

## TxDOT, partners work to expand transit

Texans have long enjoyed one of the finest highway systems in the world. But increased congestion, environmental concerns and rising vehicle operating costs are challenging TxDOT to find other ways to maintain those high standards of mobility.

Public transportation will play a crucial role in keeping Texans moving in the future. With the increased use of transit, TxDOT will expand its partnering and cooperative efforts with transit operators around the state.

Partnering with public transportation agencies to solve congestion problems, share information and maximize savings is nothing new to TxDOT.

For example, when the Houston District rebuilt US 59 — also known as the Southwest Freeway — TxDOT teamed with local agencies to plan, design and reconstruct Houston's busiest freeway. Four years before construction started, all of the stakeholders in the project began monthly meetings to address concerns that arose and to improve communication among all parties. TxDOT's partners included Houston's Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro), the city of Houston, the Federal Highway Administration and the project designers.

"The Southwest Freeway was the example from the get-go as far as cooperation," Janelle Gbur, public information officer in Houston, said. "All parties shared concerns of dealing with the public and a desire to minimize the public's inconvenience. We used the monthly meetings to discuss ideas and innovations so we could take steps in the planning process before problems became evident in the construction phase."

The resulting freeway included an 11.6-mile, barrier-separated high-occupancy vehicle lane, three new park-and-ride facilities and a new regional transit center. The project was completed two years ahead of schedule, under budget and with an outstanding safety record.

In agreement with Metro, TxDOT handles maintenance of the HOV lane, while Metro is responsible for daily operations. In addition to the Southwest Freeway, there are another 52 miles of HOV lanes operating in Houston — the most in any American city — with a goal of a total of 97 HOV miles planned when they system is completed.

Two major construction projects in the Dallas District are now being coordinated. TxDOT is reconstructing North Central Expressway, while Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) is building a light-rail system, part of which will pass through the Central corridor. Instead of operating independently, DART and TxDOT have cooperated on these projects. Also, to assist area residents with concerns and questions about both projects, the North Central Mobility Task Force was formed. The committee includes both TxDOT and DART representatives.

Transit operations are also a key element in Intelligent Vehicle Highway System projects. Central control facilities to monitor traffic flow, congestion levels and accidents are planned for Houston and San Antonio. With transit managers in the control facility, buses can be re-routed when traffic tie-ups occur. At the same time, motorists will be alerted to the status of the freeways and can adjust their travel plans accordingly.

Partnerships can be effective on a small-scale, too. Through the Rural Transit Assistance Program, TxDOT asked Houston Metro to serve as a mentor to the two rural transit operators in

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the area, Connect Transportation and Colorado Valley Transit. These rural systems learned marketing techniques, computer assistance on how to dispatch vehicles efficiently and track inventory, and helpful management tips from the larger, more experienced Metro.

"There's been a big push in public transportation to coordinate services through transit providers," Gayle Walker, public transportation coordinator in the Houston District, said.

Although the program didn't require a large monetary investment, it established a relationship between Metro and the rural systems that has continued to grow. Similar "buddy" projects were carried out in other parts of the state.

TxDOT has both a vested and legislatively-mandated interest in rural and urban transit through its administration of Federal Transit Act and state matching funds.

Most of rural Texas now has public transportation through the Section 18 program. These systems usually do not operate on fixed routes like their big-city counterparts. Instead, passengers make reservations and a vehicle is then sent to pick them up. TxDOT receives nearly \$8 million in federal dollars

**Meredith Whitten**  
Staff Writer

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# Transportation NEWS

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## Page 4 Use of commercial labs studied by MAT team

No sooner had the Materials and Tests Division's Continuous Improvement team formed that team members were already getting down to business. The team, charged with developing a plan on how to implement

the use of commercial labs, surveyed other state DOTs, and met with TxDOT employees and commercial lab representatives before coming to their conclusions.

## Page 4 CI team suggests automating functional manuals

The Human Resources Functional Manual team recently reported its findings. The team's mission was to create an action plan for developing an integrated Human Resources Manual, as well as a process for coordinating

any functional manual. The team suggested getting rid of the paper manuals altogether — and replacing them with an automated Human Resources Information System.

## Page 5 Print shops to start charging for services

The department's print operation has undergone numerous changes as part of a recent consolidation of state agency print shops. The biggest change is that TxDOT is now able to print for other agencies and

charge for the service. The Council on Competitive Government, whose members include the governor and lieutenant governor, directed the consolidation to make print shops more efficient and cost effective.

## Page 7 Cutting down paperwork one aim of CMS

Into every job a little paperwork must fall, but TxDOT and 12 other states are collaborating on a notebook computer automation system to reduce paperwork for construction and maintenance personnel in the field, provide

information access and increase efficiency. Reducing paperwork is one of the goals, along with providing up-to-date information on construction and maintenance projects statewide.

## Page 9 Forum promotes DBE/HUB opportunities

With recent changes in purchasing procedures, historically underutilized businesses will be getting a bigger piece of the TxDOT pie. But encouraging these small, women- and

minority-owned businesses to come to the table can be a challenge. While the department is eager to work with these companies, choices of firms to work with were sometimes limited.

## Page 13 Cooperation reopens road after bridge collapse

When an early-morning accident on Aug. 8 caused a county road overpass to collapse on Interstate 30 in Bowie County, a concerted effort by Atlanta District employees with other state, local and private entities had the accident scene cleaned up and the highway

open to traffic within 24 hours. A truck pulling a flatbed trailer loaded with three rolls of stainless steel had veered into the median, passed around the left side of the protective guard rail and struck the bridge column head-on.

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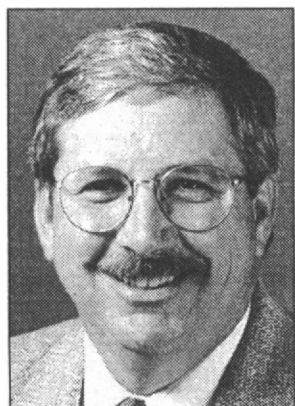
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## Ask Bill



**Q** I am writing to you in hope that you will understand my point of view when it comes to using numbers for the districts and divisions. I certainly understand that you wish all of us to know the proper names for each.

But it is hard, in fact, impossible to use the names in our computers here at the Training Center. Our software is set up to use the numbers. Numbers for everything. I cannot tell you how many times a week I have to tell those that I talk to that it is OK and actually a must that I use their number for inputting information. They have all had a scare put into them to even say the number.

Surely we can reach some understanding in the department to let everyone know its alright to use the district or division number when it is called for.

There are times when it is a real time-saver to just have the number already in place. Right now I am putting the yearly allocation in. I know I need to learn the names but as I put the allocations in for a class I am turning the forms and looking for the number. And to double-check that I am on the right district or division, I have had to put the number on the bottom of the pages.

I feel this is not cost effective or time effective. I hope you will consider my opinion on this. Thank you.

*Ann Jones  
Training Assistant*

**A** Most long-time TxDOT employees probably can't remember a time when we didn't use number designations for districts and divisions. These designations are no doubt handy for various purposes. One Budget and Finance Division employee told me, "I don't recognize anyone without using the numbers." And that's fine when you're inputting information into a computer.

I would, however, like to encourage employees to call districts and divisions by their actual names when talking about them, both at work and in public. Imagine if you were only known by a number. It reminds me of standing at a bakery or meat counter with a number in hand. It's pretty impersonal and can make you feel like you're just one of the crowd. We don't want our internal or external customers to feel lost in that crowd.

The same goes for using initials for districts and divisions. It's fine in some instances, but in conversation, it sounds like alphabet soup.

The world is filled with enough acronyms and jargon and we would like TxDOT to be more user-friendly, both to our employees and the public. The man on the street doesn't know what "D-9" means, so we need to educate him. Old habits are hard to change, but I feel that dropping number designations when appropriate will serve our best interests and help us communicate better.

....

**Q** I recently attended the management classes at Wimberly. I was most impressed with your speech, and with your reference to maintenance, since this has been my occupation for the past nearly 20 years.

I appreciate your knowledge of the difficulty of the foremen's jobs. You also spoke of the possibility of raising the pay in this area. I am, however, an assistant foreman. I feel this job is also important, not just because this is the position I hold, but because the assistant foreman become foreman in his absence.

I also find many other important jobs that have far-reaching effects in the assistant foreman's regular duties, such as handling complaints, handling emergency calls 24 hours a day, and the hiring and disciplining of employees.

My position as assistant foreman involves a large urban area (Fort Worth) which has situations that are not encountered in the outlying sections.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with TxDOT. This has been my primary job my entire life and I intend to continue this career until my retirement.

I would greatly appreciate hearing from you about the above-mentioned matters. I will be looking forward to your reply.

*Larry D. Martin  
Fort Worth District*

**A** Thank you for your letter, and congratulations on your participation in TxDOT's Management Training as preparation for future advancement in position and growth in your responsibilities.

In reply to your letter, let me say that maintenance and marine positions were recently reviewed, and a restructuring of hourly paid positions was made. This review included first-level supervisory maintenance positions. However, supervisory positions above Roadway Crew Chief, now established at salary group 12, were not affected.

In establishing relationships of maintenance positions, the department's Classification Branch, with oversight by a committee composed of senior-level district engineers and division directors, developed the current Assistant Maintenance Section Supervisor job family at three progressively responsible levels to reflect the increasing complexities of work and employee relationships within our maintenance sections. The assistant supervisor family tops out one salary group lower than the Maintenance Section Supervisor job family begins. TxDOT decisions on pay involve many factors, such as the scope and complexity of work, relationships of positions and state-mandated classification requirements, as well as

consideration of private- and public-sector salary surveys.

While I indicated there was a possibility of raising the pay in this area, it will not necessarily occur right away, as reviews in this area tend to support our current structure. However, I will monitor this issue and stay attuned to the subject of pay equity for all TxDOT employees.

Again, thank you for your letter. Your attendance at a management course indicates your supervisors are working to prepare you for future advancement opportunities, which is the right direction to take when one reaches the top of the ladder, but has yet more potential to contribute to TxDOT's service to our customers.

....

**Q** I received a copy of your memorandum of June 27, 1994, regarding the department's EEO policy and workforce diversity. Your actions on this issue are to be commended. It inspired me to submit the following suggestion for your consideration.

Traditionally, the Department has used Mr. or Ms. in correspondence to respectfully address a person. This practice has become obsolete, if not offensive, to those persons not concerned with the sex classification of a person.

The time has come for such sexual references to be discontinued and the addressing of persons respectfully by name initiated.

If implemented, the Texas Department of Transportation will follow the trend set by other responsible organizations in both the public and private sectors.

