

National spotlight shines on Houston High-performance concrete, intelligent transportation featured

Texas was in the national spotlight recently as two significant conferences were held in Houston. The Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP) High Performance Concrete (HPC) Bridge Showcase was held March 25-27. The Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America) held its sixth annual meeting April 14-18.

A visit to the first bridge in the United States to be built with high-performance concrete highlighted the three-day SHRP conference.

The event, which drew hundreds of transportation officials from around the country, focused on the development and use of high-performance concrete that state and federal transportation officials say may play a significant role in rehabilitating the nation's crumbling infrastructure.

"Texas is leading the way in cutting-edge transportation technology," said U.S. Rep. Tom DeLay at the conference. "High-performance concrete will save the federal government and, more importantly, the American taxpayers billions of dollars in the next several decades."

The conference, hosted by the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT, in cooperation with the Center for Transportation Research at the University of Texas at Austin and the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M University, included a tour of the Louetta Road overpass construction site, located on Texas 249 in Houston. The Louetta Road project uses the more durable high-performance concrete, with a strength which is almost double that of conventional bridges.

"With the use of high-performance concrete, agencies can construct the economical bridges that will help improve long-term performances," said Executive Director Bill Burnett.

"High-performance concrete features improved impermeability, greater durability and accelerated strength gain over normal concrete," said Sue Lane, FHWA bridge research engineer.

Mary Lou Ralls, bridge design engineer in TxDOT's Design Division, said using high-performance concrete is cost-efficient. "The use of high-performance concrete should greatly increase the life span of bridges," Ralls said. "In addition, states and localities should have much lower maintenance costs for bridges that are built with high-performance concrete."

More than 4,000 people attended the ITS America meeting, which coincided with the ribboncutting of Transtar, Houston's intelligent transportation system. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña and Mortimer Downey of the U.S. Department of Transportation addressed attendees. The ITS America meeting and the opening of Transtar will be covered in the June issue of Transportation News.



Kevin Stillman, TRV

Mary Lou Ralls walks beams of high-performance concrete at Houston's Loretta Road overpass during the Strategic Highway Research Program High Performance Concrete Bridge Showcase.

High-performance concrete Q&A

Following are excerpts from a question-and-answer session with bridge design engineer Mary Lou Ralls concerning high-performance concrete.

Will HPC become the standard for concrete?

That's our goal. Although we can't predict the future, it just makes good business sense.

When will HPC be used in other bridges across the state?

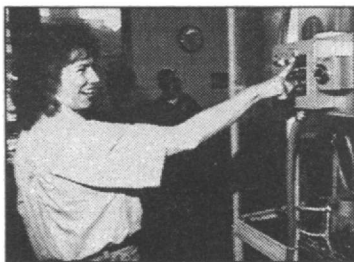
We are working on incorporating HPC technology into everyday practice. We continue to monitor and evaluate research data in the HPC projects, and will modify our construction documents as results become final.

What is HPC composed of?

HPC is composed of the same materials as normal concrete, but it's an "engineered" concrete. It is put together in such a way that the mixture has the needed properties.

Please see Q&A, page 6

Inside



A new machine will reduce tedium and increase accuracy and consistency in testing cement samples. **Page 5**



"Buckles" is the name chosen for the dog belonging to cartoon characters Texas and Dot. **Page 7**



James Grayson has seen a lot during his department career. But after 50 years, he's still going. **Page 9**



Al Glasscock has a platinum record hanging on his wall, but he's never been in a recording studio. **Page 10**

Q Several West Texas desperados have coerced me to ask the following: What is the reason state employees do not rate pay increases at levels within pace of inflation/cost of living increases? What was the last state employee pay increase percentage, and why was it so low? What procedures are required prior to state legislation passing a decent pay raise for state employees? What length of rope is needed? And on and on. If this is an out-of-bounds shot, I will drop a ball and hit again. But we who pay the greens fees are indeed interested in the "cost of living."

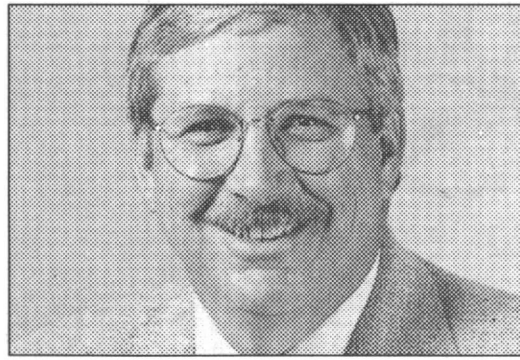
George Powers
El Paso District

A George, you've asked the question I get asked by department employees everywhere I go. First of all, the state Legislature determines the salary levels of all classified state workers. The last increase was 3 percent in 1992. According to records over the past 30 years, this is the first time we've gone four years without an increase.

This issue is getting a lot of attention as we near the beginning of the 1997 legislative session. The House Appropriations Subcommittee has been hearing from several organizations to determine how state salaries and benefits packages compare to the private sector, and if and how much salaries should be increased.

At the last hearing, results of a 1994 University of Texas study of employees' salaries were discussed. The study showed that, of the state agencies studied (including TxDOT), state pay was not competitive with private employers or city and county government. Benefits were found to be comparable to the private sector.

Also at the last House Subcommittee meeting on March 27, the Texas State Employees Union recommended a \$200 a month increase, saying that state salaries are lagging behind the private sector and the national average. The Texas Public Employees Association recommended a \$250 across-the-board increase for each year of the coming biennium. The state auditor's office has estimated the 1995 cost-of-living increase at



Bill Burnett

Ask Bill

about 2.5 percent. The auditor's office is recommending a 2 percent salary increase.

TxDOT is represented at these hearings by the State Agency Coordinating Council (SACC), which speaks on behalf of the 15 largest state agencies. Cassie Carlson Reed, deputy executive director for Administrative Services, is TxDOT's representative on SACC. SACC has not made a specific recommendation for the upcoming biennium.

One final statistic: The Legislative Budget Board, whose job it is to crunch all these numbers, reports that a \$50 across-the-board increase would cost the state \$108 million.

The department supports a legislative adjustment (cost-of-living raise) for state employees. As in past years, the department believes we need to take care of our employees and any benefits we can give them we need to take off the top of our available revenues and then fund our other programs.

Now, I can't tell what the Legislature is going to do, but you can see that a lot of folks are working on the issue. We'll make sure that new developments are reported in Transportation News as this issue develops.

Q Why does TxDOT have a lack of respect for human resources functions and the role of human resources professionals? Please share your vision for human resources and the importance of its role within TxDOT.

Over the past three years I have seen the responsibility and workload of human resources increase at an alarming rate. The expertise and knowledge necessary to be a successful human resources professional at TxDOT seems to dictate that, compared to the private sector, classification for human resources positions relative to salary group is inadequate. As a result, it is difficult to retain qualified human resources professionals at TxDOT. In previous years, human resources professionals have worked their way up from secretarial and clerical positions to obtain supervisory responsibilities. Due to federal and state regulations, not to mention TxDOT's personnel policies and procedures, it now behooves TxDOT to hire qualified, competent human resources professionals to perform duties outlined in human resources functional job descriptions. I realize that the Human Resources Division is reviewing human resources

functions with retooling and consultants. I hope the result of such efforts help decision-makers see the reality of today.

It is disheartening to note that a human resources professional at the district level who is not the training coordinator, employment interviewer or assistant human resources officer can only obtain a salary group 13 over the span of his or her career. A human resources officer at the district level has no career path within the district because a director of administration must have experience in accounting, warehouse, human resources and automation to be competitive. To expect applicants to possess a background that is so diverse is not plausible. I suppose the bottom line is where we place our values.

Darryl C. Stratton
Dallas District

A Thank you for your question. First, I do not have, nor do I believe the Management Team or TxDOT employees have a lack of respect for the human resources functions and the role of human resources professionals. In fact, in the past two years, the role of human resources professionals has become more and more important. We have seen significant changes in the way department human resources professionals conduct their business. Increasingly, administrative responsibilities are being revamped to allow them to contribute more directly to our mission.

Our human resources professionals have been instrumental in leading the retooling of human resources functions. They have provided leadership in identifying, designing and implementing the business processes needed to meet their needs and those of the department. Through these efforts, human resources professionals partner with management in planning and guiding the evolution of organizational change. I cannot stress enough their importance, or the importance of the work they perform.

As you stated, the Human Resources Division recently began studying HR jobs. The study will examine all existing HR positions from the technician to the officer levels departmentwide. One of the major points will be a review of compensation for duties performed. This, along with an assessment of services delivered, will provide the Functional Title Classification Committee and me the insight to determine what career paths should be available for our HR professionals. I could not agree with you more that a well qualified workforce to support the human resources function is critical to maintaining an efficient transportation system.

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Do you have a question for Bill? Send it in care of the Public Information Office, Main Office. Although we will withhold your name upon request, all letters must be signed and a work address included. Questions may be edited due to space restraints.

FTW employee dies after jobsite accident

Tim Starkey, a chief inspector in the Fort Worth District, died April 19, a week after being pinned in a trench by a block of dirt and rock while inspecting a retaining wall.

Starkey worked for the department for 11 years.

He is survived by a wife and four children.

A fund has been started for his family, and all donations may be sent to the Fort Worth District's Public Information Office. ★

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Worrying pays off for TRF's Lammons

Concern about doing things right is guiding principle for railroad inspector

Connie Lammons is a worrier. She worried about making sure I wasn't bored when I spent the day with her. She worried about being punctual for the railroad crossing signal inspections she had to do. She worried about every detail of the actual inspections. She worried about training another employee so he could conduct inspections without her.

Most of all, she worries about doing her job right.

The 11-year TxDOT employee, a railroad program coordinator for the Traffic Operations Division, said she's often told not to worry. "But I do worry, especially when I read the weekly railroad crossing accident reports from the Department of Public Safety," she said.

Lammons, who covers the Lufkin, Beaumont, Houston, Corpus Christi, Brownwood and Abilene districts, is charged with inspecting signals at railroad crossings. She is, without a doubt, a thorough, detailed inspector who has the respect not only of her co-workers and district personnel, but also railroad employees who must work with her to satisfy the rigid standards.

"There are three signal inspectors, including myself, and we are very serious about what we do," she told me. "We have families and loved ones, and we worry about their safety as well as our co-workers and the public. We want to know that we have done everything we can to make each crossing funded under our programs safe for everyone."

In her current position since 1993, Lammons gained experience in the Brownwood District, where she started her TxDOT tenure. Before that, she worked for three and one-half years at the Texas Railroad Commission while she attended Capitol City Trade School in Austin.

"In the five years I worked in the Brownwood District Maintenance Office, my job consisted of coordinating all preliminary and final inspections of railroad crossings, preparing the railroad signal and replanking layouts, and reviewing and approving payments to the railroad companies," she said.

"Employees in small districts usually wear more than one hat, so I also purchased roadway materials, wrote service contracts to include yard maintenance and janitorial and security services, and issued over-size/overweight permits for the district," Lammons continued.

"In addition to that, I was also secretary to the district maintenance engineer, who, ironically, was Tom Newbern, now the new director of the Traffic Operations Division," she said, smiling. "It made my transition from the district to the division a lot easier, simply by seeing a familiar face and being able to work with someone who already knew me and my work," Lammons said.

"It is great to be working with Tom again." (Newbern feels the same way about Lammons; he extolled her virtues to me so effectively that I completely rearranged my schedule in order to interview her.)

Her three years in the Brownwood District were spent in the district design office, where she assisted with plan reviews and preparations for the district, and continued to handle railroad programs at the request of the division formerly known as D-5. "Railroad projects are so unique from other state projects, so this job has kind of followed me around," Lammons said with a grin.

If I had to describe Lammons in a nutshell, I would use the quote from a plaque she has hanging in her cubicle: "A career woman has to look like a lady, act like a man and work like a dog." She is mission-oriented but with just the right touch of humanity.

As I observed Lammons conducting the two signal inspections in Thrall, I realized the key to her success — she doesn't miss a trick, but she isn't threatening. She makes you want to do the right thing.

And wanting to do the right thing always determines the way Lammons conducts her business.

We began the final inspection of the railroad signals with Lammons taking photographs of each approach — north, east, south and west — in just that order. She was explicitly meticulous in her record-keeping.

