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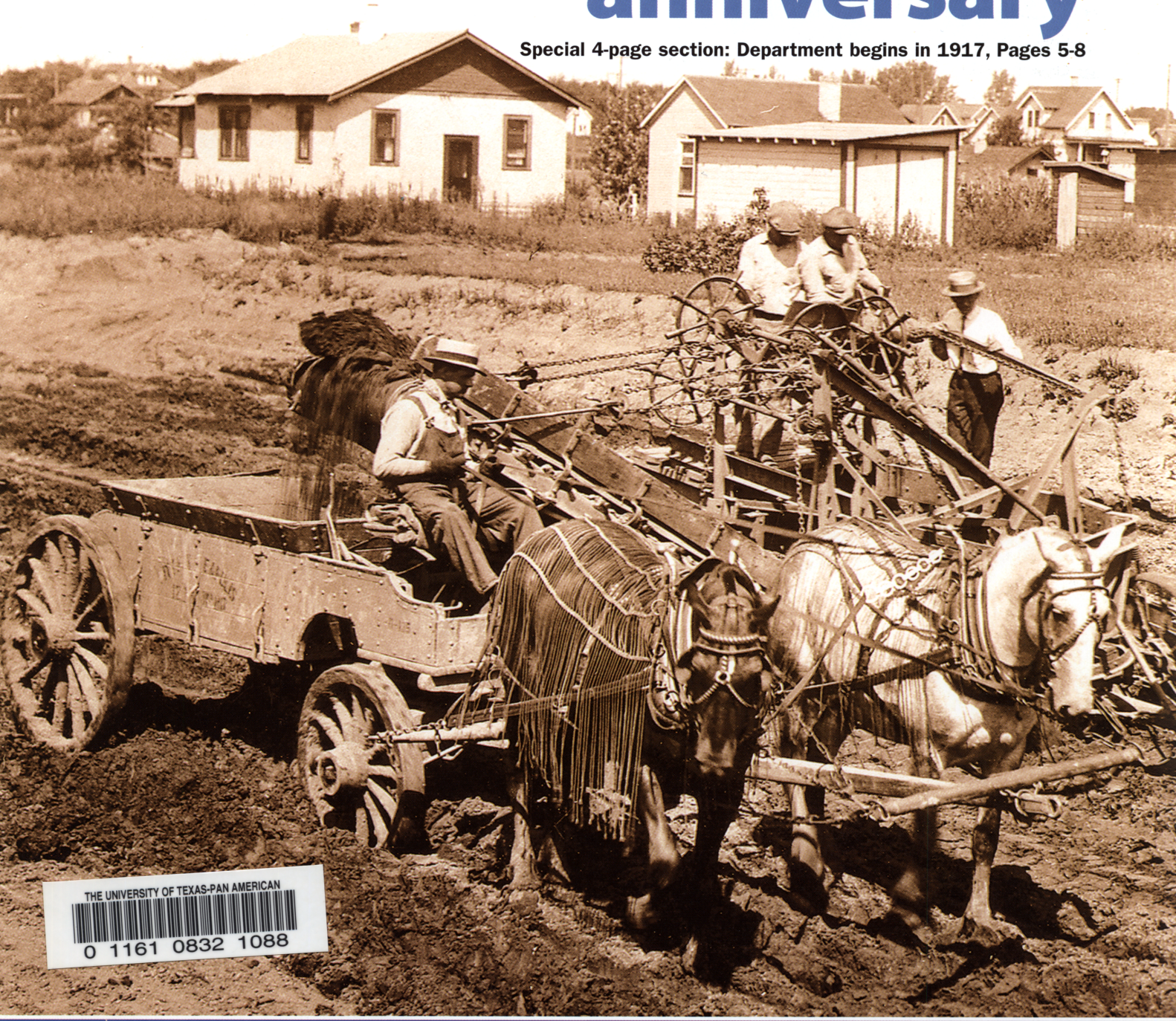
Transportation news

TRANSPORTATION NEWS
APRIL 2007
Volume 32, Number 4

TxDOT's 90th anniversary

Special 4-page section: Department begins in 1917, Pages 5-8



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN
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On the cover:
Back when TxDOT got its start 90 years ago in 1917, road-building efforts in Texas were labor intensive — for horse and man. A four-page special section on Pages 5-8 reviews the department's origins, helping us understand how much Texas has grown over nine decades.
– TxDOT Photo Library

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Transportation News is published by the TxDOT Public Information Office
125 E. 11th St., Austin, TX 78701-2483
Phone: (512) 463-8588
Circulation: 18,793

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Printed on recycled paper by TxDOT, General Services Division

TNews Online (TxDOT computers only): http://crossroads/org/pio/tnol.htm

Straight Talk

Nine decades of service

By Mike Behrens
Executive Director

Mike Behrens

This month, TxDOT celebrates 90 years of service to the traveling public in Texas.

It was 1917 when the 35th Texas legislature passed House Bill 2, establishing a state highway department "vested with power to encourage and direct the development of a system of State Highways."

Similar departments were forming at the same time across the United States, the result of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, which Congress enacted to stimulate the building of a coordinated national system of roads.

The new highway department in Texas was charged with injecting "greater efficiency and durability in public road construction and greater economy in the expenditure of the large sums of public funds annually employed in road work." The agency also inherited oversight of vehicle registration and the use of the resulting fees to fund the work at hand.

The efforts of the new employees who made up the new Texas Highway Department focused on an entirely different set of problems and challenges than today's workers face. Back then, the goal centered on building any roads at all, to get the farmer out of the mud, literally, and to connect one road to another, one community to others. Texans at first just wanted roadways so they could take their farm products to market.

That certainly is very different from the wish list of today's motorists. Congestion, a key factor affecting safety, air quality, economic development, and system preservation, was not a problem in 1917. After all, there were fewer than 200,000 registered vehicles on very few roads back then.

Today, our key goals focus on reducing congestion, cutting air pollution, enhancing economic development and safety, and preserving the value of our current transportation infrastructure.

What hasn't changed since the department was created is the dedication, hard work and can-do attitude of our employees.

All of us working for TxDOT today have those who went before us to thank for the legacy they left us. And I thank you all for living up to it. ✪

TxDOT goals

- **Reduce congestion**
- **Enhance safety**
- **Expand economic opportunity**
- **Improve air quality**
- **Increase the value of transportation assets**

T•Notes

■ Seven developers have submitted qualifications and conceptual proposals to develop the North Tarrant Express.

Teams competing for the chance to develop proposals that are more detailed are Acciona-Omega, B3 Connect Texas, FCC Construccion, Itinere Infrastructure, NTE Mobility Partners, OHL Infrastructure, and T-Bar Mobility Alliance.

Last year, TxDOT issued a request for private-sector proposals to develop the 36-mile project along the I-35W/I-820/SH 121/SH 183 corridor. The improvements, estimated at $2 billion, will reconstruct and add lanes on I-35W, I-820 and SH 121/183, including express toll-managed lanes.

TxDOT will now identify the teams that qualify and will seek Texas Transportation Commission approval to issue the request for more detailed proposals.

