hurt.

"Thanks for not making me a statistic."

Others from TxDOT receiving praise in recent letters to the department:

■ **Childress District** — Jay Hurt, Carolyn Carrick, Mark Hightower, Butch Nichols, Chris Medford, Chris Reed.

■ **Fort Worth District** — Larry Gilbreath.

■ **Lufkin District** — Charles Tucker.

Hall of Honor inducts four

'Gentleman's agreement' didn't stop inductee Esther Neveille Colson

By Mike Cox
Editor

AUSTIN — Back in the 1930s, the politicians in neighboring Grimes and Montgomery counties had a gentleman's agreement.

They would elect someone from Grimes County to the legislature to serve one term with the understanding that when the next election rolled around, the office holder from Grimes County would step aside so someone from Montgomery County could run.

Lawrence Olsen, Texas Good Roads Association executive vice president, said that system worked fine — until a woman named Esther Neveille Colson got elected as state representative in 1938.

As Olsen told those attending the June 28 Transportation Hall of Honor induction ceremony at the Greer Building, after the representative from Grimes County had served her two-year term the Montgomery County political establishment reminded Colson of their gentleman's agreement.

"That's all very good," she replied, "but I'm no gentleman."

Colson broke the "rules" and ran for a second term. She won that race and continued to represent her East Texas district in the House until 1948, when she won election to the Senate as the only woman in the 31-member upper chamber.

Two years before she ran for the Senate, Colson became the first woman to introduce a constitutional amendment passed by the legislature and approved by the electorate — the 1946 "Good Roads" amendment. That amendment, crucial to the future of transportation in Texas, dedicated 75 percent of the gasoline tax and vehicle registration fees for building and maintaining Texas highways.

As a freshman senator in 1949, she worked with state Rep. Dolph Briscoe to pass the measure that became known as the Colson-Briscoe Act — the bill providing for the construction of a the network of farm-to-market roads credited with getting farmers, school buses and mail carriers "out of the mud."

"Only a handful of legislative acts in the nation are referred to by the names of their authors," Olsen said of Colson following her induction.

Colson continued to serve in the Senate until 1966. She died in Bryan in 1982.



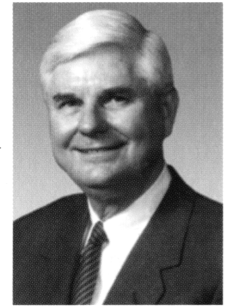
Colson

■ James D. Pitcock Jr.

Also inducted in the Hall of Honor were James D. "Doug" Pitcock Jr., founder, owner, board chairman and chief executive officer of Houston-based Williams Brothers Construction Co.

"Doug Pitcock's philosophy of life is simple," said former Transportation Commission chairman and former Houston mayor Bob Lanier, "it is 'build more highways.'"

In earning his "King of the Road" nickname, Lanier continued, "Pitcock gets up early, works harder and smarter, and takes care of his business."



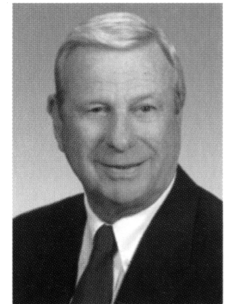
Pitcock

■ Ray Stoker Jr.

The third transportation leader recognized at the ceremony was Ray Stoker Jr. of Odessa. Appointed to the Transportation Commission in 1985 by Gov. Mark White, Stoker was reappointed and made chairman by Gov. Ann Richards.

During his tenure on the commission, Stoker guided TxDOT through two "sunset" reviews and played a key role in gaining legislative approval of increases in the gasoline tax in 1986, 1987 and 1991.

While working for that third gasoline tax increase, Stoker had to take a few days off for heart surgery in Houston. But as Arnold Oliver, a former TxDOT engineer-director recalled, "Ray was back at work in a few days, literally putting his life on the line" to convince legislators to vote one more time for a gas tax hike.



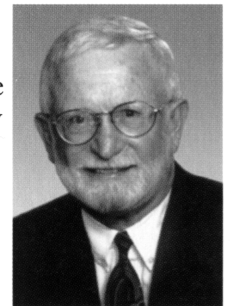
Stoker

■ Robert S. Braden

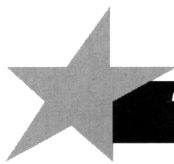
A fourth transportation leader, Robert S. Braden, was inducted to the Hall of Honor in a separate ceremony earlier in the year.

Known to his friends as Bob, he joined the engineering consulting firm of Freese, Nichols, Turner and Collie in 1955 with a staff of 27. When he retired 35 years later after serving both as president and chief executive officer, the name of the firm had changed to Turner Collie & Braden and employed more than 300.

Braden recognized that communities should have funding options to accelerate needed transportation projects. This vision became reality when voters approved creation of the Harris County Toll Road Authority. ☺

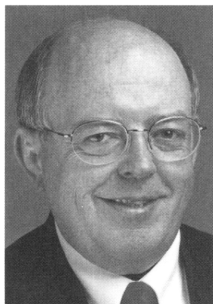


Braden



Whitworth tops ERS vote

Owen Whitworth, director of the TxDOT Audit Office, received 52.2 percent of the vote and was re-elected as trustee serving on the board of directors of the Employees Retirement System (ERS). Whitworth now chairs the ERS board.



Whitworth

First elected to the board in 1999, Whitworth was elected vice chair in August 2003 and chair in August 2004. Whitworth's second term begins Sept. 1 and ends on Aug. 31, 2011. He also is a member of the board's audit committee and serves as the board's representative on the board for the Texas Growth Fund.

Laredo chief to retire

Luis A. Ramirez, with almost 28 years as a state employee, and now serving as district engineer in Laredo, will retire Aug. 31.



Ramirez

Ramirez developed an action plan in the early 1990s to create the Laredo District, which was officially established in September 1993. A new district had not been created within TxDOT since 1932, so he is proud to have had a role in the establishment and success of TxDOT's 25th district office.

Before taking on the leadership role in the Laredo District, he worked in George West, in Karnes City and Alice area offices, and in the Corpus Christi District.

