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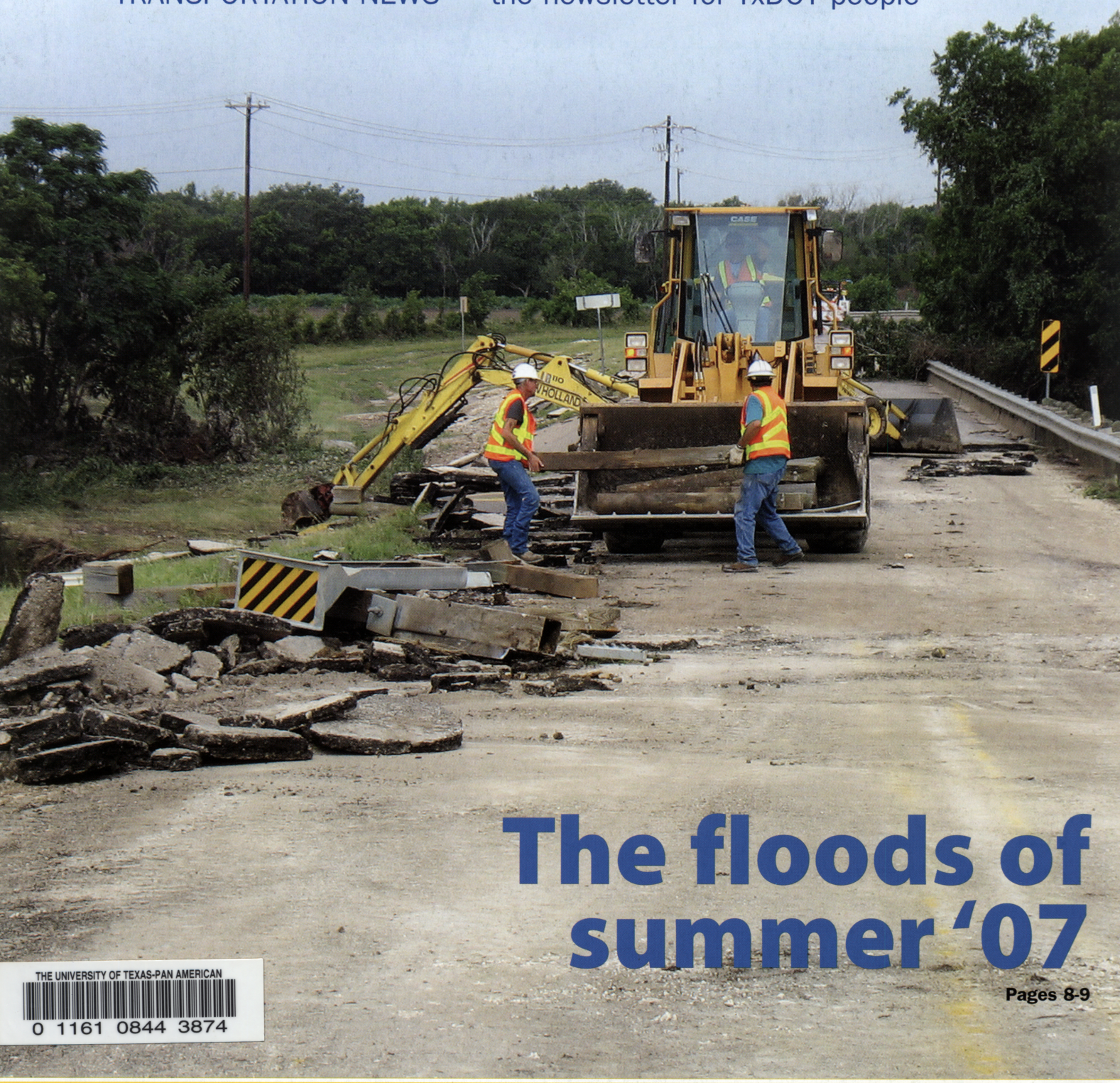
TNews

TRANSPORTATION NEWS — the newsletter for TxDOT people



The floods of summer '07

Pages 8-9

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN
0 1161 0844 3874

FEATURE: Highlights of second annual Transportation Forum, pages 6-7

On the cover:
TxDOT crews put in long hours statewide repairing damage from the flood of '07
– TxDOT photo/Austin District

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Straight Talk

Farewell from the Executive Director

Mike Behrens

By Mike Behrens
Executive Director

Fresh out of college, I became a member of the Texas Highway Department family in January 1971. I was hired by Carl Ramert, district engineer for the Yoakum District at that time. I will always be indebted to the employees of the Yoakum District (past and present) I worked with who made my family and me always feel welcome.