*Scott D. Koczman  
General Services Division*

**A** Thank you for your suggestion regarding the use of courtesy titles in TxDOT correspondence. I appreciate your affirmation of my June memo. TxDOT is committed to being a progressive organization sensitive to the concerns of all its employees.

The department's Communications Manual allows flexibility in letters and memos. In some cases, offices may adopt practices tailored to their situations. The manual says that memos—communications sent within the department—are informal. It even encourages handwritten memos whenever possible. Letters, which are sent only outside the department, are to use the recipient's courtesy or other title—Ms., Mr., Dr., Senator, etc.

I certainly would be open to amending the manual to ask employees not to use Mr., Miss, Ms., Mrs. or the ever-popular Messrs. in memos. However, I agree with the standard style guides referenced in the manual that recommend using titles in business letters.

One exception would be to use the recipient's preference if you know it, whether that is an alternate title such as Mrs. or no title at all. Another exception would be to eliminate the courtesy title if you do not know the recipient's sex.



# Use of commercial labs studied by MTD team

## Privatization, FTE reduction high-priority goals of Senior Management Team

**Meredith Whitten**  
Staff Writer

No sooner had the Materials and Tests Division's Continuous Improvement team formed that team members were already getting down to business.

"We really jumped up and started early," said team leader Jerry Meyers. The team, charged with developing a plan on how to implement the use of commercial labs within the Materials and Tests Division, met with executive sponsor Bobbie Templeton, assistant executive director for field operations, and functional sponsor Katherine Hargett, director of the Materials and Tests Division, to define the team's focus.

Hargett said the commercial labs issue was identified as one of the first to be studied because it dealt with privatization and augmenting the existing workforce, two goals of the Senior Management Team.

After deciding what direction to take, team members were off and running.

Instead of limiting themselves solely to examining TxDOT's privatization policies, the team chose to look at all available resources, both in-house and outside the department, that could assist them attain their ultimate goal: optimizing TxDOT employees to do other tasks.

"We were trying to find how we could free up our present resources to do more important tasks, monitor more and do more research," Meyers said. "We looked at contracting out the routine and mundane work, like testing and sampling, that our division does. We looked not just at the headquarters in Austin, but at our field operations throughout the state."

Team members surveyed the other 49 state departments of transportation to draw on their experience with the use of commercial labs. They also surveyed TxDOT's district laboratory personnel. The team found that while commercial

labs enhanced testing capabilities and provided additional expertise, contracting work out could affect the budget and full-time employee allocations. It also runs the risk of reduced quality service and loss of in-house expertise.

To get another view, team members held three area meetings — in Houston, Arlington and Austin — with representatives from commercial labs. The response to the open invitation was substantial, and not just from labs already partnering with TxDOT. Also, the team successfully solicited input from disadvantaged business enterprises and historically underutilized businesses. Topics covered at these meetings — which were coordinated through the Texas Council of Engineering Laboratories and sponsored by TxDOT — included the types of services the commercial labs can provide, their limitations, their prices and what influences those prices. TxDOT asked lab representatives to recommend ways the department can help them to do the kind of work the department does. During these meetings, and in area meetings with district employees, the team "brainstormed and tried to find out as much information as we could," Meyers said.

The team looked at five main areas, including procedural changes within the Materials and Tests Division; whether TxDOT could do a more efficient job with new, state-of-the-art test equipment instead of contracting out or hiring more FTEs; temporary services; service contracts; and professional engineering contractors, including commercial labs and other types of privatization.

The team found that there are "a lot of alternative things we could do in-house to help our cause," Meyers said. He said that before turning to commercial labs, each section in the division should evaluate its needs and determine what fits its situation and materials best. They need to look at all options including, but not

limited to, commercial labs and take advantage of these.

Meyers, structural operations manager in the Materials and Tests Division, said the Continuous Improvement process aided the team's efforts. "The CI concept really works. I believe it's beneficial," he said. "I never realized how important working as a team is. And, having the facilitator kept us going in the right direction even when there were problems." He said the Continuous Improvement process also gave him and other team members a chance to widen their perspectives. "Through the process we learned about each others' sections and the needs of each others' sections. We learned about each others' concerns."

The feedback from other employees in the division helped the team address questions and rumors concerning privatization. "There was a lot of unrest that, since the team was addressing the issue of commercial labs, people were going to lose their jobs. There were big concerns such as, 'What's it going to do to my job?'" At the suggestion of Hargett, the division began a newsletter to ease these concerns and keep employees abreast of what the team was doing.

"It started off as a memo explaining what the Senior Management Team was saying and the direction the Materials and Tests Division was going and why," Hargett said. She said there are plans to expand the newsletter to include district employees.

The team prepared its final report and presented it to Hargett. A presentation to Templeton is pending.

Meyers said TxDOT employees will reap the fruits of the team's labor.

"This was not a paperwork exercise. We didn't just write a report and end it there," he said. "We're going to experience some of these things we're writing about. This is something that we'll see some benefits from."

# CI team suggests automating functional manuals

**Meredith Whitten**  
Staff Writer

Another Continuous Improvement team — the Human Resources Functional Manual team — recently reported its findings to executive sponsor Daffney Henry, assistant executive director for human resources management.

The team's mission was to create an action plan for developing an integrated Human Resources Manual, as well as a process for coordinating any functional manual. Using Continuous Improvement techniques and tools, the team developed suggestions and strategies to improve the manual. In fact, the team suggested getting rid of the paper manuals altogether — and replacing them with an automated Human Resources Information System. In doing this, the team developed a vision for a superhighway for all information within TxDOT.

Team leader Toni Luther, hazardous materials assistant in the Occupational Safety Division, said when they began to collect information about the existing manual, "We got responses from 'There's a human resources manual?' to 'On page 72, it should say...'" This emphasized the limited access employees had to the manual. The team also discovered that the information employees could find often differed because some divisions and districts have their own human resources information.

The team recommended that all human resources information — and eventually all functional manuals — be automated, eliminating the slow distribution of information, as well as the need for endless filing. As laws and policies change, immediate updates and access to them would ensure the use of current, accurate information at all times.

To guarantee that the information

employees get is consistent, team members saw the need to adopt a single department policy and issue a management "statement of philosophy" not to allow districts and divisions to issue subordinate policies contradicting department guidelines. They also stressed encouraging compliance with department standards.

To keep all the information organized, the team recommended creating a central library for all functional manuals and policy documents to serve as the hub of TxDOT's automated information delivery system. Providing access to a designated personal computer and printer in a non-work area for each TxDOT employee also would help erase the need for a hard copy manual — automation and the central library would improve access to the human resources information. Other

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# Print shops to start charging for services

Change in operations coincides with shops' consolidation at La Costa Center

**Bonnie Adams**  
Staff Writer

The department's print operation has undergone numerous changes as part of a recent consolidation of state agency print shops. The biggest change is that TxDOT is now able to print for other agencies and charge for the service.

Linda Moos, manager of the General Services Division's Information and Records section, explained that TxDOT's Austin print shop now operates on a "cost-recovery" basis.

Moos said changes won't require any additional paperwork on the part of print customers.

Paul Adkins of the General Services Commission (GSC) said the Council on Competitive Government, whose members include the governor and lieutenant governor, directed the consolidation to make print shops more efficient and cost-effective.

"They were given a mandate to take an across-the-board look at different activities of all state agencies," Moos said. "One of the first items they chose to look at was printing."

Adkins said that representatives from 33 Austin area state print shops, including TxDOT, were asked to submit business plans. "There were nine shops that submitted business plans and GSC presented a consolidated plan to the council, requesting their approval to move forward with this concept," said Adkins.

TxDOT has one of nine remaining print shops of the original 33 in Travis County. The department's shop gained one employee from the Texas Department of Commerce.

The other eight shops include the Department of Public Safety, Health and Human Services, General Services Commission, Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, Texas Employment Commission, Texas Education Agency, Texas Railroad Commission, the University of Texas at Austin Printing Department, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Adkins said GSC is developing a franchise agreement with the nine shops and will have some management oversight responsibilities.

"We will remain a TxDOT facility and we will operate out of Fund 6, which are TxDOT dedicated funds," Moos said.

The print shop consolidation coincided with a move from Camp Hubbard to the La Costa Business Park on US 290. Ironically, this new location was home to TxDOT maintenance operations years ago.

"TxDOT filled up the entire complex for years," Moos said. "What goes around, comes around." The print shop is on the north side of the large building that once housed the old D-18 maintenance division.

"Getting our print shop out of Building 6 at Camp Hubbard has been a goal of mine since I took this job six or seven years ago," Moos said. A weekend move

in mid-August meant using a crane to lift several presses from the old second-story location.

The relocation has several advantages for customers. "The move will allow us to greatly improve work flow," Moos said as she walked through the print plant. Print and bindery operations are now on one floor and there's 80 percent more space. The new location has 18,000

down time is infrequent.

Moos said some details of the operation are still being worked out, but there is a possibility the shop will add a second shift. Adkins explained that the expansion of shifts increases the use of equipment, resulting in a lower production cost.

Moos noted that TxDOT's upper management supported both the consolida-



square feet compared to 10,000 at Camp Hubbard.

"We couldn't even store our paper in the old building," Moos said. Paper that had been stored at a separate warehouse will be moved to the new print shop for easy access. The TxDOT shop has also begun a county-wide pick-up and delivery service for large print jobs.

"The upside for customers is they're going to get better resources," Moos said. All nine shops will perform work for their own agencies and other state agencies as workloads and statutes permit.

"It gives us a better opportunity in slack periods," Moos said, adding that

**Workers use a crane to remove a press from the General Service Division's Camp Hubbard print shop in Austin. The shop is being moved to give the operation more room and provide more efficient service.**

tion and the relocation. She hopes customers will lend that same support.

"We're still going to be significantly lower in price than the private sector," Moos said.

The TxDOT print shop's new phone number is 512/451-6206. An open house is scheduled for Sept. 23 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

# Signs honor those who served in SE Asia

**Sterling Brooks**  
Childress District

The Texas Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway was dedicated by TxDOT nearly 10 years ago, but motorists in the Childress District may not have known that U.S. 83 held that distinction until this summer.

That's when newly discovered signs were placed along roadside parks in King, Cottle, Collingsworth and Wheeler counties.

Kenneth McClendon, a maintenance mechanic in special jobs and a U.S. Army veteran of Vietnam, noticed the signs in a sign shop.

He brought the forgotten signs to the attention of the district public information office. District Engineer Will Parks



Sterling Brooks, Childress District

**Ten years ago, US 83 in Texas was dedicated as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway. A decade later, signs found in a Childress District sign shop are being erected in roadside parks throughout the district.**

decided to give the signs their overdue place of honor along the highway.