■ The City of College Station passed a resolution in March formally requesting that the TTC-69 study area be expanded to include Brazos County. The resolution noted that, if served by TTC-69, the Brazos Valley would share in the economic development, service to business, and job creation the corridor will bring.

TTC-69 is a 600-mile, multi-billion-dollar project from northeast Texas to Mexico. It is expected to increase mobility, safety and economic development opportunities through a multi-use transportation system that includes roads, rail and utilities.

TxDOT is considering the College Station request as it continues work on the initial environmental study that would narrow the current study area to approximately four miles wide. Public hearings are scheduled for later this year. ✪

— Judith Curtis, associate editor

'Rescission' forces program cuts

By Judith Curtis
Associate editor

The Texas Transportation Commission, at its meeting in late March, approved cuts in TxDOT's budget amounting to $288 million, the sum Texas must return to the federal government.

On March 19, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued all 50 states a "notice of rescission of federal aid" totaling $3.5 billion. Each state, receiving a proportional cut, must have notified the FHWA in April about which programs will be cut. The Texas share of the reduction totals $288 million.

The commission identified the following programs for cuts: interstate highway maintenance ($72 million), national highway system ($101 million), surface transportation ($30 million), congestion mitigation and air quality ($61 million), and bridges ($25 million).

Untouched this time around were enhancement projects, which had borne the brunt of earlier calls for budget cuts. Because of criticism about the decisions to eliminate enhancements, the commission held a public hearing March 22 to hear the public's views on how to implement the latest nationwide transportation-funding cut by the FHWA.

"We have heard the public and will not make further reductions to the transportation enhancements program," said Executive Director Mike Behrens. "But we want everyone to understand these funds will no longer be available to meet the transportation challenge in Texas."

What's more, he said, "The reductions will not impact existing construction projects and are being made in a way to maintain flexibility so locally determined priorities can be achieved."

Behrens continued, "This situation is not unique to Texas. All 50 states have been directed to return federal transportation funds to Washington."

These reductions come on top of $305 million TxDOT has already returned to Washington over the last 15 months. More rescissions are expected.

Commission chairman Ric Williamson said another $600 million rescission looms in Texas. "This next one is really going to hurt," he said, noting that the commission will begin planning and meeting with the public to prepare for the next round of expected cuts.

"The more communication we can do right now the better off we all are," he said. ✪

Letter from the editor

Mystery seen in 1917 news

By Mike Cox
Editor

Something strange happened on April 4, 1917 — the day Gov. James E. Ferguson signed the measure creating a state highway department.

But that's not what I'm referring to. The weird thing is a mystery we'll probably never solve.

In doing the research for this issue on our early history, I went to the Austin History Center, threaded the April 1917 microfilm of the *Austin Statesman* into one of their readers and began immersing myself in the events of the first week of April nine decades ago.

I read the edition for April 1, April 2, April 3, and April 4. No mention of the highway department bill. And then I realized that the April 4 newspaper seemed familiar. Rewinding, I discovered that the April 4 *Statesman* was word-for-word the same as the April 3 edition.

Oh, I thought, just a microfilming error. But when I looked closely, the date on the masthead of the April 4 paper clearly said April 4, just as the previous day's paper said April 3. Looking at the inside pages for April

(continued on pg. 11)

TxDOT in person: Mike Hayes, VTR

By Judith Curtis
Associate editor

Mike Hayes has learned a lot about human nature in his job. A regional supervisor in the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division for the Wichita Falls region, he, along with his staff, encounters various members of the public at various stages of happiness, patience or lack thereof in their dealings with the department.

But Hayes takes it all in stride. "It comes down to customer service," he says. "We're here to serve the public."

Hayes had been working in customer service in TxDOT's Dallas District for about 15 years when he was promoted to his new job as a supervisor in November 2005. In that role, he supervises a four-person staff, deals with 18 county tax offices and helps VTR customers get what they need.

That's not always easy. "Sometimes you deal with disgruntled people," he says. "But when a customer gets louder, you talk softer," he says. "We work to keep everybody happy," he says. After all, he notes, "It boils down to customer service to Austin (TxDOT headquarters) to the tax collectors, to my fellow employees and the public."

The best part about his job is: Working with all the customers, associates and partners.

His favorite spot in Texas is: Lake Fork (an East Texas fishing lake).

Book, magazine or newspaper article he's read recently that influenced/changed his thinking: Newspaper article on the war.

Mike Hayes, Vehicle Titles and Registration Division

Favorite celebrity: Cary Grant.

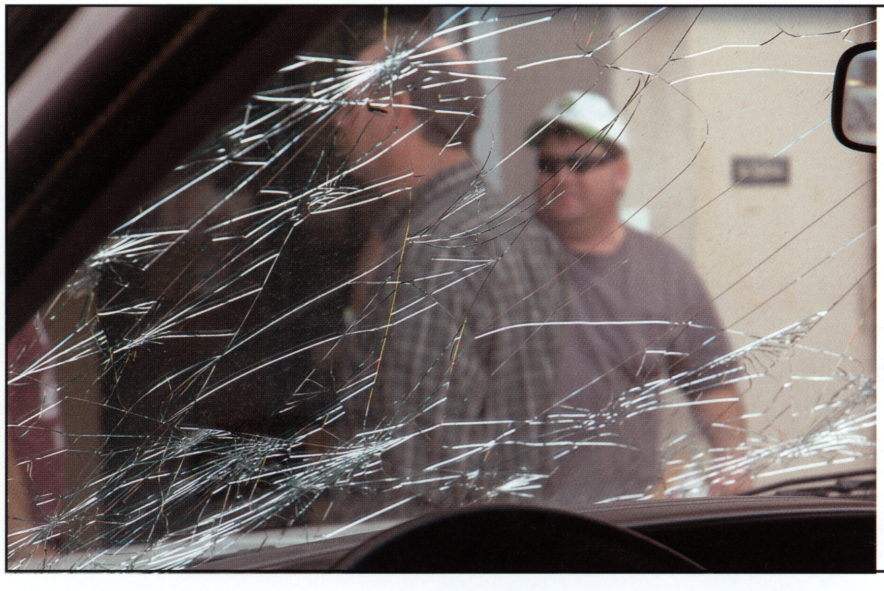
Advice he'd give to someone just hired: Enjoy the job, stay with the department and set goals. Better your education.

Best advice he ever received: Never make a decision or have confrontations while angry.

Best thing about working at TxDOT: The people and security of the job.