We call ourselves the TxDOT family, and we truly are a family. Many instances come to mind where TxDOT employees were there to help one another in time of need, to comfort in times of grief and to celebrate in times of joy.

TxDOT folks are a part of their communities, their schools, their churches and other organizations where they can be of service.

We have nearly 15,000 employees in the department, and they all perform their assigned duties. But they also go beyond their normal duties when the need arises, whether facing floods, ice and snow, hurricanes, tornadoes or a tragic event like the space shuttle disaster and the collapse of the Queen Isabella Causeway.

A lot of the news coverage about TxDOT focuses on congestion, mobility needs, safety and maintaining and rehabilitating the system, and a lot of folks are involved in those efforts. But there are also many who make sure the computers are working, people are getting paid, employees have a safe work environment and the proper tools and materials to work with. Others register vehicles, license car dealers, prevent car theft, improve our state airports, issue oversize/overweight permits, provide tourist and travel information and provide transit for Texans who need it.

Please share with others the importance of transportation infrastructure to this growing state– the arteries that move people and goods and provide for economic prosperity, and a good quality of life. Remind them that it continually needs to be expanded and maintained. Texas has a proud legacy in its transportation system, and you can all be a part of keeping it that way.

To all of you, I owe my thanks and am proud to have worked with you. ✪

TxDOT goals

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

In Memoriam

LBJ Library - Photo by Frank Wolfe

Lady Bird Johnson
1912-2007

Nearly 20 years ago at a celebration of Lady Bird Johnson's support of highway beautification programs, then-transportation chairman Robert H. Dedman said, "When you think of beautification, you have to remember Lady Bird Johnson — the living incarnation of a wildflower — beautiful, brilliant, strong, and enduring. You really can't think of her without smiling."

Lady Bird Johnson was indeed a friend to the state highway system and to all Texans and visitors. She was influential in the Highway Beautification Act approved by Congress in 1965, and she established the Highway Beautification Award for TxDOT employees in the 1980s.

■

Because of all her efforts, said Mike Behrens, executive director, "TxDOT and our state's motorists owe a deep debt of gratitude to Lady Bird Johnson for her vision of a highway system that preserves and enhances our nation's beauty. Lady Bird leaves behind a legacy of protecting and bolstering our state's beauty along Texas highways. The Texas Department of Transportation looks forward to honoring her commitment for years to come. TxDOT has always taken pride in highways that are safe, reliable and beautiful. Lady Bird's love for our state will serve as an inspiration to all of us for years to come." ✪

2007 legislative session slows Texas' transportation momentum

By Cady North
Government and Public Affairs Division

TxDOT gained little this session to enhance the state's ability to provide transportation.

The legislature voted down a gas tax increase and gas tax indexing. A moratorium on toll roads passed, and some $1.5 billion was transferred by lawmakers from the state highway fund to non-transportation purposes. These transfers are up 15 percent from the last biennium.

The legislature did approve an additional $3 billion in Proposition 14 bonds, which allows the department to mortgage future gas tax revenues to pay for projects now. But, says Ric Williamson, commission chairman, "As we all know, this is not new money for transportation."

A few pieces of legislation moved TxDOT closer to attaining its transportation goals. These are:

HB 1857 by Murphy/Carona giving counties more authority to regulate development around future transportation corridors.

HB 2093 by Hill/Carona providing $50 million a year in oversize/overweight permits to the State Highway Fund.

SB 1209 by Carona/Krusee extending the 50-50 split of utility relocation expenses between the state and utility companies until 2013.

The legislature addressed several issues affecting employees. These include:

- A 2 percent raise for all employees, one in September 2007 and another several months later if funding allows, with a $50 minimum. In addition to raises, TxDOT's FTE cap was raised to 15,000 (up from 14,832).
- Making participation in the state's 401(k) plan automatic for any employee hired after January 1, 2008, unless the employee elects not to participate.
- Giving job protection to volunteer emergency responders if absent or late to work due to responding to an emergency.