Then, she started completing her Discrepancy Form, which is a checklist of everything you would ever want to know about a railroad-crossing intersection: signage, pavement markings, type of sig-



Eloise Lundgren

A Day in the Life

Stop on Tracks" is an optional sign that may be placed where there is a potential for traffic to queue up across the tracks. But it's mandatory for a sign with a phone number to call in case the signal is malfunctioning to be placed at all signalized crossings.

Lammons apologized to me for being slow, but she was doing



double duty by training Austin District employee Randal Lenz so he could conduct final inspections on his own. When it got down to the inventory of the instrument cabins, Lenz made sure he eyeballed each and every item.

Finally, Lammons got in her vehicle and approached the crossing from each direction so she could see what motorists would see. She required the railroad workers to adjust one of the signal lights because it sat too high.

The two railroad signals we inspected were the "mast flashers with gates"

variety (there are three — the other two are "mast flashers" and "cantilevers.") But you don't get to pick and choose the type of crossing arbitrarily, as Lammons explained to me. As is usually the case for most things, money plays a big part in determining type and location of crossings.

"TxDOT is allocated a specified amount through ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991) annually to spend on crossings," she said. "So we developed a way to rank and prioritize a statewide list for each public crossing eligible for these funds.

"Each crossing is unique," she said. "They will all have some basic features in common, but each will have its own twist."

If I could get drivers to understand one thing, it would be the importance of understanding and obeying warning signs and signals; there would be far fewer accidents involving railroad crossings if they would. But the average driver, being what he or she is, may get in a hurry or do what we all do — think accidents always happen to "the other guy." No wonder Lammons worries, but it certainly is comforting to know someone of her caliber is looking out for the rest of us.

Lammons played down her talents; she said all it takes is good, old-fashioned common sense, attention to detail, keeping the

Connie Lammons, right, goes over a discrepancy form for railroad crossing inspections with Austin District employee Randal Lenz. After completing training under Lammons, Lenz will be responsible for preliminary and final inspections in the Austin District.

Please see Lammons, page 15

VTR employees volunteer to help save lives

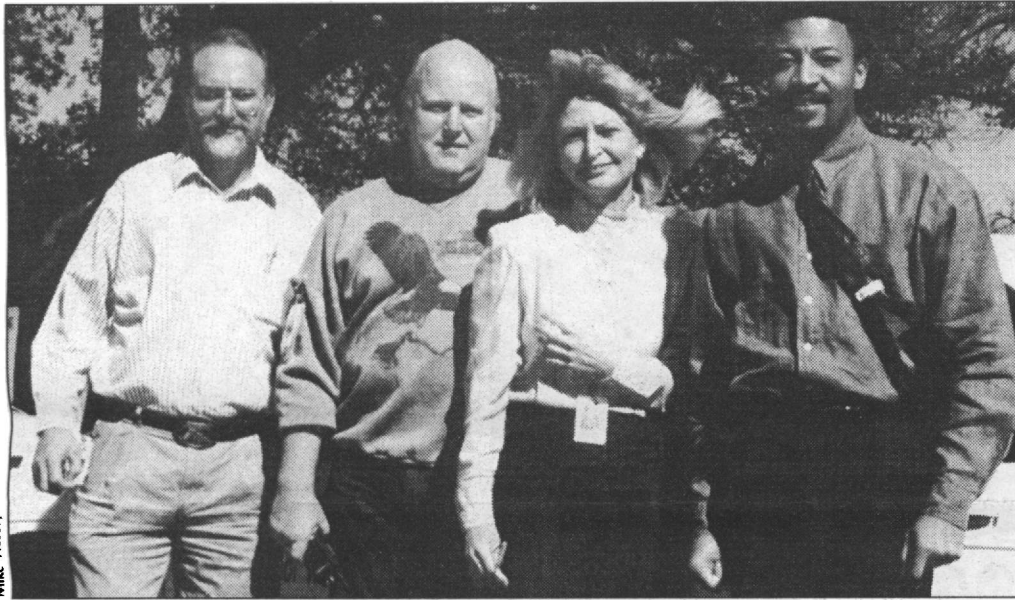
While not doctors or nurses, First Responders trained to handle medical emergencies

Melissa McCann
Vehicle Titles and Registration Division

How many of us can say that we would know what to do in the event of a medical emergency? Perhaps most of us would panic, then call an ambulance or 911. Of course, it would be helpful to have medical training for handling such a crisis.

Four employees in TxDOT's Vehicle Titles and Registration Division (VTR) volunteered their extra time to learn how to respond to a medical emergency. Scott Bennett, Lynn Rosebery, Charlie Johannessen and Johnny Manns all are trained and certified to be First Responders.

First Responders work with Emergency



VTR employees Charlie Johannessen, Scott Bennett, Lynn Rosebery and Johnny Manns are certified First Responders. They are trained to handle medical emergencies until paramedics arrive

Medical Services (EMS), a division of the Texas Department of Health's Bureau of Emergency Management. They are not doctors or nurses, but they are trained to handle medical emergencies.

At first, Rosebery did not consider volunteering.

"I started off a little leery of what was involved and what was expected," she said.

Eventually, though, she became interested because she wanted to be able to help her family if an accident occurred. Rosebery's father suffers from heart problems and her grandson has asthma. She thought taking a course in emergency medical techniques would come in handy.

First Responder training classes were held two evenings a week at Austin's Camp Hubbard.

The classes taught students to determine whether an ambulance is needed, and procedures to stabilize a patient before an ambulance arrives. There were also Greek and Latin medical terms to memorize, and a significant amount of homework and studying for exams. The students were tested often and practiced procedures such as bandaging and CPR.

"I never heard complaints in class about the long, late hours. Everyone was concentrating on learning the information," Manns said.

To receive their certificates, students had to pass a final exam.

"They didn't cut us any slack. They didn't cut any corners for us," Bennett stressed, "If you couldn't perform that skill, you didn't pass it." He also said students knew they would have to depend on one another in emergencies, so teamwork and bonding were important.

The time immediately after an accident is described as the "Golden Hour," during which lives hanging in the balance can be saved by proper medical care. Because First Responders often arrive at a victim's side before EMS personnel can, they can provide the critical transition between citizen first aid and advanced medical care. There may be certain preliminary procedures that should be followed in a crisis or life-threatening situation while waiting for the paramedics. First Responders have the necessary skills and knowledge to initiate life-saving procedures such as CPR, bleeding control, shock treatment, and stabilization of spine injuries and splint fractures.

Unless a person is unconscious, First Responders must have permission to touch the victim before medical procedures may be initiated. "We will tell you who we are, ask permission to touch you and if you say no, we can't touch you," Bennett said

But, Johannessen added, "If you hit the floor, the rule changes. We can treat you then."

Rosebery said the course was a lot of work, but worth the effort.

"The overall course was a lot more involved and difficult than I think any of us expected," said Rosebery. Despite the difficulty involved, the course gave her self-confidence.

For Bennett, the sheer excitement of something new happening within TxDOT sparked his interest in the First Responder course. Bennett volunteers in his community, and he felt that it will help him in any emergency.

"The satisfaction of getting through this class and knowing that I feel more comfortable when I approach a serious illness or an accident is something I am very proud of," Bennett said.

Manns said that although it was a challenge to find time to study, the course gave him confidence to handle certain procedures.

"Getting used to the idea that I might have to deal with an amputation is no longer scary, but it used to be," Manns said.

"There is a lot to it and you cover a lot pretty quickly," added Johannessen. He kept up with his studies by practicing the procedures he learned with his wife. Johannessen said that even after classes are over, First Responders cannot just push the books

aside. "It's like anything else. If you don't use it, you lose it," he said.

Although classes were taken seriously, there were humorous moments that put everyone at ease. Rosebery recalled a situation where terminology became confusing. A paramedic explained that when a head injury occurs there is test that determines whether serious injury to the brain has occurred. The test involves a drop of blood on a 4x4 (a 4x4 sterile bandage). The first thing that came to Rosebery's mind was a 4x4 piece of wood, so she asked the paramedic about it.

"After class, a couple told me that they were thinking the same thing," said Rosebery. The incident became known as the "infamous 4x4."

No matter how confusing or difficult the classes were, no one ever considered quitting. Rosebery wants to take more classes and move to the next level of training, Emergency Medical Technician Basic.

Currently, First Responders are working on organizing their own system of responding to emergencies within Camp Hubbard. Several department employees in other divisions have taken the First Responder classes, too.

Bennett, Rosebery, Johannessen and Manns each spent between \$100 and \$150 for equipment, including a stethoscope, blood pressure cuff and rebreather mask.

All four advise anyone who wants to take classes in First Responder training to designate plenty of time for it — inside and outside of class. Bennett said he encourages questions from anyone who would like to know more about the program. ★

For more information about First Responders, contact EMS at the Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Emergency Management, 1100 W. 49th St., Austin, Texas, 78756-3199, (512) 834-6740. ★

Bubba Williamson signs on as retiree columnist

Several months ago we ran a piece asking for correspondents for our upcoming retiree column.

We got several responses, and since then Bubba Williamson has agreed to coordinate the column. He'll have some help — several former employees across the state signed on to be correspondents.

Now, they need your help tracking down tidbits of information on department retirees. If you are a retiree, or you have information about a retiree, contact Bubba Williamson at 3601 Vara Drive, Austin, 78754. Or, you can contact the Public Information Office at (512) 463-6630.

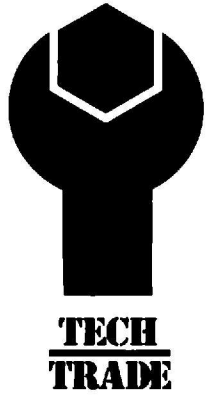
Also, Bubba can always use more correspondents, so if you're interested, let him know.★

Cement testing benefits from robotics

Tommy Etheredge
Materials and Tests Division

For several years, TxDOT has looked into using robotics in various dangerous, repetitive and tedious jobs. One area that could benefit from robotics is materials testing.

The Materials and Tests Division (MAT) performs ongoing quality monitoring on a variety of materials, including cement. In the past, cement monitoring was based on job



samples collected from projects in progress. Now, MAT takes samples directly from cement plants, tests them and determines if the cement is good enough to ship to TxDOT projects. This saves time and money, but robotics could simplify the process even more.

Katherine Holtz, MAT director, emphasized that the idea of using robots was not to replace employees with machines, but to gain more uniformity and repeatability in some tests.

"We're not building machines to replace people, but to increase productivity," Holtz said. The robot frees employees to perform other, less tedious tasks.

The project was assigned to Paul Krugler, technical operations director in MAT. A joint

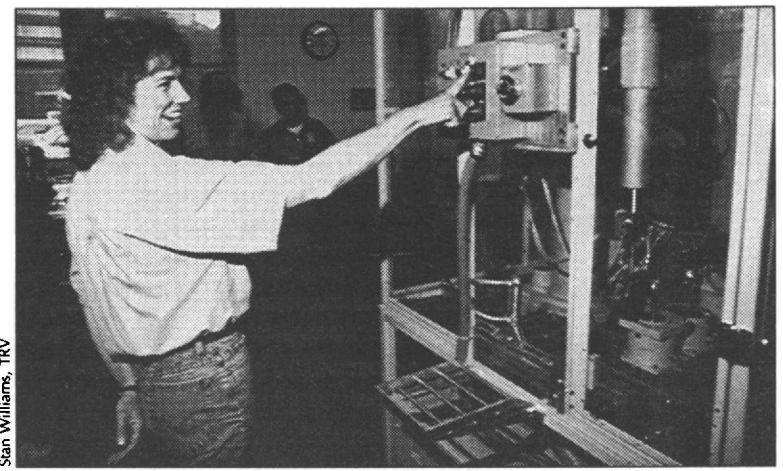
effort between the Research and Technology Transfer Office (KIT) and MAT got the ball rolling.

Representatives from the robotics departments of several universities visited MAT to determine what tests were the most feasible for application of mechanization technology. Texas State Technical College (TSTC) in Sweetwater was chosen for the project.

TSTC delivered the robot to MAT in Austin in January. The creators, Dr. Gary Rhoades, Dr. Tony Hsieh and four TSTC students, set up the robot and trained TxDOT employees to operate it.