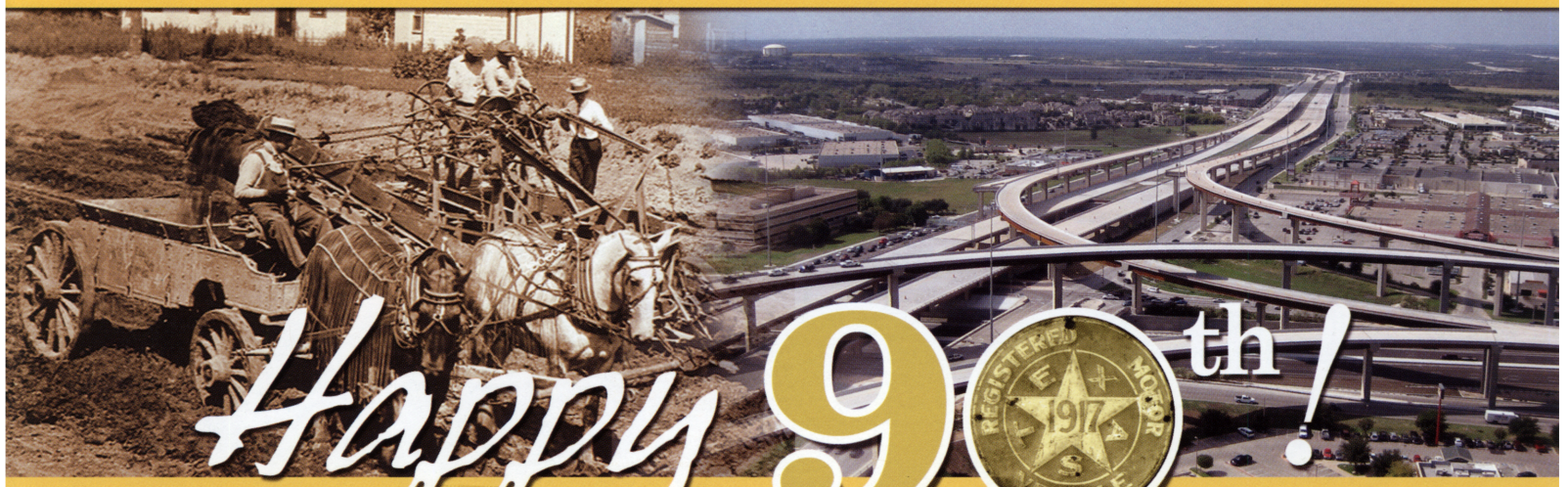
Person who has influenced him most in his job/life: On the job — Rick Kinnibrugh and Cathy Williamson (both former and now retired managers in the Dallas region). In life — his parents.

List any career highlights or educational achievements you want people to know about: When he became a regional supervisor. ✪



Saw less in Seymour — Baseball-size hail damaged this TxDOT truck windshield on Friday, April 13, reducing visibility as Reed Slaggle drove into Seymour, about 45 miles southwest of Wichita Falls. No injuries occurred. At least five other district vehicles needed repairs to windshields and tail lights. Tim Hertel, director of the district's maintenance operations, and Lance Burnett, with TxDOT's maintenance shop in Seymour, are slightly visible in the background of this photo as they inspect the damage. The storm was one of the worst in 30 years with the cost to area homes, cars and crops estimated up to $3 million.

— TxDOT photo / Ben Coker



1917: Texas drives to build good roads

Founders, friends of transportation forged department 90 years ago

By Mike Cox
Editor

Stretching block after block, a long convoy of Ford Model T's and Willis Overlands left Dallas at 8:30 that Wednesday morning, June 17, 1917, for the second-ever meeting of the newly created State Highway Commission.

The Texas Good Roads Association had organized what it called an "automobile good roads parade" from Dallas to Mineral Wells via Fort Worth to celebrate a transportation milestone — establishment of a state highway department after years of effort.

Good-roads boosters had tried to get a highways measure through the Legislature in previous sessions, but it took congressional action before Texas lawmakers finally realized the state needed a highway department. The catalyst was the Federal Highway Act of 1916, which made available $75 million for building highways over five years. The catch was that a state had to have a highway department to get any of the money.

On Jan. 10, 1917, Gov. James E. Ferguson sent a 2,000-word message to the 35th Legislature listing his priorities for the just-begun session. Of 14 major issues, creating a state highway commission stood fifth on his list.

"I need you and you need me," Ferguson said in his written message to lawmakers, one of the shortest that old-timers at the Capitol could recall, "and the people need us both to accomplish those things which represent their will."

The governor listed two primary reasons for a highway commission:

"First, as the national government has appropriated money for the building of highways in those states where a highway commission is created, it is necessary to create such a commission so that federal aid, which will amount in a few years to millions of dollar, may be obtained for Texas."

The other reason, he continued, "is that a state tax is the only way to equalize the cost of state highways. The man living in Dallas who would enjoy the luxury of a fine car on a good pike road from Dallas to San Antonio ought to pay part of the maintenance of that road and all the cost should not be borne by the taxpayers of Ellis or William County just because that road passed through their county."

Ferguson also said that in the interest of "reasonable safety," he favored a 10 mph speed limit for vehicles operating in cities and towns and 25 mph on rural highways.

Introduced by Rep. Howard Bland of Taylor (president of the Texas Good Roads Association) and shepherded by Rep. Leonard Tillotson of Sealy, the highway department act — House Bill 2 — progressed rapidly and with little controversy. By a vote of 90-29, the bill passed the House on Feb. 7. Five weeks later, House members approved a joint House-Senate conference committee version of the bill. The Senate passed it 22-2 the following day, March 15. The measure arrived on Ferguson's desk four days later.

With no fanfare, Ferguson signed the 16-page bill on Wednesday, April 4. It went to the Secretary of State's office the following day.

Given an imminent declaration of war against Germany, the *Austin Statesman* noted the legal birth of the

(continued on pg. 6)

More about TxDOT's origins next issue

This is the first of a two-part look at 1917, the year the Legislature created a state highway department. In our next issue, we'll profile the agency's first two leaders — Commission Chairman Curtis Hancock and State Highway Engineer George Duren.

In the beginning...
House Bill No. 2

"There is hereby created a department of the public service of the State, to be known as the State Highway Department, the administrative control of which shall be vested in the members of the State Highway Commission and the State Highway Engineer..."