Accident claims TxDOT worker

Jeffrey McNeil, 44, was laid to rest Monday, July 18, at Pine Ridge Cemetery in Lumberton. McNeil, a Beaumont District assistant maintenance section supervisor, died Thursday, July 14, after being hit and killed by a flatbed wrecker on Cardinal Drive in Beaumont.

He had stopped to pick up some road debris that had been creating a traffic hazard when he was hit by the wrecker.

Investigation of the accident continues.

McNeil, of Kountze, is survived by his wife and two daughters. A fund benefiting the family has been set up at the Texas State Bank, 700 Calder Ave., Beaumont, TX 77701-2305, Account number 280173292.

Questions on the fund can be addressed to the bank at 409-981-7000.

Dike slates retirement

Jerry L. Dike, director of the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division, will retire Aug. 31 with 37 years of service to the state of Texas. Division director since 1992, Dike has developed policies, procedures and products in all areas of motor-vehicle registration and titling. He also has advanced programs

to prevent the theft of vehicles in Texas.

Dike, who has long been a member of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), serves as chair of the International AAMVA board of directors.



Dike

Dike began his career in 1965 as a summer employee in the Tyler District.

He began as a full-time employee with the Automation Division in 1969, the same year his father, Ray Dike, the Palestine maintenance foreman, retired after 42 years of service. Over the years, he held a variety of managerial positions before being named division director. In 1995 he was honored with the Raymond E. Stotzer Jr. Award, presented by the Texas Transportation Institute.

New director appointed

Eric Gleason has been appointed director of the Public Transportation Division, effective July 1, to fill the position in Austin held by Susan Bryant, who retired March 31. Gleason's first day in the office will be Aug. 1.

Gleason most recently served as director of service development for the King County Department of Transportation, Metro Transit, in Washington state, where he was responsible for the planning and implementation of public-transportation services, facilities and market development programs for more than 200 routes carrying nearly 100 million passengers per year.

Before joining King County

■ See Page 7



Metro in 1985, Gleason had been a transit planner in Oregon. He also served two years in the Peace Corps in the Solomon Islands.

He holds a bachelor's degree in resource economics from the University of New Hampshire and a master's degree in city and regional planning from the University of North Carolina.

State promotes tourism

The Travel Industry Association reported in a recent survey that Texas spends more on tourism than any other state — \$13.7 million in 2004-2005. Following Texas in domestic-tourism advertising are Florida (\$10.8 million) and Pennsylvania (\$9 million).

With the country's fourth-highest overall budget for tourism, the

Lone Star State spent \$30.6 million behind Hawaii, Illinois and Pennsylvania. The return on investment is noted in the association's report: Visitors to Texas who stayed overnight in commercial lodging spent \$17.4 billion in 2003, which is more than half of all visitor spending in the state.

Heat hits tires hard

According to a study conducted by the Rubber Manufacturers Association, only 16 percent of Texas drivers properly check their tires — leaving 84 percent who are asking for trouble, especially during the summer heat.

Research sponsored by the tire-industry group shows that 32 percent of drivers in Texas wrongly believe that the best time to check

tires is after being driven for at least a few miles. Instead, tires should be checked when cold, before taking the vehicle on the road.

Under-inflated tires, combined with hot weather and a fully loaded vehicle, can lead to tire failure. Under-inflated tires generate excessive heat, which can be dangerous.

If a tire goes flat while traveling at a high rate of speed, drivers should remove their foot from the accelerator and coast to a stop. Do not slam on the brakes, which could cause a rollover.

Proper tire care and safety is easy. The most important factors in tire care are: proper inflation pressure, vehicle loading, and tire wear, regular inspection, good driving habits, and vehicle condition. ☺

Retiree-volunteer program begins in September

TxDOT Historical Exhibit welcomes visitors year-round

Remember the days of blacksmith shops, slide rules, guardrail washers and electric typewriters?

For TxDOT retirees with a soft spot for department nostalgia, the department has the perfect opportunity to recall the good-old days — a new “job.”

At 10 a.m. on Aug. 29, the TxDOT Public Information Office (PIO) will host an orientation for volunteers in the Dewitt C. Greer Building for department retirees who want to help further develop the TxDOT Historical Exhibit in Austin.

The exhibit, opened in August 2001, displays highway artifacts, historical photographs, and employee memorabilia. It's in the basement on the west side of the Greer Building.

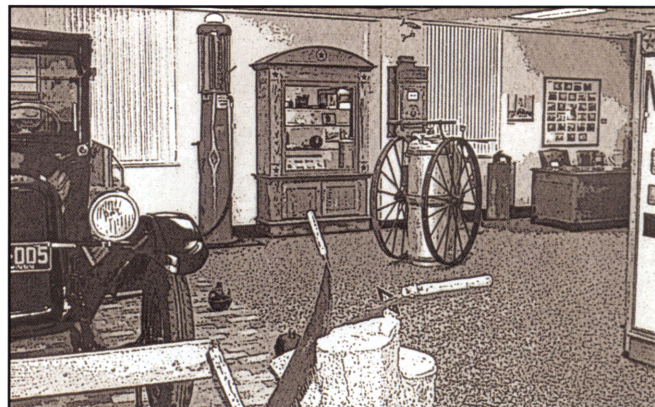
Opportunities for volunteers will include developing displays, procuring and archiving highway memorabilia, collecting oral histories from former employees, framing photographs, serving on an exhibit advisory committee, and more.

Attendance at the Aug. 29 orientation is required before participation in the program. However,

additional orientations will be scheduled for those unable to attend.

Interested retirees should fill out and return a volunteer form, located on the TxDOT Web site at www.dot.state.tx.us/heritage/default.htm.

PIO staff members Ann Zeeck or Monica Reyna can be phoned at (512) 463-8588 to provide more information or to sign volunteers up for the Aug. 29 orientation. ☺



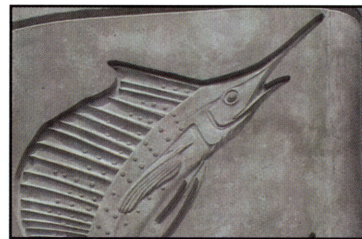
TxDOT photo-illustration
Many tools and specialty pieces of equipment from TxDOT's early days are on display in the department's historical exhibit in Austin.