The cement testing involves carefully mixing precise amounts of cement, sand and water. The resulting mortar is poured into 2-inch cubic molds, tamped into place and allowed to set under controlled humidity and temperature. After being removed from the molds, the cubes are put under mechanical pressure to test their strength. The robot does all of this, allowing employees to conduct other tests. Among the goals of the project are improvements in cost-effectiveness, safety, energy consumption, precision, accuracy and repeatability.

The Concrete/Cement Section scheduled demonstrations for both internal and external customers. Cement producers who furnish materials to TxDOT projects were invited to see a demonstration. MAT employees and TSTC officials and students also demonstrated the robot's capabilities for the news media and members of the state Legislature. TSTC's bid of \$267,000 was considerably



San Williams, TRV

Chris Reding, MAT engineering technician, runs a robotic cement tester through its paces. The robot mixes cement, sand and water and, after setting up, subjects the mixture to intense pressure to determine its strength.

less than other bids the department received. And, TSTC came in approximately \$35,000 under budget. MAT employees are now compiling data from the robot's tests to determine its accuracy. After accumulating this data, TxDOT will determine if this is a viable piece of equipment to present to American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) as an alternative for this type of testing.

This project with TSTC exemplifies the department's partnering efforts. TxDOT benefits with a more cost-effective, productive testing procedure, while TSTC students acquire skills they couldn't learn in the classroom. ★

No RIF necessary for FY '96, Burnett announces

Department employees uncertain how a possible reduction in force (RIF) might affect them by the end of fiscal year 1996 can breathe easier, following an announcement at the April Management Team meeting.

"We've been keeping a close eye on this issue," said Executive Director Bill Burnett. "Due to a positive approach by the management team, our numbers (FTEs) are looking so good that a RIF is not needed to obtain

our FY '96 goal."

The department, under a legislative mandate to reach prescribed FTE (full time equivalency) levels for FY '96 and '97, had set in July 1995, FTE goals for districts, divisions and special offices.

For the past few months, TxDOT has carried an average of about 14,180 FTEs. The legislative target for the end of FY '96 is 15,171. For FY '97 that number drops to 14,721. The Management Team has been meeting quarterly to address staffing levels. FY '97 staffing will be reviewed again at the July Management Team meeting.

Though FTE numbers will swell with about 300 summer hire positions, the department still faces a pretty good outlook for the near future.

"We have made progress meeting our FTE targets through attrition, retirements and voluntary separation," Burnett said. "We continue to seek ways to be more efficient. That's why outsourcing and privatizing applicable work is so important. It makes us more cost-efficient and helps in the downsizing efforts."

The department adopted an official RIF policy on Oct. 1, 1995. The policy is published in Chapter 1, Section 18 of the Human Resources Manual. ★

Innovation Showcase highlights '96 Transportation Conference

The Innovation Showcase returns to the Transportation Conference again this year, and conference coordinators invite interested parties to submit exhibit ideas. The 1996 Transportation Conference's theme is Quality Transportation: Moving Texans into the Future.

The showcase is an opportunity for the department to highlight ground-breaking projects, techniques and processes in a trade-show setting. Since its inception two years ago, it has proven to be a valuable addition to the annual Transportation Conference. The conference will be held Oct. 14-16 at Texas A&M University in College Station.

The deadline for showcase submissions is June 14. If you are interested in exhibiting distinctive projects at the Innovation Showcase, provide a brief written description of the project and how it is innovative. Send submissions, including a contact name and phone number, to the

Innovation Showcase coordinator, Kim Vencill, by mail in care of the Continuous Improvement Office, Main Office, 6th Floor, Austin, or by GroupWise to KVEN-CILL.

Note that any ideas submitted should be those you are willing to exhibit, not exhibits you would like to see. Additionally, chairs, tables and skirting will be provided. However, selected exhibitors need to make arrangements for special equipment, such as floor display booths and computer equipment.

Floor space for the showcase is limited, so projects that have not been displayed at the Innovation Showcase will take precedence. If you are interested in submitting a project that has been previously displayed at the Innovation Showcase, demonstrate that it has progressed significantly.

For more information, contact Kim Vencill at (512) 463-8621. ★

TQI conference stresses working together

Melissa Welch
Public Information Office

In this time of tight funding, employee reduction and higher demand for quality, it's no wonder that the trend is partnering. By partnering with the private sector, TxDOT can work more efficiently, produce better products and save money.

In February, TxDOT hosted its second annual Total Quality Initiative conference at the Del Lago resort in Montgomery. TxDOT employees and private transportation industry representatives gathered to discuss highway construction, and searched for better ways to work together to achieve their goals.

Partnering is the relationship TxDOT builds with contractors, consultants, utility companies and other participants in highway projects. Building these relationships helps TxDOT expedite projects, which in turn saves the contractor, TxDOT and the taxpayer money.

"It's a smart way to do business" said TQI Program Administrator Annie Dadian-Williams. "Partnering can produce a 10-fold savings down the road."

Kicking off the conference, Assistant Executive Director for Field Operations Bobbie Templeton announced the 1995 National Quality Initiative Awards and "pay tribute to the individuals who have taken on TQI and made it work."

The Lubbock, Laredo and San Antonio districts walked away with the awards. In the Lubbock District, HDR Engineering, Granite Construction Company and John Ranse, former Lubbock area engineer, worked with neighborhood communities on the Canyon Lakes Crossing project on Interstate 27 and made a winning situation for the community, the traveler and the department.

Laredo District Project Engineer Salvador Mercado, Design Manager Manuel Saldana and South Texas Utility Contractors turned a two-lane, flood-prone underpass on U.S. 83 at Guadalupe and Chihuahua streets into a level thoroughfare that enhanced the safety of the traveling public.

The San Antonio District's

TransGuide was recognized for enhancing traffic flow and making highways safer for travelers. Pat Irwin, San Antonio director of transportation operations, Allied Signal Technical Service Corporation and 65 sub-contractors worked through unexpected problems to bring together one of the most advanced transportation management systems in the country.

Accepting their awards, winners described their partnering experiences differently, but agreed on one common denominator: Partnering works.

As one TxDOT employee put it, "Partnering is a new term for the good-ol'-boy way of doing things. You work together - not through faxes, letters and work specifications, but through face-to-face communication."

Manuel Saldana, design manager for the Laredo District, described the partnering program as essential. Saldana was one of the recipients of the Quality Awards, and explained the effects of partnering.

"In every project that I have been involved with I have used partnering. Maybe not the standard partnering we are using today, but I communicate with the contractors. It saves everyone involved a lot of time and best of all, the product that we produce is better because of it," Saldana said.

Saldana's design for the project was completed in a record three months because of planning with all project participants.

Since the beginning of the partnering trend in 1992, TxDOT has partnered 389 projects and has expanded the program to include design, materials and tests, and retooling. ★



Geoff Appold, TRV

TxDOT personnel and private transportation industry representatives gathered at Del Lago in Montgomery for a TQI conference. Breakout groups like this allowed participants to meet face to face and discuss ways to work together more efficiently.

Q&A

Continued from page 1

What makes it a better product than standard concrete?

Increased durability, and increased strength if needed. It's an "engineered" concrete, with the type and amount of each component included to achieve the needed characteristics.

Where else has it been used completely to build bridges or other highway-related projects?

HPC has been used in individual bridge components in a few U.S. bridges. The Louetta Road Overpass in Houston is the first to use HPC throughout the bridge. The Federal Highway Administration has six HPC bridges (two in Texas, one in Nebraska, New Hampshire and Virginia, and one just initiated in Ohio). In other countries, bridges with HPC components include the Annacis Bridge in Vancouver, the Normandie Bridge in France and the Northumberland Strait Crossing bridge, which is under construction, in Prince Edward Island, Canada.

How does it help strengthen bridges?

Beams can be stronger and stiffer with HPC, resulting in the ability to carry heavier loads with less effort. Also, the more durable decks will be less affected by environmental conditions. It's important to remember that we're concentrating on durability in addition to strength, because we want our bridges to last longer.

Can it be used in other projects, besides bridges or highway-related projects?

Absolutely. HPC should be used in all concrete projects — it just makes good business sense.

Why isn't HPC used more extensively?

Knowledge about it hasn't been fully disseminated yet. Once HPC's better performance is known, it should be used more. Also, there are always risks with using new technology, such as not being able to achieve higher concrete strengths consistently, and this could be causing some hesitation.

If HPC is still being developed, how do we know it will save money in the long run? How has this been proven?

Research studies over the last 10 years have shown HPC's cost-effectiveness for bridges (including studies at Tulane, LSU, NC State and Construction Technology Laboratories Inc.).

FHWA is asking each state to perform a cost-analysis for their project, so that we have a database of initial costs.

On a national level, the Transportation Research Board is initiating a research study, to begin in April 1996, on long-term costs.

A more durable concrete should result by reducing concrete's permeability, the ability for water to get into the concrete. Our test results have shown that replacing some of the cement with fly ash, a recycled product, can reduce permeability. Therefore, it follows that this concrete should be more durable.

How much more expensive is HPC to manufacture, compared to conventional concrete?

While a unit cost comparison may show HPC to be more expensive, initial costs could be reduced due to fewer beams or fewer piers; it should also last longer because it's more durable.

If it hasn't yet been proven to save money, how do you think taxpayers will react, considering its expense? What justifies its use?

We must move from thinking of costs only in terms of initial costs, to thinking in terms of long-term (lifecycle) costs. The use of HPC may or may not result in initial cost savings, but it should save money long-term because of its improved durability.

How long will a conventional concrete bridge last?

Insufficient time exists to accurately state a life-span for prestressed concrete bridges. According to the FHWA's 1995 report to Congress on the status of the nation's highway bridges, the average time to reconstruction for bridges of all materials is 42 years.

How long will an HPC bridge last?

We look for 75 years to 100 years life.

How much lower do you expect maintenance costs of HPC bridges to be?

We can't give a quantitative answer, but it just makes good sense to build with a more durable concrete. Nationally, the Transportation Research Board has initiated a research study to quantify this. ★

Winner named in Tex, Dot children's contest

Tex and Dot can finally call their dog, thanks to the imagination of 8-year-old Sarah Tschoepe.

Tschoepe's entry was chosen as the winning name in the Tex and Dot "Name That Dog!" contest. Her winning entry, "Buckles," was announced March 27.

The contest was part of a statewide campaign to promote traffic safety among children. Last year, TxDOT launched the children's safety campaign using two new cartoon characters, Tex and Dot. A focal point of the campaign, a coloring and activity book, gave children a chance to enter the contest to name another new character: Tex and Dot's dog.

More than 1,620 entries were mailed to the Dallas District offices of the characters' creators, Traffic Safety Specialist Mike West and Assistant Public Information Officer James Black. Incoming names were not limited to Texas addresses however; entries were mailed from across the United States and from such countries as Canada, Italy, Germany and France.

Entries were judged based on originality, creativity and suitability with the traffic safety message.

"We were amazed at the number of creative entries we received, but Sarah's really stood out," said West. "We wanted to find a name that would not only fit the character,

but would also relate to traffic safety. Thanks to Sarah, we found it. Buckles is a perfect name."

Many children mailed their own drawings of Tex, Dot and Buckles along with their entries. An elementary class in Denton, for instance, created its own book of drawings and letters as a memento.

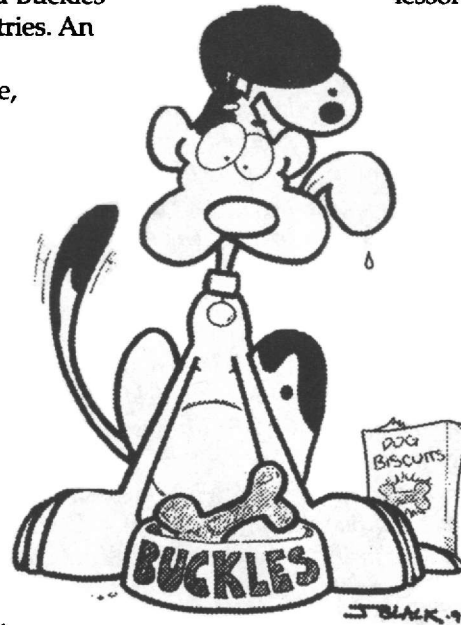
"Knowing that so many kids, teachers and parents have enjoyed these character so much means a lot," Black said. "It's great to know that it's taken off like Mike and I hoped it would. I think credit goes to the TxDOT employees across the state who supported it in their districts and were as enthusiastic about Tex and Dot as we were. We wouldn't have gotten this kind of response without their help."