A few major issues not addressed by the legislature this session include rail relocation funding, environmental streamlining, advanced acquisition of right of way, and a transportation corporation to develop infrastructure in Texas.

In other actions, legislators returned the Medical Transportation Program to the Health and Human Services Commission and required TxDOT to publish on its Web site annual statistical reports by county including information on all department contracts.

The bill also requires TxDOT to publish on its Web site a list of contracts with lobbyists, public relations firms and government consultants.

SB 718 by Ogden/Gattis requires the state to use the trunk system, to the extent possible, as the route for the Trans-Texas Corridor.

SB 766 by Ogden/Gattis transfers all of the duties and functions of the Department of Public Safety's Crash Records Bureau to TxDOT.

SB 1119 by Carona/Murphy requires cities and counties to conduct a traffic engineering study prior to placing a red light camera and to place signs along the approach to an intersection. The local authority must report to TxDOT the number and types of accidents at the intersection for the 18 months prior to the installation of the camera and annually thereafter. TxDOT will be required to publish the reports.

SB 1266 by Brimer/Krusee creates a possible new funding source for pass-through toll projects.

SJR 64 by Carona/Krusee This constitutional amendment, if passed by voters, will allow the state to issue debt backed by the general revenue of the state (up to $5 billion) for highway improvement projects. ✪

Executive director to retire after 37 years at TxDOT

Behren's career built on solid, steady values

By Judith Curtis
Associate Editor

If there's one word that friends and colleagues universally apply to soon-retiring Executive Director Mike Behrens it's "unflappable."

From his role as running back for Giddings High School to his first job at the Texas Highway Department, and as the official frequently on the hot seat in front of public groups, Behrens "is just steady," says his friend and one-time boss, former Yoakum District Engineer Ben Bohuslav. "He is quiet and absorbs a lot. He never goes off on a tangent, and he always has the best interests of the department in mind."

That outlook served TxDOT well over the last few years. Change has been the order of the day beginning with the 2005 legislative session and every day since.

"Mike has been working under some difficult circumstances," says Wes Heald, former executive director who retired in 2001. "And he has done a great job in taking the department in a different direction."

Adds Coby Chase, director of the Government and Public Affairs Division, "I have never, ever met someone who can disarm the most strident agency critic more than the plain-spoken Mike Behrens. He believes deeply in the people he works with and he makes sure everyone else does, too."

Behrens oversaw the implementation of a vast array of new financing tools the legislature created to help Texas better and more rapidly meet its growing transportation needs. Those changes include the establishment of comprehensive development agreements, pass-through financing, expanded bonding authority, and public-private partnerships.

Mike Behrens -TxDOT photo/Kevin Stillman

"Mike Behrens' dedicated service has better prepared Texas to meet the challenge of a rapidly growing population and an overcrowded, aging transportation system," says Chairman Ric Williamson. "He is a true public servant who has devoted his entire career to improving mobility and safety for all Texans."

Behrens worked for Bohuslav when he came to work in the Yoakum District as a young college graduate. "I don't believe too many district engineers had as capable an assistant as I did in those years," says Bohuslav. "He just never gets too strung out about things."

Bohusalev says he sensed from the beginning that the young man from La Grange would move far. "I knew he would go on to bigger and better things," says Bohuslav. "To have someone from a small rural district take the job he did you have to have a lot on the ball."

One notable Behrens characteristics is his tendency to say fewer words than others.

"When everyone else is talking," says Heald, "Mike is over in the corner with a note pad trying to see how he can make something happen."

In 1970, Behrens earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M University and he began his career with TxDOT as an engineering assistant in the Yoakum District. Other positions he held in the Yoakum District include La Grange area engineer, district planning engineer, and assistant district engineer.

In 1992, after serving as acting district engineer for the Yoakum District, Behrens was appointed district engineer for the 11-county district. He became the department's assistant executive director for engineering operations in Austin in April 1998.

The 37-year TxDOT veteran has served six years as executive director, and he says he will continue to support transportation improvements in Texas.

"I will always be an advocate for the department and the need for providing adequate transportation infrastructure for this state," he said in his letter to Williamson. "I will continue to inform and educate."

