

What looms for TxDOT

Here's a hint:
It starts with
the letter 'R'

By **Lisa Trow**
Public Information Office

Go ahead. Buy a Lottery ticket. But your odds this year are better in the Legislature.

The 76th Legislature, which convened Jan. 12, is expected to consider an across-the-board cost of living increase for state employees as part of an appropriations bill this session.

A recent state auditor's report, which urged a salary increase to stanch the flow of state employees to better paying jobs in the private sector, recommends a 3.9 percent pay raise in 2000 and another in 2001 to make state salaries competitive. The recommendation is based on the average difference between the salaries of those in various state positions and the wages offered to their private sector counterparts.

The increase, as well as other salary-related issues designed to improve employee morale and retention, are at the top of the Texas Transportation Commission's legislative agenda, said Coby Chase, director of the Legislative Affairs Office for the Texas Department of Transportation.

In addition to the across-the-board raises, the report recommends more competitive salaries for those in engineering, engineering sup-



Cirill Smith, TRV

in the Legislature?

port and information technology positions, and authorizing merit raises every six months rather than the current 12 months.

Commission members support the state auditor's recommendation and are "hitting this issue hard," Chase said.

"Texas has one of the largest and best transportation systems in the nation largely because of the competent and dedicated men and women who develop and maintain it," said TxDOT executive director **Wes Heald**. "We hope the Legislature will recognize their worth to the state by making their salaries more competitive with those in the private sector."

Commission members emphasize the need for salary increases by stressing the obvious.

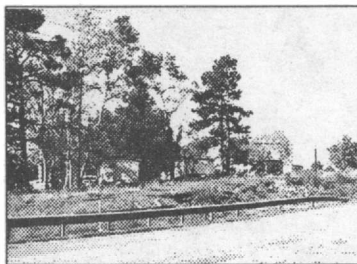
"The three Rs for the department this session are revenue, raises and retention," Chase said. "The mission is to retain and recruit. The current salary structure doesn't do either very well."

What's the likelihood lawmakers will adopt raises for state employees? Although nobody in the know is in the mood to post odds, veteran analysts believe the salary proposal is a sound one. That doesn't mean, however, that it's a done deal.

"Budgetary pressure will control the outcome," said Doug Mink, who has worked for four years as a state legislative analyst for

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Inside



TxDOT construction is delayed while officials decide the disposition of two graves.

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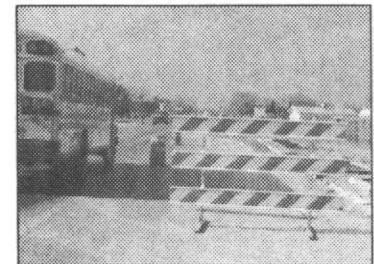
TxDOT crews made news while working long hours to keep ice from closing state roadways.

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TxDOT is doing its part to curb 'sky glow' by the use of new light fixtures.

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The use of new crashworthy barricades in work zones puts TxDOT ahead of other DOTs.

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Be careful when communicating with lawmakers

I am in the process of undertaking yet another new experience as TxDOT's executive director — my first legislative session.

The Texas Legislature opened its 76th session last month. During the next several months, I expect to spend quite a few hours "across the street," providing information to the various committees and subcommittees as they work on legislation for the next two years.

I won't go into a lot of detail, but there is proposed legislation in virtually all operational areas of our department, from aviation to vehicle titles and registration. One issue that is of interest to all of us is salaries. There are proposals for a salary increase for all employees. I strongly support the State Auditor's Office recommendation for a minimum of a 3.9 percent cost of living pay raise for each year of the biennium.

When an issue, such as a proposed salary increase, directly affects us, it's hard not to voice our concerns to the decision makers. For that reason, I want to remind all employees about the importance of using good judgment when communicating with legislators.

There are many department employees who are in frequent contact with legislators. When lawmakers request information about TxDOT business, employees are expected to respond promptly. Employees may not, however, contact legislators with personal issues using TxDOT resources or on TxDOT time. Doing so constitutes lobbying, which is a violation of the law.

I am not saying that state employees cannot let their legislators know how they feel about an issue. Nothing restricts employees from contacting legislators as private citizens. But doing it properly is critical. For example, employees may not write personal opinion letters on TxDOT stationery and fax them from the office. They can write it on their own stationery and fax it from another location on their own time. It is crucial that all employees draw the line between departmental and personal interests.

In addition, employees should not express personal opinions when representing TxDOT.

I know that can be difficult at times. Just remember, when you identify yourself as a TxDOT employee, you're our official representative, and your comments must be restricted



Wes Heald

Straight talk

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Hale selected Abilene DE

Bill Hale has been named Abilene District Engineer. The appointment became effective Jan. 1.

Hale, a 15-year TxDOT veteran, has spent his entire tenure in the Dallas District. Immediately prior to being named Abilene DE, he was the area engineer for Southeast Dallas County in Hutchins, where he oversaw all transportation-related projects and activities. That office's average annual workload for the past three years has been \$60 million in design projects, \$70 million in construction and \$4 million in maintenance.

In 1996, Hale received the Luther DeBerry Award for his work with local officials on several major projects in the Dallas area.

Before taking that position in 1992, Hale was at the Ellis County Area Office in Waxahachie. He worked in a variety of areas, including planning, design, construction and maintenance. He was assistant area engineer in Ellis County before his promotion to the Hutchins office.

Hale earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Texas at Arlington. He also received a master's degree in civil engineering from UTA. For the past six years, Bill has been a senior lecturer at his alma mater, teaching a graduate class in pavement design.

The Dallas native and his wife, D.D., have three children, Chris, Tyler and Tori. ★

Massey becomes new director of Public Transportation Division

Margot Massey has been named director of the Public Transportation Division.

The assignment became effective Jan. 1. Massey had served as interim director of the division since August, and had been deputy director for the past six years.

Overseeing and implementing TxDOT's program, she works closely with the transit industry and the Federal Transit Administration to provide public transportation throughout the state.

Massey has worked with public transportation throughout her 24-year career at TxDOT. Since joining the department in

1974, she has managed and implemented several state and federal grant programs as well as developed formulas for grant funding and coordinated grant financing for transit providers.

Massey is a member of the American Planning Association and the Community Transportation Association of America.

Born in San Angelo, Massey received a bachelor's degree in government and history from the University of Texas at Austin.

She also earned a master's in business administration from UT. ★

Wynne executive assistant new turnpike administrative manager

Ron Davis Jr., former executive assistant to Texas Transportation Commission member Anne Wynne, has been chosen the administrative manager of the Texas Turnpike Authority Division.

The transfer was effective Feb. 1. In his new position, Davis will handle a number of responsibilities, including budget and contract management duties.

He will also work closely with the division's financial advisors to develop financial packages for turnpike projects.

Davis earned a bachelor's degree in

accounting from Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

After graduation, he played as a free agent with the Canadian Football League and National Football League.

He has also worked as an accountant for the Office of the Texas Attorney General and as a budget analyst in TxDOT's Finance Division.

The Austin native and his wife, Alice, have two sons, Ryon and Arnell. ★

All in the family

BWD environmental coordinator enjoys working with a team

I don't know what I expected when I traveled to the Brownwood District to spend the day with Michael Belvin, environmental coordinator.

I guess I half thought an environmental coordinator would be wearing jeans, hiking boots and a plaid shirt. He'd probably have a beard and sort of shaggy, longish hair.

Not even close.

The handsome Belvin, clean-shaven with a stylish haircut, looks like he just stepped off the pages of a gentleman's fashion magazine. He laughed when I told him what I imagined he would look like and reminded me that he was an environmental coordinator.

"The environmental coordinator's job is kind of unique," he explained. "We're concerned about the environment, but we're not environmentalists."

"What we try to do is see what everyone's — TxDOT and environmental organizations — concerns are and get them to work together to accomplish a common goal."

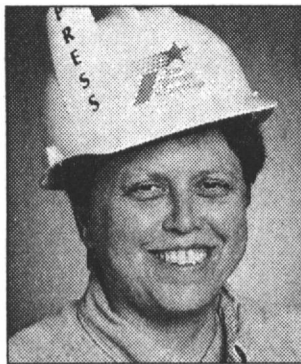
That common goal is to provide the citizens of Texas a transportation system that is safe, efficient and environmentally friendly, Belvin continued, and in complete concert with state and federal laws.

"We're not a big district," he said, "so we're lucky in that we don't have noise and air pollution problems. Historic structures and endangered species are the main part of my concern, since Brownwood is home to the black-capped vireo and golden-cheeked warbler and is one of the areas of the state that has a large number of masonry culverts."

And anytime Belvin has a problem or a question, all he has to do is pick up the phone.

"I feel I have a good relationship with division (Environmental Affairs Division)," he said; "they're always quick to help me out. We really have a lot of extremely knowledgeable people in the environmental field here at TxDOT."

