

New facilities designed to give drivers a break

By Darah Waldrip
Maintenance Division

Motorists traveling Interstate Highway 40 across the Texas Panhandle can go for miles without seeing a tree — or a restroom.

But thanks to TxDOT, relief is in sight.

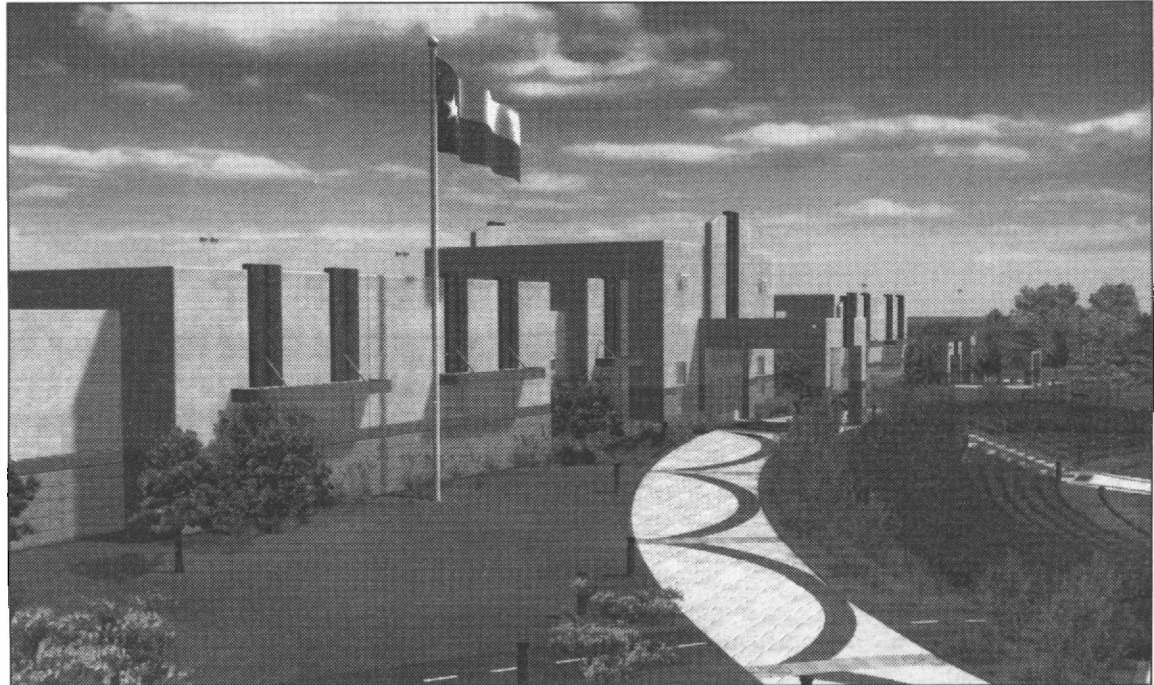
Two structures are now rising above the horizon that will give drivers a break in Gray and Donley counties, 55 miles east of Amarillo. TxDOT is adding the new safety rest areas as part of a program to overhaul outdated structures statewide. When the pair of rest areas are completed this fall, I-40 will be much safer and more pleasant for thousands of drivers.

"These are going to be first-class facilities," said Amarillo district engineer Mark Tomlinson. "The former rest areas were pretty primitive. I think the new ones will be much more effective in doing what they're supposed to do, which is getting people off the road."

The wide, flat roadway through the Texas Plains can lull many drivers to sleep, especially when there's no place to stop for a break. Flat tire or engine trouble? It's a long walk to Amarillo. And winter travelers may find themselves stranded in a Panhandle ice or snow storm.

In the past, two picnic areas have been available to drivers, but the facilities didn't provide much comfort or adequate parking. A high volume of out-of-state traffic travels through the area, and more than 50 percent is made up of trucks. This unusual traffic situation was a key factor in designing the rest areas, said project manager Mark Wampler, an architect in the Maintenance Division.

Existing picnic areas were chosen for the new safety rest areas, one on each side of the road two miles apart.



Architectural rendering courtesy Halff Associates

BE PREPARED TO STOP: Eastbound travelers in Donley County will find this new safety rest area on I-40 hard to pass up. Set to open this fall, the art deco-style facility was inspired by the historic Route 66 and the impact it had on the area.

As with other safety rest area projects around the state, the Maintenance Division's architects incorporated design elements unique to the region. For the east-bound side of the freeway in Donley County, Ralph Hanson of facilities management provided a conceptual design for an art deco-style rest area with a Route 66 theme. The initial design was provided to consultant Halff Associates to turn the concepts into reality.

"It's important to understand the huge impact Route 66 has in this area even though it no longer exists," Tomlinson said.

Designated as a principal east-west artery in 1926, the historic route linked Chicago to Los Angeles and was one of the first highways to connect rural areas to a major

national thoroughfare. Route 66 cut through flat prairie lands with temperate climates (such as the Texas Panhandle), helping the trucking industry rival railroads for shipping goods.

More than 200,000 people migrated to California along Route 66 to escape the Dust Bowl during the Depression years, and the highway facilitated mobilization during World War II. Thousands of Americans traveled Route 66 to move to warmer climates during the post-war era. During this time, restaurants, motels and gas stations sprang up along the highway to accommodate the heavily traveled road.

By the 1950s, Route 66 was deteriorating

■ See I-40 rest areas, Page 3

Roundup

MEXICO VISIT: TxDOT representatives in mid-March met in Mexico City with representatives of the Mexican federal government. They were there to present the conceptual plans for the Trans Texas Corridor proposed by Gov. Rick Perry. Besides providing an overview of the proposal, the TxDOT representatives also discussed how the corridor could tie into transportation elements in Mexico, particularly those along the border with Texas. "Mexico is the state's largest trading partner," said Mike Behrens, TxDOT executive director. "It's in our best interest — for safety, commerce and the efficient flow of

trade — to coordinate our transportation efforts with Mexico. The Trans Texas Corridor could provide a seamless transportation system between our state and Mexico." More meetings are scheduled with representatives of Mexican border states. To help formulate the corridor's action plan, officials will discuss rail connectivity to Mexico, as well as how highway corridors in Mexico and Texas match up with each other.

CLEAN FUEL DEMO: Texas is among 14 states recently included by Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham in cooperative agree-

ments totaling nearly \$10.5 million to develop and advance clean energy technologies. The Texas research and development project is known as "Texas LPG Fuel Processor Development and Fuel-Cell Demonstration." The Texas State Energy Conservation Office in Austin will develop two optimized liquid petroleum gas (LPG) fuel processors, integrate the processors into 5-10 kW fuel-cell prototypes, independently test both prototypes, and perform a field demonstration. The project will be accompanied by a market study and public education campaign. The

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Straight Talk

Some interesting numbers . . .