Howard Templin, who worked with Behrens years ago in the Yoakum District, has a bit of advice for that young man who made good. To this new inductee into the TxDOT retirement club, he says, "Enjoy it." ✪

Transportation Forum explores solut

By Mike Cox and Judy Curtis
Editor/Associate Editor

Nearly 1,300 government, industry and transportation officials gathered in Austin July 18-20 at TxDOT's second annual Transportation Forum to explore solutions to the state's growing transportation crisis.

Those attending came away with a clear message: Texas must find its own means of funding transportation improvements because federal funds derived from gas tax receipts are dwindling at an alarming rate.

"We have reached a fatal place in transportation because of finances," said Michael Morris, director of Transportation for the North Central Texas Council of Governments, "and without a correction we will no longer have a national transportation system or a state system" that moves people and goods efficiently.

"Transportation is about distance and time," said "Commuting in America" author Alan Pisarski, who opened the two-day session.

While the nation may have conquered "the tyranny of distance," it has not done away with the loss of time due to congestion, he said.

In transportation, he continued, it has almost seemed as if the national goal was "making things get worse slower."

In the next quarter century, Pisarski said, Texas is likely to see 15 percent of the nation's total growth and all the transportation problems that growth can bring.

"But Texas is up to the job," he concluded. "You are imminently well-positioned to compete in this brave new world."

TxDOT photo/Kevin Stillman

Alan E. Pisarski, author of *Commuting in America*, said Texas will receive 15 percent of the nation's growth in the next 25 years.

Nine breakout sessions over the day-and-a-half forum covered a broad range of transportation issues, from a state and federal update to the latest on the Trans-Texas Corridor.

Some selected highlights:

State Sen. John Corona noted that Texas voters have an opportunity to pass a constitutional amendment in November that will permit the next legislature to issue $5 billion in general obligation bonds for highway improvement. Rep. Larry Phillips, vice chairman of the House Transportation Committee urged transportation leaders to "take up the mantle of educating the community you live in on transportation issues" focusing on congestion relief, safety, accountability and affordability.

John Esparza, president of the Texas Motor Transportation Association, said no one likes to be stuck behind a truck in traffic, particularly the trucking industry. His association supports plans to develop separate, tolled lanes for 18-wheelers.

Nathan Asplund, general director for Public Private Partnerships with Burlington Northern Santa Fe, said railroads spend some 18 percent of their revenue on capital investment and look forward to working with government to fund badly needed new capacity.

Tom Kornegay, executive director of the Houston Port Authority, said Texas needs to get ready for even more freight traffic as the Panama Canal is deepened and widened.

Joe Flores, Laredo International Airport director, said his city is booming as a port of entry, with more traffic expected.

Bill Hammond, president and CEO of the Texas Association of Business, said Texans need to do a better job in being heard by the legislature on transportation issues. "We were out shouted last session," he said.

In a session on commuter rail,

ons to Texas' transportation crisis

Sid Covington, chair of the Austin-San Antonio Intermunicipal Rail District, said plans are moving apace for passenger service between the two fast-growing cities. He said the district expects that about 8,000 people a day will ride trains along the line, saving an estimated $5 million a year in productivity that would have been lost by being stuck in traffic. Eugene Skoropowski, head of the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority in Oakland, Calif. said that if a commuter rail service operates on time and gets people to their destination at 79 miles an hour or greater, the line will be successful. "Americans will ride quality trains and fund them," he said.

Besides commuting, noted several speakers, freight looms large as a source of congestion that must receive the spotlight.

"It has immediate and immense financial and job implications," said Pisarski.

Mike Heiligenstein, executive director of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, noted that transportation policy "is not just about concrete and steel. It's about quality of life."

Retired Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey, who owns his own consulting firm and sits on the board of directors of HNTB Corp., said that Texas' transportation is "coming apart at the seams." He also noted that Texas must work with Canada and Mexico in planning transportation corridors. "It's not going to work if sensible transportation stops at the border," he said.

Added McCaffrey, "Time is running out. Congestion, if left unchecked, will bring us to a grinding halt in 20 years. There a lot of hard work facing Texas," he said. "But it's something that needs to be done." ✪

TxDOT photo/Kevin Stillman

Retired four-Star General Barry McCaffrey called for coordination among transportation planners in Texas, Canada and Mexico.