"Dianna (Noble, division director) is



Eloise Lundgren

A Day in the Life

edge and interest in the preservation of historic structures around Brownwood.

"Mike provided invaluable assistance in the work that was done on the Santa Fe Depot and the Regency Bridge," she said.

"I know he wears many hats for the district, but somehow he manages to stay on top of his projects, proficiently managing environmental issues."

His immediate supervisors, Bill Crumley, district transportation planning and programming director, and Elias Remilli, who heads the design section, get high marks from Belvin, too.

"They back me up and give me the opportunity to do my job," he said.

And whether it's hiring consultants and managing contracts for an enhancement project or a construction project, Belvin is content because "I like having lots of jobs; I'd get bored just having one."

Besides, his job is fun and easy, according to the eight-year TxDOT veteran, for a lot of reasons.

"I started out with the department as a summer employee in a maintenance office mowing, patching potholes and operating heavy equipment," he said. "I also spent some summers surveying at one of our area offices."

Belvin worked in the San Antonio, Dallas and Fort Worth districts before ending up in Brownwood.

Before his life at TxDOT, he worked for the Texas Parks and Wildlife

great and she's easily accessible," he said enthusiastically.

"She does a lot to develop good relations with other agencies so we can work together as a team."

Noble was just as complimentary about Belvin, praising him for his personal knowl-

Department.

"Starting at the bottom here has helped me immensely with my career," he explained. "I learned a lot about the engineering aspects, an opportunity so many new employees don't have."

"So it's easy for me to understand from our engineers what they want to do and then be able to explain to them their options," Belvin said.

Additionally, his degree in environmental and wildlife science from Tarleton State University kind of makes him a kissin' cousin to design engineers.

"My classes in hydraulics, soils, vegetation management and agriculture have some similarities with design work," Belvin said. "I'm fortunate that it all fits in."

"Anyway," he went on, "in a district this small, no one is territorial; everyone works as a team."

For example, environmental and right of way work very closely, Belvin pointed out, because environmental clearances have to be obtained before right of way can be purchased.

"You hear people from other districts complain about friction between engineers and everybody else," he said.

"We don't see any of that here. The way I look at it is, if there's a misconception about what's needed, then there's a breakdown in communication."

Belvin's pleased with the way new executive director Wes Heald has "gone back to the family concept."

"My dad just retired from being the right of way agent in the San Antonio District," he said. "TxDOT is a family."

And the TxDOT family extends into the community as well.

"An enhancement project is a community effort," he said. "I stay with the project even after the grant is awarded, all the way through construction. I am TxDOT's link to the citizens and I have learned a lot in dealing with them."

Although Belvin grew up in San Antonio, his roots are firmly planted in Brownwood.

"Both sides of my family are here," he said. "My relatives were among the first settlers."

He's continuing that heritage by restoring his grandfather's house so he can live in it.

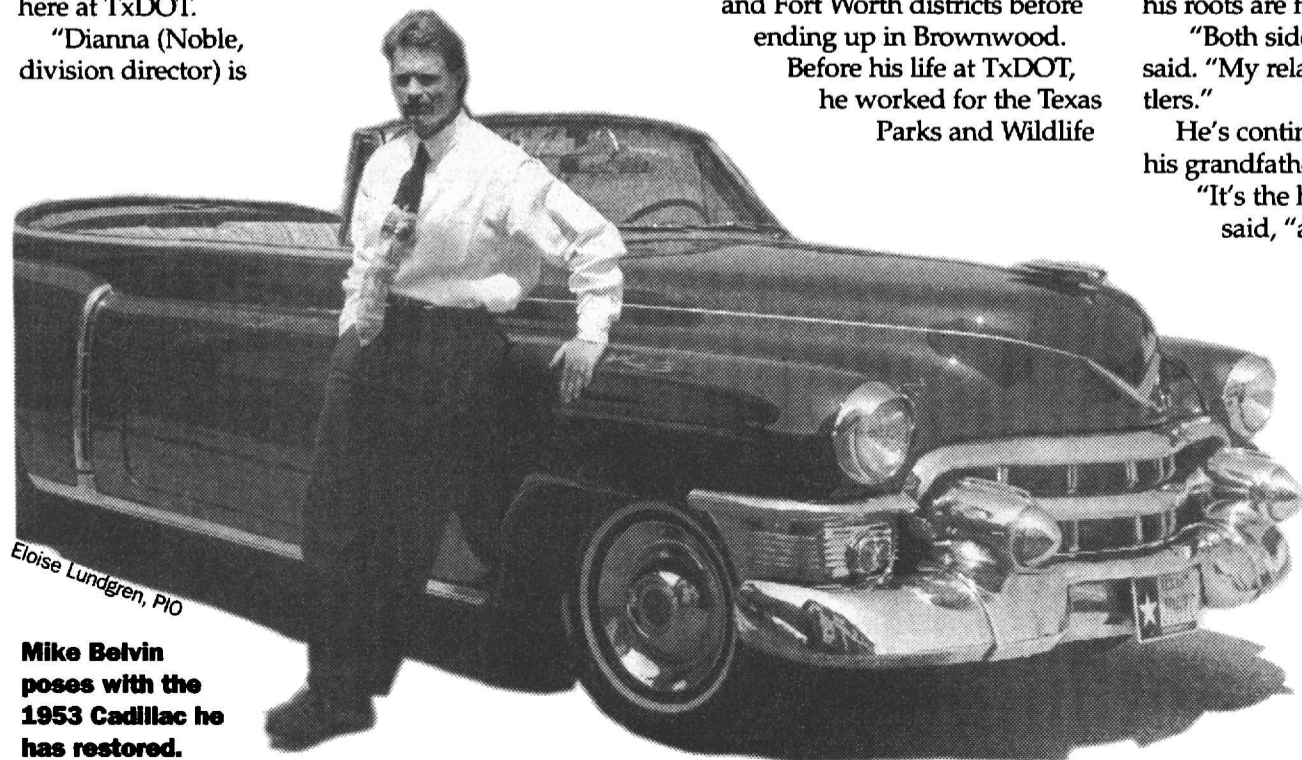
"It's the house my dad grew up in," he said, "an old pier and beam with

hardwood floors that are in excellent shape. I think it will be kind of neat to live in the house where my dad lived as a child."

His affinity for restoring vintage things extends to automobiles.

He's finishing up a gorgeous dark green 1953 Cadillac Coupe de Ville, which he's turned into a convertible by dropping the top. I felt like I had really stepped

■ See BELVIN, Page 13



Eloise Lundgren, PIO

Mike Belvin poses with the 1953 Cadillac he has restored.

Traffic Operations Director Newbern to retire

Tom Newbern, director of TxDOT's Traffic Operations Division has announced his retirement, effective Feb. 28. Carlos Lopez, deputy division director, will serve as interim director.

Newbern, a 28-year veteran, was director of traffic operations for the past three years. The division oversees traffic operations, including safety, engineering and management, and railroad signals and crossings. Newbern joined TxDOT in September 1970 as an engineering assistant in



Newbern

the Traffic Engineering Section of the Safety and Maintenance Operations Division. He moved to the Brownwood District to serve as assistant maintenance engineer in 1985. While in Brownwood, he was named district maintenance engineer/traffic engineer. In December 1992, Newbern returned to the Traffic Opera-

tions Division in Austin, serving as a field area traffic engineer, assistant division director and acting director. He became division director in December 1995.

Newbern has been a registered professional engineer in Texas since 1974. He is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Texas Good Roads/Transportation Association, the Texas Institute of Transportation Engineers and the Texas Public Employees Association. ★

LAWS

Continued from Page 1

TxDOT. "Every dollar the Legislature spends on employee raises is one dollar less that can be used for education initiatives and tax cuts."

Nobody really has an inkling of how the salary issue will play in the Legislature until debate on it begins. The same is true of the other issues on the Transportation Commission's legislative agenda.

It is the job of TxDOT analysts to ride herd on these issues to make sure lawmakers have a comprehensive understanding of pending legislation to be considered.

"TxDOT likes to be at the table when the decisions are made," Chase said.

Over the course of the session, LAO's team of six state legislative analysts will eat, sleep and dream the commission's legislative agenda, which includes other issues key to the department. Those issues are designed to generate state revenue, increase funds available to the department for construction and maintenance projects — including money for state matching for federal highway bill dollars — and to expand the department's ability to finish its construction projects sooner.

For LAO, this means working long days, nights, weekends and holidays, and eating meals from Capitol vending machines. In fact, the refrigerator in LAO's seventh-floor quarters in the Greer Building is adorned with magnets advising analysts how to eat healthily — at least as healthily as possible — from a buffet of salted peanuts, cheese crackers and Hershey bars.