Said West, "Teachers throughout Texas

and beyond have used Tex and Dot as a tool for discussing traffic safety with their classes. That's exactly the point. This was a way of allowing kids to learn some valuable lessons in a fun and interesting way."

Tschoepe is a second-grade student at Castle Hills Elementary School in San Antonio. She will be recognized in an upcoming reprinting of the coloring and activity book, and will also receive Tex and Dot promotional items. San Antonio District officials also held a press conference on May 2 to recognize Tschoepe and her family.

Honorable mentions were also awarded to the following entrants for their submissions: Brandon, 7, and Josh Bararo, 9, Fort Worth; Alyssa Allen, 5, Denison; Jessica Beck, 10, Garland; Joshua Foust, 8, Silverton; Amanda Cortinas, 9, Mesquite; Bianca Montanez, 7, Frisco; and Colleen Murphey, 10, Fort Worth. ★ *Contributed by the Dallas District*



Early morning blaze tests YKM district firefighter's mettle

Pearlie Bushong
Yoakum District

Andy Carl Brzozowski, a maintenance technician in the Yoakum District, serves as assistant volunteer fire chief for the city of Edna. On Feb. 1, Brzozowski responded to an early-morning alarm that tested his skills as a firefighter.

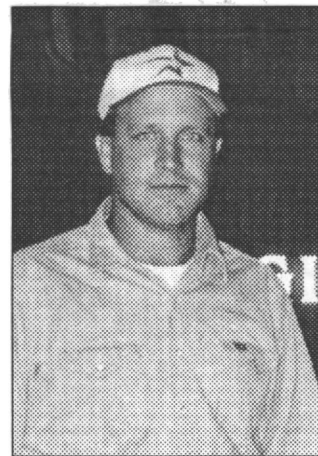
The fire started at 1:07 a.m. and resulted in \$1.5 million in damage to the John Deere dealership, known as the Texas Trading Company. The store's offices, work areas and the parts department — including all its contents — were damaged.

Besides the Edna fire department, Vanderbilt, Lolita, Ganado, El Campo and Formosa sent a total of 73 firefighters to help extinguish the blaze. The fire finally was put out about 7:30 a.m.

The fire reached 3,000 degrees, exploding gas and diesel tanks and 55-gallon drums of hydraulic fluids and motor oil. Flames and fireballs shot more than 60 feet in the air.

Brzozowski was instrumental in getting an oil containment pipe set to catch diesel and oil runoffs from ruptured tanks. He also prevented the Texaco bulk tank, located 150 feet away on adjoining property, from catching fire and exploding when a 55-gallon drum landed on the bulk tank. Brzozowski had firefighters posted and ready for just such an event, and they quickly removed the danger.

Formosa firefighters applied 750 gallons of foam to the chemical fires, and more than 50,000 gallons of water were pumped by other



Andy Carl Brzozowski

firefighters. The water hoses stretched across Texas 111, which was closed to traffic until 9 a.m. due to the dense smoke.

Firefighters believe the blaze started in a wall, where an electrical outlet shorted out and ignited a sofa in the office. It then spread to some storage boxes and old files.

TxDOT's Jackson County Maintenance Section, where Brzozowski works, provided a backhoe and other heavy equipment to move the debris. "Despite the intense heat and exploding chemicals, we didn't have any injuries," Brzozowski said.

Edna Mayor Joe Hermes commended Brzozowski for his actions in containing the fire and preventing even more damage to surrounding businesses.

Brzozowski has attended Texas A&M's firefighting school and receives additional instruction at weekend schools and semimonthly training. He is just a few hours short of certification.

Brzozowski, a nine-year TxDOT employee, has been a volunteer fireman since 1988. ★

Multi-agency 'one-stop shop' phone line a reality

Answers to a wide range of motor carrier questions can be obtained with the touch of a button thanks to a cooperative effort of three state agencies, the Texas Motor Transportation Association and industry.

TxDOT, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the State Comptroller's Office joined together to expand service on a toll-free number operated by TxDOT. Now by calling (800) 299-1700, callers are guided through a menu of topic options and are automatically routed to the appropriate agency.

For example, if a caller requests information on motor fuel taxes, the call is automatically connected to the Comptroller's Office; for questions on commercial driver's licenses, the call is routed to DPS; if a caller requests apportioned interstate license plate information, the call is automatically connected to TxDOT's Vehicle Titles and Registration Division; to obtain an oversize/overweight permit, or information on motor carrier registration/insurance, the caller is connected to TxDOT's Motor Carrier Division. Other options are also available.

"With the three agencies working together, we are providing a one-stop shop phone number for most motor carrier-related questions," said Lawrence Smith, director of the Motor Carrier Division. "We are dedicated to working closely with the motor carrier industry to provide the most efficient, effective and productive motor carrier services in the country. The new system frees TxDOT employees from directing callers to other agencies, allowing staff more time to issue permits and motor carrier credentials," Smith said. ★

LFK gets recycling 'Good Guy' recognition

Jimmie Styles
Lufkin District

Hal Hubbard, Lufkin District warehouse supervisor and recycling coordinator, received the following letter from Angelina Beautiful/Clean:

Dear Mr. Hubbard:

On behalf of the Angelina Beautiful/Clean Recycling Committee, we would like to congratulate you and your business for being a "Good Guy!"

We are glad to know that there are businesses within our communities who are not only meeting environmental standards, but surpassing the guidelines set forth for a cleaner earth.

We applaud your efforts for helping to keep our area beautiful and clean.

In response to your submitted application, AB/C is enclosing a "Good Guys" sticker, which we hope you will proudly display in your business. Meanwhile, as you continue to strive to be environmentally friendly, AB/C will be educating the public on how to identify one of the "Good Guys." AB/C cannot endorse a particular business, but we can certainly recognize your efforts. Again, thanks for doing your part to clean up the environment. With your help, together we can make East Texas a cleaner place to live, work and play. Congratulations and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,
Yana Pounders-Bullock
AB/C Executive Coordinator
Rebecca Reid
AB/C Recycling Coordinator

John Miller, assistant recycling coordinator for the Lufkin District, applied to the Angelina Beautiful/Clean group for the Good Guys award. He said that the district planned to reduce its waste by 40 percent by such methods as reusing existing materials and recycling.

"The Lufkin District adopted a proactive stance in being a leader in preserving the environment," Miller said. "A large percentage of our fleet has been converted to use alternative fuels, and we've implemented programs to educate contractors about regulations and appropriate measures to satisfy those regulations," he said.

Miller said that all white paper, cardboard, aluminum, tires, batteries, scrap metals, used oils, some paving materials and some organics are recycled in the district.

Many district employees pledged to recycle. Each participant and the janitorial crew were instructed about how and where recyclable materials should be placed. Each office has a bin for recycling white paper.

Miller said that educational materials, contests and other campaigns encourage participation in the recycling program. He said their efforts are being noticed, as the AB/C letter indicates.

"I am proud that Angelina Beautiful/Clean sent the letter to the district employees, recognizing them for their efforts in this endeavor," he said. ★



New plate honors law enforcement

The Vehicle Titles and Registration Division (VTR) is issuing the peace officer license plate honoring law enforcement officers who have been hurt or killed in the line of duty.

The plate has a yellow rose superimposed on the outline of a badge with the inscription "To Protect and Serve."

The idea for a license plate to honor law enforcement officials came from state Sen. Jane Nelson of Flower Mound during the 1995 legislative session.

Plates are available only to officers and



family members of officers who have been hurt or killed in the line of duty.

In addition to the regular vehicle registration fee, customers are charged an extra \$20 fee for regular plates or a \$60 fee for personalized plates.

Passenger cars or commercial motor vehicles weighing a ton or less may be issued a peace officer plate. There is no limit to the number of plates that may be issued. More than 60 have been issued so far. ★

Federal funds OK'd for consolidating rail grade crossings

Efforts to increase motorist safety at railroad crossings recently got a boost.

At its March meeting, the Texas Transportation Commission authorized the use of existing federal funds for necessary roadway and/or operational transportation improvements to facilitate traffic flow in exchange for the closure of unnecessary or redundant railroad crossings.

Each year, TxDOT programs funds to upgrade approximately 150 railroad crossings with flashing lights or flashing lights and gates. Locations are selected based on the average daily traffic on the highway, the number and speed of trains, the type of existing warning devices already present, and the auto-train accident history. Other factors, such as school bus routes, are also considered. These factors then are used in a formula — the Texas Priority Index formula — for the statewide selection process. Grade crossings that qualify for funding through this formula, as well as those adjacent crossings, will be studied during preliminary diagnostic inspections to determine if they are potential candidates for closure. TxDOT then works closely with the city or county to determine which railroad crossings may receive flashing lights or flashing lights and gates and which crossings may be closed. ★

TransGuide engineers lauded by magazine

Patrick L. Irwin and Patrick F. McGowan of the San Antonio District were named engineers of the month by Better Roads magazine.

The magazine cited Irwin and McGowan's innovative pioneering in the intelligent transportation system field and their efforts with TransGuide, the district's \$151 million traffic management system.

"Their use of technology has changed the way in which many federal and state DOT officials look at hardware and software, with TransGuide's emphasis on off-the-shelf equipment, expendability, redundancy, reliability and maintainability," the magazine said.

In 1995, Irwin and McGowan received TxDOT's High Flyer Award for the work on TransGuide.

Irwin is district director of transportation operations. McGowan served as district traffic management engineer. He recently accepted a position in Colorado as ITS chief engineer for Lockheed Martin. ★

From grunge to glitter, Texas Trash-Off rids state of roadside litter

Everything from trash to treasure was among the 7.25 million gallons of litter picked up across the state during the 11th annual Great Texas Trash-Off April 13.

Unusual roadside finds included a \$100 bill in Buda; an antique marble coffee table in Graham; and in Beaumont, it was an entire meal — including wine glasses.

More than 130,000 participants statewide cleaned state and county roads, city streets and parks. Volunteers represented more than 2,000 Adopt-a-Highway groups and 84 Keep Texas Beautiful community organizations.

The Trash-Off is part of TxDOT's "Don't Mess with Texas" antilitter campaign, which

was created 10 years ago to fight roadside litter. Along with the Adopt-a-Highway program, Don't Mess with Texas and the Great Texas Trash-Off have significantly reduced the amount of litter on Texas roads. In addition, these litter prevention programs save the state between \$2 and \$4 million a year in litter pickup expenditures. ★

Grayson marks 50 years with department

Fresh from the Navy in '46, TxDOT's senior employee started at 75 cents an hour

Dan Feldstein
Houston Chronicle

When James E. Grayson joined the state highway department, Houston had no freeways.

Baytown didn't have a tunnel crossing the Houston Ship Channel to La Porte, much less a brand new suspension bridge. A surveying trip on a rural stretch of Westheimer left Grayson with a nasty case of poison ivy.

"I remember that real well. It was just two lanes. Now it's eight," he said.

Grayson this month is celebrating his 50th year with the Texas



Kevin Stillman, TRV

In the 50 years Houston District project engineer James Grayson has been with TxDOT, vehicle registration in Harris County grew from 184,000 to 2.5 million, and state highway funds spent annually in the county grew from \$1.8 million to \$420 million.

1946.

"I'm just a bulldog, I guess. Heck, time flies," he said, refusing to specify his age beyond "70-something."

When Grayson signed on with the then-Texas Highway Department, he was fresh out of the Navy and made 75 cents an hour. Until the state Legislature changed it in 1951, the workweek was 45 hours, including a session on Saturday that lasted until 1 p.m.

Lunch on the other five days was at noon, he said, and the extra hour Saturday was agony on his stomach.

The department's nonair-conditioned main building was on North Greenwood on Houston's east side. Grayson used pieces of paper as cuffs to keep his sweat from smudging his work, and the office had no mechanism for copying drawings.