SB 792 puts the brakes on most CDAs

One bill that passed last session — SB 792 — prohibits most comprehensive development agreements, except for a few projects that can move forward in the major metropolitan areas.

A legislative committee will review CDAs during the interim between legislative sessions, and submit its findings in December 2008. Unless the legislature renews the CDA program in 2009, there will be no more private investment in transportation infrastructure, other than the few exceptions.

However, tolling itself is not outlawed. But there will be changes to how toll projects are developed. In the future, any tolled project located within the jurisdiction of a local tolling entity (regional mobility authority, regional transportation authority, county toll road authority), must go through a market valuation process whether it will be developed using private funds or not.

Previous TxDOT strategy was to allow the market to determine the value of a project through a competitive process. Once a value is determined, the local tolling entity will always have the first option to develop the project. If the local tolling entity chooses not to develop the project, then the state may move forward with the project. The market valuation process laid out in the bill expires in 2011.

The bill also authorizes toll authorities to issue bonds to pay for any costs associated with a toll project or to terminate a CDA contract.

An additional $3 billion in Proposition 14 bonds are authorized in the bill (up to $1.5 billion can be issued per year), 20 percent of which must be spent on safety projects. ✪

– Cady North

RM 1431 East of Cow Creek

Summer flooding wreaks havoc on Texas roads

By Mike Cox
Editor

Not since Dwight Eisenhower's presidency has Texas seen a wetter spring. The last time so much rain fell over such a large chunk of the state came in the spring of 1957, when torrential rains broke the now-storied drought of the early 1950s.

Though this year's rains have refilled the Highland Lakes and recharged springs, the protracted period of heavy precipitation has claimed at least 15 lives across the state and done more than $10 million in damage to roadways and bridges.

During the flooding — which spanned more than 40 days and nights — TxDOT maintenance workers assisted in barricading dangerous crossings and flooded roadways, in clearing debris and in making roadways passable again.

Particularly hard hit was Burnet County in the Austin District.

Usually gentle stream crossings in Marble Falls became veritable rivers as 18 inches of rain fell in an eight-hour period. Many roadways were buried in debris. Boats, cars, vegetation and timbers piled across the roadways.

In addition to the department's own storm damage issues, the Austin District helped Burnet County in the reconstruction and repair of five county roadways. The district logged 921 hours among 51 workers assisting local government using 1,144 tons of rock for roadway construction, 550 tons of flexible base material, 36 pieces of equipment, and 380 feet of culvert pipe. Despite the torrential rains, all but two highways were reopened prior to the July 4 holiday.

In the **Wichita Falls District,** the worst damage was in the Gainesville area. On FM 373 south of Muenster, two six-foot culverts washed out next to

The floods of '07 brought extensive water and damage to Texas roads and bridges; TxDOT crews pitched in long hours to clean up, open roads and repair what the rains and debris destroyed.

each other and created a 30-foot canyon. South of Gainesville on FM 372, a large section of overlay washed out. The resulting deposit on the right of way created a new (if temporary) alignment for 372. State Highway 101 south of Bowie also had a washout, but much smaller than FM 372 experienced.

In the **Dallas District**, a sinkhole in the middle of a Denton County road will likely continue to grow. The sinkhole is along FM 428, the main connector between Denton and Aubrey.

Drivers reported the pavement had been steadily cracking and sinking for more than a week. The hole is 50 yards long and 20 yards wide.

In the **Fort Worth District,** some 29 road closures occurred.

In the **Paris District** June 17-18, slow moving storms dumped more than 7 inches of rain in Sherman. That triggered hours of road closures, evacuations and high water rescues.

In the **Tyler District**, maintenance crews put in some long hours. On U.S. 84 between Rusk and Palestine, just west of the Texas State Railroad, rising flood waters quickly eroded a quarter-mile section and threatened to undermine the eastbound lane. TxDOT crews kept one lane open while they shored up the washout. Flooding closed SH 110 between Whitehouse and Troup, and several FM roads in Wood, Smith and Cherokee Counties were closed.

The **Pharr District** experienced some heavy rains July 1-2, especially in Starr County. The county received approximately 17 inches of rain in two days. According to Maintenance Supervisor Jesus "Jesse" Lara of Rio Grande City, "it took close to four days after the rains for our arroyo to go down to normal." Los Olmos Creek rose 17 feet above normal and Arroyo Garceno on U.S. 83 reached nearly 22 feet above normal.