At least LAO has company on the legislative trail.

Commission member Robert L. Nichols has been traveling around the state to speak to civic groups and media organizations about the importance of these legislative issues to TxDOT and taxpayers.

The push to get information before voters and lawmakers is designed to counteract a similar information — or misinformation — blitz by those who oppose these measures.

One issue analysts expect to be controversial is a bill to change the point at which the state imposes its tax on motor fuel. In Texas and more than half of the rest of the states, fuel is taxed when it is delivered to a service station or other retailer. TxDOT hopes lawmakers will pass legislation to change the point of taxation to the fuel terminals, or "at the rack."

Because there are significantly fewer terminals than distributors, collecting at the racks presents big savings in administrative costs. It also virtually eliminates the wide-

spread incidence of fraud and tax evasion. Under the current system of collection, fuel tax fraud is widespread and almost impossible to catch. The federal government, which moved to change the point of taxation in 1993, collected an additional \$21 billion the first year of the new program without raising fuel taxes. Some states, mostly in the upper Midwest, have also switched the point of taxation and with similar financial rewards. The federal government's most conservative estimate is that Texas loses \$127 million per year through state tax evasion.

"Nineteen other states have proved you can do this. We want to be the 20th," Chase said.

Obviously, crooked distributors and organized crime stand to lose if Texas lawmakers follow the lead of these 19 other states. The current system allows distributors to retain the taxes they collect for two months before they must turn it over to the state, a situation that costs the state revenue from missing interest on these collected taxes. The state also pays distributors to collect fuel taxes, money they would lose if the taxes were collected instead at the terminals.

Three-fourths of the funds that could be collected through reducing administrative costs and tax evasion would go to the State Highway Trust Fund. One-fourth goes to the Available School Fund.

Funding for highway construction became a critical issue with the passage last spring of TEA 21, the federal highway bill that allocated additional funds to Texas for construction and maintenance. These dollars will disappear without adequate state matching funds.

"To fully realize the benefit of what we won with TEA 21 in Congress, the state is going to have to step up to the plate. Commissioner (David) Laney has made it clear we're not leaving any federal dollars on the table," Chase said.

The Legislature has been asked to consider a measure that would restore about \$300 million to a fund TxDOT has been increasingly expected to share with the Department of Public Safety. DPS receives 85 percent of its funding from the highway fund.

"That has a very measurable effect on our ability to meet the state's growing transportation demands," Mink said.

The Transportation Commission urges the Legislature to fund DPS programs from the state's General Revenue Fund, thereby freeing up the highway funds for highway projects, including those partially funded by federal dollars. Over time, the DPS's allocation from the highway fund has risen by 927 percent.

The Transportation Commission also favors a measure that would allow TxDOT

to change the manner in which it lets certain construction projects. The current procedure requires that projects be designed before they are let. Under the commission's proposal, the commission may choose to let a single contract for both design and construction. This would allow construction to begin on a portion of a project before the remainder of the project is designed. Although this "design-build" change would not be suitable for many projects, it would speed up completion of some toll road projects funded by investors who had purchased construction bonds.

Other issues on the commission's agenda include traffic safety legislation, such as a bill to abrogate an earlier bill allowing certain permitted vehicles to ignore posted weight limits. HB 2060, passed by the 71st Legislature, allowed TxDOT to issue permits to trucks so that they could carry up to 5 percent more than their legal limit on any public road or bridge in the state — with the exception of federal Interstate highways.

"State law allows trucks with a weight tolerance permit to ignore load postings on roads and bridges," Mink said. "This negatively impacts TxDOT's construction and maintenance costs to the tune of millions of dollars per year. It's also a substantial risk to public safety."

The commission also recommends stiffer penalties for repeat drunken drivers so that Texas law conforms to stronger federal laws. Texas stands to have \$15.7 million in federal-aid highway dollars in fiscal years 2000 and 2001 shifted to traffic safety or hazard elimination programs if lawmakers don't pass a stricter law by Oct. 1, 2000. The amount doubles to about \$31.3 million annually in fiscal year 2003 and each year after until lawmakers comply.

The commission also recommends the Legislature adopt a stiffer open alcoholic beverage container law in order to comply with more stringent federal statutes. The state also risks having federal-aid highway funds transferred if it fails to pass such a law in a timely fashion.

"Congress told states to either adopt a law forbidding open containers of alcohol in a passenger compartment or risk losing highway construction dollars," Mink said.

The commission gets ideas for formulating its legislative agenda from input from TxDOT employees in the districts, divisions and offices.

"It's very much a from-the-bottom-up process," Chase said. "There's no lack of ideas....The question is what's politically viable. There's only so much that can be done in 140 days." ★

WEATHER WOES

December ice storms spawn accidents in districts around the state

By Chris Bishop
Austin District

There's nothing like an accident to drive home the reminder that ice and freeways don't mix. And when at least 64 vehicles are involved, the message is rammed home with the force of a sliding tractor-trailer.

The pre-Christmas ice storm that slid into Texas began causing problems around Austin on Dec. 22. That's when slippery conditions developed along state highways in Bastrop and Gillespie counties. Mist froze on driving surfaces and left motorists sweating out normally easy drives.

"Everything around the county has a thin glaze of ice on it. We're unable to get to every location right away, so we're concentrating on treating structures with a sand-and-salt mix," said Danny Crenwelge, Gillespie maintenance supervisor.

Meanwhile, in the Austin urban area, district workers began preparations the day before when maintenance crews began working around the clock. They treated bridges, overpasses and elevated roads with magnesium chloride and calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) to keep ice at bay.

When the real cold and icing conditions hit, everyone was ready, except local motorists. Slushy conditions combined with speed led to a 24-vehicle pile-up on northbound Interstate 35. Even before police arrived on the scene, at least 40 cars and trucks cracked up in practically the same location headed southbound. Two people died in the collisions, and at least 20 more were treated at area hospitals for injuries.

Fear of more accidents prompted Austin police to close roads, despite TxDOT assurances that the roads were passable and safe if drivers were cautious. Gene Stabeno, assistant district maintenance manager, said that's when ice can really pile up.

"The problem is that when you take traffic off a road, it freezes faster and harder and takes longer to thaw out," he said.

The shutdown of I-35 and the elevated lanes of U.S. 183 helped snarl traffic already slowed by icing conditions. It took time for crews to re-treat the roads, and convince police they were safe to re-open. The wintry conditions helped spur more than 400 accidents in just a few hours. A woman died in southeastern Travis County when her car skidded into an oncoming truck as she crossed a bridge.

The deep freeze hit again that Wednesday



Scott Alley, San Angelo maintenance supervisor, gives an interview to a local TV crew in the wake of the winter storm that hit Texas right before Christmas.

night, prompting warnings about potential ice on two dozen roads across the district. By 2 p.m. Christmas Eve, slightly warmer temperatures and decreasing drizzle ended the threat.

The Austin District did not close any roads, and no state vehicles were involved in accidents.

Stabeno noted that the district's ice plan worked well. The question that remains is when will motorists learn how to do their part in handling the situation?

"Drivers need to consider bridges. They also should not take for granted that they can drive 60 mph or faster, pass others or change lanes on icy roadways. People think they can drive; it's the other guy who will have problems," Stabeno said.

The Austin District wasn't the only area in the state to get slapped by the pre-Christmas storm. Also hit hard were the Dallas, San Angelo, Childress, Brownwood and Odessa districts.

Crews of 250 Dallas District maintenance employees worked 12-hour shifts between Monday night and Wednesday afternoon to keep traffic moving, said Mark Ball, DAL public information officer.

In the Childress District, crews spent 548 hours in two days battling icy bridges and overpasses, according to Barbara Seal, public information officer. Seal said crews used 661 cubic yards of bottom ash, 2,469 of Melt-down 20, 1,040 bags of salt and 490 gallons

of liquid magnesium chloride de-icer.

The weather kept San Angelo District crews hopping, too. The district went through 685 cubic yards of sand and crews put in 739 hours of overtime, with most maintenance sections working 12-hour shifts, said Patsy Maddux, public information officer. The district also logged 52 traffic accidents during the storm.

"We have had ice during Christmas in many different years and have to come to realize that almost every year, we will either work Christmas, New Year's, or Thanksgiving," said Tom Green County Maintenance Section Supervisor Scott Alley.

Brownwood crews spent approximately 2,008 hours spreading 431 cubic yards of sand; 280 bags Melt-down 20; and 255 bags of salt over 15,000 miles to keep roads open, according to Sandra Parker of the Brownwood District.

The storm also triggered an avalanche of calls to TxDOT's automated road condition hotline. Deteriorating conditions are reflected in the number of calls received daily. Heidi Zetty, Travel Information System manager said the automated attendant recorded 9,387 calls On Dec. 21; on Dec. 22, 26,477; Dec. 23, 136,645; Dec. 24., 344,172; Dec. 25, 27,678; and Dec. 26, 3,247. ★

South Texas rest stop design wins national award

A South Texas rest stop that garnered state architectural honors was recently recognized nationally.