For people who follow professional baseball teams, individual players on the PGA Tour, or their children's performance at school, numbers are fascinating facts of life.

Numbers help us understand where we've been, how fast we're getting where we're going, and whether we're closing in on our goals.

Some numbers have more meaning than others. This is especially true when you're responsible for a budget of more than \$5 billion. As executive director of TxDOT, I have been appointed to such a position by the Texas Transportation Commission.

From time to time, I am asked about numbers that relate to TxDOT. The questions come from many different people: taxpayers, legislators, commission members, employees, TxDOT retirees, professional engineers, and others.

Actually, the people asking the questions don't ask for numbers so much as they do about the condition of the department and the work that we perform. Even so, the answers often come in the form of numbers.

I won't detail every question or number of importance about TxDOT, but here are some facts you may find interesting:

- The department employs 14,711 people to provide transportation services and expertise for the 21 million people of Texas and for the state's millions of visitors. In a certain sense, this means that each of us in TxDOT may think of ourselves as individually responsible for the transportation safety, comfort and convenience of no less than 1,426 other Texans.

- Texas has the largest state-maintained highway system in the United States. Measured by centerline, this system covers 80,000 miles. That's the equivalent of driving across Texas almost 96 times.

- TxDOT maintains 3,233 miles of interstate highways and 6,481 miles of interstate



Mike Behrens

frontage roads. Even with so many miles available for cars and trucks, we know traffic congestion can be so thick at times that people grow frustrated when they aren't moving fast enough to where they're headed. Expanding mobility is one of the biggest challenges facing TxDOT and Texas.

- TxDOT maintains 41,000 miles of roads in the state's farm-to-market system.

- Texas pays an average of \$12,102 per mile to maintain roads in the state. This number measures efficiency of maintenance. It costs Texas less to maintain its roadways per mile than most other states. However, Texas has many more miles to maintain than any other state. The cost of highway maintenance each year approaches \$1 billion.

- The rate of fatalities resulting from traffic accidents has dropped sharply over time. The fatality rate is measured in deaths per 100 million miles traveled. For example, traffic accidents were far more deadly in 1937 in Texas than they were in 1999. Here are the rates for comparable years: 1.6 (1999); 4.3 (1980); 14.6 (1937). The fatality rate has dropped 63 percent over the past 20 years, even as overall traffic volume statewide has more than doubled.

- Even with more motorists on the road, the number of deaths resulting from accidents at road and rail intersections has decreased by 46 percent over the past 20 years. Records

show that 87 people died as a result of accidents at rail crossings in 1980 while 52 persons died at such locations in 2000.

- The estimated value of tonnage carried each year on the state's 423 miles of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway exceeds \$21 billion. An estimated 96,000 barges carry more than 63 million short tons through the waterway.

- The Texas Department of Transportation welcomes nearly three million visitors to the state through a dozen travel information centers situated on major highways into Texas.

- Texas Highways magazine promotes Texas to the traveling public through the publication of 290,000 copies each month.

- Nearly 18 million vehicles are registered in Texas. We can expect even more.

Over the years, I have learned that if you give people too many numbers at one time they sometimes lose focus. The eyes glaze over. The mind wanders.

I hope I haven't given you too many numbers. This is because we must stay focused on our purpose. We are here to serve the people of Texas. We are here to help them enjoy the freedom of movement we Americans so enjoy. We are here to see to it that such freedom endures. ★

Mike Behrens is executive director of the Texas Department of Transportation.

. . . and more numbers

- Fatal crashes in the United States dropped slightly (0.2 percent) from 1998 to 1999, and the fatality rate dropped to a new historic low of 1.5 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 1999.

- The injury rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel decreased slightly (by 0.8 percent) from 1998 to 1999.

- The U. S. occupant-fatality rate per 100,000 population, which declined by 23 percent from 1975 - 1992, increased by 1.9 percent from 1992 - 1999.

- The occupant injury rate per 100,000 population, which declined by 14 percent from 1988 to 1992, decreased by 0.4 percent from 1992 to 1999.

- The fatality rate for non-motorists per 100,000 population has declined by 47 percent from 1975 to 1999.

- The injury rate for non-motorists per 100,000 population has declined by 35 percent from 1988 to 1999.

- Nationally, alcohol-related fatalities declined: 57 percent 1982; 38 percent 1999.

Source: nhtsa.dot.gov

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Got news?

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

Submission info

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I-40 rest areas offer nostalgia, native materials

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along with the rest of the national highway system.

The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 provided for the establishment of a national interstate highway system, and by 1970, nearly all segments of the original Route 66 had been replaced by modern four-lane highways.

Many tourists still stop at points of interest along the famous roadway where a few remnants of the era remain.

In fact, Hanson got the idea for the design from an old "motor court" in the Amarillo District.

Visitors to this rest area will take a step back in time when they are greeted by a neon sign reminiscent of the once-popular roadside diners and motels. The facility will feature tile murals depicting the bygone era, and an outdoor walking path will trace the route along a map. The rest area will include sheltered picnic pavilions, as well as a place for even the family dog to take a break.

The structure is the first in the state to be constructed with the "tilt-wall" method. Long employed by many commercial organizations, this technique involves pouring the walls of the structure on the ground, explained Wampler.

The walls are then tilted to an upright position and secured to piers. The method is both sturdy and economical.

The westbound rest area in Gray County had most of the material for its walls already on site. The earth sheltered structure resembles the "dugout" dwellings once used by pioneers in the region.

Designed by Wampler, the facility incorporates energy-saving features.

Because the earth is a natural insulator, only the roof and top portions of the walls will have insulation added. Although conventional heating and air conditioning will be installed, the natural insulation is expected to keep energy costs relatively low.

The rest area overlooks a canyon and will offer two telescopes for taking in the view by day or stargazing at night. Sheltered picnic areas will resemble Native American kivas. The landscaping will include native, self-sustaining vegetation that doesn't need mowing. Markers along walking paths will point out regional plant life, animals and geological features.

The rest area will be the first to employ a wind-powered generator, which will supplement the facility's electricity supply and act as back-up during power outages.

"The design efforts for this portion of the project were coordinated with the Alternative Energy Institute at West Texas A&M, located in Canyon, Texas," said Andrew Keith, safety rest area program manager. He also said maintenance of the equipment will be provided in cooperation with the State Energy Conservation Office.

Backup generators will be installed at both rest areas to prepare for possible power failures during bad weather. Each facility also will have interior storm shelters.

Water wells and water treatment facilities were also included in the designs. Utilities are not readily available in remote locations where rest areas are built, so the facilities had to be self-sufficient, Wampler said.