More than 350 citizens of the towns of Goree and Munday had pictures taken for use as silhouettes in the American-flag wall on FM 266 in Knox County. A duplicate wall will be built in the Town of Munday, also on FM 266.

TxDOT photo / Michael Ford

Designers at TxDOT find satisfying features seen on modern roadways. Those large “canvas” to delight those viewing the artistry there. In their own words, here are profiles of four TxDOT projects. Each excels in enhancing the design



These sailfish adorn one of several columns on the SH 286 & 358 interchange in Corpus Christi. The project incorporates other varieties of sports fish and shell fish from the Gulf of Mexico and the Texas Coastal Bay.

TxDOT photo / Stephen Walker

It's ART! — designs bring

★ Mike Ford

Work: Graphics designer.

With TxDOT: 11 years

Background: Self-taught graphic artist; medical illustrator, U.S. Army 1973-1976.

What interested you in creating highway art?

I had been doing carvings and such for many years and was working on a stone carving of a gargoyle one day during my lunch hour when my boss, Mark Bloschock, noticed my work and stated that somehow, someday he would like to see TxDOT put up a gargoyle on a bridge. From there I started researching old bridges and buildings with their ornate carvings and thought, “We can do this.”

Proudest accomplishment?

That's tough; each piece has its own story that makes me proud to have been a part of the project. At the moment, I would have to say the American Flag wall that is going up in Knox County is my favorite.

Once I was inspired by one of my co-workers, I got very excited about the project and did my best to sell the concept.

I really enjoyed going to the towns of Goree and Munday and taking pictures of the local citizens to use for the silhouettes. To me, this project has a lot of life and feeling reflected in it because of all the personal contributions the local citizens provided.

Why highway art?

If you tailor the art to the location and pay attention

■ See Ford, Page 10

★ Stephen Walker

Work: Pharr District landscape architect.

With TxDOT: 19 years.

Background: Bachelor's degree, landscape architecture, University of Texas at Arlington.

What interested you in creating highway art?

The opportunity to include ‘Highway Art’ evolved from working with alternative finishes for bridges and surface treatments on highway improvement projects. Applications expanded from simple designs used on past projects to larger and more detailed murals on current projects. The artwork has been well received by the traveling public and viewed as another means of enhancing the aesthetics of highway design which has promoted community ownership.

Proudest accomplishment?

Two projects come to mind, US77/83 in Brownsville and the SH286 & SH358 interchange in Corpus Christi. Both broke new ground in proving what could be accomplished with concrete surface treatments. We were able to draw from the identity of each community and celebrate its “sense of place.”

Why highway art?

I believe art forms have a place in urban highway design mainly because of the opportunity to highlight the heritage of our communities. Every region in the state has its unique history. This tool allows TxDOT the option to celebrate some of these unique qualities.

■ See Walker, Page 10

tion and artistry in the decorative scale roadway features provide an unexpected though the looking glass of a vehicle's windshield. DOT road-art designers, with samples of their living experience through highway art.

The "Lone Star" becomes highway art adorning an interstate overpass in the Bryan District. At State Highway 30 and Interstate 45 in Huntsville, the stars turn a standard pedestrian traffic rail into a decorative design feature.

TxDOT photo / Maury Jacob



Highway art combined with community involvement created the Deep Ellum Art Park. Beneath Interstate 345, which is a 1.4-mile section of U.S. 75 at the north end of Interstate 45 in Dallas, the project used incentive funding.

TxDOT photo / Patrick Haigh



ghten Texas roadways

★ Maury Jacob

Work: Bryan District landscape architect.

With TxDOT: 12 years.

Background: Bachelor's degree, landscape architecture, Texas A&M University.

What interested you in creating highway art?

Texas should have not only the best pavement, but the most appealing highway system in the world. Consider highway art the "icing on the cake" that makes an otherwise ordinary structure or roadside attractive. If you start with a delicious cake, then just a little icing goes a very long way. I try to consider a project from a broader perspective and design visual appeal into the project elements. It saves cost, creates a unified design and incorporates art and architecture deep in the highway design process where it belongs. Beautiful roadways provide some of the best public relations the department can get.

Proudest accomplishment?

The State Highway 30 U-turn project may be my best effort to date. It is a conservative design reflecting community values. A simple, repeating arch theme defines the retaining walls dominating the structure. Created with form liner textures and a natural, earth-toned color scheme, the faux stone finish provides a solid visual foundation for the bridge, yet hints at a hidden history. This simple, low-cost design has big visual impact. As I do in many other projects, I reserved landscape spaces up front. Providing sites for local par-

■ See Jacob, Page 10

★ Patrick Haigh

Work: Dallas District landscape architect.

With TxDOT: 19 years.

Background: Bachelor's degree, landscape architecture, Texas A&M University; master's degree, city and regional planning, University of Texas Arlington.

What interested you in creating highway art?

I had an opportunity which came about as a result of working for TxDOT. In Deep Ellum there was already some art and it seemed natural to put it out on the highway as well.

Proudest accomplishment?

Deep Ellum Art Park, under the north end of I-345. We encourage community involvement in making a TxDOT Highway art project a success. It was a Governor's Community Achievement Award (Keep Texas Beautiful) winner.

Why highway art?

My philosophy is that blending highway appearance into the local community is important. We ask these questions: Do the aesthetics of the community fit in with the feel of the project? Are citizens happy with the way the highway looks?

In the works:

SH 161 in Grand Prairie — structural aesthetics and sound walls decorated in a prairie style including grasses and wildflowers.

FM 1382 in Grand Prairie — structural aesthetics

■ See Haigh, Page 10

■ Ford —

continued from page 8

to detail then the community accepts it as theirs and treats it as such. I understand that many believe less is better but you also have to consider the people that have to look at this wall every morning and evening while they are at the stop light, or the business or office that's across the street. Their only view is that of a blank retaining wall. The natural

instinct is to hang a picture on the wall or paint it.