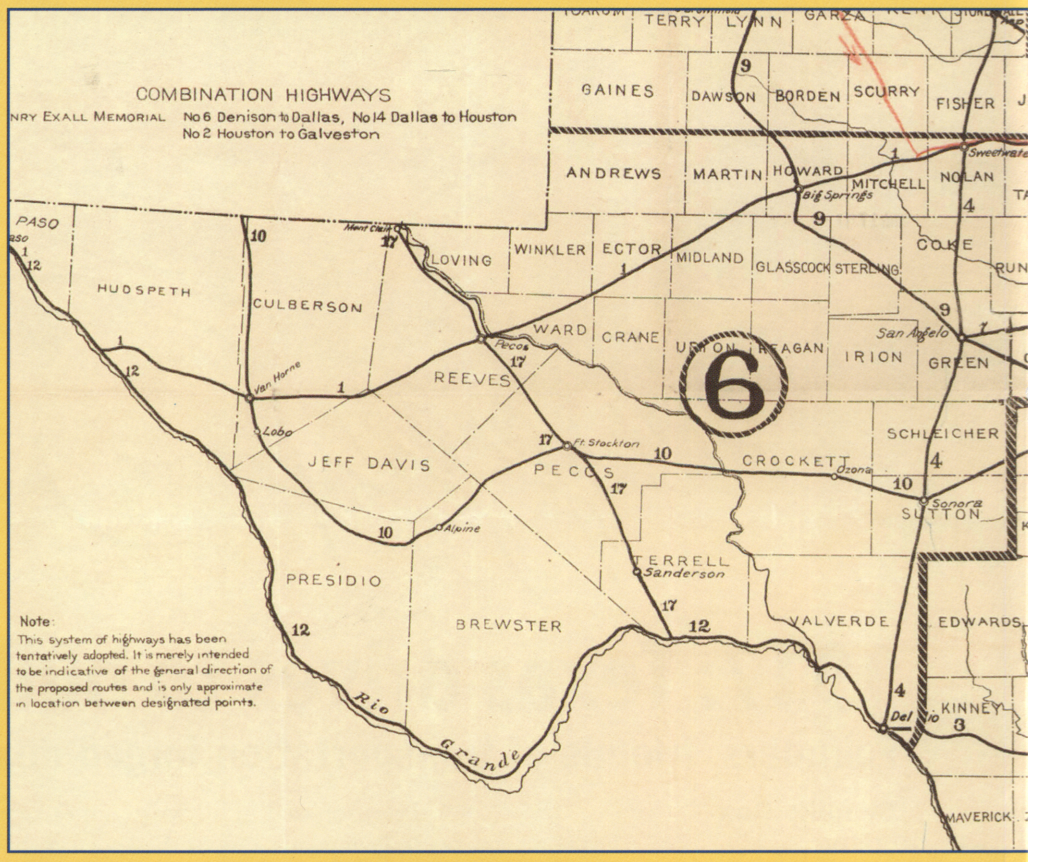
"The said Department shall be furnished with adequate office room at the State Capitol, which offices shall be the repository of all records of the department."

"As soon as practicable after their qualification for office, the State Highway Commission shall elect a State Highway Engineer, who shall be a competent civil engineer and graduate of some first-class school of civil engineering ..."

"The State Highway Engineer shall, as soon as practicable ... cause to be made and kept in form convenient for examination in the office of the Department, a complete road map of the State ..."

"The State Highway Engineer shall prepare, under the direction and with the approval of the commission, a comprehensive plan providing a system of State highways, and it shall be the duty of the commission to advance the construction of such State Highways ..."

"The labor of State prisoners may be utilized in construction or maintenance work on any road ... forming a part of the system of State Highways ..."



This map is a section from one of the first to show highways in Texas. (TxDOT archive)

Happy 90th!

(continued from pg. 5)

highway department in only one sentence in a three-paragraph story on an inside page on April 5. The competing *Austin American* gave the new law a bit more attention in its April 6 edition, but the war with Germany and mobilization efforts took up most of the news columns of the state's newspapers.

The bill authorized the governor to appoint a three-member state highway commission. Pay for commissioners would be $10 a day plus expenses while discharging their duties. But they couldn't work too hard, at least not for money. The bill capped their possible state income at $1,000 a year.

Under the new law, commissioners would name a state highway engineer, enforce a vehicle-registration effort to generate state highway funding, and oversee development of a statewide highway plan.

Noting that Ferguson would "exercise great care" in selecting the first three commissioners, the *Austin American* said Texas had "plenty of men...capable and patriotic enough to carry out this great work."

Though earlier histories of the department have tended to write off the first commission as having realized only modest attainments, the man selected as chairman, Curtis Hancock, proved to be hardworking and dedicated to the cause of improving transportation in the state. The other two commissioners appointed were T.R. McLean, a farmer-banker from Mount Pleasant, and H.C. Odle, a farmer from Meridian.

The commission met for the first time on June 4 in the empty House chamber.

"It appearing that Mr. [George A.] Duren is a competent engineer and a graduate of the School of Civil Engineering of the University of Texas," the commission voted unanimously to hire him as the new agency's highway engineer at a salary of $5,000 a year. The next motion the commission entertained was to adjourn.

Within a few days, operating on a $10,000 initial appropriation, the fledging agency set up a temporary headquarters in the south wing of the Capitol. Later that year, the department moved to the second floor of the new General Land Office

Building, a four-story red brick and limestone building at the southeast corner of 11th and Brazos streets.

The commission met for the second time on June 21 in Mineral Wells. Hancock, McLean and Ogle approved the eventual location of division headquarters in Amarillo, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Angelo, and San Antonio.

Commissioners also heard from delegations from across the state concerning the roadways they felt they needed. Based on work Duren had done on his first few weeks on the job, the commission approved a tentative network of 8,865 miles of "improved highways" for the state.

That network, a San Antonio newspaper reported, would provide better transportation for 89 percent of the population living in the 248 counties the roads would serve. (At the time, Texas had 253 counties, not its present 254.)

Drawing lines on a map was easier than organizing a system to register vehicles. The U.S. Office of Public Roads, then part of the Department of Agriculture, released a report that summer noting that slightly more than a million "motor cars" had been registered in the United States in 1916. That represented a 43 percent increase over 1915 as sales of autos continued to grow exponentially.

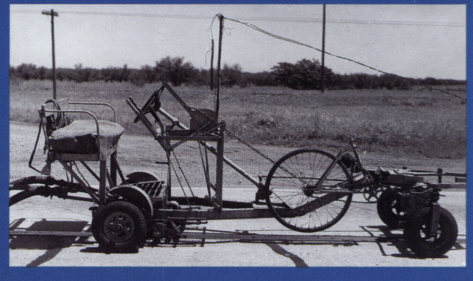
The new commission set July 1 as the deadline for every Texas vehicle-owner to send a letter to Austin requesting a registration form. The fee was 35 cents per horsepower, with a $7.50 minimum. Registrants would receive a round metal seal to attach to their vehicles, but they were responsible for putting their registration number on their vehicles however they saw fit.

By the end of 1917, the new highway agency had registered 194,720 vehicles. At first, the department collected license fees directly from vehicle owners, with half that money returned to the counties as allotments.

The fourth called session of the 35th Legislature passed a measure getting the department out of the collection business, handing the job over to county tax collectors.

(continued on pg. 8)

Pavement Progress



Photos / TxDOT archive

Happy 90th!

(continued from pg. 7)

With the Legislature having impeached Gov. Ferguson (but not because of his role in pressing for a highway department) only a couple of months after he signed HB 2 into law, lawmakers looked at everything he had been connected with through squinty eyes. By November, a proposal was afoot to fold the new highway department into the older, more established Railroad Commission.

Commission Secretary D.E. Colp, who oversaw management of the agency while Duren tended to the highway work, told a legislative committee that the department had 52 employees and would soon need 70 to 100 more. He recommended against merging the highway department with any other state agency and the Legislature agreed.