The Rio Grande City Maintenance Office, located off US 83, had about four inches of water inside. According to Lara, water came in the front door and went out the back. ✪

PIOs Mark Ball, Larry Krantz, Adele Lewis, Val Lopez III, Amy Rodriquez, Sabra Vaughan contributed information for this report. Information from the Austin District came from Lowell Choate, maintenance director.

TxDOT photo

L - R: Russell Laughlin; Susan Kennedy; Grady Smithey Jr.; Sid Cauthron; (not pictured: William Burge)

TxDOT's Road Hand awards

Five honored at Transportation Forum

By Mike Cox
Editor

Five champions of transportation received TxDOT's Road Hand Awards at the Transportation Forum July 19.

Only 208 Road Hand awards have been given since then-executive director Luther Deberry started the recognition program in 1973.

"In the early days, a road hand was anyone who helped build roads," Assistant Executive Director Steve Simmons said. "Today's road hands continue that tradition by championing projects to help build the finest transportation system in the world."

This year's Road Hand honorees are:

Susan Kennedy: A dedicated advocate of improved transportation in East Texas, she led efforts to study the need for a regional mobility authority and rallied support for TTC-69.

A driving force in the development of FM 2435, which will facilitate access to proposed Lake Naconiche, Kennedy also served as a member of the Lufkin District's Advisory Committee for the development of a U.S. 59 master plan for Nacogdoches and Angelina Counties.

A former county judge, she currently is director of guest and community relations for Nacogdoches Medical Center.

Russell Laughlin: Laughlin played a pivotal role in the development of SH 170, helping create the nation's largest intermodal transportation center. Today, stretching from I-35 West to SH 114, this center serves 140 companies that have generated $26 billion in economic benefit for the North Texas region.

Currently senior vice president and transportation committee chair of Hillwood Properties, he has served as a member of Fort Worth's Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee and the Tarrant Regional Transportation Coalition RTI Policy Review Committee.

Grady W. Smithey Jr.: Smithey has actively worked with TxDOT and local elected officials to expand and improve transportation in the Dallas area.

In 1989, to ensure equal representation on the Regional Transportation Council, he devised a plan to give smaller cities a voice. He also has worked with regional and community leaders to offer suggestions for transportation enhancements to Dallas County's southwestern region.

He currently serves on the Trans-Texas Corridor Advisory Committee and the National League of Cities Transportation Committee.

A Duncanville city councilman for more than 18 years and mayor pro tem for six terms, he is a member of the Regional Transportation Committee of the North Central Texas Council of Governments and is the former secretary of the Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition.

William F. "Billy Burge III: Burge has been instrumental in advocating a strong solution for traffic congestion in the greater Houston area, also working diligently to help make Houston an international seaport and a national center for medical research and space exploration.

Chairman of the Grand Parkway Association, he formerly served as chairman of the Metropolitan Transit Authority Board of Directors.

Sid Cauthorn: As a founding member and chairman of the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Coalition, Cauthorn has worked hard for improved transportation and economic development along a corridor stretching from Mexico to the Pacific Northwest. Cauthorn is president and CEO of the Bank & Trust in Del Rio. ✪

Exit Ramp — May 2007

() = service years

Atlanta: Samuel Fields Jr. (6), Michael J. Ritter (21), Stevie E. Rawls (27) — **Austin:** Nellum L. Craven Jr. (30) — **Beaumont:** Karen S. Davis (25) — **Brownwood:** Jimmy J. Power (38) — **Childress:** Alvin C. Harper (34) — **El Paso:** Raymundo Granado (18) — **Fort Worth:** Karen L. Schulter (29), Bobby L. Triplett (26), Glenn M. Franklin (26) — **General Services:** James W. Corcoran (6), Guadalupe De La Fuente (21) — **Houston:** Bernard J. Murphy (26), Stephen L. Shaw (26), Loretta H. Charpiot (18), Jimmy A. Turner (26) — **Human Resources:** Robert A. Eason Jr. (13) — **Laredo:** Gerardo M. Martinez (21) — **Lubbock:** Donnie V. Blakely (21), Randell C. James (29), John E. Rantz (29) — **Lufkin:** Myrtice R. Kyle (30), John S. Evans (29) — **Motor Carrier:** Robert J. Margo (32) — **Paris:** Steven R. Taylor (14), Tommie E. Cox (33) — **Pharr:** Francisco J. Cobarrubias Jr. (38) — **Right of Way:** Nancy E. Johnson (36) — **San Angelo:** Eduardo P. Saenz Jr. (32) — **Tyler:** Ralph M. Miller (8), Thomas M. Goodson (26), Danny R. Scott (26) — **Vehicle Titles & Registration:** Glinda J. Ornelas (30), Bernadette H. Muras (27) — **Wichita Falls:** Joe D. Anderson (24) — **Yoakum:** Billie M. Maness (21)