In the works:

We have several projects in the works from small ornamentations to large designs, several of which have just been approved for the East-West freeway in Lubbock. It's too early in the design phase to talk about the others yet, but I'm excited about my work here.☺



Ford

■ Walker —

continued from page 8

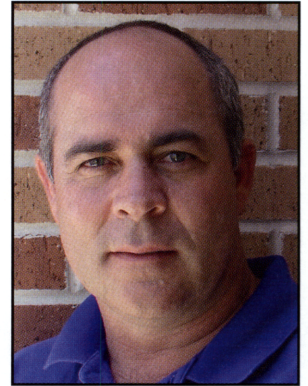
All artwork should focus on themes such as architecture, heritage, or its natural settings.

In the works:

U.S. 77/83 in Brownsville — The mural celebrates the historic pasts of the city of Brownsville. This mural or 'Time Line' depicts historic buildings, native

palms, parrots and images representing historic events in South Texas along the Rio Grande.

SH 286 & SH 358 in Corpus Christi — The project displays sporting fish such as sailfish, tuna, redfish, trout, flounder, shrimp and shellfish. The mural images hint to the natural food chain within the ecosystem of the Gulf.☺



Walker

■ Jacob —

continued from page 9

icipation improves civic pride and local buy-in.

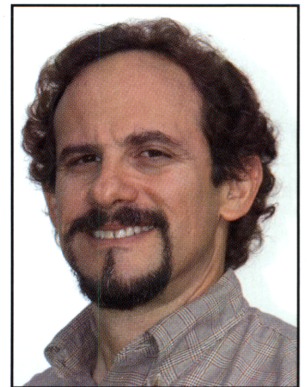
Why highway art?

I've always believed that art and architecture reflect local values and self image. In the Bryan District the state highway system represents a huge percentage of the local communities' visible public

space. This visual dominance requires TxDOT designers to pay close attention to what highway corridors look like.

In the works:

SH 36 Little River Bridge and railroad underpass in Cameron — aesthetic structure treatments to bridge rails, and railroad bridge elements.☺



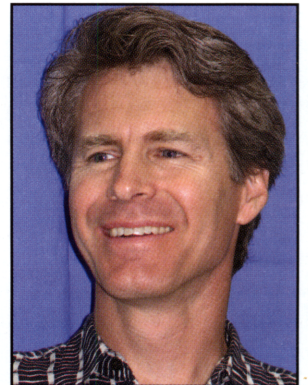
Jacob

■ Haigh —

continued from page 9

and columns decorated in a prairie style including grasses and wildflowers.

Retaining walls — Discussions have started for highway art for retaining walls within Plano, Sanger and Denton. Plano and Sanger planning will be done later this year.☺



Haigh

Text compiled by Bill Powell, TxDOT Public Information Office

All images, TxDOT photos



Windy Man blows back into Lubbock

Road art in Lubbock District spurs community commentary

by **Bill Powell**
Public Information Office

Last summer, when vandals damaged Windy Man — a piece of highway art — beyond saving, the Lubbock District had to remove the first decoration of its kind in TxDOT's history.

The public's perceptions of whether Windy Man represented the welcome or unwelcome have been mixed. Opinions of the sculpture ranged widely: it symbolized paganism, it was light-hearted whimsy, or it was intriguing and provocative art. Most folks, though — whatever their feelings — were scandalized that someone would destroy the figure.

The memory of Windy Man lingered locally as a character nicknamed Blowthor to adorn T-shirts and other memorabilia sold locally for the amusement of the college population at Texas Tech.

Placing Windy Man in the community was not as profound as those who created the controversy may have believed. Mike Ford, a graphic artist with the TxDOT Bridge Division who designed Windy Man, characterized it simply as a work of art to be part of

a retaining wall to enhance the appearance of the Marsha Sharp Freeway.

There were no hidden meanings. Of the pickup-truck-bed-size decoration, Ford says, "It was intended as a celebration of West Texas."

Soon after the vandalism, the damaged sculpture was removed and replaced with a blank panel. The remaining three undamaged "Windy Man" figures faced an uncertain future.

A year later the strategy for highway art is changed. Windy Man is no longer the centerpiece of the campaign to decorate the Marsha Sharp Freeway. Now, instead, the focus is on a setting sun.

That doesn't mean the controversial figure of Windy Man won't be on the freeway. But when the interchange at Avenue L — one of six in the city — is decorated, it will be the home of three Windy Man sculptures. These will be in addition to the windmills and other images designated for the intersection.

As to the security of the figures, Lubbock District Engineer Randy Hopmann says he is confident about the safety of these sculptures. "The walls are taller and Windy Man is located in the upper reaches of the wall."

Estimates are that the Windy Man figures will be re-installed on the freeway within two years. ☺

Big hole in ground closes road

Larry Krantz
Tyler District

NEW HARMONY — A hole in the ground can mean different things to different people.

For most, the hole that appeared suddenly one Sunday morning on Farm to Market 724 just west of Tyler has become a curiosity capable of unleashing even the wildest of imaginations.

“Was it a meteor?”

No.

“FIRE ANTS!?”

Nope.

Then more softly: “Space aliens?”

Wow! — but no.

OK, so how did a hole come to be that nearly swallowed a passing sheriff’s department cruiser around 9 a.m., June 26, and end up nearly 100-feet across, 60-feet wide and 60-feet deep?

A bird’s-eye diagram of the scene shows a large, rough oval with a teardrop shape inside.

The sinkhole makes up the bulb of the teardrop, with the damaged roadway crossing the northern-most part like a belt.

The point of the teardrop stops underneath an active gas-drilling rig — which reported experiencing some kind of underground anomaly a few hours before the sheriff deputy’s discovery — located some 100 yards from the sinkhole.

The rough oval, which is made up of several layers of concentric rings, shows additional surface cracking. That surface instability has limited TxDOT access to the site.

So far, the hole has shown itself to be unstable, if not downright unpredictable.

From its pavement-to-pavement width on Day 1, the hole rapidly grew to 50 feet by Tuesday, and, after a short slowing period, eroded to twice its size over the next 72 hours.

Meanwhile, at least four natural



TxDOT photo

Seen from the air, this hole erased the width of the roadway on June 26 in the Tyler District. A sheriff’s car and its driver escaped being drawn into the hole. Repair efforts are under way.

springs appeared out of the newly exposed earth on the sides, and began filling the hole with water.