In 1950, the department got a large machine to make copies — an "Ozlid" machine, Grayson recalls. In 1952, the department moved to Washington Avenue north of Memorial Park. That building had cool air.

Out in the field, Grayson often went surveying for the maintenance department, back in the days when the state did its own repaving rather than hiring contractors. He recalls a 1950 trip to the marsh surrounding the former FM 528, now called NASA Road 1.

"There was not a heck of a lot there. Matter of fact, I wish I'd bought some dang land," he said.

In order to mark the center line of a repaving job around a bend, Grayson had to lug books full of trigonometry charts. That later

evolved to a pocket calculator. Surveyors now can use global positioning satellites.

The Gulf Freeway was Houston's first major highway, started in 1948. Crews sank the tube sections for the Baytown Tunnel shortly thereafter and Grayson attended the grand opening in 1953.

The tunnel, which had replaced a ferry, was finally shut last year with the opening of the Fred Hartman Bridge.

Grayson now works on funding issues for various smaller bridge projects as a program engineer. He stands to make his full salary as his pension — 2 percent of salary times 50 years — if he ever retires.

He's thought seriously on four occasions about staying home with his wife of 55 years, and now he's thinking about it again, perhaps in August.

"She'll want me to, but then when I'm off on a three-day weekend, she changes her mind," he joked.

A photocopy of a photograph is taped to Grayson's desk. With little "D's" scrawled on various members of the September 1951 road maintenance division, it is marked "16 of 25 dead."

The keys to a long, happy career are a dose of determination and an enjoyment of people, Grayson said.

"We're the best highway department in the world. I haven't run across anyone I didn't like," he said. "It sure wasn't for the money." ★

This article originally appeared in the Houston Chronicle Feb. 28, 1996. It is reprinted with permission.

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Grayson among select few to make 50 years

When James E. Grayson celebrated his 50th anniversary with the department, he also became somewhat of a department rarity.

Few employees in TxDOT's 79-year history have worked for the department for half a century.

In fact, Human Resources Division records uncovered only a handful of employees to achieve this milestone.

Former El Paso District Engineer Joe Battle retired in September 1991 with 51 years, seven months of service to the department.

Former State Highway Engineer Dewitt C. Greer passed the 50-year mark while serving as chairman of the Texas Highway Commission.

Clara Bewie, the commission secretary, edged past the half-century mark when she retired in 1983 with 50 years, three months.

Currently, Burton Clifton, advanced planning engineer in the Fort Worth District, is next in line for the half-century mark. Clifton has worked for TxDOT for 47 years, but he's not sure if he'll make it to 50.

"Some days I'm having fun and I think I'll stay here forever," Clifton said. "But there are a lot of things in the world to do."

An Employees Retirement System newsletter said the average state employee retires with 24 years of service.

The record for the most years of service among all state employees, according to ERS, belongs to an 89-year-old female with 58 years.

Along his way, Grayson has received many service awards. So, what does an employee hitting the big 5-oh get? With 50 years a TxDOT employee is eligible for service award items such as a plaque, sports/stadium blanket, portable radio, duffle bag or 72-quart ice chest. When they retire, employees with 50 years or more state service also draw 100 percent of their salary and get health benefits. ★ *Meredith Whitten, Editor*

Brochure targets Houston's Chinese community

Victor Tsai
Houston District

Last year, a 67-year-old woman was hit by a car while crossing Bellaire Boulevard in southwest Houston. Shi-Hwa Yu, a leader in the Chinese community, died three days later.

To commemorate the anniversary of Yu's death and to focus attention on the importance of pedestrian safety, friends and co-workers held an educational seminar at Houston's Overseas Chinese Community Culture Center. Visitors watched a videotape on pedestrian safety and received a brochure on pedestrian safety, translated into Chinese by Thomas Lou, a transportation planning engineer in the Houston District. Doug Vanover, district traffic signal supervisor, constructed a special pedestrian signal to demonstrate at the seminar.

The tragedy sharply focused Lou's attention on the safety of elderly pedestrians and strengthened his determination to launch an education program on precautions the elderly should take when walking on a street, crossing an intersection or even walking in a parking lot.

"Nearly everyone is a pedestrian during some part of the day, regardless of age," Lou said. "People walk to school and to work, to and from parked cars, to stores and entertainment events, or just for social or health benefits. The pedestrian, particularly the elder adult, needs to take precautions to help make walking as safe as it can be."

走過多少年
悲歡歲月

長輩們步行安全須知

張允文題

Lou, author of a university textbook "Traffic Engineering Fundamentals," requested materials from Dr. Alfred Farina, a research psychologist with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. These materials included research summaries, a videotape and a booklet, "Walking Through the Years," documenting pedestrian risks and advice on how to avoid incidents.

These Chinese characters appear on the cover of a Chinese version of the Houston District safety pamphlet for the elderly. Starting at top right and reading down, the first line says, "How many sad and happy years we have walked through." The line to the left says, "What elderly people walking safely must know." The four characters at the bottom are the signature of calligrapher Yin-Wen Chang.

Lou translated the booklet into Chinese and sought financial assistance to print copies for wider distribution.

With the help of Larry Pflughaupt and Sharon Johnson of Houston's Traffic Safety Office, Lou received a donation from the Houston Chapter of the American Automobile Association to print 1,000 copies of the booklet for nationwide distribution by the Chinese Seniors Association of Houston. More than 400 brochures were distributed to Houston seniors during the seminar.

Yu's death deeply saddened Lou because he and the victim had attended middle school together during the Japanese invasion of China preceding World War II. Yu's late husband, a professor at the National Taiwan University, was Lou's English teacher when he was a student there. Yu taught Lou the language skills he needed to come to the United States years later. ★ *This story originally appeared in Forum, the Houston District's newsletter.*

Sailboat outings inspire multi-platinum disc

Jeff Carmack
Public Information Office

Many department employees have awards hanging on their walls, or certificates of merit, or other symbols of recognition. But probably not many can claim a platinum record.

Al Glasscock, information resource administrator for Staff Services in Austin, holds that distinction.

Glasscock earned the disc not for record-

mates, they both went to Alamo Heights High School.

"I was in bands when I was younger and we used to practice at my house," Glasscock said. "Chris was younger than me, but he was interested in the band. He'd come by to listen, and we got to be friends."

Glasscock owned a small sailboat, and one day he invited Cross to go sailing with him. "I had this little sailboat, a Sunfish, and it's no fun to go by yourself, so we'd go out sailing," Glasscock said. "We'd go to

Canyon Lake, and sometimes to the Gulf Coast. He seemed to have a lot of fun."

Although he didn't realize it at the time, Glasscock became a kind of surrogate "big brother" for Cross, who was going through a tough emotional period at home.

Cross was also getting a band together. "He was just starting at that time, but he was real musically inclined," Glasscock said. "He had his own band, and could play several instruments, not just guitar."

After high school, the two drifted apart. Between a stint in the military and a budding romance with the woman who would become his wife, Glass-

cock lost track of his "little brother."

That changed one day when he heard Cross' biggest hit, "Sailing," on the radio. "I heard that song, and I realized he was doing well, and I wondered, 'Could he have gotten the idea (for the song) from the times went sailing?' And I thought, 'Nah.'"

Glasscock said he was tempted to contact Cross but decided against it. "I felt bad

about having not talked to him for all these years. The analogy I use is, it's like when someone gets a new swimming pool; all of a sudden they have lots of friends. I didn't want to be one of those folks."

Hearing Cross on the radio was followed by seeing him on television on a several occasions. "I saw him on the Academy Awards show and the Grammys, then a little later I saw him on 'Entertainment Tonight,'" Glasscock said.

"Not too long after that, I got a call from the producer of Howard Stern," the New York-based radio "shock jock." "Howard wanted to interview us together because Chris had been on his show and Stern was drilling him about the song," Glasscock said. "Chris told him it was based on a friend who took him sailing when he was a kid. He told Howard he didn't know what had happened to me; Stern said he would find me."

Someone in San Antonio knew that Glasscock's mother still practiced law there and called Stern's show, telling him how to get in touch with Glasscock. Shortly thereafter, Glasscock came home to find on his answering machine a message from the Howard Stern Show. "I about fell over," he said. "I talked to his producer and he talked me into doing the interview. They wanted to send a camera crew. I freaked out."

Glasscock consented to a telephone interview, which was to be set up for Cross' next appearance on Stern's radio show.

"Stern's producer said they wanted to surprise Chris with finding me," Glasscock said. "So, for the first attempt, they had me standing by at home, but Chris didn't make it. The second day, they had me stand by and Stern sprung it on him."

Glasscock said at that time, he hadn't



For inspiring Christopher Cross' hit song "Sailing," Al Glasscock received a copy of Cross' platinum record. Glasscock took Cross sailing when they were teen-agers.

ing a hit song, but rather for inspiring one.

The record that hangs on his wall is Christopher Cross' "Sailing." And how the disc came to be there is as interesting as how he earned it.

Glasscock and Cross grew up in the same neighborhood in San Antonio. And although they were not class-

Please see Glasscock, page 13

Pharr District working to cut pelican deaths on causeway

Velma Garcia
Pharr District

TxDOT's Pharr District is continuing efforts to protect endangered brown pelicans that land on the Queen Isabella Causeway and are struck by vehicles.

The first reported death of a brown pelican on the causeway occurred in September 1984. Since then, pelican deaths have been documented between September and early March each year.

The increasing traffic mortality of the endangered birds prompted a 1988-90 Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) study that monitored the pelicans' behavior. The study found that the birds don't land on the bridge intentionally; rather, turbulence above the deck causes them to land if they attempt to fly over the bridge without sufficient initial altitude. The study also determined that flashing lights, propane cannons or other noise makers are not likely to discourage pelicans from making emergency landings. Alternate roosting structures and platforms or additional railings on the bridge were also found to be ineffective.

The study identified traffic control measures as the actions most likely to effectively reduce pelican mortalities.

Representatives from TxDOT, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, local city and park officials, local citizens, a veterinarian from a local zoo and a professor, met to discuss the deaths and efforts to preserve and protect the brown pelican. The group determined that lower traffic speed on the causeway would give drivers time to avoid downed birds and reduce or eliminate fatalities.

As a result of these meetings and the recommendations from the TTI report, TxDOT took the following actions:

- Installed flashing reduce-speed signs at the ends and crest of the bridge (this was done after it was determined that a silhouette sign previously installed was not effective);
- Adjusted causeway lights to turn on 30 minutes earlier in the evenings;
- Installed changeable message signs at each end of the bridge to warn motorists to slow down and drive cautiously;
- Installed windsocks and banners on light poles at the crest of the bridge to distract pelicans;
- Established a "pelican patrol" of TxDOT personnel to patrol the bridge during northers to pick up or assist downed pelicans and activate warning signs;
- Established a plan to determine who would pick up the birds and where they would be taken.

These measures are active during northers and inclement weather months, specifically from September through February.

In addition, a public service announcement produced by TxDOT has aired on local, national and international television stations since January. This announcement aims to make the public aware of the

pelican population and its endangered status. It encourages motorists to reduce speed on the causeway and provides information on how to assist downed or injured pelicans.

Four pelicans died on the causeway this winter, compared to eight in January 1995.

The Eastern brown pelican (*Pelicanus occidentalis carolinensis*) is a large bird with an average weight of 7.5 pounds, a body length of 4 feet and a wingspan of 6.5 feet. It flies 14 to 35 mph, often with slow wing beats, close to the water. The bird is a coastal resident who seldom strays inland.