"We have 173 miles of US 83 running through this district," Parks said. "By installing the signs in each of our roadside parks we are finally saying 'thank you' to those who served in Vietnam."

The signs say in part: "It is our hope that all those who travel US 83 will pause to remember those who gave up their lives or their youth or their hopes in that long and bitter conflict. We vow never to forget those who did not return to us

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## FHWA shows support of states' VE programs

*Frank M. Mayer, division administrator for the Federal Highway Administration, offered to coordinate and provide a value engineering (VE) presentation for the TxDOT administration. The offer was accepted, and Keith Borkenhagen, FHWA VE coordinator and Brian Strizki of the New Jersey Department of Transportation were invited to address the July 5 TxDOT management meeting. Following that presentation, Mayer was asked to summarize the FHWA perspective on value engineering. The following is Mayer's submission.*

Value engineering reviews help obtain design excellence, through an optimum blend of performance, constructability, maintainability, safety, cost consciousness, and scheduling. Value engineering is not aimed at finding fault with current designs. Value engineering should be applied to selective projects. Not every project needs to be value engineered. In fiscal year 1993, the FHWA awarded 3,201 construction projects worth \$9.7 billion. Of these projects, 513 had costs over \$5 million. These 513 projects amounted to 66 percent of the total costs of FHWA's program.

Section 1091 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 required the Secretary of Transportation to "study the effectiveness and benefits of value engineering review programs applied to Federal aid highway projects," and "to report to Congress on the results of the study, and include recommendations on how value engineering could be utilized and improved in federal-aid highway projects."

The FHWA's report was based on VE data gathered in a 1992 survey which covered a four-year period between FY 1988 and FY 1991. Over 1,500 VE studies were performed during the four-year study period, resulting in over \$3.6 billion in savings being recommended and \$615 million in savings being implemented. Seven states with "active" VE programs performed 71 percent of the 1,500

VE studies. There were 27 other states that performed some limited VE while 18 states were inactive.

The FHWA's VE report was sent to Congress in June 1993. Its recommendations reported that an opportunity exists to improve the overall effectiveness of FHWA's VE program if all states "actively" apply VE. To accomplish this end, the FHWA proposes to develop a VE regulation. The FHWA plans to have a Notice-of-Proposed-Rule-Making (NPRM) ready by the end of September 1994. This proposal was discussed at the September 1993 American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials VE Conference in Wilmington, Del. Using the rule-making process allows all states to comment on the proposed regulation.

Over the past few years, federal legislation has been proposed to mandate VE on federal-aid projects. The House recently passed House Resolution 4385 designated as the National Highway System Designation Act of 1994. The Senate has not passed its version of the NHS Act. This bill mandates that a VE analysis be performed on all projects on the National Highway System.

Last year, two other bills were introduced, H.R. 2014 and H.R. 133, which would require the application of VE on federal-aid projects.

### H.R. 2014

- VE study of all federal-aid projects over \$2 million;
- Apply VE study to projects before 35 percent complete;
- Provide increased federal share by 5 percent if VE reduces cost by 5 percent or more;
- Increase federal share by another 5 percent if VE reduces project cost by 15 percent or more (up to maximum of 100 percent federal share).

### H.R. 133

- Each agency is to designate a VE official;
- Each department of government or agency is required to make a VE review

of its operations;

- Agencies shall to report to the Office of Management and Budget showing VE results;

- The Office of the Inspector General shall audit VE results;

- Each agency is to establish a threshold dollar value for application of VE which results in 80 percent of the program being covered.

States with active VE programs have the commitment and support of executive management. Management should develop a policy on where, when, how and to what specific areas VE should be applied. Management should also establish a trained team of VE analysts and a systematic VE training program. The NHI offers a one-week VE workshop to train individuals in the principles of VE.

We know that the TxDOT VE program has been active since 1990 with the value engineering of 16 projects. Those studies generated an estimated cost-saving recommendation of \$120,000,000.

With the establishment of an ad hoc committee to define the TxDOT course for a revised VE program, FHWA is looking forward to working with TxDOT on this important effort.

The New Jersey VE program is a case example for the potential benefits that can be realized from the consistent application of value engineering. According to Brian Strizki, the success of the NJDOT value engineering programs has resulted in a top five nationwide ranking by the FHWA for the past four years, and "in the past five years, VE has saved the department (New Jersey DOT) over \$150 million with proposals implemented into design projects," Strizki said. "With costs of \$110,000, there was a rate of return of almost 800 to 1. The NJDOT also saved over \$5 million through VE proposals approved during construction in the past five years," he said.

Questions about the VE program may be directed to Terry McCoy of the Design Division at 512/416-2320.



# Cutting down paperwork one aim of CMS

**Bonnie Adams**  
Assignments Editor

Into every job a little paperwork must fall, but TxDOT and 12 other states are collaborating on a notebook computer automation system to reduce paperwork for construction and maintenance personnel in the field, provide information access and increase efficiency.

"We're working toward a total paperless office environment out in the field," said Dawn Scheel, field engineer in the Construction and Maintenance Division's field engineering section. Reducing paperwork is one of the goals, along with providing up-to-date information on construction and maintenance projects statewide.

The project is an American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) sponsored effort for joint development of a computerized Construction Management System (CMS).

The CMS project involves Texas, 12 other states and the Federal Highway Administration. Scheel says the project is in its first phase which should be completed by October. At that time, the project will have yielded a prototype based on input from 13 states working with a commercial consultant. Phase II of the project will follow and will produce the actual system.

In addition to CMS, the department is concurrently developing field data automation strictly for maintenance personnel, which is known as Research Project 7-1991.

Joey Matesic, program administrator in CMD's automation section, said, "We're automating the collection of field data. The forms will be programmed into the handheld computer."

The two related systems allow inspec-

tors and maintenance personnel to input information right at the project site. The electronic data will then be transferred to a microcomputer at the area engineer's office or maintenance office and uploaded to a mainframe.

Scheel demonstrated what CMS is all about using a notebook computer and a special pen display pad. Using a battery operated pen, she completes an inspec-

stake. Matesic estimated that each maintenance section could save about two hours a day in data entry time by using the automated system. Statewide, that translates into more than \$2 million in savings a year for the 300 maintenance sections.

Scheel says the cooperative phase one study for AASHTO is examining systems being used by Michigan, Ohio and

Kansas. She said CMS plans to pull the best features of current systems and set a new standard for recordkeeping.

"We don't want to automate a dinosaur," Scheel said.

Scheel has met with representatives from 12 partner states to determine what functions they want CMS to perform. The software will be flexible enough that TxDOT or other states can customize it to meet specific needs.

"We need a system that meets the needs of our state and all the other states," she said. The software needs to be up to date, diverse and user friendly. Matesic said the latter feature is a constant concern

in designing the systems.

Matesic said that this summer, personnel in six maintenance sections in the Abilene, Atlanta and San Angelo districts will be trained in automated record field procedures. The Texas Transportation Institute will observe the project for six months, then present its cost-effectiveness analysis to TxDOT.

For now, the daily activity report, daily inspectors report and other forms are an everyday part of the job, but the electronic data gathering system is just down the road.



**Joey Matesic, CMD automation administrator, and Dawn Scheel, field engineer in the CMD field engineering section, check out a new notebook computer automation system that is designed to reduce paperwork for construction and maintenance personnel in the field, provide information access and increase efficiency.**

tor's daily report similar to that used by TxDOT inspectors. Using a pen instead of a mouse allows the operator to fill out the form by touching it to the screen. The operator can also type in information or write it on the screen. All blanks must be filled in before the computer advances to the next screen of the form.

The software will tabulate information immediately so that TxDOT personnel can determine how much material or manpower contractors have put into a project to that date.

There's more than convenience at

## Feliz Mes de la Hispanidad a todos los de descendencia hispana

September is Hispanic Heritage month in the state of Texas and TxDOT wants to acknowledge the important contribution Hispanic employees make to the agency.

Hispanic employees have always played an important role in the state's highway system. But it wasn't until recently that more Hispanics began to take part in TxDOT's decision-making, administration and management.

Although the number of Hispanics employed by TxDOT has not changed

much in the past five years, the number of Hispanics in mid- and upper-management levels has.

In 1989, 16.2 percent of the total TxDOT workforce was Hispanic, making it the largest minority group in the department.

And although today Hispanics make up only 18.7 percent of the department's workforce, they are still the largest minority group. There has also been an increase in the number of Hispanics in

professional job categories.

Just five years ago, 2,502 of the department's 15,403 workers were Hispanic. Only 126 of this group held positions in salary groups 17 through 23. Seven Hispanic employees held a position in salary group 23.

Today, more than 300 Hispanic employees are in salary groups 17 through 23 and two hold positions in

**Please see Hispanics, Page 13**



## Austin employees rewarded by work at Settlement Home

**Cheryl Converse**  
Staff Writer

Barrie Cogburn and Steve Katz wanted to help people. They didn't know that the group of troubled youth they befriended would turn the two TxDOT employees into teachers, students, healers and friends.

For more than two years now, Cogburn, the Austin District landscape architect, and Katz, who works in the Human Resources Division, have volunteered at Austin's Settlement Home.

The Home is a private, nonprofit, residential treatment center for girls ages 9 through 17 who have been physically, sexually or emotionally abused. Thirty-two girls can stay at the Home at once. Each stay averages about 16 months. The girls live in cottages, receive multidisciplinary therapy and learn to live a healthy, productive, hopeful and happy life.

"I've been going out there for about three years now," said Katz, who volunteers his time to help the girls of Nelson Cottage. "Things have changed since I started. Most of the girls have moved on. That's good — I'm glad that they've moved on because that almost always means they're doing better."

Katz said he is just getting to know the girls who live in the cottage now. He isn't sure what activities they will enjoy. In the past, Katz has helped other Nelson Cottage residents plant wildflowers and play a variety of games. "It'll take some time for us to learn about one another's specific interests. With each group that moves on, we have to develop a new repertoire. That's something I look forward to."

Katz was first motivated by a desire to show the girls that not all men would treat them inappropriately. He said he still feels that is a worthwhile goal. But, he's learned there are other motivators.

"I think that anytime somebody volunteers to help others, they also get a good feeling from being helpful," he said. "But besides that, every time I see one of the girls succeed, it reaffirms my belief in the tenacity of the human spirit. I've learned a lot about my own

strengths from watching the girls struggle with their own lives."

Settlement Home Executive Director Bobbie Mae Matthews said volunteers play a special role in each of the young girls lives, "The courts will not allow some of our kids to have contact with their families. It is critical to me that these kids have someone outside the Home who cares for them. We're here because we made a commitment to work here. But, when someone from the outside finds a child loveable it isn't because it's their job — and the children know that."