The immediate unimproved right-of-way surface settled an estimated six feet at its deepest, and the road surface has cracked and buckled to varying degrees as far as 300 feet from the edge of the hole.

Surface instability has also prevented the drilling company from making a quick exit.

Heavy trucks and equipment used to disassemble the derrick — which was leaning as much as five feet — caused additional cracking and delayed extraction by several days.

The rig was finally removed on July 2. As of July 7, the drilling site was vacant.

The Texas Railroad Commission has visited the site, and will make any determinations about what may still need to be done to stabilize the ground around the site or plug any remaining well issues.

The Tyler District is also in negotiations with several firms to try to determine the extent of the instability in the area and to receive recommendations as to the best way to proceed with fixing and ultimately reopening the road.

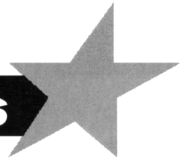
In the meantime, the road remains closed to through-traffic and has “no trespassing” and “road closed” signs posted at both ends. ☪

Letter from the editor

■ Continued from Page 3

reminder of what should by now be obvious, that the next attack could happen on this side of the ocean.

Just as obviously, transportation infrastructure will continue to be an attractive target for any person or group interested in killing innocent people as well as affecting something we cherish almost as dearly as life — our freedom of movement. ☪



DISTRICTS

ABILENE

July — (35) Tommy J. Higgins, (30) Patrick D. McKennon, (20) Charles A. Dalbert, Miguel Santos
June — (30) Jerry D. Beard, (20) Dwayne Justice, (10) Stewart J. Chapman, Kenneth D. Williams, (5) Jay E. Martin

AMARILLO

July — (20) Wesley N. Hopson, (15) Joe M. Armstrong, Kenneth W. Corse, Michael C. Fowler, Albert L. Fulcher, (5) Joel C. Law, Mark L. Wilhelm
June — (25) David L. McKee, (20) Durward M. Dorris, (15) Bradley D. Buchanan, (10) Robert G. Hendricks, Victor I. Rios

ATLANTA

July — (5) Matthew C. Davis, Keith J. Johnson
June — (15) Michael D. Lightfoot, Emma G. Simms, (10) Joan C. Clayton, Keith R. Green

AUSTIN

July — (30) David B. McHugh, (25) Robert Salas, (20) Steven O. Sylvester, (5) David R. Baroi, Alura L. Davies, Gregory S. Watson
June — (25) Richard C. Harris, (20) Christopher A. Hatla, (10) Mark E. Hoefelmeyer, Lonnie W. Hohmann, Robert N. Jordan, (10) Walter G. Barfield, Alicia D. Carlile, James R. Chamberlin, Michael W. Galloway, Sandra E. Velasquez

BEAUMONT

July — (10) Bruce A. Myrick, Catherine A. Ramsey, (5) Walter J. Breaux
June — (25) Kevin L. Weeks, (20) Billy G. Jinks, (15) Andrea M. Murry, (10) Ted D. Babin, Gregory D. Christopher, William H. Dodson, (5) John D. Barron, Preston Ceasar, Joe E. Stifflemire

BROWNWOOD

July — (15) Sigifredo Bustos Jr., Michael G. Ray, (10) Edwin L. Smith
June — (15) Jimmy D. Doud, Ronald L. Pope, Donna W. Sparkman

BRYAN

July — (10) Connie J. Flickinger, Kerry D. Jones, David Polk III, (5) Jennifer R. Manning, David E. Maresh, Wesley B. Reeder
June — (20) David W. Morris, (15) Michael R. Acosta, (5) Percy Lofton Jr., Doug J. Marino, Cecil D. Schroeder, Hoyt M. Wichman

CHILDRESS

July — (10) Hazel B. Jones, Keith R. Milhoan
June — (25) Ricky L. White, (15) Jerry D. Reynolds, (10) Larry L. Crabtree, James W. Osborn, Kevin M. Taylor,

Jackie K. Taylor,
Bobby L. Weatherton

CORPUS CHRISTI

July — (25) Theodoro M. Garza Jr., (20) Lloyd Clifton, (15) Luis S. Flores, Abelardo R. Solis Jr., (10) Eduardo Rodriguez Jr., Larry H. Wenger Jr., (5) Leonel Escobar, Patrick J. Kraus, Joe M. Perez
June — (25) Rosendo Moreno, (20) John R. Patino, (15) Arthur R. Chacon, (10) Orlando J. Carrillo, Mary M. Perez, (5) Miles P. Koonce, Perry G. Warren

DALLAS

July — (30) William R. Crosby, (20) Bobby L. Bland, (10) Douglas D. Cathcart, Micheal D. Culton, Zeldia D. Cummings, Alice F. Engledow, Sara T. McFadin, Benny W. Scarfone, (5) James C. Baxter, Daniel Garcia, Jason B. Hyde, Brady B. Lumpkin, Stanley E. Mathews, Brenda M. Taylor
June — (25) James W. Coey, (20) David W. Dowdle, Matthew E. MacGregor, Len T. McCoy, James D. McKinney, Olga A. Morris, Horace E. Tanner, (15) Bryan E. Ogden, (10) Jason M. Brodigan, Rodger D. Couch, Maher M. Ghanayem, Deborah G. Inglet, Jesse Jacquez, (5) Michael O. Anthony, Michael J. Barham, Jason P. Clarke, Brian E. Kaderka, John R. Robinson, Carlton L. Womack

EL PASO

July — (35) Sergio I. Aguilar, (20) Peter H. Bustamante, (10) Maria R. Chavez, Domingo V. Hernandez, Magdalena Leal, (5) Margarita Montes-Palomino
June — (25) Jorge Gonzalez, (20) Donald L. Benortham, (10) Cynthia A. Lucero, Debra A. Martinez, Jose H. Pina Jr., (5) Maricruz Saenz, Lorena Soriano