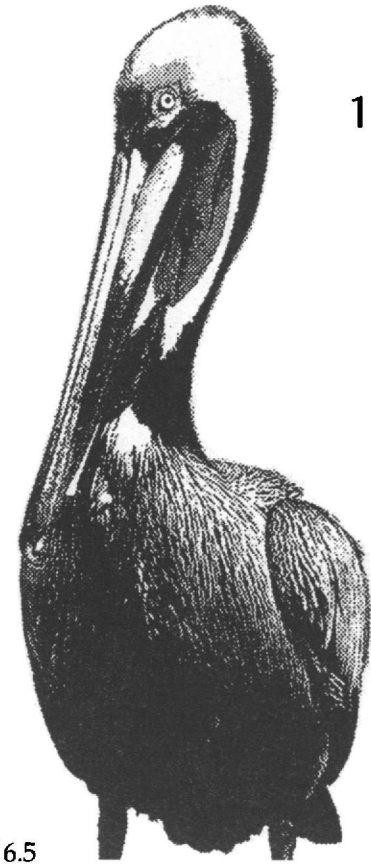
The Texas population of the Eastern brown pelican, once numbering in the thousands, suffered two serious declines in the past 100 years. The first, in the 1930s, was a result of persecution by fishermen. A second, more serious, decline came in the early 1950s. It was attributed to severe weather conditions, disease and exposure to pesticides. By 1962, no brown pelicans were reported in locations that formerly served as either wintering or breeding areas. In 1971, the U.S. Department of Interior placed the Texas subspecies of the Eastern brown pelican on the endangered species list.

Audubon Christmas Bird Counts from 1974 to 1994 illustrate the dramatic recovery of the brown pelican in Texas. Nine birds were sighted in Texas in 1974, and none were sighted in 1976. However, since 1977, when 29 birds were sighted, the population has steadily increased. The numbers for both South Texas and the Port Isabel/Brownsville area increased steadily between 1984 and 1994. The Christmas count recorded 86 sightings for this area in 1993 and 78 in 1994.

In February, a group of TxDOT and TTI volunteers observed flying patterns and activities of the brown pelican in the Queen Isabella Causeway area and counted between 75 and 100 pelicans each day.

The causeway is a 2.4-mile-long, four-lane bridge connecting Port Isabel and South Padre Island. Its center span rises 84 feet above the Gulf Intercostal Waterway. A TTI study indicated the greatest brown pelican activity is in the causeway vicinity with the majority of observations from August through October.

TxDOT is considering other possible mitigation measures to preserve the brown pelican. These include adding more banners to the causeway, launching a publicity campaign to include flyers and posters, adding call boxes at each end of the causeway and installing weather monitoring devices to detect northers. ★ *This story originally appeared in ENVision, the Environmental Division newsletter.*



Courtesy Patrol heads 'em up, mooves 'em out

James Black
Dallas District

From fixing flat tires for stranded rush-hour motorists to assisting police on-site at traffic accidents — chances are, members of the Dallas District's Courtesy Patrol have seen it all.

Now, one might say, they've "herd" it all, too.

On March 29, eight members of the patrol team became temporary cowhands following a vehicle accident in Mesquite. When a three-tier cattle truck overturned on the westbound US 80 ramp to northbound Interstate 635, more than 100 head of cattle made a dash for freedom. The result, for the next few hours, was a scene of "udder" confusion.

"We went to assist the Mesquite police in

closing some highway lanes," said Courtesy Patrol Officer Anthony Lloyd. "When we got there, we saw cows running out all over the place."

The cattle quickly scattered. Shoppers at nearby Town East Mall did double takes as cows high-tailed it through the parking lot. Traffic came to a halt as cows jaywalked across Town East Boulevard. At one cluster of restaurants, diners looked up from their burgers and steaks to see groups of cattle trotting defiantly past. One pack of roaming calves moved through a bank's drive-through teller line; they left plenty of deposits, but never paused for a receipt.

Lloyd and fellow Courtesy Patrol officers Johnny Banks, Lewis Davenport, Jesse Jacquez, Pilo Lopez, Alberto Salagamba, Frankie Trojacek and Eddie Walker were behooved to go above their regular call of

duty. The Dallas District employees helped local police beef up their efforts to capture the stray animals. Some used their patrol vehicles to temporarily corral the cows while others — in a unique preamble to the Mesquite Rodeo — got hands-on experience in roping.

"Everything was happening so fast, you didn't really have time to stop and ask what needed to be done; we just jumped right in and did it," Lloyd said. "We did what we could until the real cowboys rode in to round them up."

The real cowboys, members of the Dallas County Sheriff's Posse, joined the district employees, the Mesquite Police and Mesquite Animal Control in round-up efforts. Several area residents and motorists also helped rope and tie captured cattle.

Please see Herd, page 15

Conditional Grant program broadened

Changes open field to females; three non-engineering degree areas added

Meredith Whitten
Editor

While the rest of her peers at Texas A&M University we're fretting about their future and wondering if they would find a job after graduation, Norma Garza wasn't worried. She was studying for finals, secure in the fact that she had a job waiting for her at TxDOT, thanks to the department's Conditional Grant program.

The Conditional Grant program provides financial assistance to eligible minority and female students interested in working for the department. Students in the program, such as Garza, are guaranteed a position with TxDOT after they graduate. The grant covers tuition, fees and a stipend. The maximum is \$2,500 per semester, or \$5,000 a year.

When the program began in 1992, only minority students majoring in civil engineering were eligible. But, starting this fall, the program expands to include females, and adds accounting, computer science and communications/journalism to the list of approved majors.

In return for TxDOT picking up their educational tab, the students commit to work for TxDOT for at least two years after graduation.

"That's one of the reasons it's called a conditional grant program," Kay Howard, director of employment opportunities in the Human Resources Division (HRD), said. "The condition is that you are going to come to work for us for at least two years after you graduate."

Howard said the department expanded the program to ensure that the department maintains a diverse workforce.

"Targeting women and minorities for this program means that after they finish college we know they are going to come to work for us," Howard said. "So it's going to help us in trying to get more females and minorities into these professions."

The three recently added professions were chosen because minorities and females historically have been underrepresented in these areas at TxDOT.

Once students are selected into the program, they must meet several conditions: maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or better; take at least 12 hours per semester; graduate with a degree in one of the approved

majors; and work for the department for two years.

If students don't meet these conditions, they are obligated to repay the grant. So, for example, a student who changes his major to art history is no longer eligible and must repay the grant. The same is true if the student graduates, but does not work for TxDOT for the required two years.

"It's not a giveaway," Howard said. "There are criteria that they have to meet."

The program now provides financial aid covering tuition, fees and a stipend, to eligible minority students majoring in civil engineering. Starting this fall, it will include females, and will add communications/journalism, accounting and computer science to the list of approved majors.

There are several ways that they can default, but we explain that up front so that the students are very aware of what they're committing to."

Students can apply for the program at any stage from the time they graduate from high school to their final year in college.

Garza, now an engineering assistant in the Pharr District, applied during her sophomore year.

"I saw it as an opportunity to have less pressure to find a job," she said. Garza, who already was majoring in civil engineering, said without the grant, she would have needed student loans.

Like Garza, Gregg Granato was attracted by the security of having a job when he graduated from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

"They guaranteed me a job plus provided financial aid," he said.

But, unlike Garza, who was familiar with the department, Granato did not know a lot about TxDOT when he applied during his junior year.

But, after being accepted into the program, he worked for the department in the summer, gaining valuable experience that helped him once he graduated and went to work full time as an engineering assistant in the San Antonio District.

Howard said summer employment is not guaranteed for Conditional Grant program students, but many find jobs with the department to learn more about what they'll be doing and who they'll be working for once they graduate.

Currently, 39 students are in the program. But, recent legislation changes doubled the program's funding to \$400,000, so participants are expected to increase to about 80 students. For the fall '96 semester, TxDOT received approximately 300 applications for the 30 available slots.

Field recruiters are responsible for coordinating the placement of the students once they graduate. They also serve as the students' contact while they are in school. Through these field recruiters, the department maintains close contact with each student.

Sherry Werneking, recruitment manager in HRD, said TxDOT views the Conditional Grant program as a long-term recruiting strategy.

"We're hoping that after two years, they don't want to leave us," she said.

So far, 17 Conditional Grant program students have graduated. And although the program is still relatively new, Werneking said the retention rate seems to be good.

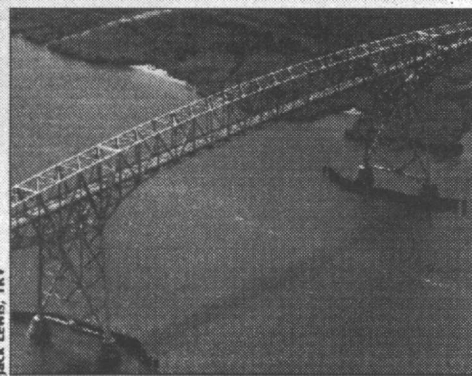
"The program is growing," she said.

"You've got some very bright students out there who wouldn't be able to go to school if they didn't have this available to them. And, it's a real competitive process. We're looking for the best, because they are our future."

Howard said everyone benefits from the Conditional Grant program.

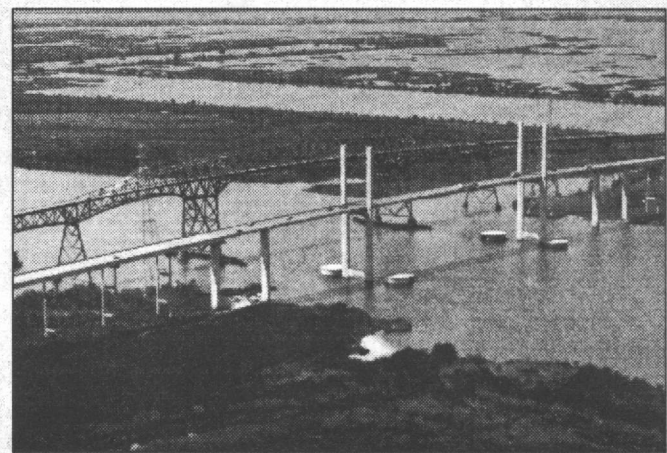
"It's a win-win situation for everybody," Howard said. "The department wins because we get some bright students, we've invested in their education and we know we're going to have them at least for a couple of years after they graduate. And then it's a win situation for the students because they get the benefit of the financial assistance, but also they know they're going to have a job when they get out of school." ★

Then & Now



Jack Lewis, TRV

The Neches River Bridge on Texas 87 between Orange and Port Arthur (left) was completed in 1938. In 1990, it was supplemented by the Veterans' Memorial Bridge (right). Currently, while the Rainbow Bridge is being painted, traffic crosses on the Veteran's Memorial Bridge. Once the painting is completed, the Rainbow Bridge will carry westbound traffic and Veteran's Memorial Bridge the eastbound.



Jimmy Marozz, ISD

Readership survey results finalized

Roger Polson
Executive Editor

The results are in and readers have spoken.

We ran a readership survey in the February issue of Transportation News and among the 19,000-plus copies we distribute each month, fewer than 200 readers responded. While this is less than 1 percent of the readership, some trends are evident and many responses were conclusive enough for us to benefit.

First of all, the paper received an overall grade of 7.22 on a scale of 1-10. Figuring that 5 is average, 7.22 ranks well above average. That's good. Only four respondents gave us a 2, and nobody ranked us below 2. Eleven folks gave us a 10.

We found that 88 percent of respondents always or usually read the paper. Eighty-three percent think T-News is always or usually interesting, and 95 percent rarely find it a waste of time.

Seventy-six percent think we always or usually do a good job reporting about department actions and employees. But only 43 percent felt we always or usually do a good job reporting on employment conditions. This is an area we pledge to improve on.

Of those who responded, 90 percent always or usually read Ask Bill. This is the most read of all ongoing features, followed closely by Letters (83 percent), Service Awards (81 percent) and Retirements (80 percent). Tech Trade came in last, with only 34 percent saying they always or usually read it.

Respondents like stories about employment policies, employee and department awards, transportation programs and employee hobbies. Most said they would like to see more news from the districts. Stories about Continuous Improvement, Retooling and the commission ranked lowest concerning what stories the respondents liked to read.

For the most part, readers are happy with the length of stories, would like more photos and aren't interested in reading T-News in an electronic format. The average respondent has 11-20 years with TxDOT and is 35-45 years old. Fifty-six percent of the respondents were women and 62 percent work in a district.

The accompanying tables show where particular features rank, what types of stories readers want to read and those subjects that are not of interest. ★



Mission, role of Transportation News defined

Roger Polson
Executive Editor

As executive editor of Transportation News, I'm interested in the results of this readership survey. It's the first one we've done since this editorial team has been together.

Each month, we plan, write, edit and assemble this newsletter. Stories come from all over: the Senior Management Team, district public information officers, district and division newsletters, memos and more. We get excellent support from the photographers in the Travel and Information Division as well as other photographers — some professional, some amateur — across the state.