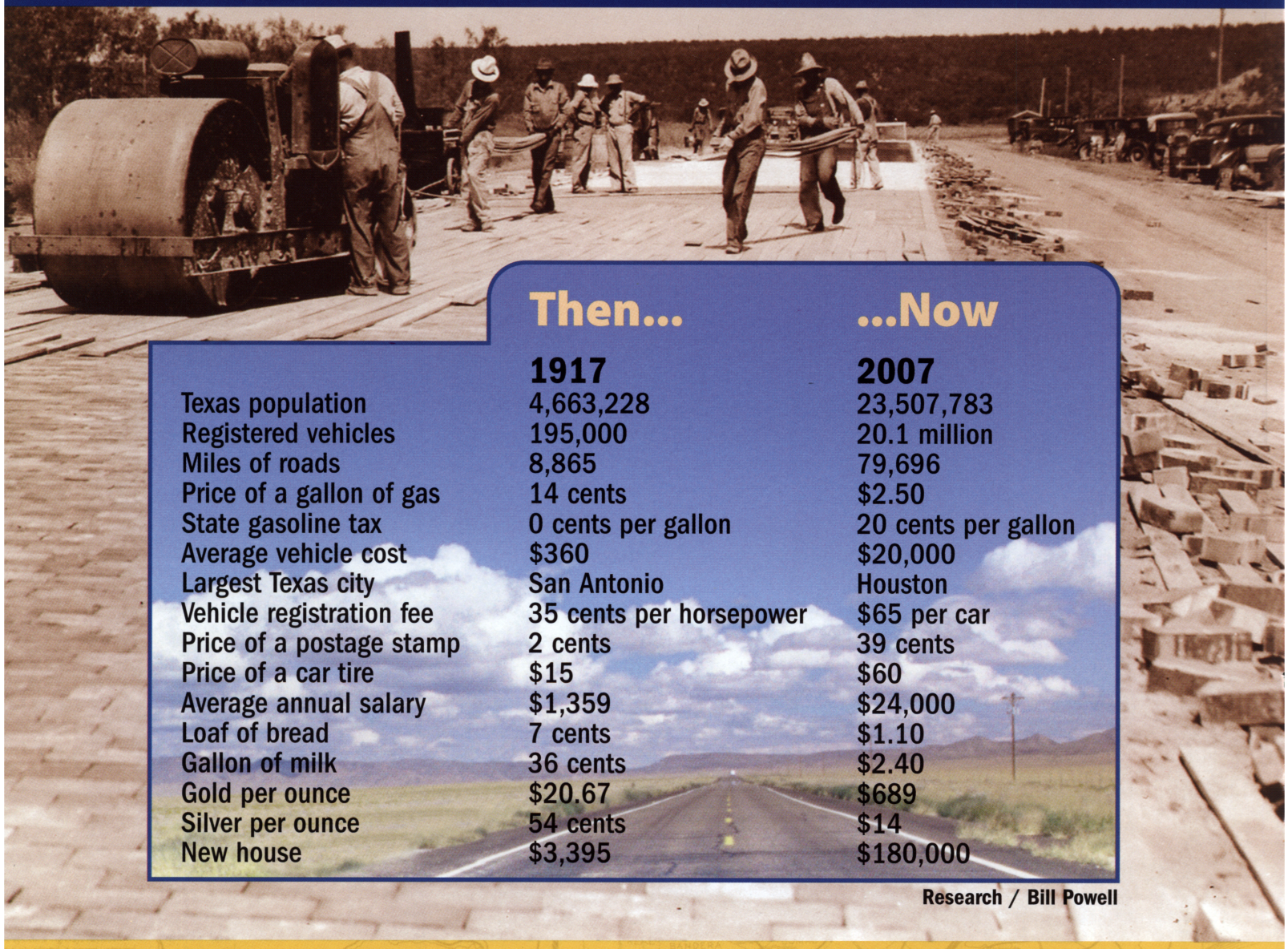
The new agency's other major goal, obtaining federal highway money for Texas, proceeded apace.

Chairman Hancock and Duren traveled to Washington in early December to meet with congressional and highway officials. Leaving for Dallas on Dec. 7, Hancock told a correspondent for the *Dallas Morning News* that the state highway department had 70 projects, amounting to $1.5 million, under federal review.

"The projects of Culberson, Brooks, Wichita, Travis and Ward counties have been approved," the newspaper reported, "and seven others are in the process of being worked out. Other projects will follow, Mr. Hancock said."

Indeed, over the last 90 years, many projects have followed. ✪

A lot has changed in 90 years



	Then... 1917	...Now 2007
Texas population	4,663,228	23,507,783
Registered vehicles	195,000	20.1 million
Miles of roads	8,865	79,696
Price of a gallon of gas	14 cents	$2.50
State gasoline tax	0 cents per gallon	20 cents per gallon
Average vehicle cost	$360	$20,000
Largest Texas city	San Antonio	Houston
Vehicle registration fee	35 cents per horsepower	$65 per car
Price of a postage stamp	2 cents	39 cents
Price of a car tire	$15	$60
Average annual salary	$1,359	$24,000
Loaf of bread	7 cents	$1.10
Gallon of milk	36 cents	$2.40
Gold per ounce	$20.67	$689
Silver per ounce	54 cents	$14
New house	$3,395	$180,000

Research / Bill Powell

TxDOT in the news

■ AMARILLO — TxDOT will build an overpass late next year in Canyon to take traffic from U.S. 60 over Farm-to-Market Road 2590 in a $10 million reconstruction of the intersection. The construction, which will replace the signal installed in July 2003, will improve safety for future development between Canyon and Amarillo. The project will take up to 20 months to complete and includes widening of FM 2590 from U.S. 60 north to Hunsley Road. (*Amarillo Globe-News*, 4/6/07)

■ GROESBECK — TxDOT has approved $3.8 million in electrical and pavement improvements for the Mexia-Limestone County Airport. The Texas Transportation Commission approved the funding at its March meeting. The project contract should be awarded this spring. (*Groesbeck Journal*, 4/5/07)

■ SEVEN POINTS — Construction crews will begin work on a TxDOT project widening Highway 334 in Seven Points between Highway 274 eastward to the first bridge over Cedar Creek Lake. The work will widen Highway 334 to two lanes in each direction with a turn lane in the center. Highways 274 and FM 85 will be widened with a center line as it gets close to the intersection of Highway 334. The contract is projected to be finished by fall 2009. (*Cedar Creek Pilot*, 3/23/07)

■ EL PASO — Installation of a glare screen on Interstate 10 from the Reynolds underpass to the Spaghetti Bowl has begun. The screens, designed to prevent driver distraction by oncoming headlights, can also prevent traffic jams or accidents by preventing drivers from looking at accidents or other events on the opposite side of the road. The screen, composed of thin panels, will stretch 2,400 feet and cost $30,000. (*El Paso Times*, 3/21/07)

■ SAN ANTONIO — The TxDOT project to widen Loop 1604 to four lanes from U.S. 90 to State Highway 151 will open after more than five years of construction. Crews will periodically stop traffic along the seven-mile stretch to gradually route southbound traffic onto the newly constructed lanes. The project, started in 2001, was originally scheduled to take under three years and cost $35 million but was delayed by weather, utility construction, and rapid development. Such circumstances added three years to the project completion time and $11 million more in costs. (*San Antonio Express News*, 3/20/07)

■ AUSTIN — The connection between U.S 290 and the Texas 130 toll road got smoother when the flyover bridge opened to traffic. The new bridge allows east-to-northbound drivers to avoid stoplights at Decker Lane, two Texas 130 frontage roads and Parmer Lane. The direct connection between southbound Texas 130 and U.S. 290 opened Oct. 31. (*Austin American Statesman*, 3/14/07)