Obtaining commercial electrical service at



Architectural rendering courtesy Hall Associates

Westbound I-40 rest area in Gray County is made of local materials and modern construction methods. A wind generator takes advantage of the area's frequent winds.

the rest areas was challenging, said design technician Debby Skinner, the project inspector. The construction sites are located at the edges of two different electric companies' territories, and TxDOT had to make special arrangements with both for billing and supply services.

The constant, blasting wind has been another challenge throughout construction. Calm days are rare in the Panhandle, and the tilt-wall process has been no easy task because of it, said Clint Henson of Duinick Bros. Inc., the contractor. "The wind is just a daily battle," he said.

One easy part of the project has been the teamwork. Although the task has been very different from most projects the district handles, everyone has worked together to make the process as smooth as possible. The contractor has been eager to deliver top-notch work, and the district staff has approached the project with enthusiasm, said building maintenance supervisor Johnny Ritchardson.

"This has really been a learning process for me to see how buildings go up and everything that is involved in the process," Skinner said.

She and Ritchardson combined their expertise to oversee the project. Ritchardson handles the district's facilities, so building construction was familiar to him. Skinner's background is in roadway projects — and each rest area required a large amount of pavement.

The east-bound rest area will include parking for 50 trucks, while the west-bound facility will have 48 truck spaces. That's considerably more parking than other rest areas, but I-40 gets a higher percentage of truck traffic than most highways.

Truck parking has been a safety issue in the area for a long time, said area engineer Jerry Raines. It's not uncommon to see trucks stacked up along the frontage road — there's no other place for them to stop. The new rest areas will provide a great service to all drivers and should leave travelers with a good impression of Texas, he said.

"Until you're out here, you don't realize how heavily traveled I-40 can be," Henson said. "I think these facilities will be used daily. I guarantee these rest areas will be known coast-to-coast as good places to stop." ★

New generation rest areas get funding, design

A major effort to improve the state's aging rest areas began in April 1999 when the Texas Transportation Commission approved \$32 million in federal Enhancement Funding to renovate, build or relocate safety rest areas statewide.

Additionally, \$6.4 million was provided in state matching funds, and \$13.8 million was carried over from state highway funds to begin the project. In August 2001, the Commission approved \$48 million in Enhancement Funds and \$12 million in state matching funds to continue the project.

Each safety rest area is designed to incorporate natural and historical features unique to its location. The facilities include separate parking areas for trucks and cars, as well as sheltered picnic areas

and walking paths landscaped with native vegetation.

Inside an air-conditioned lobby, travelers will find maps, tourist information, and weather updates. The new designs also include more restroom facilities, which will be on regular cleaning and maintenance schedules. Security cameras will be installed at all safety rest areas, and the facilities will be staffed at certain hours.

Safety rest area program manager Andrew Keith estimates the program can be completed by 2004. Plans include construction of 26 new facilities and renovation of 43 existing facilities.

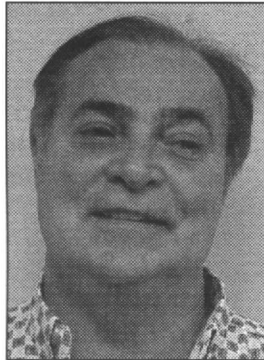
TxDOT has completed rest areas in the following counties: Brooks, Colorado (2), Culberson, Kenedy, Gillespie, and Live Oak (2). ★

Roundup

Continued from Page 1

award amount for the Texas project is \$500,000, subject to negotiation. "The President's National Energy Plan," Abraham said, "challenges us to develop the technological know-how to meet this nation's energy challenges to help expand our economy, meet the needs of a growing population, and raise the American standard of living." TxDOT was one of the Texas agencies submitting the project through the State Energy Conservation Office. Future TxDOT actions related to the project could include the use of small message boards in the Houston non-attainment region to promote the "clean air" aspects of small-kilowatt LPG fuel cells.

POLLARD AWARD: Carl Bertrand, an 11-year TxDOT employee, has won the Albert Harrison Pollard Award for Merit — a \$500 savings bond and framed certificate. Honoring the memory of Albert Pollard, formerly with the TxDOT Materials and Tests Section, the award is presented to an employee of the TxDOT Materials and Pavements Section whose efforts directly support the goals of the section. The award also recognizes contributions in the advancement of education-related materials or materials testing. Bertrand has provided technical leadership in the development and implementation of ride specifications, in the development of the ride calibration center at the Texas Transportation Institute, and in the use of ground-penetrating radar. He also has advanced the use of a texture laser to measure the friction characteristics of paved surfaces.



Carl Bertrand

INCENTIVE AWARD: The Texas Incentive and Productivity Commission has honored a Waco District employee with a certificate of achievement. Larry Colclasure was cited for coming up with an automated procedure for developing speed-zone strip maps. Colclasure, an 18-year TxDOT employee, is director of transportation operations for the Waco District. The annual awards honor state employees who make suggestions that increase productivity, reduce state expenditures, increase state revenues, or improve the quality of service provided by the department. Colclasure's process compiles pre-collected, coded data into a concise, usable form that results in a significant reduction in work-hours needed to prepare documents for use in engineering speed studies. The procedure, used in the Waco District for more than two years, has resulted in the creation of more than 1,500 speed zone maps. These include all rural roadways in the district and a first-year cost savings of \$35,705 for TxDOT. The process has been adopted by more than half of the department's districts.

COLONIA ROADS: The Texas Transportation Commission has approved nearly \$23 million for 192 road projects in the Border Colonia Access Program. The funds, approved in February, will help pay for roadway improvements that connect colonias to other public roads. The improvements include paving dirt roads, re-paving deteriorating roads, and constructing drainage structures. Nineteen border counties will receive funds based on the proportion of their colo-

nia population. Construction on these projects is expected to begin this summer. The funds are part of the \$50 million available in the first program call. The remainder will be distributed on a project-by-project basis later this year. Funding for the program was approved by a constitutional amendment, passed by voters last November. The amendment authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds not to exceed \$175 million.

PROPOSED RULES: The Texas Transportation Commission has granted preliminary approval of proposed rules to implement regional mobility authorities. Known as RMAs, such authorities are a voter-approved financing tool to construct new transportation projects. After a public-comment period that ended in mid-March, the proposed rules will be considered by the commission for final approval. RMAs, once established, could build, operate, and maintain newly created toll projects within a designated area. To create an RMA, one or more counties may submit a request to the transportation commission. Approval of such requests generally will be based on public support for an RMA and on how a turnpike project improves mobility in the region. The commission also would consider how the project affects the state's transportation system. Proposed rules provide that RMA projects must receive final approval by the commission before they move to construction. Other transportation projects are eligible for RMA status and would include commercial service airports, public transit facilities, Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, state-planned highway projects, passenger and freight rail facilities, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

AVIATION: TxDOT recognized airports and individuals at the 20th annual Aviation Conference, held in late March in Austin. The conference was co-hosted by the Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Association of Airport Executives. Participants included airport managers, city and county officials, and representatives from the Federal Aviation Administration.