Matthews said that along with the Settlement teachers and therapists, volunteers also give the children permission to heal. The children need that implicit permission because their feelings won't allow them to think differently.

"Steve shows our girls that a man can see each of them as bright, shiny spirits and not objects to meet the adults needs," Matthews said. "He brings the male energy to a nurturing Settlement Home. Because we serve little girls, most of our houseparents and counselors are women. His energy and role-modeling shows the girls that some males do have respect for children, especially girl children. Most of the kids at the settlement home have been sexually abused by people in their family or people close to their families. That sense of betrayal is pretty deep. The volunteers help us heal that betrayal."

Cogburn is a role model to many of the girls in Nelson Cottage, but specifically, she is a trusted friend to 12-year-old Elizabeth. In the two years that Cogburn and Elizabeth have known one another, the pair has gone ice skating, on train rides, to the district's Ben White construction project, to the movies and shopping.

"I look forward to our visits. I look forward to seeing and hearing how well she's doing," said Cogburn. "I've seen such a change in her. She's much more

**Berrie Cogburn, Austin District landscape architect, has been volunteering at Settlement Home for more than two years. She is a trusted friend to a 12-year-old girl.**



Steve Katz, Human Resources Division

mature. I'm so proud of her."

Cogburn and Elizabeth usually visit every other weekend. This past year, Elizabeth spent Christmas at Cogburn's grandmother's house. "She's found a place in their hearts. My father told her that he wanted to see her at (Texas) A&M when she graduates. Everyone in my

**Please see Volunteers, Page 15**

## Home helps abused girls learn skills for life

**Cheryl Converse**  
Staff Writer

There's a group of people — big enough to make up the population of a small Texas town — who have overcome childhood abuse and today live with confidence and self-control. They first learned those skills at Austin's Settlement Home.

Every year the Settlement Home touches about 50 young lives, most of which are scarred by emotional, sexual or physical abuse. Multiply those lives by the 77 years that the home has been oper-

ating and you can see the people who have become the grandparents, parents and children of several generations.

The Home is a private, nonprofit residential treatment center for girls ages 9 through 17. Some of the residents are placed in the home by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services; others are placed by their parents. Each of the girls stays anywhere from 12 to 24 months. Thirty-two girls can stay at the Home at once. However, the Home's Executive Director Bobbie Mae Matthews estimated that another 200 girls in Austin could benefit from similar treatment each

year.

Once at the Home, the girls learn to develop self-control and cooperative living skills. Some are helped to come to terms with what their families can and cannot be for them. Most of the girls return to their families, some go to foster homes and some of the older girls begin living independently.

The Home's staff includes psychiatrists, counselors, art therapists and psychodrama therapists. The staff also works to include the family in therapy. The girls

**Please see Home, Page 15**

# Forum promotes DBE/HUB opportunities

Department looks for way to increase visibility with small-business owners

**Margaret Sanders**  
Waco District

With recent changes in purchasing procedures, historically underutilized businesses (HUBs) will be getting a bigger piece of the TxDOT pie.

But encouraging these small, women- and minority-owned businesses to come to the table can be a challenge, said Berdell Collins, a TxDOT contract compliance specialist.

It's his job to help the department increase contract participation by HUBs, disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs) and other minority firms. But, he found that while the department is eager to work with these companies, choices of firms to work with were sometimes limited.

"The department's list of registered DBE/HUB firms was very short in the Central Texas area," he said, "and that's because many are unfamiliar with the process of becoming certified to work with TxDOT."

Collins knew that the businesses were out there, so he began looking for ways to reach them, hoping to increase TxDOT's visibility with the owners.

"We wanted to get the word out to minority- and women-owned businesses that it's well worth the time it takes to get certified," Collins said.

The Temple Chamber of Commerce's Inclusion Committee and the Hispanic Leadership Council had similar goals. "We contacted them and suggested that we collaborate," Collins said.

The result was "Promoting Free Enterprise." Attended by more than 150 business owners, the forum was so successful that it will be repeated and may even be used as a model for future interaction between agencies and business owners in other areas of the state.

Roscoe Harrison, who chairs the Inclusion Committee, said this is the second year the chamber has sponsored a business forum, but that TxDOT's involvement helped the group expand the audience and the program.

"A lot of opportunities are available to minority- and small-business owners," he said. But, "even when the businesses are aware of opportunities, it sometimes doesn't seem worth the effort to fill out forms necessary for becoming registered," Harris said.

The forum sought to change that perception by informing business owners about opportunities and helping them get started working with government agencies. By doing that, he said, sponsors hoped to "demystify the process" of becoming registered and certified by putting owners together with agencies and companies interested in working with them.

While one purpose of the event was to

years. As you can see, there's a lot of money to be made."

Service contracts offer additional potential, said Jerry Kindred, Waco District maintenance manager, who discussed bid lists and how business owners could request them. Bruce Baker, head of the Waco District's warehouse, urged companies to register with the department. He has developed a list of commodities purchased by the district and



Margaret Sanders, Waco District

increase DBE and HUB contacts with TxDOT, Collins staff also realized that not every company will be able to work with the department. "That's why we took the lead in coordinating participation by other agencies.

In all, TxDOT and 10 other state agencies participated. The department presented a session focusing on doing business with TxDOT. "We wanted to bring people from the department they could connect with," Collins said. "We thought it was important that they have the name and phone number of a person who — if he or she didn't know the answer — could find out who could help them."

Jim Cowan, Bell County Area Engineer, discussed future projects in the county and stressed TxDOT's commitment to including DBEs and other minority-owned businesses in the department's contractor mix. "We tell prime contractors that they have to meet DBE guidelines," he said. "We will be letting \$46 million worth of projects in the next two

**Rose Durrett, Waco District human resources officer, discusses employment opportunities at a Bell County job fair.**

encouraged HUB owners to review it. "You would be surprised how much we spend," he said. "We want to get vendors certified and on the computer. We want to open lines of communication and expand our basis of DBEs and work together."

That, Collins said, is the real purpose behind TxDOT's sponsorship of the forum. "We knew we wanted to pump up our minority- and women-owned business involvement and certified DBE/HUB list," he said. "The end result, of course, is that we want them to become certified and successful in obtaining contracts. "Certification does not have to be a difficult hurdle," Collins told participants, "and after you cross it, a world of opportunity comes to your door."

## TxDOT gets double coverage with booth at ADA job fair

A job fair held at the same time and location as the business forum allowed TxDOT a two-for-one punch in the Central Texas market.

While some department staff were seeking DBE and HUB contractors in an upstairs room of the Bell County Expo Center, others were downstairs looking for potential employees.

Rose Durrett, Waco District director of

human resources, and Paula Traffas, an employment compliance specialist with the Civil Rights Division, staffed a booth at Temple's Second Annual Job/Information Fair for Persons with Disabilities.

The event brought together 30 potential employers and several agencies that serve physically challenged workers. Organizers encouraged people looking for work to bring their resumés and take advantage of a free copying service, as well as the opportunity to meet several

employers in the same place.

Durrett and Traffas offered general information about the department and statewide job opportunities.

Durrett was pleased with the results. "We've been to several job fairs, but this was one of the most successful," she said. "We had a steady stream of good people who were interested in working for the department."

**Margaret Sanders, Waco District**

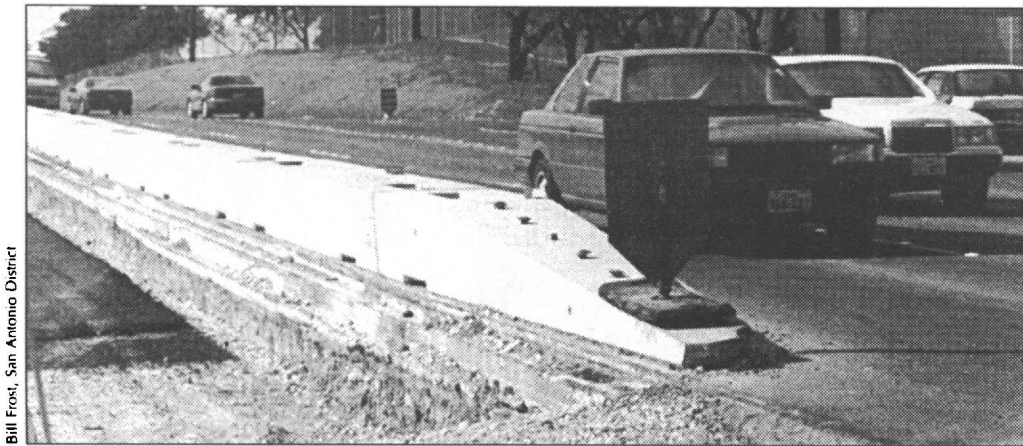


## Tech Trade

# New barrier provides safety, better visibility

**Betty Taylor**  
San Antonio District

The San Antonio District is pioneering a new type of concrete traffic barrier that should enhance safety and reduce accidents in urban work zones. The portable low-profile barrier, designed for 45 mph



Bill Frost, San Antonio District

**This portable, low-profile traffic barrier is being tested in the San Antonio District. Developed by the Texas Transportation Institute under contract with TxDOT, the barrier allows for better visibility while providing the same degree of safety as standard barriers.**

Office, said, "The basic advantage of this type of barrier is that it offers a better sight distance advantage to the driver. The barrier is shorter in profile and allows the driver to see traffic flow on the other side of the barrier."

The new safety feature was developed by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), under contract with TxDOT. Boundaries of work zones are often defined by reflective barrels or large concrete barriers. These systems work well for vehicles traveling along the major roadway through the work zone. However, if access across the work zone is required, there are often sight-distance problems. Fredericksburg Road, with its many driveways

and intersecting roads, provides an ideal location to test these types of barriers. The purpose of the low-profile barrier is to shield the work zone and redirect

or lower speed zones, is being used along the Fredericksburg Road construction project in San Antonio.

Matt Van Wicklen, Bexar 410 Area

errant vehicles while improving visibility.

In 1991, TTI began a series of tests to establish a new height for the low-profile barrier. A random survey of 100 vehicles was conducted to establish a range of typical headlight heights (distance between the roadway surface and the center of the headlight). The results provided a boundary for acceptable barrier performance.

A low-profile barrier with a height of 20 inches was developed. It is significantly shorter when compared to the 32-inch height of a standard concrete traffic barrier. Because of the reduced height of the low-profile barrier, it was important to develop a design that would prevent vehicles from vaulting or rolling. In two full-scale crash tests of the low-profile barrier, vehicles were smoothly redirected. The shorter barrier proved to be just as effective as the standard barrier.

According to TTI, a 24-inch version of the low-profile barrier may prove sufficient for use in high-speed work zones. Also, the low-profile barrier may be used in permanent applications in urban situations and, in some areas, adjacent to freeways. Van Wicklen said, "This product enhances the driver's visibility and should contribute to a safer work zone and fewer accidents."