■ MIDLAND — TxDOT starts work next month on a 16-mile Interstate 20 reliever route north of town. A contract for a bridge over Jal Draw at County Road 60 north of Highway 191 and FM 1788 between Midland and Odessa will be awarded in April with selection of a contractor in the fall to start building the $36 million truck route west from 158 to 1788. A third contract will be awarded to build the two-lane reliever route on uncut land west from 158 to 1788. The entire project will cost $220 million and should be finished by 2012. The finished project will allow trucks to come off I-20, run north on 1788 and connect to 349 north to Lubbock. (*Midland Reporter-Telegram*, 3/6/07)

■ ARLINGTON — TxDOT and regional officials announced a $3 billion deal to make SH 121 the first privately owned toll road in Texas. Officials touted the 50-year deal awarded to Cintra Concesiones de Transporte SA as the first in which a single company will design, build and operate a substantial portion of the 24-mile road. Cintra, which will operate the road through 2057, will pay $2.1 billion for the right to operate the toll road and has agreed to give the state $700 million in toll revenue over the life of the contract. Cintra will also spend $560 million to finish toll road construction. (*Dallas Morning News*, 2/28/07)

— Bill Powell, TxDOT PIO

APRIL 2007

■ DISTRICTS

Abilene: 25 – Gary R. Cypert; 20 – Harold G. Cannon, Jimmy Marquez; 15 – Donnie L. Cornutt; **Amarillo:** 25 – Lloyd A. Hare Jr., Lee P. Landes, Cecil C. Rich II; 15 – Kenneth S. Brewster, Linda D. Reimer; 5 – Stephen Garcia, Kenny J. Grant; **Atlanta:** 10 – Meloney J. Berryhill, William M. Burns; 5 – Molly C. Berridge; **Austin:** 20 – Donald A. Leclerc, Rodney D. Matthews, Travis W. Remmert; 10 – Elton J. Copeland, Bruce O. Murphy, Maria D. Ramos; 5 – Dennis A. Bomberger, Mark A. Perez; **Beaumont:** 30 – Dana S. Stephens; 15 – Barbara E. Brooks; 10 – James L. Duncan, Oran J. Sams; **Brownwood:** 25 – Donald H. Harrison; **Bryan:** 30 – Patrick T. Williams; 20 – J T. Anthis Jr., Roberto P. Estraca, Sammy Martinez, Dennis W. Schroeder, Keith E. Zwernemann; 15 – Kenneth D. Petty; 10 – Kathleen D. Newton, Randall B. Whitaker; 5 – Darryl W. Hargrave, Robert L. Pavlas; **Childress:** 35 – Terry L. Keener; 25 – Vicky T. McBride; 10 – Kurt D. Gilbert; 5 – Daniel Castro; **Corpus Christi:** 25 – Craig E. Clark, Ralph P. Condra, Rosie S. Lopez; 20 – Ignacio J. Hinojosa; 15 – Ethen D. Swisher; 5 – William E. Hamilton, Lester M. Lindley, Rodney Ramirez, Harold R. Reeves Jr.; **Dallas:** 25 – David M. Grooms, Dennis F. Hall; 20 – Ramon Barreiro; 15 – William H. Catchings Jr.; 10 – John H. Colquitt, Fredrick D. Jenkins, Katherine B. Keys, Kenny Krishnan; 5 – John V. Montoya, David Williams Jr.; **El Paso:** 25 – Juan M. Ortega; 15 – Richard N. Rose Jr.; **Fort Worth:** 35 – John L. Sharpe; 25 – Clennon D. Rosewell; 20 – Gary W. Baird, Jesus G. Galvan, Justin L. McKinley; Jerry D. Vandivere, Dicky J. White; 10 – Ronald C. Morales, Russell T. Poer; 5 – William B. Palm III, Kathy A. Rawle, Ronnie L. Sanders, Michael R. Speicher II; **Houston:** 30 – Walter D. Torres; 25 – Magnolia G. Allen, Douglas C. Conrad, Johnny L. Guice, Eddie L. Horace; 20 – Douglas H. Blaine, Debbie F. Smith; 15 – Joe E. Hendrix, Anis A. Merchant, Juraj G. Spakovsky, John C. Williams; 10 – Benamar Mebarkia; **Laredo:** 25 – Jaime G. Ledesma, Gregory C. Newman; 5 – Alejandro A. Juarez, Evelio Lugo, Armando Ramirez; **Lubbock:** 30 – Louis Aguilar Jr., Tommy D. Hickman; **Lufkin:** 30 – Myrtice R. Kyle; 25 – Roy B. Sanders Jr.; 15 – Louis C. Parten; **Odessa:** 20 – John I. Jaquez Jr.; **Paris:** 25 – Reza Bazazzadeh; **Pharr:** 25 – Robin L. Boone, Jose E. Lopez Jr.; 10 – Rex A. Costley; **San Angelo:** 10 – Ronald G. Blaylock, Richard L. Flores; 5 – Lisa A. Sanders; **San Antonio:** 20 – John B. Hood; 10 – Linda S. Blume-Grimsley, Roy H. Mumme, John C. Turner; 5 – Alejandro Alvarez, Walter D. Letbetter, Gregorio Martinez Jr.; **Tyler:** 25 – Kent M. Clark; 20 – Phyllis S. Neill; 15 – William S. Perry; 10 – Tamala D. Daniels, Lucinda K. Molloy; **Waco:** 30 – William A. Smith; 20 – Roddy W. Hale, Harold B. Shilling, Brian K. Smart; 15 – Anthony J. Moran, David H. Pederson; 10 – Beth A. Gilbert; 5 – Chris A. Perez; **Wichita Falls:** 40 – Linda L. Proctor; 25 – James R. Kelley, Kenneth J. Mitchell; 20 – Peggy R. Royston; 15 – Hugo Flores; 10 – Marvin D. Rauschuber, James S. Reaves; **Yoakum:** 30 – Michael L. Drozd; 25 – Myrtle S. Schomburg; 20 – Mark J. Kusak, Barry A. Mikeska, James G. Pustka, Mark E. Wendel; 15 – Marla M. Jasek; 10 – Joseph C. Kridler

■ DIVISIONS

Aviation: 15 – Judy L. Barnes; **Bridge:** 25 – Joseph B. Gomez; **Construction:** 20 – Richard F. Kirby; 5 – James B. Bradley, Shawn C. Gilbert, Gary R. Peterson, Philippe M. Woodruffe; **Environmental Affairs:** 5 – Theresa A. Canales; **Government & Business Enterprises:** 20 – Helen M. Havelka; **Information Systems:** 30 – Anthony H. Compton; 10 – Victor E. Flores, James W. Kuhn; 5 – Jonathan W. Martin; **Maintenance:** 25 – David R. Bennett; 5 – Victor G. Winston; **Motor Vehicle:** 10 – Angela S. Gibson, Lisa M. Martinez; **Occupational Safety:** 15 – James E. Baker; **Right of Way:** 5 – Steven B. Taylor; **Transportation Planning and Programming:** 5 – Michael J. Brantley; **Travel:** 15 – Michael A. Amador, Martin C. Lange; 10 – Cynthia J. Leffingwell; **Vehicle Titles & Registration:** 20 – Cindy J. Grisham, Margie L. Montgomery; 5 – Carlos Escobedo