■ The Bay City Municipal Airport is the 2002 General Aviation Airport of the Year. The Matagorda County airport was cited for excellence in facilities maintenance, appearance and services. It is a full-service general aviation airport that provides service for business, agriculture and recreational use.

■ The Eldorado Airport is the 2002 Most Improved Airport. Owned by Schleicher County, Eldorado Airport was recognized for various improvements that have ensured that the airport remains a vital asset to the community. For example, the airport increased its operating capacity with the construction of a new 4,300-foot by 60-foot runway and aircraft-parking apron.

■ Mike Shahan, airport manager for Grayson County Airport, is the 2002 General Aviation Airport Manager of the Year. Under Shahan's leadership, the Grayson County Airport, a former military training field, has grown and been transformed into a community asset.

■ Mike Feeley, airport manager for Fort Worth Spinks Airport, is the 2002 Reliever Airport Manager of the Year. Feeley, a 25-

year veteran of airport operations, was recognized for his improvements to the Spinks Airport. As aviation director, he oversaw the installation of an air-traffic control tower and helped secure licenses to activate the new operation.

■ Tony Bingelis was honored for a lifetime of achievement with the 2002 Career Contribution to Aviation Award. Bingelis, who died in March 2001, was considered a pioneer for his contributions to aviation, especially in creating experimental aircraft. He was the inspiration for the creation of the Experimental Aircraft Association and built 11 planes over his lifetime from his start in the late 1930s. He wrote and published four how-to books on these planes known as "homebuilts." He also wrote a monthly column called "Sportplane Builder" for Sport Aviation magazine.

■ Three students, from among 420 entrants, received the top awards in their age categories in the 2002 International Aviation Art Contest. The theme of this year's art contest was "Silent Flight." The winners received a certificate and were recognized at the conference. The winners are Dawson Clark (6-9 years category), a student at Sibyl's School of Art in Wheeler; Lesley Murray (10-13 years), a student from Murchison Middle School in Austin; and Julie Lin (14-17 years), a student at Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville.

CERTIFIED: The Community Transportation Association of America recently designated Karen Dunlap and Demetria Fairley, both with the TxDOT Public Transportation Division, as national certified transit program administrators. The two are among the first in the nation to achieve certification status. Fairley manages several programs within the division, including transit operations for the elderly and persons with special needs. Dunlap oversees special projects for the division. She also represents the division on the TxDOT Research Management Committee for Transportation Planning. The certification program recognizes state-level transit agency personnel for specific skills gained through experience, education, and a passing score on the certification exam. This program is the first of its kind in the community transit industry.

VIDEO AWARDS: TxDOT expertise in video production drew recognition recently through the annual video competition of The Communicator Awards. Sue McClenahan of the Natural Resources Section in the Environmental Affairs Division, and Debbie Snyder, a video producer with the Travel Division, received the Crystal Award of Excellence.

Another video produced by the Travel Division, with the Fort Worth District, received an Award of Distinction in the overall competition that drew more than 3,400 entries. This video was about the history of bridges in Fort Worth.

NOMINATIONS WANTED: Calls for nominations for the 2002 Environmental Achievement Award have been sent to TxDOT district engineers, environmental

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Recycling challenge: 85 million scrap tires

By Quevarra M. Moten
Public Information Office

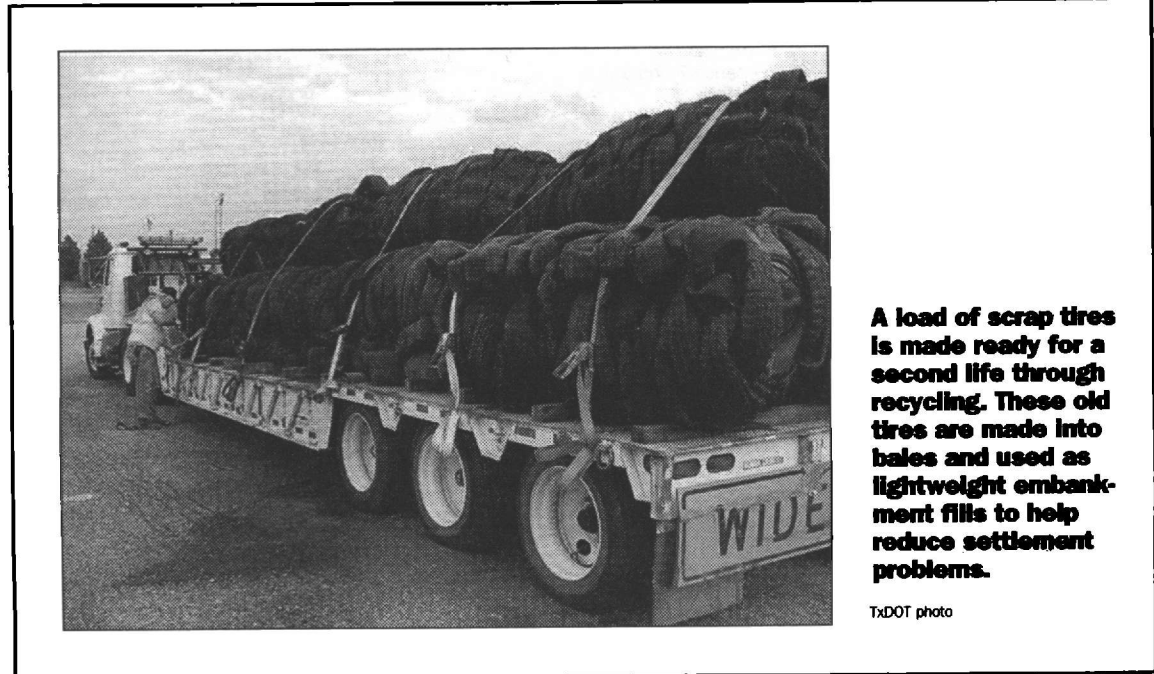
At TxDOT these days, "where the rubber meets the road" has a whole new meaning.

"TxDOT, like other state agencies, has a responsibility to care about our impact on the environment," said Rebecca Davio, TxDOT recycling manager. "With more than 375,000 miles of surfaced roads to oversee, and with the particular mission we have as a department, we have the opportunity for a sizeable impact."

One way TxDOT is making a difference is in its use of recycled tires. In Texas alone, 24 million tires are discarded annually. Add the 1.9 million whole tires in previously identified illegal sites with 58.7 million shredded and whole scrap tires stockpiled at registered sites, and the outcome will list Texas with an inventory of almost 85 million scrap tires.