The rest area on U.S. 281 near Falfurrias in the Pharr District was recognized in January by the American Institute of Architects. Designed by the Corpus Christi firm Richter Associates Architects, the site last winter won an award from the Texas Society of Architects.

The rest area, situated in the median of a

■ See other TxDOT award stories, pages 9, 11 and 13

busy highway, includes walls which define the area and serve as sound barriers between the area and the busy highway.

It also features dual sets of bathrooms, tile mosaics on walls and benches and galvanized steel mesh tabletops and benches require no painting.

The rest stop is on the Texas Birding Trail,

and includes nature trails that wend their way through the surrounding trees.

The rest area was recognized at the 1998 Transportation Conference, where it won an Environmental Achievement Award from the Environmental Affairs Division.

It was featured last November in an issue of *Transportation News*. ★

— Public Information Office

The mystery of the GRAVES OF WINFREE

Who lies in these unmarked sites in the Beaumont District?

(Editor's note: In June 1998, the Beaumont District discovered a section of an old cemetery in Chambers County. This article is part one of a two-part series on what TxDOT found and its significance to the FM 1409 expansion project.)

By Marc Shepherd
Beaumont District

The Texas sun beat down with a vengeance. It was still June and the hottest part of the year. August was still two months away.

Dennis Price wiped the sweat from his forehead. With a thick British accent he joked, "Don't you just love this Southeast Texas humidity?"

Tim Meade, Price's assistant, gave him a strange look. The two archaeologists picked up their shovels and made their way to the top of a mound near the edge of Farm-to-Market Road 1409 in Winfree, Chambers County. "If it's anywhere, it will be here," he said. "Let's try digging in this spot."

Jake Taylor, Liberty Maintenance Technician, jumped in the Gradall and fired its diesel. The big mechanical shovel inched its way to the area Price and Meade had chosen.

The huge machine began taking out chunks of dirt many times faster than 10 men with shovels could have. Taylor's experience with the Gradall, a hydraulic excavator, was obvious. He made it look too easy. The trench grew longer and deeper, exposing roots and that hardpan dirt this part of Texas is so infamous for. With each swipe of the big arm, Price and Meade looked into the hole.

"What are you looking for?" asked a group of kids keenly watching the work. Nobody responded. Meade and Price were too busy looking to see what would come out of that trench.

Suddenly Price raised his hand. "Stop!" he shouted.

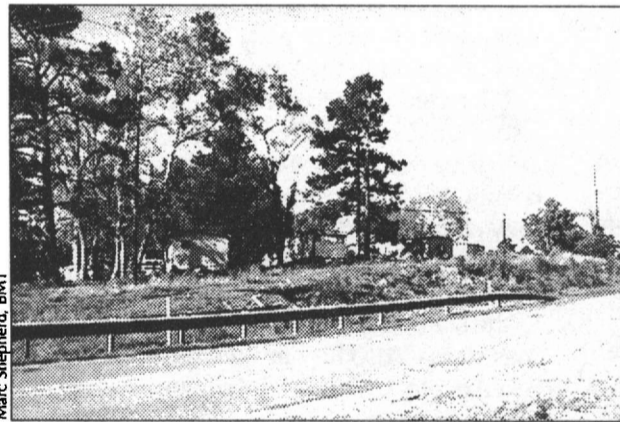
The Gradall's thundering engine ground down to a gentle roar and finally shut down. Price and Meade jumped in the trench and began scraping the sides of the trench with their flat-edged shovels. "What do you think?," Meade asked. "I'm not sure, but it looks awfully suspicious," Price replied. Both bent down on their knees and began to

Part I of II

brush away the bottom of the 6-foot-deep trench.

"Is that an old nail?" someone asked from the bottom of the trench. Taylor got out of the Gradall to see what was happening. The kids ran in for a closer look. They gawked, watching what was taking place in the trench. "I think we hit wood!" Meade said. "There is definitely something down here."

Nobody had to ask what it was. Every-



This mound on FM 1409 near Winfree in Chambers County yielded some surprises for TxDOT crews, which excavated the site prior to planned construction to investigate reports of an old burial ground.

body knew what had been uncovered. There, in the sunlight, were the remnants of two small graves. Everybody stopped, looked and pondered the discovery. Even the kids became quiet. Hundreds of questions ran through their minds.

Someone broke the silence: "How old is it?"

Another chimed in: "I wonder whose buried in it."

Everybody knew what had been found. Now the question was what to do with it. Price scratched around the dirt some more until a thin outline of an old coffin became apparent.

"OK," he said. "Let's survey it, stake it, and cover it up."

Taylor jumped up on the Gradall, fired up its engine and began to cover the gravesite.

"Wonder if there are more?" asked one of the kids.

"Don't know. We'll just have to see." Meade replied.

Deep down he knew there probably were. Meade was right: The next day another grave was uncovered. News of the find made its way quickly through the small community. Many of the people who live in the district had no idea there was even a 150-year-old graveyard in their town. Some peered out of their mobile homes, watching the commotion. Most shook their heads in

amazement after finding out they had been living on top of an old gravesite.

The "big dig" on FM 1409 stemmed from efforts to improve a section in Liberty and Chambers counties. TxDOT plans to add shoulders to the length of the road and realign the bridge crossing Turtle Bayou.

Improvements to the road have been in the works for several years. The narrow, winding two-lane road has been the site of several fatal accidents. The project was scheduled to let in August 1998. With the discovery of the two graves, however, the Beaumont District has pushed that date several months back.

Five years ago, Beaumont District Environmental Coordinator Paul

Smith discovered a letter pointing to the possibility of an old family cemetery along the highway. Realigning the bridge would mean buying additional right of way. It also meant TxDOT would have to find out if rumors of an old cemetery in that right of way were fact. To complicate matters, a mobile home park sits atop the site where tombstones or grave markers may have stood.

At best Smith could only guess the location of the cemetery. He would have to rely on the archaeological expertise of Price and Meade from the Environmental Affairs Division to find the exact location.

But TxDOT would have to pick the brains of Harry Daves to find out the mystery of who lies buried beneath FM 1409.★

■ **Coming In March:** *The dead are identified, but obstacles still must be cleared before construction can begin.*

Pharr District raises funds with volleyball tourney

Pharr District employees and friends traded steel-toed boots, dress shoes, and pumps for tennis shoes to challenge each other in a friendly volleyball tournament to raise money for the State Employee Charitable Campaign.

Although thunderstorms threatened, more than 100 employees and friends showed up to play volleyball. The tournament was held in October 1998.

Nine teams participated, including six from the Pharr District and three from local agencies and businesses. Each team donated the entry fee and selected to play for a specific charity on the State Employee Charitable Campaign.

After a tough battle, Gilbert Texas Construction Corporation finished first and the District Engineer's team, a.k.a. the "A" Team, took second.

The tournament raised \$380 dollars, which was donated to the first- and second-place winners' favorite charities. The top teams combine their winnings and donated them to the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley.

The Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley provides groceries to handicapped elderly, children, unemployed, and under-employed people through a network of 120 nonprofit agencies.★

— Amy L. Garza



Jeff Carmack, PIO

Spreading cheer

Santa entertains Austin-area fifth grades during a news conference on the steps of the state Capitol to announce the inauguration of TxDOT's safe holiday billboard campaign, "Santa's coming to town. Please don't hit him." The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness of the dangers of holiday travel in the hope of reducing traffic injuries and fatalities.

District plays Santa for FTW-area kids

By Denise Fischer
Fort Worth District

Fort Worth District employees have a long history of reaching out during the holiday season to those in need, but this Christmas their generosity reached unprecedented levels.

1998 was not the first time Fort Worth employees made a substantial effort to make the holidays special for people in need, but this Christmas was unique nonetheless.

"It is great because every year this effort seems to get bigger, with more employees participating and more families receiving our help," said one fund-raising coordinator, Johnette Williams of District Design.

At least two charitable programs were organized in the Fort Worth District, both at the headquarters and in the field offices, according to Williams and other organizers. This year the district headquarters served 11 families with a total of 23 children. In Stephenville, area office and maintenance section employees helped two more families with a total of eight children. One family has a 3-year-old daughter born with daunting medical problems, while another family recently lost their home and belongings in a fire.

District workers assisted these families in a variety of ways, but the "TxDOT Stars" Christmas trees were probably the most moving for employees. This Christmas, both headquarters and the Stephenville office had such trees, which were decorated with cardboard stars as ornaments. Each star listed a child's name and age and a wish for a special gift. Most touching were the stars that listed not a toy, but a simple, fundamental need such as underclothes, socks and shoes. Employees who visited the trees selected a star and purchased that needed item or toy. When the drive was completed, more than 200 stars had been removed from the tree by

"I have never seen such grateful kids. They just hugged me and hugged me."