■ OFFICES

Audit: 10 – Maria E. Alvarado; **General Counsel:** 15 – Pamela A. Mackenzie, Maria R. Awad; 5 – Yolanda A. Cuellar

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■ DISTRICTS

Abilene: 20 – Kristy E. Gardner; 10 – Jacquelynne S. Hendricks; 5 – Troy S. Knowles; **Amarillo:** 10 – Manuel F. Melendez, Darryl E. Pratt; **Atlanta:** 30 – Robert W. Gullatt; 25 – Everett J. Baker, Daniel M. Griekspoor; 20 – Stacy G. Burns; 15 – Irene M. Webster; 10 – Charles E. Anderson, Robert R. Hill; 5 – Edwin W. Brannum, David L. Carter; **Austin:** 35 – Alois G. Goertz; 15 – Lloyd L. Chance; 10 – Matt J. Massey, Larissa D. Tachmetova; 5 – James L. Ragland, Chad D. Robinson; **Beaumont:** 25 – Phil B. Adams,Duane L. Browning;15 – Kenzie E. Vidito; 10 – John P. Gentry; 5 – Ronald E. Lemons, Karl Totzer Jr.; **Bridge:** 20 – Sam O. Brooks, Michael S. O'Toole; **Brownwood:** 25 – Layton L. Brown Jr; 20 – Mark A. Hale; **Bryan:** 30 – Robert L. Richardson; 25 – Nancy Y. Fincher; 20 – Howard G. Langford Jr., Thomas G. Stevens, Samuel L. Wilson; 15 – Terry J. Pope; 5 – Timothy A. Berlan, Jennifer M. Stanush, James R. Wallace; **Childress:** 20 – Terry G. Simpson; 5 – James D. Harris, Finies M. Scoggins; **Corpus Christi:** 25 – Bruce Butler; 20 – Laura B. Canales, Esteban Guerra Jr., Ella R. Mason, Joe A. Torres; 10 – Charles R. Hafer, Atanacio M. Martinez Jr.; **Dallas:** 20 – John R. Johnson, Carl D. Mcgehee, Noe N. Rodriguez; 15 – William R. Fuller, Barry D. Heard, Tina G. Massey, Abbas Mehdibeigi, Horace Pierce Jr., Rosalind R. Thompson, Eddie D. Walker Jr.; 10 – Michael S. Buffington, Connie Stever; 5 – Larry P. Gipson, Forrest L. Huffman, Eric D. Lane, Angi T. Mize; **El Paso:** 25 – James R. Law; 15 – Efrain H. Esparza, Larry Fierro; 10 – Carol L. Campa; 5 – Carmen P. Sifuentes; **Fort Worth:** 25 – Santos R. Chazarreta, Carol Jean K. Stelmas, Mark A. Stelmas; 20 – Carla S. Haynie, Bryan D. Riggs; 15 – James W. Pollock, Mark D. Price, Richard A. Stacy, Sigmund L. Zuckman; 10 – James D. Greenhill, Harry A. Blair Jr., Jay I. Herman, Rachel M. Kulhavy; **Houston:** 25 – Emmett M. Lunsford; 20 – Thomas P. Smith; 15 – Jim F. Teltschik; 10 – Fernando Avendano, Kathleen B. Oden, Oleta J. Reynolds; 5 – Aucencio Hernandez; **Laredo:** 15 – Jose L. Martinez; 10 – Oscar Martel; **Lubbock:** 20 – Larry E. Harris; 5 – Samuel Blanco, Billy D. Long, Mendy J. Warwick; **Lufkin:** 25 – Mark A. Edge, Richard L. Jordan, Bryan K. Smith, John N. Thomas; 20 – Coy D. Ditsworth; 5 – Robert J. Allen, Jerrod M. Byley, Phyllis D. Clark, Clifton W. Henley, Michael W. Petty; **Odessa:** 25 – Jackie C. Lambert; 20 – John N. Blackman IV, Lauren D. Garduno; 5 – Carlos A. Garcia, James O. Watts; **Paris:** 20 – Timothy W. Dorner; 10 – Paula J. Jones, Troy L. Scholl; **Pharr:** 20 – Roel Garza, Ruben C. Gonzalez, Hector P. Gonzalez Jr., Calixto Mora Jr., Ricardo Sendejo, Kenneth A. Todd; 10 – Roberto L. Serna; **San Angelo:** 15 – Kenneth R. Tomlinson; **San Antonio:** 25 – Carl G. Friesenhahn, Roland Torres; 20 – Dale F. Holzhaus, Myles S. Theis; 10 – Richard J. Guillemette, Cecil E. Guinn, Ray Guzman, Carlos H. Macias; 5 – Clarence Clark, Jacquelin N. Wheeler; **Tyler:** 20 – Wendell T. Monds, James K. Pryor; 10 – Richard E. Alexander; **Waco:** 30 – Howard E. Nelson Jr.; 25 – Randolph L. Pierce; 20 – Mary G. Griffin, Jackie D. Herring; 5 – Rickey B. Gates, Robert E. Spratt; **Wichita Falls:** 20 – David D. Bates, Thomas A. Bruce, Mary M. Davis, Terry L. Holder; 10 – John W. Anderle Jr.

■ DIVISIONS

Business Opportunity Program: 10 – Mary E. Paez; 5 – Eli E. Lopez; **Construction:** 25 – Caroline A. Herrera; 5 – Carolyn M. Bishop, Paul H. Heinemeyer, Steve G. Strmiska; **Design:** 15 – Dione N. Albert; **Environmental Affairs:** 10 – Gordon L. Ellis; **Finance:** 5 – Lauren R. Johnson; **General Services:** 20 – John R. Whittenbaugh; **Human Resources:** 5 – Sheila G. Arnold; **Information Systems:** 20 – John L. Adams; 15 – James M. Pope; 10 – Clyde K. Anderson; **Motor Vehicle:** 30 – Gail Anderson; 15 – Robert J. Murdock; 10 – Norma A. Fabian, Kathryn A. Scales; **Occupational Safety:** 5 – Lois E. Fuchs, Bryce C. Sanford II, Sharon R. Thorson; **Research & Technology Implementation:** 5 – Duncan F. Stewart; **Traffic Operations:** 15 – Brian A. Stanford; **Transportation Planning and Programming:** 15 – Michael W. Aspra; **Turnpike Authority:** 20 – Timothy G. Juarez; 5 – Laura J. Grimsley; **Vehicle Titles & Registration:** 20 – Ramona A. Lawlor; 15 – Mala Danneeru; 10 – Paul D. Boothe, Gloria M. Garcia, John Poole III

■ OFFICES

Public Information: 5 – Mike Cox

Exit Ramp

( ) = service years/month of retirement

Austin
David E. Thomson (22/Feb)