"There are applications where scrap tires — whether in the form of crumb rubber or whole tires — can yield engineering benefits and a positive lifecycle cost in certain highway construction projects," Davio said. Some of these applications include crumb rubber in hot mixes, tire bales in embankments, and the use of tire shreds.

In TxDOT's attempts to find other ways to recycle used tires, the department recently used tire bales on a slope repair in the Fort Worth District. The tire bales were used by the district as a lightweight fill material to



A load of scrap tires is made ready for a second life through recycling. These old tires are made into bales and used as lightweight embankment fills to help reduce settlement problems.

TxDOT photo

repair a slope failure east of Fort Worth on eastbound I-30 near Beach Street and Oakland Blvd. Although this was the first use of scrap tire bales in Texas, other states have used them successfully in applications where lightweight fill was required.

Another application treading the way for increased usage of recycled tires is crumb rubber. When it comes to crumb rubber, TxDOT brings a new meaning to the term "burn rubber." TxDOT adds crumb rubber to the asphalt and then blends and heats the mixture for several hours. Studies have found

this "high cure" mix will last longer than traditional asphalt pavements.

Tire shreds are used as embankment fills. This process first was used in the El Paso District on the Loop 375 bridge embankment. The experimental project showed tire shreds used as fill could reduce fill weight and improve embankment settlement problems.

Using recycled tires benefits TxDOT by reducing maintenance cost, pavement cracking, and road noise. It also extends pavement life and ensures construction durability. ★

Roundup

coordinators, directors of transportation planning and development, and public information officers. The award recognizes the best examples of projects and processes fulfilling transportation objectives while protecting and enhancing the natural and human environment. Nominations must be based on activities accomplished through proactive means, not the result of lawsuits, violations, or the mandates of resource agencies. The award is presented by the Environmental Affairs Division to the district whose efforts demonstrate outstanding results and innovation. The Waco District received the award last year for its wetland restoration in Riesel. Entries must be received at the Environmental Affairs Division by 5 p.m., May 3. Jim Dobbins has more information at (512) 416-3006.

NEW PROCESSOR: Judy Skeen, director of the TxDOT Information Systems Division, reports that in mid-February the division took a weekend to install a new mainframe processor with little disruption of service for TxDOT computer users. Replacing disk storage devices has increased storage capacity 36 percent. This means quicker processing time for TxDOT users and county tax assessor-collector offices, particularly at the first of the month when heavy use occurs.

Before the mainframe upgrade, evening processing of vehicle registration activities ran at 300 transactions per minute. Now the rate is more than doubled to 600-900 transactions per minute. And the upgrade saved space. Before the upgrade, the processor and storage devices required 1,000 square feet of

floor space. After the upgrade, the mainframe uses equipment the size of two industrial refrigerators. That's 120 square feet.

DOING GOOD: Lowell D. Choate, P.E., has been appointed as the North Austin area engineer for the Austin District. A native of Austin, Choate holds a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from the University of Texas. He worked five summers for the Austin District before becoming a full-time employee in 1986. Choate has progressed through various design and construction assignments with the Austin District.

■ Bob Lanier, former Houston mayor and a former commissioner of the Texas Transportation Commission (1983-1987), has been inducted into the Texas Transportation Hall of Honor at the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M University. Several of Lanier's achievements were noted at the induction ceremony including initiation of the anti-litter efforts known as Adopt a Highway and Don't Mess with Texas. Lanier is the sixth person inducted. Others with connections to TxDOT include former department chiefs Gibb Gilchrist and DeWitt Greer.

■ Randall L. Bena, P.E. is the new Victoria area engineer in charge of Calhoun, Jackson and Victoria counties for the Yoakum District. A native of Victoria County, he holds a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M

University. In February 1984, he began working for TxDOT in the Victoria Office.

■ Ronald "Lewis" Nowlin, P.E., has been appointed area engineer in the San Angelo District for the five-county Kimble County Area Office. Nowlin was born in Rochelle. He holds a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering and a master of science degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M University. He has worked as an assistant research scientist for the Texas Transportation Institute and for TxDOT in the Bryan District.

■ The American Road and Transportation Builders Association, promoting pride in transportation construction, recently recognized the Dallas District with honorable mention awards. The Texas Transportation Institute, in partnership with TxDOT, submitted the entries in the awards program. Receiving the honorable mention was "Precious Cargo," which promotes school safety, and a video designed to educate the public about sound walls.

CORRECTION: Due to an editing error, an item in "Roundup" in the March issue of Transportation News incorrectly reported the weight of materials diverted from landfills through recycling and waste reduction. Here are the correct figures: 2.1 million tons of materials were diverted from landfills through recycling and 13.7 million tons

In Memoriam

Ablene District

Francis R. Hair
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1977
died December 29, 2001

Atlanta District

Charles W. Dell
Engineering Technician V
retired 1980
died January 6, 2002

James P. Kessler
Maintenance Technician II
retired 1975
died July 16, 2001

Beaumont District

Willard L. Lavine
Engineering Technician IV
retired 1984
died January 25, 2002

Bryan District

Edwin D. Sledge
Engineering Technician II
retired 2001
died January 7, 2002

Thomas E. Woolley
Engineering Technician V
retired 1991
died December 28, 2001

Dallas District

Ira B. Bradley
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1993
died January 17, 2002

James E. Walding
Staff Services Assistant
retired 1986
died December 3, 2001

El Paso District

Ben E. Sanders
Transportation Maintenance Spec. V
retired 2001
died February 18, 2002

Fort Worth District

Harold A. Auvenshine
Engineering Technician V
retired 1986
died May 29, 2001

James C. Ferguson
Engineering Technician III
retired 1998
died November 11, 2001

Houston District

Felix R. Bartholomew
Engineering Specialist I
retired 2000
died January 7, 2002

Arthur J. Brown
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1986
died January 2, 2002

James M. Murphy
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1993
died October 8, 2001

Fred M. Reaves
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1995
died November 30, 2001

Dan W. Vinson
Engineer V
retired 1976
died January 15, 2002

Laredo District

Ronald Rubio
Engineering Technician I
died February 18, 2002

Lubbock District

Edwin D. Sanders
Engineering Technician IV
retired 1992
died December 6, 2001

Odessa District

Preciliano A. Delao
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1980
died October 17, 2001

Thelston Stafford
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1980
died January 29, 2002

Paris District

Walter B. Darling
Maintenance Supervisor IV
retired 1981
died December 1, 2001

Troy M. Fowler
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1981
died January 1, 2002

John McFadden
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1987
died January 11, 2002

Pharr District

George H. Horn Jr.
Maintenance Supervisor IV
retired 2001
died January 10, 2002

San Angelo District

Eliberto Nombrano
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1997
died January 9, 2002