FORT WORTH

July — (20) David B. Dennis, Thelma D. Patterson, (15) James R. Neely, (10) Baldemar Galindo, Ross D. Johnson, Patrick G. Quarles Jr., Mikel J. Riley, (5) Whendlyn J. Cross, Jason D. Fite, Scotty L. Peevey, Anthony E. White
June — (35) Raymond T. Buzalsky, (20) Michael W. Forbus, Larry W. Gilbreath, (10) Thomas D. Moore, (5) Kirby L. Bailey, Charles M. Stiles, Gregory B. Timmons

HOUSTON

July — (20) Margaret A. Moore, Fawn M. Snyder, (15) James C. Bryant, Stephen L. Leffingwell, Maria Toybina, Khoi T. Tran, (10) Rakesh Tripathi, Debra A. Williams, (5) Theresa A. Anderson, Laura E. Finner, Kimberly I. Janca, Ba Trinh, Berhane T. Wasse
June — (35) Gilbert A. Sherrill, (25) Roosevelt N. MacK Jr., Ray A. Santee, Donald W. Wygrys, (20) Timothy C. Colby, Ron J. Garrison,

Alfred L. Jones, Kenneth L. Ozuna, James B. Schlichting, Frederick Whitaker, (15) Daniel E. Ammons, David S. Crain, James E. Kridner, Teddy R. Revia, Criss K. Wilcutt, (10) Eliska M. Carrier-robinson, Bell A. Cheng Ranft, Tyrone Hamilton, Sandra K. Martin, Paula W. Moore, Rowland N. Ochieze, Bharat I. Patel, Vera D. Rader, Tammy T. Samuel, (5) Mary M. Hernandez, Juan P. Pinales, Ernesto L. Pitogo, Armin A. Rodriguez, Sedrick D. Scott, Felicia M. Shamlin

LAREDO

July — (30) Leopoldo Guerrero, (10) Yolanda A. Castillo, Elia Hernandez, (5) Ana A. Trevino
June — (25) Santiago De La Garza, (15) James G. Casey, (10) Sara R. Garza, (5) Casey B. Gilpin, Diana Y. Hernandez, Roberto Rodriguez III, Hector Rogerio Jr.

LUBBOCK

July — (20) William E. Smith, (15) Charles S. Renfro, (10) Guy R. Sledge, (5) David O. Dean
June — (20) Jesus Meza, (15) Judith M. Hromas, (5) Manuel A. Cardenas, Kevin L. Dixon, Edwin D. Hartfield, Joseph S. Lamb, James D. Morren, Michael L. Priest

LUFKIN

July — (15) Douglas K. Mark, (10) Granville D. Waller, (5) Earnest Minor Jr.
June — (25) Sandra B. Mettlen, (20) Carl E. Johnson, (15) Robert N. Foley, Kevin L. Luna Jr., (10) Wesley L. Cloudy, Michael R. Moore, (5) Stevie Z. Barnes, Jerome Owens, Joshua T. Taylor

ODESSA

July — (25) Ruben F. Rodriguez, (20) Victor M. Martinez, Alfredo R. Martinez, (15) Ricardo A. Garcia, Diana J. Ortiz, (10) Joe W. Bumpus, (5) Daniel Aguirre, John C. Wallis
June — (20) Jose A. Diaz, (15) Ruben R. Salcido Jr., (10) Russell J. Tidwell, (5) Kevin M. Barnhart

PARIS

July — (35) James K. Baker, (20) David M. George, (10) Herman D. Andrus, (5) Michael A. Jaco
June — (35) Richard C. Lynch, (10) Kimberly D. Helms, Billy C. Pannell, Andra K. Walker, (5) Tina A. Jones, Robert L. Turner III

PHARR

July — (20) Samuel Gomez, (10) Joe B. Casas, Cruz E. Garcia, Maria C. Gwynn, Jesus M. Hernandez, Aurora B. Morales, Roel Silva, Graciela G. Soto, Bill C. Taitague, (5) Robert R. Juarez Jr., Arnulfo Rodriguez
June — (20) Ricardo S. Gallaga Jr., Teresa S. Solis, (10) Graciela Cantu, Yvonne J. Hernandez, Miguel Hinojosa Jr., Elizabeth L.

Paradise, Raymond G. Sanchez Jr., (5) Juan M. Garza, Lorenzo Leal, Juan L. Longoria Jr.

SAN ANGELO

July — (25) Stacey L. Huber, (20) Othol K. Long, Fernando B. Sanchez, (15) Darren S. Crenwelge, (10) James F. Palacio, Luis P. Ramirez, Martha F. Villarreal
June — (20) Hermerejil S. Garcia, Curtis J. Whitlock, (15) Lauren C. Fortier, (5) Debra F. Sienkiewicz

SAN ANTONIO

July — (20) Thomas J. Hill, Joe P. Valadez, (15) Irene C. Ugarte, (10) John C. Ferguson Jr., Philip T. Horne, William Koerner, Tony S. Martinez, Michael J. Shelton, Nancy L. Tarbox, (5) Jessica B. Castiglione, Logan C. Green, Ronald R. Hultz, Julian Ramirez
June — 30 years, Frank P. Scheel, (25) Craig S. Williams, (20) Samuel Martinez, Michael Shaw, (15) Farren S. Basse, James F. Browne Jr., (10) Gilbert L. Davila, Rolando Escamilla, David P. Rodrigues, Kiley N. Seaton, (5) Lea M. Casiano, Donnie L. Herrera, Samuel Lopez III, Armando F. Rodriguez

TYLER

July — (10) Marlin L. Gallender, (5) Steven B. Gandy, Kathy J. Morrison, John T. Russell, Paul D. Schneider, Kenneth R. Smith
June — (15) Stephen K. Sanders, (10) Donald B. Berry, Vanessa J. Bordwine, Mary L. Deel, Wanda J. Oliver, Sandra Walters, (5) Ricky M. Alvis, Walter P. Crews, Jesse D. Sisco, Waco District, 40 years, Patricia M. Garrison, 30 years, Richard L. Hairston, (10) Cedric F. Patterson

WACO

July — (25) Vivian A. Powers, (10) Raymond Roddy Jr., (5) Gabriel C. Garcia

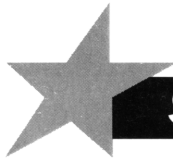
WICHITA FALLS

July — (10) Michael D. Beaver, Angelia D. Thomason, (5) Lee W. Adams, Michael E. Leritz, Jimmy R. Sanderson, Lewis G. Thomas
June — (10) Hector A. Flores, Armando Martinez, (5) Matthew A. Poirot