—Felicia David, district warehouse

caring employees who returned with items ranging from a bicycle to new shoes and disposable diapers. The Christmas bounty filled a district meeting room.

Employees donated more than 900 food and toiletry items to add to the Christmas gifts during a simultaneous food drive. Even items not requested by the families found their way into Santa's sleigh. For instance, one employee donated used furniture for the family whose home recently burned.

Deliveries of the food, toys, clothes and grocery store gift certificates were made about a week before Christmas, and volunteer employees visited the families as TxDOT Santas.

The family's children were at a friend's house while Felicia Davis, a district warehouse employee, and her son unloaded sacks and boxes with the grandmother's assistance. The children were overcome with joy at the sight of so many presents under their tree and the boxes of food when they returned home.

"I have never seen such grateful kids. They just hugged me and hugged me. The boy said, 'I don't have a gift for you.' I said mine was still to come, but they gave me the best gift of all. It was their eyes as they stood under that tree and were trying to see what Santa had brought them....Their gift was pure magic," she said.

The delivery of the gifts was the climactic end to the project, but it actually started several weeks before the holiday season. In late

October the district's committee for the State Employee Charitable Campaign sold barbecue sandwiches at an employee luncheon and donated the proceeds to the Christmas fund. In November, a district auction of homemade baked goods was also a successful fund-raiser.

This year, the auction of cakes and pies brought in a whopping \$708, about twice as much as the bake sale earned in any of its previous years. Other fund-raisers quickly followed, including raffles for three Beanie Babies donated by a employee's daughter and for a pair of donated Justin boots. All of the money collected was used to purchase grocery store gift certificates, items from the families' wish lists and fresh fruit and supplies for another district holiday event, the delivery of fruit baskets.

Fruit baskets are one of the district's oldest traditions, delivered to elderly and needy recipients. On Dec. 17, employees delivered 20 baskets.

In the Fort Worth District, charitable giving certainly adds a special glow to employees' faces during the holidays, but concern for less fortunate people is also a year-round routine in the district. For instance, one quiet, behind-the-scenes project in the Sagnaw maintenance section is an effort to help an insulin-dependent woman who is living alone in very primitive conditions. Her tiny, 8-foot by 8-foot shack has no plumbing and only a water hose for running water.

In more public efforts, employees are also behind other fund raising, such as the annual golf tournament for Cook Children's Medical Center in Fort Worth. This tournament was established by TxDOT employees and has earned more than \$43,000 for the hospital in the last five years. Fort Worth employees also were recently recognized for increasing their annual contributions by more than 5 percent over last year. ★

dark skies

TxDOT looking for ways to curb 'light pollution'

Outdoor electric lighting is not just a convenience — for motorists, it's a necessity. But like most necessities, this one also comes with a price.

The cost to many who live in or near large cities is their view of the night sky. The proliferation of electric lighting has created "sky glow" or "light pollution" that brightens the night sky to the extent that many heavenly bodies can be seen only from vantage points outside urban centers.

TxDOT is doing what it can to cut down on its contribution to light pollution while at the same time, doing what it needs to do to keep motorists safe, said Karl Burkett, P.E., a senior lighting design engineer with the Traffic Operations Division.

Last month, the department began using full cutoff fixtures as the standard for 40- and 50-foot mounting height roadway lighting fixtures. The full cutoff fixtures cast no light above the horizon. Previously the standard had been semicutoff fixtures with high-pressure sodium lamps for conventional highway lighting.

"We try to accommodate what citizens want," Burkett said. "We started in the '80s looking at ways that we could accomplish our job and at the same time decrease our contribution to sky glow."

Burkett said that TxDOT is aware of the sky glow issue and is concerned about the aesthetic implications, as well as the economic implications of using light efficiently.

"We have taken several steps in recent years to reduce our contribution to sky glow," he said.

"In the early 1980s we changed our standard conventional light fixtures from non-cutoff to semi-cutoff," Burkett said. "In the late '80s, we changed our standard underpass light fixtures from non-cutoff to full cutoff."

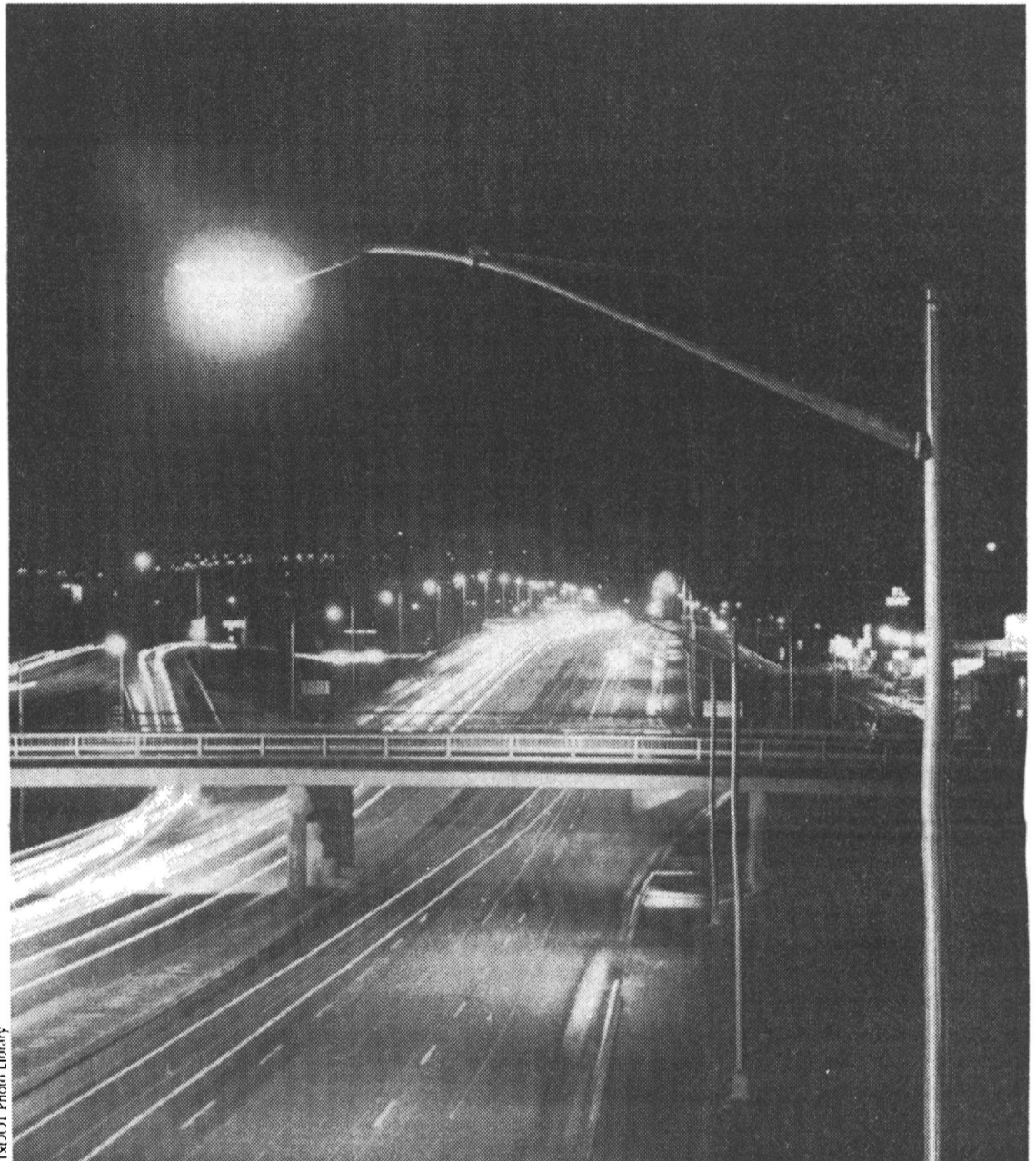
High-mast fixtures, those of 100 feet and taller, were modified in the early '90s, he said.

"Around 1991, we changed our high-mast lighting fixtures from flood lights, which emit some of their light above the horizontal, to cutoff fixtures," he said.

Burkett said lighting fixtures fall into four categories, depending on the way they cast their light.

The types are full cut-off, cut-off, semicutoff and non cut-off. Full cut-off fixtures direct none of their light above the horizontal; at the other end of the scale, non cut-offs direct light just about everywhere.

TxDOT is a member of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North Amer-



In December 1962, the lights on Interstate 35 in Austin contributed to what would become a problem with "sky glow," or light pollution, which obscures the natural light of the night sky. To combat the problem TxDOT has begun using roadway light fixtures that don't cast light above the horizon.