## Orange TIC rolls out red carpet for state visitors

**John Hurt**  
Beaumont District

Each year, when National Tourism Week rolls around, the folks at the Travel Information Center in Orange do something special for their guests. This year was no exception.

For the second consecutive year, the convention and visitors bureaus from Beaumont, Port Arthur and Orange rolled out the red carpet at the TIC.

Most of the visitors expected to walk in, grab a map and head on down the road. But many hung around talking about attractions in Southeast Texas with the CVB members.

"We'd like to get them to spend some

time in this area if they hadn't already planned on it," says TIC director Pam Crew. "Most out-of-state visitors are familiar with the attractions in the metro areas and miss what we have to offer right here."

All three local TV stations turned out for the event, interviewing visitors from as far away as New York. In fact one couple from the Empire State seemed completely baffled by all of the attention, but when they discovered they were among the guests of honor, got into the swing of things.

No one can make a visitor feel welcome like a Texan can and the Orange TIC has a reputation for having fun with its guests.

"We used to 'kidnap' a family and treat them to a night in Orange," said travel counselor Dan Perrine. "Having the CVBs set up at the center is something relatively new."

Orange is one of the original tourist bureaus. It was opened in 1936 to direct tourists to the state's centennial celebration in Dallas, and by the mid-1960s was the busiest of all border stations. Near the Sabine River on Interstate 10, the center welcomes nearly 500 visitors a day and more than one-half million a year.

Southeast Texas cities long ago identified tourism as important to the local economy. Already this year nearly 200,000 people have stopped at the center.

## Bryan, Waco district employees are killed in on-the-job accidents

Edward L. Schmidt of the Waco District died June 28 from injuries sustained in an on-the-job accident.

Schmidt was operating a roller at Loop 121 and Sparta Road in Belton, Bell County, when it overturned, pinning him beneath it. He died two hours later.

Schmidt, 60, was a Maintenance Technician II and had been employed by TxDOT since 1984. He was married to Roberta Faye Schmidt.

Bryan District Maintenance Technician III Anton Englemann Jr. was killed Aug. 18 while flagging traffic for a hot-mix operation on FM 50 in Burleson County near Clay.

He was struck by a car and died shortly thereafter. The driver of the car

that struck him ran into a roller and was also killed.

Englemann, 57, had been a TxDOT employee since 1966. He was married to Nancy Welch Englemann.

Both accidents are being investigated by the Occupational Safety Division.



## Texas 22 Housing project near Lake Whitney strictly for the birds

When the Lake Whitney Corps of Engineers planned its participation in the 1994 Great Texas Trash-Off, the group didn't limit itself to just picking up litter. The park's rangers marked the event by giving part of their adopted stretch of Texas 22 to the birds.

Now, 40 bluebird boxes line the fence bordering Corps property along the Hill County highway near Lake Whitney

"We wanted to do something a little special this year," said Anjna O'Conner, who coordinated the activities for the Corps.

The idea came from Lake Whitney park rangers, who also bought materials to build the boxes. Wood shop students at Whitney High School built the boxes. On Trash-Off day, members of the Boy and Girl Scouts of Whitney installed the boxes on the fence posts while rangers and friends picked up litter along the right-of-way. Bird boxes were also placed on the Corps' fence line along FM 56 in Bosque County.

Set well back from the highway, the bird boxes attract birds already making their homes in the area. Rangers say they may install additional bird boxes in the future. *Margaret Sanders, Waco District*



The Lake Whitney Corps of Engineers left more than a clean roadside as part of the Great Texas Trash-Off - the group installed 40 birdhouses along its stretch of Texas 22 in Hill County.

## Wynne, Burnett on hand for US 87 ribbon-cutting in Tom Green County

Texas Transportation Commission member Anne Wynne, Executive Director Bill Burnett and other dignitaries recently dedicated a 7-mile stretch of US 87 with a ribbon-cutting in Vancourt.

The \$7 million project completed the upgrading of US 87 to a four-lane divided highway throughout Tom Green County. This route is on the Texas Trunk System and is part of the National Highway System.

Wynne said personal appearances allow state officials to see how projects affect people and to see firsthand the transportation needs of communities throughout the state. She also congratulated the contractors and the San Angelo District for working together on the state's first partnering project.

Burnett thanked Area Engineer Jose Morales and his staff for their commitment to quality and their cooperative efforts with contractors to complete the project on time.

Other speakers included state Sen. Bill Sims, Paint Rock; state Rep. Robert Junell, San Angelo; state Sen. Jeff Wentworth, San Antonio; Tom Green County Judge Bill Moore; and District Engineer Walter McCullough.

Wynne was also the featured speaker at the San Angelo Chamber of Commerce monthly luncheon at the Holiday Inn Convention Center. After the luncheon, Wynne and Burnett joined city and business leaders on a tour of area highway projects.

## District/Division News

### Wolf wins '94 Shelby Award

Lloyd M. Wolf, P.E. has received the 1994 M.D. (Mac) Shelby Award from the Center for Transportation Research at the University of Texas at Austin.

The award is given in recognition of excellence as a research project director for TxDOT. Wolf coordinated research efforts for the past four years for Project No. 1265, "Structural Integrity of Epoxy-Coated Reinforcement."

### HRD's Gilbert certified

John Gilbert, Human Resources Division, recently passed the Professional in Human Resources exam.

Administered by the Human Resource Certification Institute, the exam covers a broad range of human resources activities including strategic planning, international competition, management staffing, family and social issues, affecting the workplace, employee compensation and benefits and contemporary management concepts and practices. Certification demonstrates a mastery of this body of knowledge and a willingness to stay abreast of new developments in the human resource field.

### Yoakum slates bass tourney

The Yoakum District will host a bass tournament Saturday, Sept. 4. The fifth annual tournament will be held on Coletto Creek Reservoir near Victoria. Interested employees may contact Bob Arlitt at 512/293-4343.

### Clark namesake of new 'Bubba' award

In years to come, the Texas community that undertakes the most successful Great Texas Trash-Off will be "bubba-tized." Keep Texas Beautiful Inc.(KTB) will present the newly created J. Don Clark "Bubba Award" annually in honor of the Travel and Information Division director.

Clark received his namesake award at the July convention of Keep Texas Beautiful.

"In appreciation of your ongoing inspiration and support of the Keep Texas Beautiful and 'Don't Mess with Texas' programs, and for your effort to create a cleaner and more beautiful Texas, the Keep Texas Beautiful board of directors is happy to present you with the first "Bubba" Award," said Nancy Chancellor, past chairman of the board for KTB.

## Austin's Carol Thompson will highlight WIN's Sept. 21 dinner meeting

WIN's annual dinner meeting will feature a speaker who has spent more than 20 years working in Austin—Carol Thompson of The Thompson Group.

Her topic for the Sept. 21 dinner meeting will focus on how to network, make contacts and take full advantage of every opportunity presented.

Thompson began her career as a public health nurse with a degree from Cornell University. She completed post-graduate work in public health at the University of California.

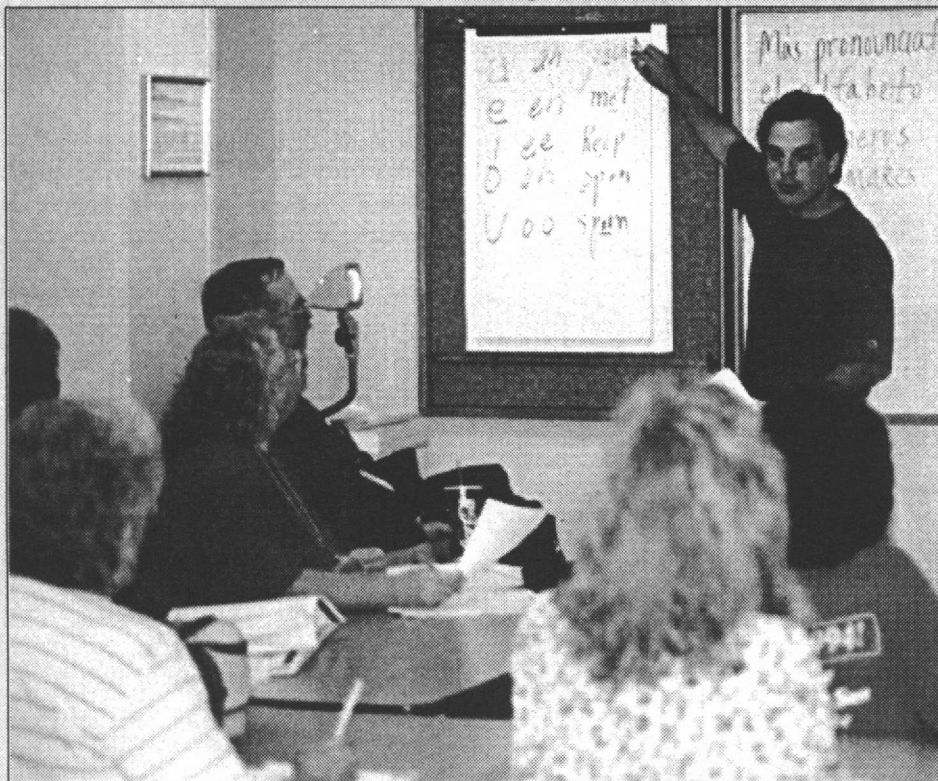
Thompson has started and operated diverse businesses, including dealing in china and ceramic collectibles, computer rentals and computer sales.

Today, Thompson is a "network strategist," meaning she connects the right company with the right contacts to make them more profitable.

The Thompson Group helps business clients with goals, network development, public relations and marketing strategies.

The dinner is set for 5:45 p.m. Sept. 21 at Austin's Red Lion Inn, Interstate 35 and US 290. Reservation deadline is Sept. 16. Contact WIN facilitators for a reservation form.

## CPO offers staff Spanish classes



**Juan Deanda**  
Special to Public Information Office

Some Central Permit Office employees are learning Spanish — for free, and on their own time.

Trinidad Salinas, a CPO permit officer, is offering lessons to interested co-workers.

Monty Chamberlain, an assistant unit manager, had looked into what it would cost to have employees take Spanish lessons at a local college. When he saw the \$2,000 price tag, Salinas volunteered his services.

"Although we have Mexican-American employees on our staff, many do not know how to speak the language," said Chamberlain.

Salinas is majoring in Spanish and obtaining his teaching certificate from the University of Texas at Austin. He and others in his class agree that a

knowledge of the language will help them communicate better with a growing number of Spanish-speaking customers.