YOAKUM

July — (25) Karen K. Fuchs, Fred Lerma III, (20) Lonnie J. Gregorczyk, William G. Hundl
June — (25) Michael W. Drake, Billy J. Goodrich Jr., Larry G. Jirkovsky, (20) Gary M. Gould, Joseph M. Orr, (15) George A. Eilert, (5) Henry Gutierrez, Brian K. Jasek

■ See Page 14



Service Awards

() = service years

■ DIVISIONS

AVIATION

July — (15) Harold R. Lafitte

BRIDGE

July — (15) Joseph E. Owen,
(10) Michelle N. Minjarez

CONSTRUCTION

July — (10) Christina L. Cheatham, Roy A. Contreras, (5) Michael T. Olsze, Kristine F. Santos
June — (45) Leonard A. Iselt, (40) George B. King, (25) Darren G. Hazlett, (20) Craig A. Cox, (15) Robert J. Roe, (10) Mason A. Adam, Marissa E. Trujillo, (5) Betty J. Myers, Lavonda Sparks, Jason Tucker

DESIGN

June — (15) Rene Garcia, (10) Christina L. Cabello, La Tanya M. Williams, (5) Sandra Sinton

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

July — (30) Elvia R. Gonzalez

FINANCE

July — (15) Leticia Cruz,

(10) Rose Ann Juarez
June — (10) Steve L. Bolles

GENERAL SERVICES

July — (20) James L. Jarrett Jr., (10) Marissa N. Longoria, (5) Chad A. Glenn, Toby W. Rackley
June — (30) Gordon S. Taylor, Adelina T. Torres, (20) Carolyn C. Shanley, Juan G. Vinton III, (15) Charla R. Saegert

HUMAN RESOURCES

July — (10) Sandra J. Kissman
June — (10) Donald L. Thompson, (5) Nancy J. Crocker

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

July — (15) Timothy R. Kalich, Reynaldo R. Muniz, Gary M. Popp, James T. Wilder Jr.
June — 30 years, Stephen W. Shackelford, (15) Raymond A. Charnecki, John K. Strickland Jr., (5) John L. Stokes

MAINTENANCE

July — (35) Stanley M. Wade, (10) Gregory N. Cole, (5) John F. Mason Jr.
June — (20) Seferina A. Chavez, (10) Suzanne G. Pecht, (5) Byron Hicks

MOTOR CARRIER

July — (5) Shelagh Chapman, Denise C. Pate
June — (10) Henry O. Floyd

MOTOR VEHICLE

July — (5) Sharon E. Gordon, Suzanna C. Kaatz

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

June — (5) Precila Martinez

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

July — (10) Paul S. Moon

RIGHT OF WAY

July — (5) David P. Harrah
June — (15) Suzanne M. Roach

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS

July — (10) Christine E. Johnson
June — (20) Donald R. Baker, David J. Danz, Charles J. Farnham, (5) Clinton D. Jumper

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & PROGRAMMING

July — (15) Cheryl L. Heflin
June — (15) Charleston D. Hall, (10) Raul Cantu Jr., Rosemarie G. Grimmell

TRAVEL

July — (20) Mary E. Ulrich Jackson, Melissa M. Vian, (15) Martha L. Martin, (5) Robbie L. Dudley
June — (20) Joe G. Smith, (10) Avelina J. Armendariz

VEHICLE TITLES & REGISTRATION

July — (20) Romelia Flores, (15) Nancy Naysmith, (5) Melanie G. Churchill
June — (30) Larry C. Wojtek, (15) Mary M. Coffman, (10) Judy C. Carter, Diane M. Kenny, Penelope B. Perkins, Ann M. Willard, (5) Diane B. Emrick-Dodson, Tammera L. Parr, Janice K. Schlichting

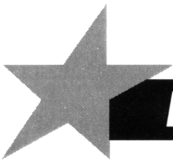
■ OFFICES

AUDIT

July — (20) Merle K. Williamson
June — (10) Donna F. Roberts

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

June — (10) Steven M. Polunsky



Exit Ramp

() = service years/month of retirement

■ DISTRICTS

AMARILLO

Larry D. Fewell (29/MAY)
Antonio M. Panheco (24/MAY)
Victor D. Chandler (21/MAY)

ATLANTA

Johnnie B. Haskins (25/APRIL)
Leonard O. Grant (11/APRIL)

BEAUMONT

Billy R. Clopton Sr. (31/APRIL)
Thomas A. Bergman (20/APRIL)

BROWNWOOD

Ralph Q. Atchison (24/MAY)
Michael Kopchik (29/APRIL)
Bruce R. Ransberger (20/APRIL)

BRYAN

Stanley P. Markowski (31/MAY)

CHILDRESS

Jimmie R. Lax (30/MAY)

CORPUS CHRISTI

Grace L. Greenlee (22/MAY)
Oscar M. Casanova (39/APRIL)

DALLAS

Christopher Speed (29/MAY)
Betty B. Stults (25/MAY)
William C. Baker (11/APRIL)
Martin D. Brookhart (11/APRIL)

FORT WORTH

Larry D. Martin (31/MAY)
Tama G. Keaney (21/MAY)
Scott E. White (12/MAY)
Severo Rodriguez (26/APRIL)
Keyurnath V. Gautam (11/APRIL)

HOUSTON

Lamont L. Sauer (22/MAY)
Robert L. Cubine (31/APRIL)
Donald J. Lorenz (27/APRIL)
Joan E. Littleton (16/APRIL)

LAREDO

Jose L. Delapass (28/MAY)
Estela F. Rodriguez (27/APRIL)

LUBBOCK

Matthew H. Askew Jr. (31/MAY)
Juan D. Alvarado (21/MAY)
Ronnie L. Bales (25/APRIL)

LUFKIN

John T. Corbin (25/MAY)

ODESSA

Jesus O. Ramirez (18/APRIL)