San Antonio District

Harry L. Alexander
Engineering Technician V
retired 1977
died January 29, 2002

George D. Varoff
Accountant I
retired 1980
died January 10, 2002

Tyler District

George E. Young
Engineering Technician V
retired 1981
died January 2, 2002

Waco District

Charles E. Randal
Engineering Technician IV
retired 1987
died December 1, 2001

Ney F. Watson
Maintenance Technician II
retired 1983
died November 26, 2001

Yoakum District

Charlie A. Hentschel
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1974
died February 19, 2002

Walter W. Nagel
Maintenance Technician III
retired 1979
died January 19, 2002

Anton F. Schumacher
Maintenance Technician II
retired 1972
died January 19, 2002

Service Awards

Ablene District

25 years
Bennie D. Harvey
Garry L. Jennings
William D. Rister
20 years
Gary R. Cypert
15 years
Harold G. Cannon
Jimmy Marquez
10 years
Donnie L. Cornutt

Amarillo District

25 years
Jackie L. Bailey
James E. Ford
20 years
Lloyd A. Hare Jr.
Lee P. Landes
Cecil C. Rich II
10 years
Kenneth S. Brewster
Linda D. Reimer

Atlanta District

5 years
Meloney J. Berryhill
William M. Burns

Austin District

25 years
Terrell N. Eulenfeld
Clayton E. Seidel
15 years
Leonard J. Bobrowski Jr.
John F. Hellinghausen
Donald A. Leclerc
Rodney D. Matthews
Travis W. Rimmert
10 years
Jeannie T. Walker
5 years
Elton J. Copeland
Bruce O. Murphy
Maria Del carne Ramos

Beaumont District

25 years
Travis R. Cupples
Dana S. Stephens
5 years
Oran J. Sams

Brownwood District

20 years
David R. Bennett
Donald H. Harrison

Bryan District

25 years
Patrick T. Williams
20 years
Curtis L. Beckham
15 years
J. T. Anthis Jr.
Roberto P. Estraca
Sammy Martinez
Dennis W. Schroeder
Keith E. Zwernemann
5 years
Kathleen D. Newton
Randall B. Whitaker

Childress District

30 years
Terry L. Keener
20 years
Craig E. Clark
Vicky T. McBride
5 years
Kurt D. Gilbert
Kelly B. Hess

Corpus Christi District

20 years
Rosie S. Lopez
15 years
Ignacio J. Hinojosa
10 years
Benito A. Galvan Jr.
Ethen D. Swisher

Dallas District

30 years
Deborah B. Burgess
Willard L. Simmons
20 years
David M. Grooms
Raymond G. Hicks
15 years
Ramon Barreiro
10 years
William H. Catchings Jr.
5 years
John H. Colquitt
Raju E. George
Fredrick D. Jenkins
Kenny Krishnan
Boney Yim

El Paso District

20 years
Juan M. Ortega
10 years
Richard N. Rose Jr.

Fort Worth District

30 years
John L. Sharpe
25 years
Thomas J. Jackson
20 years
Clennon D. Rosewell
15 years
Gary W. Baird
Rudy M. Estrada
Jesus G. Galvan
Justin L. McKinley
Tommy R. Stacy
Jerry D. Vandivere
Dicky J. White
5 years
Ronald C. Morales
Russell T. Poer

Houston District

30 years
Mills D. Wood
25 years
Walter D. Torres
20 years
Magnolia G. Davis
Johnny L. Guice
Eddie L. Horace
Keith R. Robison
15 years
Douglas H. Blaine
Pearlie H. Gray
John D. Hernandez
Debbie F. Smith
10 years
Joe E. Hendrix
Anis A. Merchant
Juraj G. Spakovsky
John C. Williams
5 years
Michael D. Lopez
Benamar Mebarkia

Laredo District

20 years
Jaime G. Ledesma
Gregory C. Newman
15 years
Jorge Medina
5 years
Dubelza Williams

Lubbock District

25 years
Louis Aguilar Jr.
Tommy D. Hickman

Lufkin District

35 years
Thomas F. Dobbs
30 years
Gary J. Cowart
25 years
Myrtice R. Kyle
20 years
Eddie D. Kennedy
Roy B. Sanders Jr.
Sonny J. Tippett
10 years
Louis C. Parten

Odessa District

20 years
Jackie C. Lambert
15 years
John I. Jaquez Jr.
10 years
James L. Jenkins
5 years
Freddy G. Herrera

Paris District

20 years
Reza Bazazzadeh

Pharr District

30 years
Manuela E. Castillo
20 years
Robin L. Longwell
Jose E. Lopez Jr.
15 years
Calixto Mora Jr.
5 years
Guillermo A. Arratia
Rex A. Costley

San Angelo District

30 years
Ernest R. Gomez
25 years
Charles M. Thompson
5 years
Ronald G. Blaylock
Richard L. Flores

San Antonio District

35 years
Margaret A. Richards
25 years
Clay R. Smith
20 years
Bryan R. Vickery
15 years
John B. Hood
Guadalupe A. Martinez
5 years
Linda S. Blume-Grimsley
Roy H. Mumme
John C. Turner

Tyler District

35 years
Glenn R. Price
20 years
Kenneth R. Christian
Kent M. Clark
15 years
Robyn E. Capps
Phyllis S. Neill
10 years
Judith S. Matney
William S. Perry
5 years
Larry J. Clark
Tamala D. Daniels
Lucinda K. Molloy

Waco District

25 years
William A. Smith
15 years
Roddy W. Hale
Harold B. Shilling
Brian K. Smart
Robert A. Tealer
10 years
Anthony J. Moran
5 years
Beth A. Gilbert

Wichita Falls District

35 years
Linda L. Proctor
20 years
James R. Kelley
Kenneth J. Mitchell
15 years
Peggy R. Royston
10 years
Hugo Flores
5 years
Marvin D. Rauschuber
James S. Reaves

Yoakum District

25 years
Michael L. Drozd
Luke Grant
20 years
Myrtle S. Schomburg
15 years
Mark J. Kusak
Barry A. Mikeska
Mark E. Wendel
10 years
Marla M. Jasek
Gregory L. Polasek
5 years
Joseph C. Kridler

Administration

15 years
Helen M. Havelka

Aviation Division

10 years
Judy L. Barnes

Bridge Division

20 years
Joseph B. Gomez

Construction Division

25 years
Richard G. Kubitzka
15 years
Hector Marquez
Patricia A. Merrill
Rodney S. Patterson

General Counsel Office

10 years
Pamela A. MacKenzie

General Services Division

10 years
Maria R. Awad

Human Resources Division

15 years
Ladell G. Wood
5 years
Maria E. Alvarado

Information Systems Division

25 years
Anthony H. Compton
20 years
Cathy J. Long
15 years
Anthony B. Harper
10 years
Barbara J. Kullenberg
5 years
Victor E. Flores
James W. Kuhn