We try to balance coverage of people, events and activities. We introduce readers to interesting individuals at TxDOT, as well as inform employees and retirees about programs and policies.

We had hoped for a better response. Less than 1 percent of the readership is pretty low. But, valuable information can be derived from a sample that low if the trends are definite enough. I appreciate the efforts of those who participated.

I think it's important to reflect on T-News' role. Some readers expressed frustration that we don't tackle controversial issues. While those responsible for T-News come from a journalism background, we are not journalists and T-News is not a newspaper. We are organizational communicators and T-News is an employee newsletter. Our job is to advance TxDOT's goals. We must report with integrity and honesty, but not without bias, passion or subjectivity.

If we are successful, the reader is better informed. By understanding what is going on, you become an advocate for TxDOT. As a result, you become one of almost 15,000 spokespersons for the department scattered across Texas.

I have found, from talking with employees at all levels, that we do believe in what we're doing. So, being an advocate isn't hard, as

long as we have the facts and understand what TxDOT is doing. That's what makes a readership survey so important. We found out whether we are hitting the mark. In some cases we are; in some we're not.

The two most important factors of a successful employee publication are support of management and trust of the readers. Management is completely supportive, and the overall approval rating you have given us indicates a high level of trust. Now, we look to the future and to honing our product. Your continued feedback is essential. Keep those cards and letters coming. If you have story ideas, talk to your district or division PIO, or call us. If you have a question, Ask Bill. If you have an opinion, write us a letter. ★

Glasscock

Continued from page 10

spoken to Cross in 28 years. But, listening to Glasscock's tape recording of the broadcast, you would never guess the hiatus in their relationship had been that long.

During the on-air reunion, Cross said that Glasscock's sailing trips had indeed been the inspiration for "Sailing." Stern goaded Glasscock, and told him that he should ask Cross for a percentage of the money the song made. Cross demurred, but said he would send Glasscock a copy of the platinum record he earned for selling more than five million copies of "Sailing."

Glasscock said, "It was a real compliment. Artists only get so many copies of their platinum records. It's at the artist's discretion who they give them to, and here he was sharing this with me. It was overwhelming."

Sure enough, about four months later, a copy of the album arrived in the mail. It now occupies a place of prominence in Glasscock's living room.★

Service Awards

May

Abilene

30 years
Elsie T. Reid
15 years
Daniel P. Leonhard
10 years
Willie J. McKinney

Amarillo

15 years
Roy D. McCoy
Tammy N. McWilliams
Ward C. Wall
Thomas D. Weller
10 years
Rhonda L. Clifton
Donald E. McQuitty
Kelli S. Navarrette
Janice K. Oakley
Charles M. Rennie

Atlanta

15 years
James A. Thornton
10 years
David S. Cooper
Deborah L. Crenshaw

Austin

35 years
Curtis E. Stabeno
30 years
John Dimery Jr.
25 years
Pamela M. Mikulencak
Henry J. Ward Jr.
Bobby W. West
15 years
Lonnie V. Doyle
John D. Jones
Marvin D. Riedel
Frank Zapata
10 years
Ben M. Casey
Sharon B. Holt
Ronnie B. Parker
Mark W. Taylor
5 years
Darcie A. Schipull

Beaumont

35 years
Edward F. Seymour Jr.
10 years
David L. Bruno
John C. Cannatella
Pauline Sharp
5 years
Agnes M. Prejean

Brownwood

5 years
Dannie R. Harrison

Bryan

30 years
Danny M. Spillers
25 years
Patricia S. Jaster
20 years
James H. Curry
15 years
Bonnie B. Loehr
James M. Robertson
Shelton S. Webb
10 years
Richard L. Krenk
George W. Smith

Childress

20 years
Rita K. Butler
15 years
Delbert W. Love
10 years
Andy L. Zarate

Corpus Christi

30 years
John W. Stewart
25 years
Harry E. Carter
15 years
Laura B. Ashcraft
John E. Dippel Jr.
10 years
Robert R. Garza
Irenio Martinez
Juan M. Montano
5 years
James A. Kay

Dallas

30 years
John F. Weatherly Jr.
25 years
James L. Blair Jr.
James L. Godwin
15 years
Melvin P. Lusk
10 years
Jerry C. Boatwright
Timothy P. Boleyn
Brenda J. Callaway
Patrick J. Haigh
Thomas D. Purcell
James K. Selman
5 years
Michael J. Self

El Paso

15 years
Mark C. Longenbaugh
10 years
Graciela Concha

Fort Worth

40 years
Frank J. Durda III
Barbara T. McNeil
25 years
William D. Roy III
15 years
Helen D. Sifford
10 years
Ronald J. Abernathie
Ben A. Asher
August C. Bustos
Michael L. Kuykendall

Houston

35 years
Russell E. Knapp
30 years
Charles L. Barker
Richard D. Pitts
25 years
Deanna K. Ivey
15 years
Larry R. Bowen
Billy S. Chance
Cynthia G. Gloyna
Fredrick L. Harris
Michael N. Murphy
Louis A. Petry
Pilar M. Rodriguez
10 years
Angela L. Blake
Hao T. Bui
Dan S. Cearley
Charles W. Dawson Jr.
Jorge A. Garcia Duran
Terry L. Platt
Jeffery D. Thomson
5 years
Richard C. Knoblock
Jose M. Salazar Jr.
Richard E. Wahrenberger

Laredo

30 years
Manuel Saldana
25 years
Macario S. Munoz Jr.
10 years
Fred R. Martinez

Lubbock

25 years
Gerald W. Patton
Troy R. Williams
20 years
Daniel G. Hernandez
Joe L. Lara
15 years
Adrian Madera
James R. Odom
Grady L. Simmons
10 years
Wiley G. Baker
Fred A. McCraw
David C. Perkins
Todd J. Thompson
5 years
Eula B. Self

Lufkin

20 years
Leslie F. Cameron
15 years
Jeffrey L. Weatherford
James T. Yarbrough
10 years
William L. Dhone
Rhonda R. Walker

Odessa

30 years
Dale M. Tucker
15 years
Martin P. Arredondo
Tommy D. Rejino

Paris

30 years
Jessie G. Fults
Robert J. Lovén
15 years
Ali A. Esmailidoki
10 years
Steven R. Ekstrom
Gary D. Stone
Kevin W. Wilson
Mykol C. Woodruff

Pharr

30 years
Juan A. Hinojosa
Acencion R. Perez
Ramiro A. Ramirez
10 years
Jody R. Ellington
Toribio Garza Jr.
Jorge L. Ramirez
Ormar Soto

San Antonio

30 years
Ronald J. Beath
Dennis A. Bloch
Gerald P. Burell
Jesus C. Cuevas
Melchor Pacheco Jr.
15 years
Joseph A. Rohmer Jr.
Jimmy D. Sarabia
Dwayne S. Smith
10 years
Alberto Galan
Dave H. Gregory
Mark R. Mosley
Dan D. Pena
Lisa W. Rainosek

Tyler

20 years
Gerald Smith
10 years
Bernard Fears Jr.
Robert J. Hidalgo
Cheryl L. Tiner
Jimmy D. Williamson

Waco

25 years
Tommy A. Gaskamp
10 years
Sondra D. Dieterich
Norman D. Hammons
John A. Lee

Wichita Falls

25 years
Billy L. Perry
15 years
Doris A. Withington
10 years
Gary W. Adams
Kim C. Bryant
Christophe C. Ulbig
Linda R. Vanvacter
Jeffery W. Warren
Paul E. Wenzel
5 years
Roy L. Hudson

Yoakum

30 years
Jimmy W. Kirby
Leonard R. Mikesch Jr.
25 years
Ethel C. Schafer
15 years
William D. Barthels
Ervin E. Edwards
Michael J. Martinez

Budget and Finance

10 years
Earl G. Gatlin
5 years
Diana J. Huerta

Construction and Maintenance

15 years
William R. Cox
10 years
Frank Huerta III
Robert D. Manly

Design

25 years
George W. Reid III
15 years
Elizabeth Hilton

General Services

25 years
Jerry J. Broz
10 years
Scott D. Koczman
5 years
Johnny Granadó
Richard A. Johnson

Human Resources

15 years
Rose D. Vargas

Information Systems

25 years
Robert C. Conner
10 years
Troy C. Bryant
William J. Parris
Steven E. Rice
5 years
Denise Brown Baglioni
Carol R. Campbell
Brian L. Kalstad
Dina Mehta

Internal Audit

15 years
Owen Whitworth

Management Services

5 years
Tracy L. Mortensen

Materials and Tests

30 years
Vernie F. Swartz Jr.
15 years
Laura K. Benningfield
Katherine H. Hargett
5 years
Jimmy W. Baldwin

Motor Carrier

20 years
John T. Donovan
15 years
Edna S. Carter
Philip E. Pettit

Occupational Safety

5 years
Stephen Fox
Julia A. Kotal

Research and Technology Transfer

15 years
Sylvia R. Medina

Right of Way

30 years
Gary W. Bernethy
25 years
Nancy E. Johnson

Traffic Operations

10 years
Carol T. Rawson
5 years
Joseph R. Favéur

Transportation Planning and Programming

10 years
Michelle L. Conkle
Wayne L. Wells

Travel and Information

20 years
Deborah D. Thompson
10 years
Dawn C. Bartholomew
Daniel K. Perrine
5 years
Grace A. Villanueva

Vehicle Titles and Registration

15 years
Calvin J. Morrow
5 years
Eneledia M. Rodriguez

Retirements

November 1995

Austin
Michael C. Cates, 11 years, Maintenance Technician III

December 1995

Laredo
Reginaldo R. Castillo, 29 years, Roadway Maintenance Supervisor II

January

Austin
Michael N. Borden, 30 years, Human Resources Management Officer III
Paris
Thomas M. Jones, 23 years, Administrative Technician II

Pharr

Rafael Narvaez, 30 years, Maintenance Technician IV

Waco

Angie G. Cook, 26 years, Administrative Technician II

February

Brownwood
Gene H. Laughlin, 29 years, Roadway Maintenance Supervisor V
Shirley C. Zigler, 18 years, Administrative Technician II

Dallas

Neil Wayne Carter, 33 years, Engineering Technician III

Paris

Wanda A. Burns, 28 years, Administrative Technician IV

Tyler

Raymond H. Hogan, 27 years, Roadway Maintenance Supervisor II

Yoakum

Weldon L. Popek, 24 years, Maintenance Technician IV

Bobby D. Head, 40 years, Maintenance Supervisor IV

Vehicle Titles and Registration

Michael O. Lansdowne, 27 years, Investigator II

Troy D. Stubblefield, 12 years, Maintenance Technician IV

March

Abilene

Victor (Scott) Mitchell, 32 years, Roadway Maintenance Superintendent II

Amarillo

Robert W. Davis, 28 years, Maintenance Technician IV

Laredo

Raoul M. Gutierrez, 27 years, Motor Vehicle Mechanic III

20 years ago in Transportation News

SA District Methods Freeing the Freeway — Innovations such as ramp metering, park-and-ride programs and a new moveable gate are all helping the San Antonio District to cut down on freeway congestion and accidents while increasing traffic volume.

Towns Seek Rural Grants — The department has received 10 requests for federal grants to fund rural highway and public transportation demonstration programs in fiscal 1977. ★

Lammons

Continued from page 3

public's interests first in mind and believing in teamwork.

"Teamwork is the key to our success," she said. "Those of us in the Railroad Section replaced people with 25-30 years experience, so we realize we have to count on one another and help each other out to get the job done. When we share our knowledge, we're teaching each other to be better at our jobs."

And having a leader like Rick Collins is the icing on the cake, according to Lammons.

"Rick is a great boss," she emphasized. "He believes that he works for us instead of us working for him. He thinks if he can make our jobs easier, then we will be able to do a better job for him, and everyone comes out a winner."

Collins is more than modest about his contributions. "The public doesn't realize that these railroad signal devices are engineered products," he said. "We have to get the word out and Connie is very good at doing that. She's a good example of the quality of railroad liaisons we have and a great representative for the department."