"Knowing how to speak Spanish would not only help me here at work, but it would also be to my benefit to know when I travel," said Jenny Lynn Shumaker, assistant unit manager.

Based on attendance and participation, Salinas judges the classes a success. The classes, held every Thursday from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., have an average attendance of about 10 people.

For now, Spanish classes are only open to CPO employees, but this could serve as a pilot program for similar classes, Salinas said.

**Trinidad Salinas, a Central Permit Office employee and Spanish major at the University of Texas, teaches Spanish to CPO employees.**

## MTD opens doors to fabricators during June open house

Let's show 'em what we're made of!

That was one of the reasons that the Materials and Tests Division hosted its first open house for fabricators who conduct business with the division.

The division opened its doors on June 3. During the open house, 75 company representatives visited the laboratories, viewed a video of the Materials and Tests Division and enjoyed refreshments. The video was shot, produced and edited by Robert Sarcinella of the division's structural section. It showed the sections of the division and what materials are tested in each section.

Those who came early enjoyed a welcome session with Division Director Katherine Hargett, and viewed the video. Representative guests were divided into groups and escorted to nine laboratory areas. Many of the fabricators were surprised by what they saw — the tests performed, why certain specifications are developed and how materials are tested to ensure compliance.

This is just one area in Continuous Improvement that the Materials and Tests Division has developed to emphasize customer service. In doing so, a cross-functional group of employees was involved as a team to plan and organize the event.

"We wanted to show that we are the cornerstone of the transportation system in Texas and it starts with the materials used to develop our highways," said Hargett. *Renee Chadwick, Materials and Tests Division*

## Signs

Continued from Page 6

and we pledge to remember the sacrifices of those who have come home."

"The signs were made for a reason — to honor those who served in Southeast Asia — but I think all vets will be happy to see the signs on our roadways," McClendon said.

Bobby Crabtree and Delbert Love, district maintenance mechanics, fashioned slanted sign holders patterned after those used in the Abilene District. The slant of the signs encourages motorists to leave their car and read the information honoring the men and women of Texas who served in Vietnam.

A number of the signs had been produced by the state with the intention of erecting them along the 900-mile stretch of US 83 that runs through Texas from Oklahoma to Mexican.

The black signs with white lettering feature the flag of Texas and an outline of Vietnam. The text is in both English and Spanish.

## Manual

Continued from Page 4

suggestions included setting up an 800 number to access a human resources subject-matter expert locally and statewide. The team also envisioned touch-screen technology and sound cards that read the screen to the user.

Webre said the team found that 70 percent of employees were not getting the needed information. But, he said, the team's suggestions would improve the way each TxDOT employee accesses this information, as well as the type of information available.

"This issue called attention to the fact that there's a communication problem down to the individual employee level.

The information is impossible to find, and if you can find it, it's impossible to understand. It's not user friendly," he said. "All of these suggestions cut down on that 70 percent; this affects every employee."

After the team's report, Henry praised members for their work and suggestions.

"I know to get this product required a big commitment," she said. "You spent a lot of hours on it and we will be implementing your suggestions. You didn't work for naught."

Henry said she recognized the importance of providing updated, timely information that's easily accessible to all of TxDOT's employees. "I know how it is to try to get information or to not have access to it," she said. "Employees should not have to go through that to get information."



# Cooperation reopens road after bridge collapse

**Marcus Sandifer**  
Atlanta District

When an early-morning accident on Aug. 8 caused a county road overpass to collapse on Interstate 30 in Bowie County, a concerted effort by Atlanta District employees with other state, local and private entities had the accident scene cleaned up and the highway open to traffic within 24 hours.

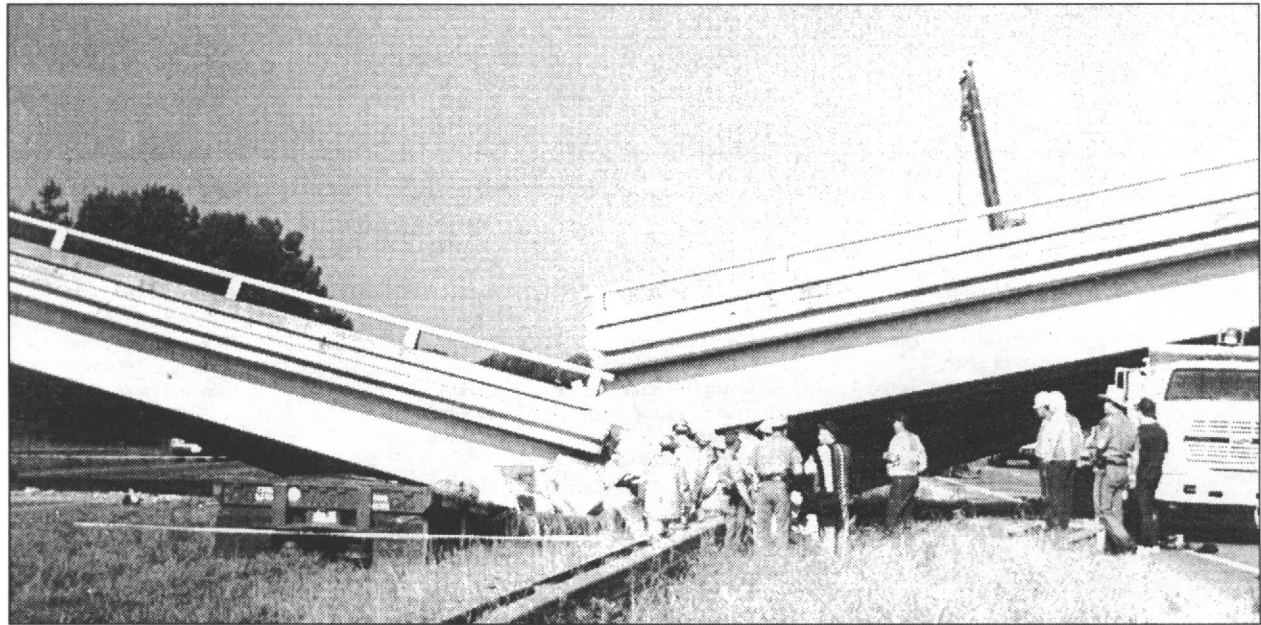
"This was really an outstanding effort by our employees and the private crane operation crew to get the highway back open to traffic in such a short time," said Gaylon Childress, district maintenance engineer. "We had a lot of help from state and local agencies and the private sector in keeping traffic flowing and the crash site cleaned up."

A truck pulling a flatbed trailer loaded with three heavy rolls of stainless steel had veered into the median, passed around the left side of the protective guard rail and struck the bridge column head-on at between 55 and 65 mph.

The impact sheered the first column off near the base and caused the second column to break about two-thirds of the way up. This caused the concrete beams and decking of County Road 2110 to fall on the vehicle. The driver and his passenger were killed instantly.

Both maintenance section supervisors who oversee Bowie County, Gerald Smith on the east end and Winfred Thompson on the west end, were awakened with the news of the accident around 3:30 a.m. and set about getting crews to the site to set up blockades and detour routes.

"Before any demolition took place, we had a meeting with all entities involved to outline the step-by-step procedures of what was to be done so everyone would know what was going on. That helped everything run a lot smoother," Childress



said. It was around 2:30 p.m. before enough of the structure was removed so the first of the bodies could be extracted. The second victim was removed a few hours later.

With the aid of lighting equipment provided by a local company, TxDOT employees worked into the night and had the entire roadway clear and opened to traffic by 1:30 a.m. the following morning.

"We had a very devoted group of employees working to get the accident victims free, the highway cleared and open to traffic. Several were out there working up to 22 hours and still showed up to work at 8 o'clock the next morning," Childress said.

The efficient process of getting the accident site cleared and the highway open can be credited to many factors, according to Williams. "As word spread about the accident, we immediately had offers of assistance and loan of equipment and supplies from many different private and government sources,"

**A bridge over Interstate 30 in Bowie County collapsed Aug. 8 when it was struck by a large truck. Cooperation between TxDOT, local officials and the private sector had the highway reopened in less than 24 hours.**

Williams said. "Red River Army Depot provided several pieces of equipment to help break up and cut up the concrete; The Texas Department of Public Safety provided traffic and crowd control, as did the Hooks Police Department and Bowie County Sheriff's Department. Langdon Oxygen, out of Texarkana, provided lights for the night work and the local Red Cross organization provided refreshments for everyone assisting in the work."

The company that owned the truck also sent a hazardous-materials crew out the following day to remove and replace the soil contaminated by the truck's diesel fuel.

Representatives from TxDOT and the National Transportation Safety Board began an investigation the following day.

# Ag department gets help at inspection station

**John Hurt**  
Beaumont District

Eighteen-wheelers thundering across the Louisiana state line into the Beaumont District received an unexpected surprise recently.

It all came about when the Texas Department of Agriculture joined forces with TxDOT. The agencies paired up to help prevent plant-borne diseases from being illegally transported into the state.

According to ag department inspector Alan Peacock, the Beaumont District in general and the Anahuac Maintenance section in particular played a big role in making the inspection a success.

"This would have been a lot harder without the help of (Anahuac Maintenance Supervisor) Wilbert Johnson and his crew," said Peacock.

The site provided by TxDOT is a former roadside park that now serves as a temporary weigh station for the DPS's portable scales. It is located on Interstate

10 in Chambers County near the historic town of Anahuac.

Peacock said, "The folks in Anahuac provided us with traffic cones that allowed us to divide the trucks into two lanes. They also set up a changeable-message sign board on the Interstate advising all westbound rigs to exit at the inspection station. They also stayed close by in case we needed anything else."

Ag Commission crews were then able to look over the on-board cargo and decide whether further inspection was needed. The station was set up for seven days and operated around the clock. During the week it was in operation, nearly 24,000 trucks passed through the facility. The surprise audits seem to be working. Only five trucks were hauling shipments rejected by the inspectors.

According to Peacock, the offensive cargo wasn't confiscated at the site. "We let the trucks go on to their final destination and had an inspector meet it there," he says.

Operations like this are important to Texas and help prevent such diseases as citrus canker from spreading and wiping out the state's valuable grapefruit industry.

"The folks from TxDOT were just great. We look forward to working with them again in the future," said Peacock.

## Hispanics

**Continued from Page 7**  
salary groups 24 and 26.

TxDOT now employs 2,653 Hispanics, an increase of 151 employees, or 6 percent, since 1989, but it also has about 800 fewer employees than five years ago.

By the end of the century, Hispanics will be the fastest-growing minority group in the state and TxDOT is committed to reflect this in its workforce.