Maintenance Division

15 years
Richard F. Kirby

Motor Vehicle Division

5 years
Angela S. Medrano

Occupational Safety Division

10 years
James E. Baker

Traffic Operations Division

25 years
Janie P. Light

Transportation Planning & Programming Division

20 years
Stephen O. Haizlip
15 years
George Lueck

Travel Division

10 years
Michael A. Amador
Martin C. Lange
Joseph H. Slocum Jr.
5 years
Cynthia J. Leffingwell

Vehicle Titles & Registration Division

15 years
Cindy J. Grisham
Margie L. Montgomery

Letters

Cross-country car gets help out of ditch at Cadillac Ranch

The week before Thanksgiving 2001, my mother and I were driving from Los Angeles to New York via Texas. I stopped to see the Cadillac Ranch in the rain and slid into a ditch (in our Cadillac).

Unable to reach cell phone service, we sat stuck in the mud. Minutes later, two white pickups from the Texas Department of Transportation pulled up. Ray Harrison and Mike Todd jumped from their trucks, getting soaked by the rain for their efforts, to help us any way they could.

They gave us the use of their phone and started digging our car from the mud. Finally, Cadillac Roadside Assistance freed our car from the mud, but the men stayed until they were certain we were mobile. The humor of a new addition to the Cadillac Ranch was not lost on them.

I'd like to thank Ray Harrison and Mike Todd for their friendly and helpful service and, the Department of Transportation for its professional staff.

Kyle J. Griffin

Mike Todd and Ray Harrison are project inspectors in the Canyon Area engineer's office, Amarillo District.

Woman, out of gas, gives thanks to Tyler District for hiring 'angels'

I'm writing to let you be aware of an angel that you have working for you. He goes by the name of Steve Folmar. He is one of the nicest and most helpful people that I've ever had the pleasure of meeting.

I'm a young female that was stranded on Interstate 20 without any gas. As soon as Mr. Folmar saw that I was in desperate need of help, he didn't think twice about helping me.

He came straight over to my assistance and offered his services. He went to the nearest gas station and, with his own money, bought me some gas.

When he came back and put the gas in my car, not only did he say, "Is there any-

thing else that I can do for you?" — he also offered me the money in his pocket.

Only a man of God would do something like this. God says to give from the heart and Steve did.

He saw a young woman sitting across the highway and, with so many other things to be doing, he stopped and helped. He deserves so much. I set and prayed for God to just send me an angel and he did.

I just wanted to let you know that you have an angel working for you.

Please give my thanks to Steve, and let him know that he has shown me that angels do exist.

Misty Martin
Grand Saline, Texas

This letter was addressed to Eldon McCurley, who supervises the Tyler maintenance area in the Tyler District. Steve Folmar is a maintenance tech for the North Tyler maintenance section.

Church secretaries stranded on highway with no gasoline

I am writing this letter to inform you of one of your employees who came to my aid in Port Arthur. The only name I know is Jackson.

I am a secretary at First Baptist Church in Lumberton and had been to a secretary's luncheon in Nederland before all this happened. Another secretary from our church was with me at the time.

When we left the restaurant, I went into Port Arthur and returned down 9th Ave. and then on Highway 73. Right as I turned on the Beaumont exit off Highway 73, I ran out of gas. That is a scary place to be with cars speeding past.

My friend and I started praying for a guardian angel to come to our rescue. Neither of us had a cell phone and we were afraid even to take off our seatbelts, for fear we might be hit from behind. Eventually, I was able to start my car again and move up a little and farther off the road.

The only person to come to our rescue was Jackson from the Highway Department. He did not have a phone or a gas can, but he

went to Port Arthur to bring us gasoline back.

He would not let me pay for the gasoline, said he worked for the state, that was his job, and that we paid his salary.

He was quite a blessing to me and an answer to prayer. He said he would never leave two ladies stranded out on the highway like that.

I felt he should definitely be recognized for his act of mercy on two stranded women. Maybe this is something that every Highway Department employee would do, I don't know. I am just thankful that Jackson did!

Sharron Gatch
Lumberton, Texas

Walter Crook, Beaumont district engineer, received this letter. Edward Jackson is a building maintenance mechanic for the Beaumont District.

Husband thanks TxDOT worker for providing roadside assistance

I just wanted to let someone know about how helpful one of your employees was when my wife was stranded on U.S. 380 on her way to work one morning.

She was traveling east on 380 when she hit something in the road, and it lodged under her car causing her to pull over.

Well, she tried to call me, and was unable to reach me.

About this time, John (from the McKinney area office) stopped to see if he could help. My wife was terrified to make contact with anyone, but it turned out that she knew John, and he was able to remove the piece of what appeared to be part of a bumper. He told her to have the vehicle checked, and sent her on her way.

I just thought someone should know that there are still good people in this world, and I think John is one of them. Thank you very much, John.

David Jones
Denton, Texas

This letter was received as e-mail to the Dallas District, which forwarded it for publication in Transportation News.

Retirements

FEBRUARY 2002

Amarillo District

Karan L. Fry
Accounting Specialist III
25 Years

Bryan District

Carl V. Wells
Engineering Tech III
25 Years

Childress District

James D. Smith
Trans. Maintenance Tech IV
38 Years

Wichita Falls District

Carole S. Cain
Auditor II
16 years

Joe D. Buffaloe
Engineering Technician III
21 Years

Construction Division

Thomas Emmett Witt
Engineering Specialist IV
29 Years

General Services Division

Lillian E. Hackworth
Program Administrator III
27 Years

Vehicle Titles and Registration Division

Rachel V. Lindley
Program Specialist II
17 Years

MARCH 2002

Amarillo District

Salomon J. Aragon, Jr.
Transportation Maint. Tech IV
30 Years

Bob Sims
Program Specialist I
21 Years

Beaumont District

Jesse H. Farris
Engineering Tech III
29 Years

Bryan District

Thomas J. Kennon
Engineering Tech II
17 Years

Dallas District

Raymond Don Ashmore
Manager IV
30 Years

Lubbock District

Fancy H. Koonsman
Engineer Tech. IV
17 Years

Randy J. Fowler
Transportation Maint. Tech. III
24 Years

Paris District

Michael L. Saunders
Engineering Technician IV
28 Years

Wichita Falls District

Jo P. McDaniel
Administrative Technician III
18 Years

Right Of Way Division

Patricia D. Gustafson
Program Administrator IV
34 Years

Drive Clean Across Texas

A new campaign called "Drive Clean Across Texas" hit the airwaves in late March with a musical television commercial featuring country music star Rick Trevino in messages aimed to persuade Texans to do their part to prevent air pollution.