Lammons heartily agreed with Collins that educating the public is the key to the railroad signal program. "A lot of local government officials simply don't know what their responsibilities for railroad crossings are," she said. "They typically do not know that advance warning signs, pavement markings and vegetation control within their right of way are their responsibility."

"Communities are also unaware of the cost involved in placing active warning signals at a crossing," she continued. "TxDOT has only so much to spend, so we try to use the public's money in the best way possible."

Since the basic railroad signal installation costs around \$100,000, Lammons sees the corridor approach, which involves consolidating railroad crossings through a community, as the way to go. It gets local people more involved and opens discussions between the public, railroad companies and the state for possible consolidation of redundant crossings. According to Lammons, this can be a time-consuming process, requiring several return visits to attend city council meetings to iron out details.

"It is well worth the time and effort we can put into it, though, because the community will have a complete system that provides for a much safer environment, and that's what we are ultimately here for," she said.

Getting some kind of commitment from communities got a shot in the arm in 1991, Lammons said. "Before then, the department required communities to pay 5 percent of the cost to install railroad signals if it was within their jurisdiction," she said. "In 1991, we started picking up their 5 percent participation in the cost. Now the communities are basically asked to commit to doing things like the pavement markings, signs and vegetation control (tree trimming)."

Another way to get buy-in from communities is to invite officials to preliminary and final inspections of railroad signals. "This is our opportunity to talk with city and county officials about their responsibilities at railroad crossings and answer any questions they may have," Lammons explained. "The railroad companies involved also want the cities and counties to attend these inspections because they know how important getting their commitment is."

Lammons' job keeps her traveling about one week out of each month, but she doesn't mind. "I love this job," she admitted. "It allows me to do a little drafting and graphics but I have much more input into the actual design. I really enjoy being out in the field the most; that is where you gain the most knowledge and get a good understanding of how it all works. Plus, I enjoy meeting new people."

In her spare time, she enjoys painting and drawing. "Acrylic is my favorite because it dries faster and it's easier to correct your mistakes," she said, "but I like water color and charcoal, too."

Her new favorite hobby "right now is scuba diving," she confessed. "I want to go to Cancun this year." Lammons also "loves to fish," describing herself as a tomboy. On fishing trips, she is usually accompanied by her dog, Bear, a 2-year-old half rottweiler/half Labrador retriever she's had since he was 5 weeks old.

When I got back to my office, I was completely worn out. I don't know if it was the 35-mph winds and 48-degree temperature we worked in for five hours or Lammons' remarkable energy, or a combination of all that. But I know one thing for sure — her colleague, Charlie Comparini, is right on target about the diminutive Lammons.

"Connie's a pistol," he said in admiration.

She's that and a whole lot more. ★

In Memoriam

Retirees

Leslie N. Aylor, Santa Fe, retired from Houston District in 1977, died Feb. 11, 1996.
Roy W. Bell, Plainview, retired from Lubbock District in 1971, died Jan. 15, 1996.
Walter T. Bennett, San Angelo, retired from Bryan District in 1992, died Feb. 8, 1996.
Noah Cabler, Rockwall, retired from Dallas District in 1980, died Feb. 2, 1996.
Jessie D. Edge, Farmersville, retired from Dallas District in 1974, died Jan. 28, 1996.
Gonzalo Garcia, Hebronville, retired from Pharr District in 1975, died Feb. 28, 1996.
Sedro G. Garcia, Crane, retired from Odessa District in 1993, died Jan. 27, 1996.
Homer S. Hazel, Plano, retired from Lubbock District in 1972, died Jan. 16, 1996.
George E. Hopper, McCarney, retired from Odessa District in 1992, died Jan. 22, 1996.
Robert L. McKinney Jr., Waco, retired from Waco District in 1987, died Jan. 21, 1996.
Roger D. Murray, Huntsville, retired from Bryan District in 1993, died Feb. 19, 1996.
William W. Nutt, Montgomery, retired from Lufkin District in 1975, died Jan. 29, 1996.

Roy I. Overton, Avoca, retired from Abilene District in 1984, died Jan. 14, 1996.
James T. Petzold, Valley Mills, retired from Traffic Operations Division in 1991, died Nov. 25, 1995.
N. T. Popejoy, Dallas, retired from Dallas District in 1979, died Feb. 9, 1996.
Earl E. Shively, Lipan, retired from Beaumont District in 1976, died Feb. 1, 1996.
Nathaniel Simmons, Newton, retired from Beaumont District in 1985, died Jan. 14, 1996.
Earl D. Smith, Frankston, retired from Tyler District in 1982, died Feb. 17, 1996.
Robbie D. Stephens, San Angelo, retired from San Angelo District in 1974, died Feb. 4, 1996.
John L. Stroud Jr., Lampasas, retired from Brownwood District in 1995, died Jan. 29, 1996.
Margarito C. Trevino Jr., Elmendorf, retired from San Antonio District in 1988, died Feb. 1, 1996.

Calendar

May	
9	Best Practices in Contract Management, Austin, GSD
13-17	Spring Research Management Committee Meeting, College Station, RTT
27	Memorial Day (holiday)
28-31	Southwest Traffic Safety Workshop and Traffic Records Forum, Austin, TRF
30	Commission Meeting, Austin
June	
3-5	District Pavement Engineers and Pavement Management Information System Coordinators Meeting, Austin, DES
3-6	12th Annual TxDOT Internal Audit Conference, Austin, AUD
4-7	1996 Transportation Planning Conference, Fort Worth, TPP
19	Emancipation Day (state holiday)
25	Best Practices in Contract Management, Austin, GSD
25-27	LANSER Training, Austin, TRF
27	Commission Meeting, Austin
July	
4	Independence Day (holiday)
9-11	Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) Visual Training, Austin, DES
10-12	Keep Texas Beautiful 1996 Convention, Irving, TRV
16-18	Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) Visual Training, Corpus Christi, DES
23-25	Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) Visual Training, Austin, DES
27-31	National Transportation Public Affairs Workshop, Austin, PIO
30	Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) Visual Training, Abilene, DES (through Aug. 1)
31	Commission Meeting, Texarkana
August	
2-7	51st Annual Professional Development Forum & Products Exposition, Austin, GSD
6-8	Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) Visual Training, Austin, DES
13-15	Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) Visual Training, Beaumont, DES
20-22	Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) Visual Training, Austin, DES
25	Best Practices in Contract Management, Austin, GSD
27	LBJ's Birthday (state holiday)
29	Commission Meeting, Austin

Herd

Continued from page 5

Said Courtesy Patrol Supervisor Steve Poole, "We've had cattle trucks overturn close to the downtown Dallas area before and the scene is always chaotic at first."

Out of chaos, however, eventually came order. Cows were steered into a holding pen, then transferred to another truck. The fenced-in Town East water tower was also used as a makeshift holding ring. By that afternoon, all but 25 head of cattle had been caught.

Poole said the Courtesy Patrol's mission in such incidents is three-fold: to protect the traveling public, to establish alternate traffic routes and to assist local law enforcement to resolve the incident. In the midst of such events, however, it is not difficult to find humor.

"A situation like this is so unique because cattle are so unpredictable. Plus, some of our guys are like city slickers, because they've never been exposed to cattle before," Poole said. "It was definitely humorous. Our jobs really cover it all."

Lloyd agreed.

"It certainly broke the day up," he said with a laugh. "Imagine coming home and being asked, 'What did you do at work today?' and you can say, 'Well, I helped rope a cow on the Interstate.'" ★

Letters

Executive Director Bill Burnett received the following letter from the Office of the Governor:

Dear Mr. Burnett:

I want to extend to the men and women of the Texas Department of Transportation my sincere appreciation for their dedication and commitment to combating wildfires across our state. The current situation reflects an unprecedented level of activity, and your agency has made a difference.

I know firsthand the role played by TxDOT during the "Jackerwise fire" near Poolville, as well as your contribution in controlling fires in Childress, Cottle and Foard counties. These fires would not have been brought under control without your agency's support. As I write this letter, that same support continues in other parts of our state.

Thanks for a great job and for your continued support to our firefighters across the state.

Sincerely,
Gov. George W. Bush

Russell Harding, director of Staff Services, received the following letter:

Dear Russell,

Our mutual friend, John Burgess, urged me to write you when I began complimenting one of your employees.

Yesterday, unannounced and with "glazed, bewildered eyes," I wandered into the advanced project development office here in Austin. I was greeted by Sharon Barta, who turned out to be an advanced project development engineer for the Austin District. She listened attentively and very graciously directed me to the correct people.

Ms. Barta certainly turned a frustrating day into a successful one. She is an asset to the department.

Earl Fuller
Austin

The following letter was received by Childress District Engineer Will Parks:

I want to take this time to thank you and all the employees of the Texas Department of Transportation for all your help in controlling and putting out the raging fire last week.

We were losing ground fast in trying to get the fire under control until your troops came on the scene with your equipment and employees. We all had a breath of relief knowing that we had help that cared, along with the many firefighters from several towns.

Everyone seemed to pull together in an effort to save Childress, Crowell and all of their residents.

Teddy W. Hightower
Childress

Executive Director Bill Burnett received the following letter:

Dear Director Burnett:

It may be premature to begin thanking you and your agency personnel for the assistance provided to the Texas Forest Service during the recent fire siege. Hopefully by the time you receive this, the weather forecasters will have been more accurate with their weather predictions.

It goes without saying that the Texas Department of Transportation played a major role in the coordinated fire suppression effort across the entire state of Texas. Simply put, we just could not have done it without your assistance. Several of our Incident Commanders have singled out some specific people that deserve special recognition. I recognize the danger in doing that, but I did want to call them to your attention.

First, Jim Daily, administration manager in the Construction and Maintenance Division, has been working in the command center as a liaison for the Division of Emergency Management. Our Incident Commanders simply stated, "Jim made a lot of good things happen."

James Logan, Jack County maintenance supervisor, worked with the team on the Jackerwise fire (Jack, Parker, Wise counties). He made TxDOT a key player in the containment of that fire with a lot of equipment. Primary Incident Commander Ron Davis praised James numerous times for his efforts.

Terry Keener, director of operations at Childress, was a major contributor to the success of the Buckle-L Fire Complex near Childress. Terry stayed with Incident Commander Davis through the entire operation and supported it with large numbers of equipment and personnel.

Karl Klose, roadway maintenance supervisor in Decatur, provided great support at staging areas with personnel, water tenders, etc.

Georgann Burrell, public information officer in Childress, worked with our PIO, Sam Logan, on the Buckle-L Complex. The media coverage was outstanding as the result of their mutual efforts. She also produced a video that was used during the FEMA briefing on March 18. It was a very effective presentation.

I realize that there are literally hundreds of other TxDOT employees who also made significant contributions on the firelines themselves. We owe them a great deal of gratitude as well. I hope that one of the things that comes out of this siege is an even better willingness to cooperate, organize and anticipate these incidences before we lose the values lost at Poolville.

Please express our sincere appreciation to every TxDOT employee who joined with us in this statewide effort.

Bruce R. Miles
State Forester

I was on my way home when my car died and would not run. I was able to get it off the pavement. I noticed a truck pass and come back. When I saw it was a Department of Transportation truck, I knew help had arrived.

A very courteous young man named Guy Smallridge brought me to my door. I sincerely appreciate this as I have chronic asthma and bronchitis.

Shirley Mathis
Graham

Guy Smallridge is a sign technician for the

Bisson honored by St. Edward's



Jim Bisson, assistant executive director for Motorist Services, was named the 1996 Distinguished MBA Alumnus by St. Edward's University. Bisson received an MBA from St. Edward's in 1983. He received his bachelor's degree from St. Edward's in 1981.

Graham Maintenance Section, Wichita Falls District.

We would like to thank Juan Rodriguez of North Brazoria Maintenance, Alvin, for his good deed. We lost a new pack of personal checks in a busy shopping center parking lot. Of course, the lost checks were not turned in to any local business. We were so afraid the checks would be cashed at local stores, so we closed our account.

A few days later, our bank called to let us know that Mr. Rodriguez, an assistant roadway maintenance supervisor, found our checks and turned them in to his office. Lucky for us, no checks were missing.

A big thank you to Mr. Rodriguez!

Mr. and Mrs. Steven C. Doud
Alvin

North Brazoria Maintenance Section is in the Houston District.

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