# Service Awards

## September

### Abilene

**15 years**  
Pablo L. Reyes  
John Sanchez  
**5 years**  
Ken D. Griffin  
Dianna G. Sandefur

### Amarillo

**20 years**  
William F. Harvey  
**15 years**  
Alvin D. Kabetzke  
Russell C. Luther  
Mickey L. Skidmore  
Linda S. White  
**5 years**  
William C. Burgoon

### Atlanta

**25 years**  
Donald G. Rhyne  
Charles E. Wisinger  
**20 years**  
Gary G. Barnett  
Jerry G. Turner  
**10 years**  
Carl E. Wall  
**5 years**  
Ronald W. Lundy

### Austin

**30 years**  
William M. Carter  
Hayden L. Haberer  
**25 years**  
John A. Miller  
**15 years**  
Larry R. Breeden  
Wesley M. Burford III  
Chris D. Kelarek  
**10 years**  
Ralph A. Browne  
Maurice Fifer  
Joe T. Garza  
**5 years**  
S. L. Power  
Laura D. Rogers

### Beaumont

**25 years**  
Walter Fletcher  
Jerry G. Godeaux  
**15 years**  
Donna J. Person  
**5 years**  
Tony Tamez

### Brownwood

**25 years**  
Clyde E. Braddock  
James C. Lewis

### Bryan

**35 years**  
Afton D. Lathrop  
Guy R. Ward  
**20 years**  
Stanley P. Markowski  
**5 years**  
Kevin L. King

### Childress

**20 years**  
Jesse V. Salinas  
Steven W. Smith  
**10 years**  
Sandra H. Vestal

### Corpus Christi

**25 years**  
Eddie G. Eubanks  
Ramon Lara  
**20 years**  
John M. Jacobs  
Ruben D. Salazar  
**10 years**  
Rene J. Escareno  
Martin Vela  
**5 years**  
Daniel L. Kelley

### Dallas

**20 years**  
Patrick M. Ellis  
Gary L. Sexton  
**15 years**  
Robert L. Grimshaw  
Peggy A. Simmons  
**10 years**  
Kenneth R. Brewer  
David L. Hensley  
Billy R. Hosch  
Bruce W. Jones  
Kirby L. Jordan  
Alice L. Maddox  
David C. Montelongo Sr.  
Alan S. Young  
**5 years**  
Martha A. Compton  
Gregory P. Foerster  
Timothy W. Moody  
Brian A. Swindell

### El Paso

**30 years**  
Ricardo N. Ramirez  
**25 years**  
Manuel Salas  
**20 years**  
Cruz Rivera  
**10 years**  
Maria G. Beard  
Victor B. Jimenez

### Fort Worth

**25 years**  
Thomas W. French  
William E. Glenn  
Gary A. Kowar  
John D. Reed Jr.  
**20 years**  
Gwen P. Adcock  
Charles W. Gratts  
Perry W. Hart  
**15 years**  
Steven C. Connell  
Thomas M. Pack  
**10 years**  
Tony V. Henson  
**5 years**  
Blane D. Ruback

### Houston

**35 years**  
Walter L. Adams  
**30 years**  
Gene O. Day  
**25 years**  
Musa J. Misleh  
Warren K. Valmore  
**20 years**  
Darrell G. Gloyna  
**15 years**  
James L. Elliott  
Gabriel Y. Johnson  
Paul R. Reck  
**10 years**  
Jeanne C. Javadi  
Oliver R. Smith  
Robin K. Sterry  
Carolyn E. Temple  
**5 years**  
James E. Callenius  
Pablo C. Garcia  
James M. Geesing  
Michael S. Glazener  
Darryl D. Hall  
Michael W. King  
Richard L. Miller  
Christophe A. Patterson  
Dane E. Raines  
Katie R. Shead  
Johnny L. Smith

### Laredo

**15 years**  
Maria B. Gutierrez

### Lubbock

**30 years**  
Hubert J. Lindsey  
Ernest E. Shuler  
**25 years**  
Raymond E. Bagby Jr.  
**15 years**  
Norman T. Moore  
Kenneth G. Parsley  
**5 years**  
Robert A. Bullard  
Roy M. Lloyd  
Tony V. Trevino

### Lufkin

**10 years**  
Steven E. Clark

### Odessa

**30 years**  
Lily G. Talamantez  
**20 years**  
Hilberto Delgado  
**10 years**  
Sharlot B. Sharrock

### Paris

**35 years**  
James B. Hutchison Jr.  
**25 years**  
Woodrow P. Bray  
**15 years**  
Beverly J. Yates  
**10 years**  
Brian D. Orr  
**5 years**  
Jason R. Pitts

### Pharr

**25 years**  
Miguel Melendez Jr.  
**20 years**  
Idolina P. Perez  
**15 years**  
Martin Jackson  
**5 years**  
Gregory A. Rakay

### San Angelo

**30 years**  
Carl F. Haverland  
**25 years**  
Robert Cortez  
Foster L. Ditmore  
**20 years**  
Clifton W. Ketchum  
**15 years**  
Fernando C. Abrego  
Alberto F. Estrada  
Richie G. Wood  
**10 years**  
Chester L. Crenwelge

### San Antonio

**30 years**  
Guadalupe E. Diaz Jr.  
Kenneth L. Sprowl  
**25 years**  
Chester L. Itz  
Wilfred Lewis  
Jimmy I. Miller  
Juan A. Saucedo  
**20 years**  
Jesus J. Flores  
David G. Lozano  
Richard B. Reid  
**15 years**  
Gerald L. Feriend  
**10 years**  
Urbano L. Martinez Jr.  
Joe A. Pulido  
Mark D. Staley  
**5 years**  
Susan C. Atkins  
William D. Chambers  
Ray H. Fontenot Jr.  
Virginia E. Hovermale  
Gregory S. Rohmer  
Francis A. Schell  
Linda A. Schwarzlose  
Teresa G. Tschirhart

### Tyler

**30 years**  
Michael B. Cole  
**15 years**  
Robert H. Ratcliff  
**5 years**  
Tyrone Alexander  
Teresa B. Guillet

### Waco

**15 years**  
Ronnie B. Wiley  
**10 years**  
Timothy L. Hillard  
Larry W. Hogg  
Teresa T. James  
Russell B. Larkins  
John D. Sidener  
Ricky D. Sutton  
**5 years**  
Jessie J. Ince  
John R. Jasek

### Wichita Falls

**30 years**  
Jackie L. Stephens  
**25 years**  
Robert R. Cates

### Yoakum

**25 years**  
Edwin M. Molnoskey  
**20 years**  
Cynthia R. Meza  
**15 years**  
Wanda W. Carter  
**10 years**  
Thomas W. Dreyer

### Central Permit Office

**20 years**  
Doris C. Perkins

### Construction and Maintenance

**20 years**  
Kathryn S. Evans  
**10 years**  
Charles T. Stone

### Design

**15 years**  
Shou-fang Yang  
**5 years**  
David L. Plutowski

### General Services

**25 years**  
Robert C. Johns  
**5 years**  
Edward J. Wainwright III

### Information Systems

**30 years**  
Jack W. Howell  
**15 years**  
Roger N. Boroff  
**5 years**  
Ted W. Wilson

### Legislative Affairs

**5 years**  
Maureen McCoy

### Public Transportation

**5 years**  
Karen C. Dunlap

### Research and Technology Transfer

**10 years**  
Rita C. Grimes

### Right of Way

**25 years**  
Ronald G. Cloyd  
**10 years**  
Charles G. Grote

### Transportation Planning and Programming

**30 years**  
John W. Barker  
**10 years**  
Dean E. Aaron

### Travel and Information

**25 years**  
Venita G. Schied  
**5 years**  
Jill L. Bates

### Vehicle Titles and Registration

**20 years**  
Elizabeth R. Quiroz  
Debora B. Waits  
**10 years**  
Leslie L. Lempa  
Beverly M. Ways  
**5 years**  
Esther J. Brock

## In Memoriam

### Retirees

Herbert G. Bossy, San Antonio, retired from San Antonio District in 1961, died June 9, 1994  
Chester A. Cain, Whitewright, retired from Paris District in 1984, died July 31, 1994  
John F. Freudenberg, La Grange, retired from Yoakum District in 1966, died July 28, 1994  
Myles M. Funk, Midland, retired from Amarillo District in 1977, died May 28, 1994  
Roy K. Green, Queen City, retired from Atlanta District in 1985, died July 24, 1994  
Querubin Guerra, Garciasville, retired from Pharr District in 1982, died July 9, 1994

Lemual B. Mills, Emory, retired from Paris District in 1974, died June 14, 1994  
William T. Robertson, Abilene, retired from Abilene District in 1992, died May 29, 1994  
Quince Taylor, Bryan, retired from Bryan District in 1987, died June 5, 1994  
Alton O. Tidwell, DeKalb, retired from Atlanta District in 1975, died July 7, 1994  
Tommy B. West, Everman, retired from Fort Worth District in 1994, died May 24, 1994  
Michael A. Willingham, Pharr, retired from Pharr District in 1978, died June 22, 1994  
John W. Windham, Canton, retired from Tyler District in 1974, died July 11, 1994

## Transitions

### Effective August

Lauren D. Garduno, P.E., District Maintenance Engineer, Abilene District  
Glenn H. Green, Area Engineer, Jacksonville Area Office, Tyler District  
Bonnie Loehr, Director of Administration, Bryan District

## Transit

### Continued from Page 1

annually and another \$10 million in state funds to support the nation's largest rural transit network.

Section 16 funds provide assistance for the elderly and disabled. TxDOT contracts the funds — about \$3 million a year — to local private, non-profit organizations to buy vehicles, such as vans or small buses equipped with wheelchair lifts.

Texas cities with populations of more than 50,000 are eligible for Section 9 funds, which they receive directly from FTA. The major metropolitan areas now have dedicated sales taxes to support their transit operations and other local mobility projects.