Beaumont
Oliver L. Crumedy (29/Feb)

Brownwood
Tommie R. Jones (27/Feb)

Dallas
Bennie F. McCormack (34/Feb)

Design
Michael R. Norris (17/Feb)

General Services
Ricky G. Matetzschk (31/Feb)

Human Resources
Shirley C. Walker (29/Feb)

Lubbock
Fidencio Moreno (29/Feb)

Pharr
Antonio G. Sanchez Jr. (23/Feb)

San Antonio
Gilbert G. Gavia (37/Feb)
Trans. Planning & Prog.
Don R. Noah (24/Feb)

Travel
Monica A. Gallaway (25/Feb)

Tyler
Johnny Johnson (7/Feb)

Vehicle Titles & Registration
Irene M. Hill (14/Feb)

Yoakum
Fred Lerma III (28/Feb)

In Memoriam

Beaumont
Walter "Mickey" Evans
sign man, Orange maintenance
died April 8, 2007

El Paso
Ambrosio L. Martinez
design technician
retired May 1987
died April 12, 2007

Fort Worth
Billie W. Stout
maintenance technician
retired 1988
died April 13, 2007

Mary Hanna
soil tester, lab
retired 1987
died April 5, 2007

Houston
Donald R. Vercher
died April 8, 2007

Odessa
Francisco H. Rodriguez
retired April 1978
died April 6, 2007

Yoakum
Roman F. Buzek
radio communications tech
retired August 2003
died March 29, 2007

Letter from the editor *(continued from pg. 3)*

4, I saw that the dates on those pages had been, to use an old newspaper term, "chiseled." In other words, some printer had removed the date from the day-old pages with mallet and chisel. And then, the newspaper had been reprinted with the only change being the date on the front page.

I fast-forwarded to April 5. The *Statesman* was a "new" newspaper again, but contained no mention of why it had repeated itself the day before. Next, I went to the competing morning paper, the *Austin American*. (Not merged with the *Statesman* until 1924.)

I hoped to find a taunting ha-ha-ha story in the *American* explaining why its rival had somehow been unable to produce a fresh newspaper for April 4. But again, no mention of the bizarre time warp that had enveloped the *Statesman*.

Who knows what happened? Maybe most of the printers called in sick that April 4. Maybe a poker game and beer-drinking party got out of hand the night before. Maybe the allergen count was high that day. Or maybe, since Congress was about to declare war on Germany, life seemed too momentous to bother with putting out a daily newspaper.

Whatever the answer, the record does show that the governor signed House Bill 2 that Wednesday, April 4. The April 5 *Statesman* duly gave that news exactly one sentence in a three-paragraph story buried on an inside page.

For this issue of *Transportation News*, we've accorded our anniversary a bit more attention. We hope you enjoy our stories on the people and events figuring in this department's first year of existence, a time now pretty much past anyone's living memory.

Finally, from what I was able to dig up, both our first commission chairman (Curtis Hancock) and first executive director-equivalent (George A. Duren) deserve more credit for getting this agency up and running than they have received over the years. Ditto for state representative Leonard Tillotson of Sealy, who managed HB 2 through the legislative gridlock that spring of 1917. As former executive director Gibb Gilchrist later said, Tillotson was "a small man in stature but tremendous in intellect."

Wonder if he knew why the *Austin Statesman* failed to publish a new edition on April 4, 1917? ✪

Calendar

2007

May
8-10 State Hurricane Preparedness Conf., Galveston, MNT
16 EPRS Implementation Sem., Austin, CST
17 EPRS Implementation Sem., Austin, CST
18 EPRS Implementation Sem., Houston, CST
23 EPRS Implementation Sem. El Paso, CST
24 EPRS Implementation Sem., Midland, CST
24 Commission Meeting, Austin
25 EPRS Implementation Sem., McAllen, CST
28 Memorial Day*

June
4-7 Research Management Committee Meeting, SA, RTI
4-8 Statewide Hurricane Exercise, MNT
11-13 Maintenance/Traffic Operations Conference, Waco, MNT
14 EPRS Implementation Sem., Lubbock, CST
18-22 Internal Audit Conference, Austin, AUD
19 Emancipation Day**
28 Commission Meeting, Austin

July
4 Independence Day*
17-19 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (flexible pavement), CC, CST
18-20 Texas Transportation Forum, Austin, GBE
18 PMIS South Region Pre-Work Mtg, CC, CST
24-26 PMIS Visual Rater Cert.(flexible pavement), AustinA, CST
25 PMIS West Region Pre-Work Mtg, Austin, CST
26 Commission Meeting, Sugar Land
31 Research Oversight Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI
31-2 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (flexible pavement), ABL, CST

August
31-2 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (flexible pavement), ABL, CST
1 PMIS Northwest Region Pre-Work Mtg, ABL, CST
7-9 PMIS Visual Rater Cert.(flexible pavement), AustinB, CST
8 PMIS East Region Pre-Work Mtg, AustinB, CST
12-15 Design and Bridge Conference, Corpus Christi, DES
14-16 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (concrete pvmnt), Mesquite, CST
15-17 Texas Save a Life Summit, San Antonio, TRF
21-23 PMIS Visual Rater Cert.(flexible pavement), AustinC, CST
23 PMIS Northeast Region Pre-Work Mtg, AustinC, CST
23 Commission Meeting, Austin
27 LBJ's Birthday**
28-30 PMIS Visual Rater Cert. (concrete pvmnt), Mesquite, CST

September
27 Commission Meeting, Austin

October
8-9 General Services Conference, Austin, GSD
15-17 Transportation Short Course
25 Commission Meeting, Eagle Pass
29-31 Public Information Conference, Corpus Christi, PIO

* = all agencies closed
** = skeleton crew holiday

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

backtracks

Clues lacking — The April photo will probably be a little more difficult because there are no identifiable businesses on the road through the town. The only help is the rail line crossing through the town. If you think you recognize the location of the photo please contact Anne Cook at (512) 486-5838 or by e-mail at acook@dot.state.tx.us

Identified — Rocky Roberts of the Brownwood District Lab identified the photo location (March issue) — it's in Brownwood. The answer was confirmed by two others within minutes of receiving the correct answer from Roberts. The photo, taken sometime in the late 1940s or early 1950s, featured a road sign with cities listed. ✪

Looking Back...

Item: Remembering the first days of the Texas Highway Department, Mrs. W.R. Eccles of Roswell, N.M., returned to the Greer Building as a visitor recently. Before her marriage, when her name was Birdie Canon, she worked as a secretary to the Highway Commission during the hectic days of organization in the summer of 1917. She recalled that legal restrictions at the time gave the commission only one month to get organized.

Item: Dedication of the new U.S. 90 bridge over the Pecos River has been set for April 27. The $1.3 million structure is the highest bridge in Texas and is thought to be the tenth highest in the United States. The old bridge was swept away by floodwaters during the night of June 26, 1954.

— from ***Highway*** newsletter,
Texas Highway Department, March 1957

Texas Department of Transportation

TRANSPORTATION NEWS

125 E. 11th St.
Austin, Texas 78701

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