TxDOT Photo Library

ica's (IESNA) Roadway Lighting Committee.

Through this organization, Burkett said, TxDOT participates in the writing of national standards for roadway lighting and other issues involving outdoor lighting.

Burkett said that TxDOT supports the efforts of this committee to research sky glow issues, to adopt standards for controlling sky glow, and to educate lighting designers about sky glow issues. The Roadway Lighting Committee is also adding stronger wording concerning sky glow for the next issue of the American National Standard Practice for Roadway Lighting. Burkett said he helped develop wording for this section in conjunction with David Crawford, president of the International Dark Skies Association.★

— Public Information Office

Ways to reduce sky glow

- **Use night lighting only when necessary.** Use timers or motion detector lights, which turn on when someone is present, and turn off when not needed.
- **Direct light downward, where it is needed.** When possible, retrofit current fixtures. Use fixtures which control the light while minimizing glare, light trespass, light pollution, and energy usage.
- **Use low-pressure sodium (LPS) light sources whenever possible.** LPS lamps are the most energy efficient light sources that exist. LPS is especially good for street lighting, parking lot lighting, security lighting and any application where color rendering is not critical.
- **Use shielded lighting fixtures which direct all light to at least 20 degrees below the horizon.** This directs all the light down where it is needed, rather than up into the sky. This reduces the amount of electricity required for lighting, reduces glare, and helps keep the sky dark.
- **Don't use lights brighter than necessary.** Contrary to opinion, security is not proportional to the intensity of the security light outside their home. Well designed, well placed, lower power lights are just as effective.
- **Advertise using billboards that have a dark background and bright letters, rather than a bright background and dark letters.** If the background is dark, less light will be reflected from the billboard into the sky. Have the lights located at the top of the billboard (shining down toward the ground) rather than at the bottom.

Work of districts, contractors lauded

Texas Project Awards recognize those who surmount obstacles to complete projects

The Texas Project Awards, which recognize TxDOT employees and contractors who overcome obstacles to complete construction or design projects, were the highlight of the Associated General Contractors luncheon in Austin in November 1998.

■ Amarillo District

TxDOT Engineer George R. Herrmann and TxDOT Engineer Technician Reid W. Steger worked on a "fast track" project with Superintendents Bob Lush and Dub Hathcoat of Gilbert Texas Construction Corp. to replace two bridges over the Canadian River — one on U.S. 83 and the other on Texas 70. The team had to overcome lengthy one-way traffic concerns, high levels of leaded paint on one of the old bridges, and unusual requirements for placement of drilled shafts.

They were also faced with the safety concern created by the fact that the nearest medical facility was more than 30 miles away and the project plans called for one-way traffic through the project for approximately 12 months. Working together, the team developed a plan that allowed two-way traffic throughout the project.

Another change to the original plan saved enough money to allow the contractor to paint the U.S. 83 bridge and TxDOT added several natural-looking wetlands to an area that is heavily used as a public recreational area. It is also one of the most ecologically sensitive areas in the Panhandle.

Truck traffic in the area had to make a 100-mile detour during the project, so the fact that the work was completed 220 days ahead of schedule contributed greatly to the local economy.

■ Childress District

TxDOT Inspector Kenneth W. Patterson and Superintendent Jesse Wright with Duinick Brothers, Inc. had to work through hail and high water to remove and replace a 5.5 mile section of 30-year-old, continuously reinforced concrete pavement along Interstate 40.

Planners determined that the heavy daily traffic through the construction area, including more than 4,000 trucks per day, would require substantial median crossovers. The crossover design was changed from a flexible system to a full-depth asphaltic concrete pavement section. The design change proved to be highly successful throughout the project.

One night, more than 14 inches of rain fell on the project and floated five sections of concrete median barriers into the traffic lanes. The barriers were quickly replaced and traffic disruption was held to a minimum.

After the rain, potholes began to develop in the open traffic lanes. Asphalt was not readily available to fix them but the Area Maintenance Office sent a few loads of cold mix to the site, and the potholes were repaired. The detour lanes were kept open and the traffic kept moving.

Later in the project, an overnight hail storm covered roads and filled drainage ditches, making progress impossible. Contractor and TxDOT personnel again worked

together to "snow plow" the roads and clear the ditches. In spite of the weather, the project was completed on schedule and on budget.

■ Dallas District

TxDOT Engineer Pete Garza and Contractor Superintendent John R. Nicholson of H.B. Zachry Company tackled one of the most costly and complex construction projects in the history of TxDOT.

They completely rebuilt a 1.8 mile segment of North Central Expressway in Dallas. The project included reconstructing five of the most congested urban arterials crossing the expressway; a complete interchange at Northwest Highway; a 96-inch diameter concrete-lined tunnel; and the excavation of 1.5 million cubic yards of dirt.

The project required that the freeway, frontage roads, and all the arterials crossing the project remain open to traffic despite the fact that the freeway grade was lowered 25 feet.

This team was plagued with challenges throughout the project. During the first phase it was determined that some of the needed right of way had not been acquired and would not be for several years.

The Northwest Highway interchange required a retaining wall, which was almost impossible to build because of existing gas, water, sewer, and telephone lines; as well as an electric transmission line overhead which could not be disabled.

This project also had weather problems including some temporary frontage roads that flooded in moderate rains. This problem required building temporary storm drains. During one rain storm, a temporary retaining wall collapsed and brought down 75 feet of frontage road.

Despite these setbacks, the project was completed ahead of schedule.

■ Fort Worth District

TxDOT Project Manager Kirk Lee and TxDOT Chief Inspector Russell Neely worked with Contractor Superintendent Brett Myers of Archer-Western Contractors, Ltd. to remove and rebuild two complex overpasses on Summit Avenue over Interstate 30 and commercial railroad tracks.

The biggest challenge of the project was overcoming a six-month litigation delay at the start of the project. It was imperative that the project be completed on schedule to prevent any delays in the construction of the I-35W / I-30 interchange.

Another time consideration was the fact that the project blocked the main route for emergency vehicles into the Fort Worth Hospital District. Regular contact with emergency medical services management representatives regarding work schedules, potential travel delays, and alternate routing kept access to the hospital district open throughout the project.

The project also had significant impact on local business in the vicinity and was of great interest to local residents. Communication with those parties kept everyone involved in the decision-making process and ensured that those affected by the project remained well informed of the progress and

upcoming traffic control changes.

Railroad officials were concerned the construction would significantly impede rail service, but through effective communication and coordination, the project had little or no impact on the railroad's operations.

In the end, the project was completed almost three months early.

■ Houston District

TxDOT Engineer Technician Elizabeth Gunn and Contractor Superintendent Greg Garrison with Brown and Root, Inc. teamed up to build new frontage road bridges over the San Jacinto River on I-45.

This project started with a major design change. The discovery of an existing bridge foundation beneath the soil in the exact location of one of the new bridges created a major obstacle. The new design plan incorporated a portion of the old bridge foundation into the new structure and the remainder had to be removed before construction could move ahead.

During construction it was observed that the design plan for the exit ramp north of the river was going to cause traffic flow problems due to the close proximity of the River Plantation housing development. To alleviate this problem, a ramp reversal proposal was submitted to TxDOT and FHWA. To enhance communication efforts with the local residents, the plans were also discussed with representatives of the homeowner's association.

In the middle of the project, the contractor's parent company made some management changes which could have severely impacted the progress of the project had there not been outstanding communications between TxDOT personnel and the contractor's representatives.

The project was completed on time and on budget.

TxDOT Engineer Eliza Paul and Contractor Superintendent Ray Ware of Williams Brothers Construction Company saw their project earn the maximum incentive bonus of \$112,500 for opening tollway lanes 45 days early. The overall project consisted of building the I-45 / Beltway 8 interchange, including two bridges and four direct connectors.

Because the construction work caused the Sam Houston Toll Road to lose revenue, there was a penalty/incentive clause in the contract to encourage rapid access to the toll road. Even though the project was completed ahead of schedule, tough challenges threatened that success.

The dirt for the project was hard to work with because it was a highly expansive clay with a high liquid limit and plastic index. To keep the project moving ahead, people were on the job from daylight until dark.

Once the pile-driving operations began, a public relations problem had to be overcome. People living in the area claimed that pile-driving operations were cracking their homes' foundations. An independent engineering firm determined there was no basis for the residents' claims.

While building the footing, columns and caps for Beltway 8 over Sabo-Hughes Road,

■ See AWARDS, Page 11

New crashworthy devices set standard

TxDOT first transportation department to meet federal safety requirement

By Linda Ribble
Public Information Office

New Texas Department of Transportation guidelines not only are protecting motorists and their passengers, they are also setting the standard for traffic control devices in highway work zones across the nation.

The first state transportation department to comply with a U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) mandate, TxDOT is using crashworthy, performance-tested traffic control devices in highway work zones.