"Improving air quality is something we can all be a part of because it benefits us in many ways," said John W. Johnson, Texas Transportation commissioner.

"In addition to breathing cleaner air, improving air quality reduces the potential loss of federal highway dollars needed to keep Texans moving," Johnson said.

The television ad opens with a close-up of Trevino sitting in the Texas countryside playing his guitar and singing "Home on the Range."

Between every bar of music, Trevino reaches for a hospital-style oxygen mask and inhales deeply. As the camera pulls back, the viewer sees that Trevino actually is in the grassy area next to a major Texas highway clogged with bumper-to-bumper traffic.

The announcer then says, "Help keep the air in Texas clean. Maintain your vehicle. Combine errands. Carpool. And drive the speed limit."

Trevino sings the last stanza of the song,

coughing and nearly out of breath.

The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission is co-sponsoring the campaign with TxDOT. TNRCC director Robert Huston said there are many ways that individuals, businesses, and governments can make a difference, including use of cars and trucks that burn fuel more cleanly.

Other ways to help include keeping cars in good repair and following the maintenance schedule in the owner's manual. Carpooling, vanpooling, or public transit are other solutions.

"Most Texans simply are not aware that there is a link between the quality of the air we breathe and the health of many of our vulnerable populations," said Sharilyn Stanley, M.D., associate commissioner for disease control and prevention at the Texas Department of Health.

"Many urban residents face the long-term risk of fatal lung cancer similar to that of someone living with a smoker," Stanley said.

While the campaign is statewide, special emphasis will be directed to nine areas of Texas — four metropolitan areas that have exceeded federal limits on air pollution and five that are nearing federal limits. ★

Highway beauty blooms anew

By **Gabriela Garcia**
Public Information Office

Nature deserves most of the credit for the spring wildflower show in Texas, but so does TxDOT.

Known as the state's largest landscape gardener, TxDOT has been the "Johnny Appleseed" of Texas for years. In the mid-1930s, department leaders such as Highway Commission member Judge W. R. Ely and Gibb Gilchrist advised engineers to retain as much of the natural landscape as possible in building highways. While the preservation of trees was the focus, a 1934 memo stated that the "promiscuous mowing of the right of way should be delayed until flower season is over." This was the beginning of highway beautification began in Texas.

The goal, said Gilchrist, was to make Texas highways the most attractive in the country — and to do so at a small cost.

Imagination and ingenuity were substituted for money. During those early years, wildflower seeds were not commercially available, so the department made the most of what it did have. Engineers kept a

lookout for verdant parcels of land located next to high-

ways.

In fields with blooming wildflowers, engineers worked with the landowners to gather seeds from their land. One method used was to cut the flowers, mow them into "flower hay," and then scatter them in a desired location.

Another, more successful, method was to cut a thin layer of topsoil with the wildflower seeds, then transport the mix to the roadside.

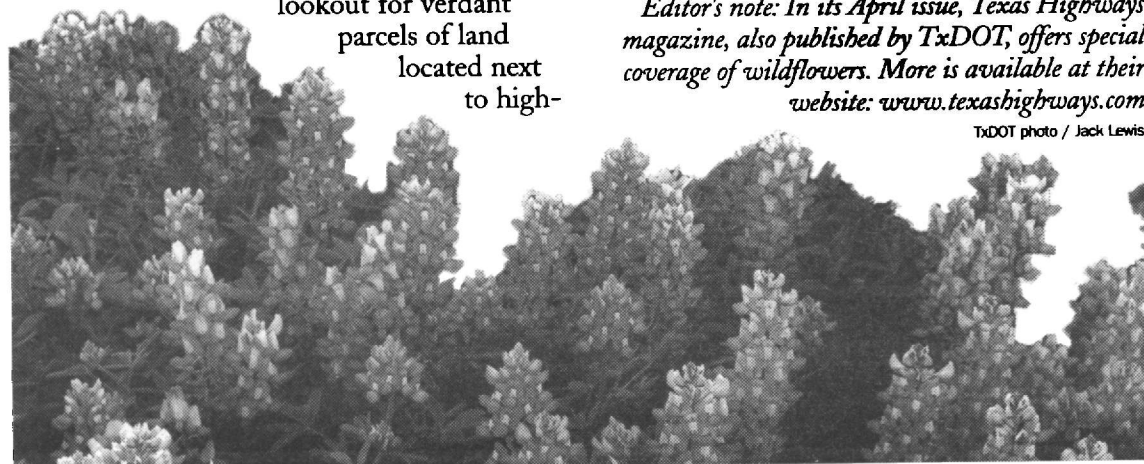
By 1940, an estimated 500,000 pounds of wildflower seed had been spread along the state's highways using these methods.

With wildflower seeds now available commercially, TxDOT no longer has to gather them, but the seeding operations have continued apace. In the past year, nearly 30,000 pounds of wildflower seeds have been spread along roadsides, with each pound containing up to 30 different varieties of wildflowers.

The wildflower program is part of TxDOT's comprehensive vegetation management program that adds beauty to the state's roadways, encourages the growth of native species, and reduces necessary maintenance. ★

Editor's note: In its April issue, Texas Highways magazine, also published by TxDOT, offers special coverage of wildflowers. More is available at their website: www.texashighways.com

TxDOT photo / Jack Lewis



Calendar

2002
APRIL

6 Don't Mess With Texas Trash-Off 2002, Statewide, TRV
16-17 Maintenance Conference, San Antonio, MNT
16-18 Advanced Public Procurement, Austin, GSD
18 CPPB Review Session, Houston, GSD
19 CPPB & CPPO Exam, Houston, GSD
22 Earth Day
25 Commission Meeting, Abilene
29-30 District Finance Meeting, Austin, FIN

MAY

7-8 Bid Letting, Austin, CST
8 Basic Legal Principles in Public Purchasing, Austin, GSD
9-10 Developing & Managing Performance Based Contracts, Austin, GSD
27 Memorial Day (holiday)
30 Commission Meeting, Austin

JUNE

4-5 Bid Letting, Austin, CST
4-6 18th Annual Internal Audit Conference, Austin, AUD
4-7 2002 Transportation Planning Conference, San Antonio, TPP
10-13 Research Management Committee Meeting, San Antonio, RTI
11-13 2002 TxDOT Bridge Engineers Conference, Austin, BRG
17-18 Dispute Resolution Conference, Austin, CST
19 Emancipation Day (holiday)
23-26 TRB Access Management Conference, Austin, DES
24-26 Traffic Operations Conference, Dallas, TRF
27 Commission Meeting, Austin

JULY

2 Research Oversight Committee Meeting, Austin, RTI
4 Independence Day (holiday)

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

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