PARIS

Dale L. Friddle (9/MAY)
Charles W. Crossland (31/APRIL)
Anna L. Spencer (15/APRIL)

PHARR

Gustavo O. Lopez (27/MAY)
Adan C. Canales (24/APRIL)

SAN ANGELO

Delvin R. Oaks (27/MAY)

SAN ANTONIO

Edward E. Hampson (37/MAY)
Anthony J. Novak (26/MAY)
Susie R. Villarreal (28/APRIL)

TYLER

Terry G. Frick (27/MAY)

WACO

Betty G. Knight (26/MAY)
Kathleen H. Smith (20/MAY)
Thomas C. Myers (25/APRIL)

WICHITA FALLS

Roy W. Proctor (36/MAY)

YOAKUM

Luke M. Grant (28/MAY)

■ DIVISIONS

CONSTRUCTION

Ronald D. Gardner (35/MAY)
Barbara H. McCain (27/MAY)
Mickey A. Dammann (28/APRIL)
Robert J. Light (28/APRIL)
Patricia A. Merrill (18/APRIL)

DESIGN

Mark S. Mathews (27/MAY)

GENERAL SERVICES

Lee B. Whitten, Jr. (21/MAY)
Kenneth J. Winkler (16/MAY)

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Paul S. Hejl (28/MAY)
Pamela L. Perrine (27/MAY)
Gloria D. King (5/APRIL)

VEHICLE TITLES AND REGISTRATION

Shirley H. Pavolich (32/MAY)



Inside Track

Editor's note: In this issue of TNews, we are launching Inside Track to capture some of the lighter moments, personal observations and significant accomplishments that take place among our employees

By Judith Curtis
Associate Editor

Bonds — James' bonds...

Chief Financial Officer James Bass is still marveling about the success of the Texas Mobility Fund bond sale he attended in New York City last month: \$5 billion in orders came in. But TxDOT had only \$1 billion in bonds for sale.

Early mornings at the Lege...

Jerry "Watch Your Step" Dike was on his way to a hearing in the wee hours of the a.m., accompanied by OGC's Bob Jackson and Amadeo Saenz, when he tripped and fell forward, barely missing Jackson, who was about to give all-important testimony to legislators. Said Saenz to Dike, who may well have been expecting a sympathetic word, "Careful, there Jerry. We don't want Bob hurt."

Most consecutive hours worked...

LAO's Denise Pittard finished work during the legislative session at 4 a.m. one day, drove home to get one hour of sleep, then got up at 5 a.m. to head back to a Senate Transportation Committee hearing.

Bluebonnets in Kandahar...

Head of security Larry Rayburn is away serving in Afghanistan. To bring a piece of the Lone Star State to the region, he is slapping as many "Don't Mess With Texas" stickers as he can on Humvees, helicopters, even on buildings. He also leaves a handful or two of bluebonnet seeds wherever his outfit happens to be.

TxDOT Idol...

Aaron Manney, 22, maintenance technician in the Childress District, has been discovered: The budding musician, whose song titles include "If a road could describe this life," travels to Nashville in August to record a CD. 🎵

If you know something interesting about a fellow TxDOTer, call Judy Curtis at 512-463-5859 or e-mail her at jcurti1@dot.state.tx.us.

NOTICE TO READERS

State law requires those people (TxDOT retirees and others) who receive Transportation News by mail to make a written request to remain on the mailing list. Address your request for annual renewal to:

TxDOT Public Information Office
ATTN: TNEWS MAILING LIST
125 E. 11th St.
Austin, TX 78701-2483

If you do not send us a request for renewal, we must drop your name from our mailing list. This notice does not apply to TxDOT employees who receive individual copies of Transportation News at work.

This is the final of three required notices.

Calendar

2005

AUGUST

16-18 Design and Bridge Conference, Dallas, DES/BRG

25 Commission Meeting, Austin

SEPTEMBER

12-14 Save a Life-Safety Belts & Sober Drivers, Austin, TRF

29 Commission Meeting, Austin

OCTOBER

11-12 Transportation Short Course, College Station

27 Commission Meeting, Corpus Christi

NOVEMBER

7-10 Research Management Committee Meeting, CC, RTI

17 Commission Meeting, Austin

DECEMBER

7 Research Oversight Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI

15 Commission Meeting, Austin

* = all agencies closed

** = skeleton crew holiday

*** = optional holiday (in lieu of any state holiday where a skeleton crew is required)

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



In Memoriam

Beaumont

Jeff McNeil
Assist. Maintenance Section Supervisor
died July 14, 2005

El Paso

James S. Philpot
Chief Inspector
retired December 1983
died June 15, 2005

Waco

Jimmy D. Knapp
Engineering Technician I
died June 22, 2005

Information Systems

Tim S. Newman
Aerial Photography
retired June 1989
died Jan. 14, 2005

Michael C. Roper
Engineer I
retired 1992
died March 16, 2005

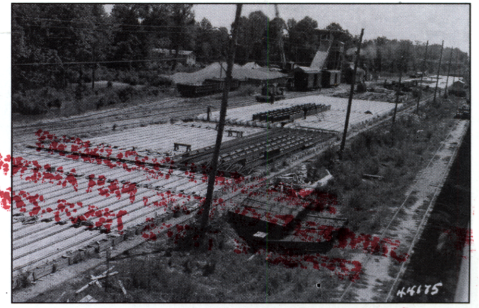
Commission

E.H. Thornton Jr.
Transportation Commission
Chairman 1951-1957
died July 10, 2005

backtracks



While this Central Texas gas station might have been known for its super service 50 years ago, today it has another use. If you have more information about this picture, contact Jeremy Boehm at (512) 936-7980 or by e-mail at jboehm1@dot.state.tx.us.



The **backtracks** picture from the June 2005 issue of Transportation News is still unidentified. Any ideas? ✚



Looking Back...

"The men who have been seen over the (Greer) building in western attire are the supervisors and attendants who man the Travel Information Bureaus at seven points on the border of the state. ... These men promote travel within Texas boundaries each year, increase miles traveled by tourists, thereby causing them to spend more vacation dollars in Texas."

— Highway,

Texas Highway Department newsletter, July 1955, p. 3

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