All of this places Texas seventh among all states in public transportation expenditures. Partnership between TxDOT and

## Retirements

### May

#### Abilene

Lynette Simpson, 22 years  
Administrative Technician III

#### Waco

Mike Keahey, 31 years  
Director I

### June

#### Abilene

Gerald E. Boyd, 28 years  
Maintenance Construction Supervisor I

### July

#### Amarillo

Keith E. Monson, 6 years  
Maintenance Mechanic V

#### Beaumont

John R. Wilson, 30 years  
Maintenance Technician III

#### Travel and Information

Paul Dehnel, 6 years  
Management Auditor II

### August

#### Beaumont

Shirley H. DeCuir, 22 years  
Accountant III

#### Brownwood

Linda R. Clowdus, 31 years  
Safety Officer I

#### Corpus Christi

Luis Hernandez, 29 years  
Maintenance Technician III

#### Houston

Marshall L. Goolsby, 30 years  
Engineering Technician V

#### Lubbock

Jerry D. Anderson, 30 years  
Maintenance Technician III  
Raymond E. Limon, 20 years  
Maintenance Technician III

#### Pharr

Enrique C. Garcia, 26 years  
Maintenance Technician III  
Baldemar S. Saenz, 29 years  
Maintenance Technician III  
Eduardo Torres, 28 years  
Roadway Maintenance Technician III

#### San Angelo

Alan D. Ford, 30 years  
Staff Services Officer IV  
James W. Whitlock, 27 years  
Roadway Maintenance Supervisor II

### San Antonio

Leonel G. Garcia, 25 years  
Maintenance Technician III

#### Tyler

Garland W. Franklin, 25 years  
Maintenance Technician III

#### Wichita Falls

Larry C. Henry, 32 years  
Engineering Specialist I

#### Information Systems

Wayman H. Finch, 28 years  
Programmer Analyst II

#### Vehicle Titles and Registration

David Ray, 30 years  
Director of Programs I

### September

#### Atlanta

Joe D. Wall, 10 years  
Maintenance Mechanic IV

#### Beaumont

Izell Ward, 25 years  
Maintenance Technician III

#### Brownwood

J. R. Duncan, 17 years  
Roadway Maintenance Superintendent I

#### El Paso

Stephen L. Jones, 28 years  
Administrative Technician III

#### Paris

James H. Kelton, 29 years  
Maintenance Technician III

#### San Angelo

Michael A. Fritz, 30 years  
Maintenance Technician III  
Rafael R. Castillo, 26 years  
Electrical & AC Mechanic IV  
Chester L. Crenwelge, 10 years  
Plant Manager I

#### Wichita Falls

Sammy D. Milam, 31 years  
Roadway Maintenance Superintendent I  
George G. Dickey, 30 years  
Maintenance Technician III

#### Information Systems

Donald G. Buck, 28 years  
Automated Data Processing  
Supervisor IV

## Calendar

### September

1 Pavement Management Information System Visual Rater Training School, Arlington, DES  
5 Labor Day (Holiday)  
12-14 Communication Conference, Lake Sam Rayburn, PIO  
13-15 Area 3 Research Meeting, Amarillo, RTT  
14 Letting  
15 Pavement Management Information System Visual Rater Training School, Odessa, DES  
15 Letting  
27-29 Area 2 Research Meeting, Lubbock, RTT  
29 Commission Hearing and Meeting  
29 Division Directors Meeting, Austin

### October

4-6 Area 4 Research Meeting, Abilene, RTT  
5 Letting  
6 Letting  
17 District Engineers and Division Directors Meeting  
17-19 Transportation Conference, College Station  
27 Commission Meeting, Austin

### November

8-10 Area 1 Research Meeting, Corpus Christi, RTT  
11 Veterans' Day (Holiday)  
15 Letting  
16 Letting  
24 Thanksgiving (Holiday)  
25 Thanksgiving Day (Holiday)  
26 Holiday  
30 Commission Hearing and Meeting, Austin  
30 Introduction to Right of Way, Austin, RO~

### December

2 Division Directors Meeting, Austin  
6-8 PMIS District Coordinators Training Course, Austin, DES  
13 Letting  
14 Letting  
21 Commission Meeting, Austin  
24 Christmas Eve Holiday  
26 Holiday

## Volunteers

### Continued from Page 8

family has met her now. They all ask about her because she's special. She's a lot of fun to be with and she's real easy to do things with," Cogburn said.

Besides the apparent place Elizabeth holds in Cogburn's heart, the spirited young girl has found a place in Cogburn's new home. As a recent home-buyer, Cogburn made sure to find a house with a bedroom that Elizabeth can call her own.

"I like spending time with her (Barrie)," Elizabeth said. "We just had our 2-year anniversary. She always cheers me up and she's taught me not to sweat the small things."

"What I like the best is that I have a lot of questions that I can ask Barrie. She shows me stuff and she listens to me. She lets me get away from stuff and she helps me learn," Elizabeth said.

According to Matthews, Elizabeth is not the only one who has grown. "I have seen Barrie grow. When she first came to us, she didn't understand the effects of the many kinds of abuse some children live with. But she's learning to live with it—to grieve about it, to be angry and to do something about it.

"Barrie has been tested—she can stay with a relationship where she gives more than she receives. She now knows that about herself. She has been asked to understand behavior she was not asked to understand before," Matthews said.

Despite the good that therapists, teachers and counselors can do in a controlled, group setting, Matthews gladly admits that the best thing for the child is to be part of a healthy and happy family. Although volunteers like Cogburn and Katz do not provide a long-term familial setting, they do provide stability.

Stability is inherently important to children. Although an abused child and her family go through therapy, they still have to cope with the child's wounds. Matthews said wounds that come from abuse stay open for a long time, becoming evident mostly through self-destructive behavior. During that time, stability is crucial.

That's when the role of being a volunteer has the power to pay off—to be a consistent person in the life of the abused child who the child can always trust. The roles of caretakers and therapists change. But a volunteer who has befriended a child rarely changes. A volunteer can anchor a child's sense of belonging and identity. They can be life-long friends.

## Home

### Continued from Page 8

attend one-on-one, family and group therapy sessions regularly. They also go to team-building exercises, therapeutic recreation and noncompetitive sports to build trust, trustworthiness and self-belief.

She said that learning to live successfully with the past abuse is a difficult process because the children first learn to see themselves an object instead of an independent being.

But, Matthews said, the children have an instinctual knowledge that the wounds can be made better. And, she added, the child in each of us knows that with the right combination of nurturing and role models, the wounding can be overcome.

Care and treatment for a child at the Home is \$3,000 monthly. If the girl is placed in the home by the state, that state pays a portion of her stay. The Home also has a sliding scale for parents who need help in paying for board.

No one, state or parent, pays the full cost. The sliding scale payments are funded by the Settlement Club, a group of Austin women who own and operate the home. Each year, they hold a garage sale to help defray costs. Almost one-fourth of the home's budget comes from those proceeds.

This year's garage sale will be held at Austin's City Colise-

## Letters

We recently made a car trip through Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida. We stopped at several roadside parks in each of the states over a period of some 15 days.

We were impressed with several of the roadside parks but the one that stood out as the best of the litter was on I-10, at Orange.

The area was clean, restrooms very neat and the biggest surprise of all we, by chance, got to visit with the supervisor over this park. His name was Isaac Hunter. In addition to being impressed by the park, we were very impressed by Mr. Hunter. He is an asset to your division. Again we were impressed with park and Mr. Hunter. That is a winning combination.

**Eddie and Jerry Manns**  
San Antonio

*Isaac Hunter is a maintenance technician in the Orange Maintenance Section, Beaumont District.*

....

I would very much like to bring to your attention the very thoughtful courtesy extended to my wife, my daughter and myself while in route to Houston on May 27.

We stopped at the roadside rest stop eight miles north of Huntsville in Walker County on the west side of the southbound lanes of Interstate 45. We inadvertently locked all our keys in the car and the two public phones at that rest stop were out of order (as apparently they had been for some five or six months now.) The supervisor for maintenance at the two rest stops in that area, Mr. Robert Estraca, observed our plight and very generously contacted a locksmith in Huntsville by way of his radio communication with his dispatcher. He then made certain that we did receive the help sought and were able to get on our way again after a bare 45 minute delay.

His courtesy, kindness and thoughtfulness were a refreshing change from the attitudes exhibited by too many public employees and I feel merit special notice and commendation. Mr. Estraca's "can do" attitude reflected credit on both himself and your department and merited

the heartfelt thanks that I gave him and a noticed "well done" by his superior.

**Arthur R. Petersen**

*Mr. Robert Estraca works as a maintenance technician for the Walker County Maintenance Section, Bryan District.*

....

On the afternoon of June 30, my family and I were stranded along the side of the Interstate 10 East with a blowout on one of our tires. Our problem was that we were unable to unbolt our spare tire from our van so we could use it. Mr. Rodriguez stopped to help us and spent nearly three hours of his busy day helping us. He spent about one hour at the accident site and then nearly two hours driving me around trying to find some service station that had a grinder. We finally found one, and then he ground off the bolt for me to remove my spare. He then helped me put my spare back on before he left.

I hope that you receive this letter. Mike Rodriguez is a real asset to your organization. We definitely could have been stranded all day or longer without him. He refused a tip that I offered him. He is a hard worker and it is great to know that there are still people like him out there to help those in need. Thanks again Mike. We appreciated your help greatly. I hope you receive a copy of this letter. Keep up the good work.

**Jerry Adell**  
Moreno Valley, California

*Mike Rodriguez is a roadway maintenance technician in the Van Horn Maintenance Section, El Paso District.*

....

I am singing praises to and for the Texas Department of Transportation employees—Dan D. Bray and Dennis Troutz. This a.m. as I was traveling on US 75 just north of the Denison exit I had a major blowout on my front tire. These two gentlemen were there to assist me almost immediately. The timing was perfect. I had prayed my travel angels on duty before I started my trip and these men were definitely an answer to prayer of a woman in distress.

I offered them money so they could buy lunch but they refused. They not only put my spare on but they followed me to Denison to make sure I got the assistance I needed.

Living proof and great example of the fact that even tho our news broadcasts are pretty grim and depressing—that good news happens every day too!

I'm grateful. My special and warmest thanks and good wishes to the "good guys"!

**Connie M. Clark**  
Austin

*Dan D. Bray is an engineering technician and Dennis Troutz is a maintenance technician. Both men work out of the Sherman Area Office, Paris District.*

....

I have several letters to write but none as important to me as this one. It is written in commendation of two of your highway workers—Rosalio and Brandon.

We are presently on our way from Maine to visit our son and his family in El Paso. On Tuesday, July 19, at 11:30 a.m. a brand new tire on our fifth-wheel camper blew. It caused minimal damage to the camper itself but it was obvious we could not safely continue on to seek help. Recuperating from back surgery, my husband was unable to change the tire.

Suddenly, two very friendly faces appeared and realized our predicament. In no time we were 100 percent again and safely on our way. They were so efficient but also so pleasant and upbeat. We offered them money which they refused. So you see, because of these two very wonderful men who extended their help to those in trouble, our appreciation and love of your great state grew to even greater proportions. We want to give you all special thanks for your wonderful state.

I also want you to know that I'm writing to *Trailer Life* magazine to acknowledge Rosalio and Brandon and your department. They love to hear of good experiences happening to travelers. God bless Rosalio and Brandon and the state of Texas.

**Mrs. Richard Allbee**  
Wells, Maine

*Both Rosalio Montejano and Brandon Vaughn work as maintenance technicians in the Iraan Maintenance Section, Odessa District. Vaughn is a summer hire.*

....

# Transportation NEWS

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