In Memoriam

Bryan District
Dywayne A. Doyle
engineering technician
died June 20, 2007

Corpus Christi District
Roger Q. Spencer
district engineer
retired 1981
died June 23, 2007

Maryanna Stewart Samford
personnel officer
retired September 1993
died July 7, 2007

Design Division
George W. West
field area engineer
retired August 1991
died July 20, 2007

El Paso District
Guillermo Molinar
maintenance technician
retired June 1989
died June 24, 2007

Jesus Velasquez
maintenance technician
retired August 1979
died June 13, 2007

Yoakum District
Roy F. Gerloff
retired February 1977
died June 3, 2007

George W. Ritchie
maintenance supervisor
retired June 1986
died June 17, 2007

Jewel Pleasant
engineering technician
retired August 2003
died July 20, 2007

Renewal notice / No. 3

Texas statute requires all state newsletters and other periodicals to present a notice in three consecutive issues indicating that "anyone desiring to continue to receive the publication must so indicate in writing. The agency shall furnish future publications only to those persons requesting."

Please note: This notice does not apply to TxDOT employees who receive their issues through bulk shipments and mailings at work. If you received your individual copy by the U.S. Postal Service (see mailing label on last page), you are eligible to re-apply for continued delivery of this publication.

To remain on the mailing list, please respond before Sept. 1, 2007, by returning this notice, properly signed and dated. **Return to: TNews, 125 E. 11th St., Austin, TX 78701**

Yes, I wish to continue receiving *Transportation News*.

Your name _____

Address _____

_____

e-mail _____ phone _____

Signature _____

Date of signature _____

Calendar

2007

August

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

3	Labor Day
13	Rosh Hashanah***
14	Rosh Hashanah***
27	Commission Meeting, Austin

October

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

November

5-8	Research Management Committee Meetings, SA, RTI
15	Commission Meeting, Austin
22-23	Thanksgiving*
28	Statewide Construction & Materials Meeting, Austin, CST

December

5	Research Oversight Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI
13	Commission Meeting, Austin
24-26	Christmas*

2008

January

1	New Year's Day*
21	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*

February

18	President's Day*

March

21	Good Friday***
25-26	Annual Surveyor's Conference, Austin, ISD
27	District Survey Coord. Mtg./Trng. Session, Austin, ISD
31	Cesar Chavez Day***

* = 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/pio/articles/calendar.htm

backtracks

Here's a new mystery. There's a toy store on the right and an auto dealership on the left of this scene from somewhere in the last century. If you have an idea where this photo was taken, please contact Anne Cook at (512) 486-5838 or e-mail her at acook@dot.state.tx.us. ✪

There are several clues in the photo from the June-July issue to help identify which TxDOT road runs through it. Identification remains unconfirmed, but some suggest it's Highway 83 in Pharr. "Last of the Mohicans" with Randolph Scott (1936) was showing. If you have an idea to confirm the location of the June-July photo, please contact Anne Cook. ✪

Looking Back...

Item: Gary Trietsch (now district engineer in Houston) is profiled as the first Fort Worth District employee to participate in the department's employee-training program. With department support, he had received his master's degree in civil engineering from UT Arlington in 1974.

Item: The department's communications capabilities received an electronic boost during July when almost four dozen word-processing systems were deployed to districts and divisions .... By the installation of enhancing electronic circuit boards, the units will be able to utilize information in the main-frame computer, greatly increasing access for district and division users.

— from ***Transportation News***,
Texas Department of Highways & Public Transportation, August 1982

Texas Department of Transportation

T-News

125 E. 11th St.
Austin, Texas 78701

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