Temporary traffic control devices, such as barricades and signs, on more than 294,800 miles of public road in Texas must meet the new requirement. The safer devices are required in new work sites and as upgrades of existing installed traffic control devices.

To meet the Oct. 1, 1998 deadline, construction and maintenance contracts awarded by TxDOT beginning with the July 1998 letting specify use of crashworthy barricades and other temporary traffic control devices in work zones, said Greg Brinkmeyer, engineer of policy and standards of the Traffic Operations Division (TRF).

A traffic control device must meet the requirements of three performance tests to be considered crashworthy. When hit, the device must not penetrate the crash vehicle's passenger compartment or windshield.

"The parts or debris of a traffic control device may pass over the roof of the vehicle, beneath the vehicle or adhere to the front of the vehicle crashing into it. Also, (impact with the device) cannot cause the driver to decelerate too quickly," Brinkmeyer said.

Impact tests are performed at three speeds: 35 kilometers per hour (km/h), or about 20 mph; 70 km/h, or about 45 mph; and 100 km/h, or about 60 mph. Although a ¾-ton pickup is used in some impact tests, vehicles weighing about 800 kilograms (about 1,779 pounds), like the Honda Civic or Geo Metro, are used as crash vehicles in most of the tests.

TxDOT performed the first test to determine crashworthiness after learning of pending FHWA changes for work zone traffic control devices in 1993. TxDOT requested that an impact performance test on work zone sign supports be included during a project by Texas Transportation Institute researchers at the Texas A&M University in College Station.

"Signs on barricades and a majority of short-term use signs failed miserably, and we knew we had a problem," Brinkmeyer said. "We began looking for ways to build safer devices."

TxDOT traffic safety specialists from TRF, the Design Division and several districts worked with TTI researchers, general contractors and barricade subcontractors to develop crashworthy traffic control devices for work zones. Three years of testing various traffic control devices followed.

The worst-case scenario test results are used to determine the crashworthiness of a traffic control device.

"Generally, the worst-case scenario for most portable traffic control devices is the high-speed test performed at about 60



Frank DeSantos, ELP

The El Paso District uses crashworthy barriers at a construction project on FM 1281. The project, which consists of widening FM 1281, began on Oct. 2, 1998 and is expected to be completed by summer of 1999.

"Our goal is to continue developing high quality, easy to install traffic control device designs which will still be functional 25-plus years from today."

Engineer Greg Brinkmeyer

mph," said Dan Maupin, an engineering assistant in TRF. "For fixed traffic control devices, it's the (about) 20 mph test."

Most alterations required in the traffic control devices were minor design modifications, such as type of material used for barricade rails or for support structures.

In developing safer devices, a major concern was the financial burden to taxpayers. To save taxpayer money, existing traffic control devices and stock can be retrofitted with hardware or new products that allow older devices to meet the new safety requirements.

Another money-saving advantage of using the crashworthy devices is that many of the devices may be salvaged and reused after impact, unlike devices made of wood, which explodes, leaving splinters strewn along the roadside.

According to 1997 Texas Department of Public Safety records, 13,424 motor vehicle crashes occurred in construction and maintenance work zones, resulting in 15,459 injuries or deaths along public roads in Texas. These figures include TxDOT TRF records of 10,276 motor vehicle crashes in work zones on TxDOT-maintained roads that resulted in 11,846 injuries and 126 deaths. On Texas public roads, motor vehicle crashes that occurred in work zones and resulted in property damage only numbered 4,335. (Motor vehicle crashes tallied are those in which one of the vehicles was towed due to damage.)

Nationwide, estimates from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

(NHTSA) records for 1997 show 75,000 motor vehicle crashes occurred in work zones on public roads, resulting in 35,000 injuries, including 658 deaths. Of the 75,000 motor vehicle crashes, 52,000 resulted in property damage only.

"(The statistics) point out the need for continuous emphasis on work zone safety," said Pat O'Neil, FHWA safety coordinator in Austin.

Other state, city, and county transportation agencies, researchers and developers are in different stages of developing and implementing the use of crashworthy work zone traffic control devices. To help provide continuity and uniformity in traffic control device evaluations, the FHWA's Office of Engineering shares test results and acceptance letters with developers and users.

Because TxDOT is the only state transportation department to meet the federal requirements, FHWA is referring other agencies to TxDOT for guidance in designing test programs, developing crashworthy products and implementing use of the safer devices.

By Oct. 1, 2002, more traffic control devices must comply. These include barrel-mounted guard fence, crash cushions, free-standing concrete work zone traffic barriers, and portable, usually trailer-mounted, lighting supports, flashing arrow panels, temporary traffic signals, and changeable message signs.

Texas has been a leader in the field of highway safety since the 1960s. Most of the traffic control devices developed, such as the triangular slip-base sign support, still meet the new safety requirements, Brinkmeyer said.

"Our goal is to continue developing high quality, easy to install traffic control device designs which will still be functional 25-plus years from today."

AWARDS

Continued from Page 9

it was determined that the traffic signals for local roadways had to be temporarily moved for the duration of the construction. After that part of the project was completed, the traffic signals had to be redesigned and installed permanently.

The project was a great success in three aspects, cost, quality and time — but most importantly time. The overall project was completed 90 days early.

TxDOT Engineer James Hunt and Contractor Superintendent Scott Armstrong of Traylor Brothers, Inc. totally reconstructed a 1.6 mile section of elevated freeway along I-45 through downtown Houston under the watchful eye of the news media and intense public scrutiny.

The Pierce Elevated, as the 1.6 mile section of roadway is known, opened to traffic in 1963 and had reached an average daily traffic count of more than 187,000 vehicles per day. The elevated roadway had never been closed for more than a weekend, and this project would require it to be closed for several months.

To ensure the driving public was kept abreast of the project on a daily basis, an advertising agency was awarded a \$200,000 contract to work with the Houston District Public Information Office. The project was a daily topic for the local news media throughout the Houston area.

To limit the impact on the driving public, planners decided to close each side of the freeway for 95 days. An incentive/penalty clause was included in the contract so that the contractor could earn a daily bonus of \$53,000, or incur a daily penalty of \$53,000. This was the largest bonus/penalty amount ever assigned to a TxDOT contract. The incentive worked, and the contractor earned a bonus of \$1.2 million for opening the freeway lanes a combined total of 30 days ahead of schedule.

The project was completed early in spite of extremely cold weather; complications that required innovative, one of a kind engineering solutions; and the problems associated with crews working 24-hour schedules.

The project has received a number of professional awards recognizing the project's planning, design and innovative techniques.

■ Pharr District

TxDOT Engineer Technician Tranquilino Pena and Contractor Superintendent Fred Lasoya of Foremost Paving, Inc. rehabilitated seven miles of the U.S. 281 southbound lanes of a four-lane divided roadway as part of the federal Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP).

The project included 19 SHRP test sites which contained seven different base materials, each a different thickness. Using the SHRP consultant's sampling and testing program, the amount of testing required on the project tripled. A total of 114 material samples were taken for the SHRP test sections, plus an additional 40 in the remainder of the project. Another 450 asphalt cores were taken for additional testing. The scope of the project required the concrete traffic barriers to be relocated eight times.

After the SHRP test sections were completed, an overnight storm dumped five inches of rain on the project, creating numerous potholes and an unstable roadway.

Repair crews were called out by the Department of Public Safety. Major maintenance efforts kept the project on schedule.

While this project was not formally partnered, this team did plenty of informal partnering on the job site and brought this unique construction job to a successful conclusion. The test sections of the roadway will continue to be monitored and tested as part of the SHRP project.

■ San Angelo District

TxDOT Project Engineer Donald Peterson, Chief Inspector James Taylor and Research Coordinator Mary Lou Ralls teamed up with Contractor Superintendents John Jordan of Jascon, Inc. and Roland Pinkerton of Reece Albert, Inc. on another federally funded test project.

Their challenge was to construct twin bridges on U.S. 67 in San Angelo crossing over the North Concho River, U.S. 87 and a railroad spur. They had to accomplish this feat using a limited number of columns, with none of them in the centerline of U.S. 87. To comply with these restrictions, the bridges had unusual design requirements which were met with the use of high-performance concrete (HPC) as part of an Federal Highway Administration test project.

Researchers involved in the project required numerous tests to ensure the quality of the HPC, but the use of this new product resulted in a significant reduction in the number of beams used as well as a reduction of the overall cost of the project.

Traffic control was a challenge throughout the project because U.S. 87 is a main thoroughfare in San Angelo. Some blasting was required in the median area between the frontage roads. The blast area was also close to residential areas. During beam and bridge deck placements and concrete pours, U.S. 87 had to be closed to through traffic. As a result of planning and coordination, these closures were limited to weekends and very limited week day times. As a result of the close cooperation between all of the participants, the closures had little or no effect on local businesses or the traveling public.

■ Wichita Falls District

TxDOT Engineering Technician Larry Carter and Contractor Superintendent Keith Glesne of Duinick Brothers, Inc. ventured together into an unknown realm of highway construction. They undertook the task of overlaying 14.5 miles of U.S. 82 using the new "superpave" hot-mix asphalt.

They not only faced the task of working with this new product, but also had the challenge of coordinating the efforts of four laboratories and eight technicians sampling and testing the new surface. The fact that the hot-mix plant was more than 60 miles from the test facilities created some significant scheduling problems. Through coordination and cooperation, the testing requirements were met with a minimum of disruption to the construction of the project.

The superpave hot-mix handled and behaved differently than does conventional hot mix. These differences created several situations that no one on the project had ever experienced. It took many hours of observing the rolling process of this new product to establish a rolling pattern that would achieve acceptable results.

DESIGN AWARDS

■ Fort Worth District

TxDOT Design Engineer John Terry faced many challenges in his efforts to design two complex overpasses on Summit Avenue over I-30 and two sets of commercial railroad tracks. This project was a major component of the I-30/I-35 interchange.

Because of the required vertical clearance over the railroad tracks, a straight alignment for the bridges was impossible. In addition, the alignment had to avoid a high-rise apartment building, curve parallel to the railroad tracks, curve again to cross the existing and proposed railroad tracks, and then cross both existing and proposed I-30.

As a result of the outstanding design plans, the project was completed with a minimum of changes and was finished three months ahead of schedule.

■ Houston District

TxDOT Design Engineers Carlos Camacho and Kenny Ozuna were faced with completing a design package in less than 12 months in order to qualify the project for federal funding. Not only did they complete the daunting task, but they did it so well that the contractor qualified for a \$1.2 million incentive bonus.

Their design plans for the reconstruction of a 1.6-mile section of elevated freeway along I-45 in Houston, known locally as Pierce Elevated, employed several unique features new to TxDOT construction plans. The bridge columns were saved, but had to be sawcut smooth with a special diamond-wire saw designed specifically for this project. For the first time in TxDOT's history, new bridge caps were pre-cast off-site and brought to the job site for assembly.

During the project, one of the steel bent caps was found to have cap bolts that were unusable. The design planners had to design a workable alternative which could be implemented without delaying construction progress. Despite this setback, the project was completed 30 days ahead of schedule.

— Public Information Office ★

Public information efforts garner three national awards

Department public information efforts got a national thumbs up recently from a professional communicators' association.

The National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) gave a first-place nod to Yoakum District Public Information Officer Pearl Bushong for a carjacking speech she wrote. Austin District Public Information Officer John Hurt took a second-place for his coverage TxDOT's cleanup efforts in the wake of the killer tornado that devastated Jarrell in 1997. *Transportation News* took second place in the Internal Newsletter competition.

The three had been entered in the NAGC's Blue Pencil/Gold Screen Awards competition. The awards were announced Dec. 10 at a ceremony in Lexington, Ky.

The National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) is a national not-for-profit professional network of federal, state and local government employees who disseminate information within and outside government. Its members are editors, writers, graphic artists, video professionals, broadcasters, photographers, information specialists and agency spokesmen.★

TxDOT retirees make the sports page

Newspaper recognizes pair's contributions to Austin-area athletics

In November, pictures or mug shots (as we call them in my line of work) of two former TxDOT employees were published in the *Austin American-Statesman*.

Uncharacteristic of most news related to TxDOT, word of these retirees appeared in the sports section.

Marcus Yancey Jr. and **Joe Chamberlain** were inducted into the Austin Sports Hall of Honor for their contributions to athletics in Austin.

Marc, a former associate executive director, was honored for his work with the Austin Aquatics Club. He helped develop this club in 1952 and served on the executive



Helen Havelka

The Good Life

board for 17 years. Since retiring in 1993 with 36 years of service, Marc has lectured at several universities across the country, dabbled in painting and still enjoys taking day trips to various parts of the state.

Joe left the **Materials and Tests Division** in 1993 with 31 years of service. Retirement for him has meant more volunteer work as a member of the Delwood Northeast Optimist Club.

He has worked with the youth sports program for 35 years and said he was very surprised to receive "such a big honor." Joe credits his work as a lab supervisor, especially dealing with people, as a building stone for his work with the Optimist Club.

Marc and Joe joined two other TxDOT employees in this elite Austin group. MAT retiree **Dale Foster** and **Juan Vega**, who works in the Construction Division, have received similar honors.

Dale was inducted in 1982 after more than 20 years with Little League Football in Austin. He retired from TxDOT in 1991 with 35 years of service, and now serves as the technical director of the Texas Hot Mix Association's hot mix center in Austin.

Inducted in 1997, Juan has worked with the Delwood Northeast Optimist Club youth sports program for 20 years. He was also co-founder of the Texas Football Youth

League. Congratulations, gentlemen!

Otis George from the old **D-12 (Vehicle Titles and Registration Division)** office in Corpus Christi has done some traveling. He has visited family in Mexico and Alaska.

The 1988 retiree mixes travel and work, delivering cars for dealers and car-rental agencies. Otis, who had 31 years of service, has found a way to see Texas and get paid for it.

Moving rental cars is also the avocation of **Joseph Mount** from the **Odessa District**. Retiring in 1991 after 34 years, Joseph added "doing nothing" on his list of activities.

Elias Cantu from the **Pharr District** spends his time hunting. "I also enjoy visiting the old working place and talking to employees," Elias wrote. He retired in 1987 after 36 years.

Travel and fancy needle work has topped **Lillie Duckett's** list of activities since retiring from the **Motor Vehicle Division** in Austin in 1978. Lillie worked for the department for 27 years.

"Having the time of my life being retired," wrote **Lawrence Glover** from the **Childress District**. Lawrence tallied more than 38 years of service when he retired in 1986. He enjoys traveling, fishing, gardening and spending time at his cabin.

Heard from **Robert Gorham**, who retired from **VTR** in Austin in 1991 with more than 39 years. Golfing, church activities and attending family events were on this activity list.

Bowling and golf have occupied **San Antonio District** retirees **William Winn** and **Charles Brown**.

William worked for 38 years, retiring in 1986 from the design section. Charles left the district right of way office in 1983 with 25 years of service.

After 43 years with the **San Antonio District**, **Emil Seewald** spends time visiting with his grandchildren. He has been "taking one day at a time" since retiring in 1992.

Russell Neal from the **Odessa District** is working on his dad's 1964 Ford pickup.

He started removing the dents in 1997, but he didn't tell me who was responsible for them. Russell worked for the department for 34 years before retiring in 1992.

Blacksmithing, gardening, travel and civic activities are keeping **Bybee Weisinger** busy. The **Atlanta District retiree** had 37 years with the department, leaving in 1986.

I received cards from **Pharr's Manuel Cantu** and **Childress' Rudolph Sanderson**. Manuel retired in 1977 after a 24-year career.

Rudolph worked in the Shamrock section, retiring in 1983 with 28 years.

Volunteering and travel have kept **Aubrey McDowell** on the go. Retired in 1990 from the **Amarillo District**, Aubrey takes time to help others at church and local organizations. The 33-year TxDOT veteran has also done some fishing and enjoys time with his granddaughters.

Retirement hasn't kept **Cloyce Holeman** from working. The 1978 **Childress District** retiree sells and installs storm doors, windows, carports and patio covers. Cloyce put in 25 years with the department.

Playing golf keeps two **Houston District** retirees — **Chester "Chet" Franus** and **W. Bruce Walthers** — active. Chet worked 27 years for the department when he left in 1982. Bruce retired in 1985 after a 39-year career. In addition to golf, Bruce enjoys bowling.

Jim Moss, the former **Amarillo District** Engineer, has been staying busy since retiring in 1993 with 39 years. He spends time with his grandchildren, is active with his church and serves on the advisory board for Amarillo College. Golf must also be one of his favorite retirement activities — he tries to play four times a week.

Odessa District retirees **Johnnie Brooks** and **Mills "Dinky" Scales** list traveling and fishing atop their activity lists. Johnnie left TxDOT in 1992 with 37 years, and Dinky had 15 years when he left in 1997.

Nina Crowder's long list of activities includes crafts, traveling, volunteering at church and working on the computer. The 1991 **Odessa District** retiree also enjoys walking and horseback riding. She worked in the district's personnel office and retired with 29 years of service.

Virgil Carpenter from the **Amarillo District** has been traveling, fishing, bowling and gardening. He left the district shop in 1977 after 31 years.

Some of the retirees may be aware that the 76th session of the state Legislature began last month. As always, the department is tracking numerous pieces of legislation.

Jennifer Williams from the **Human Resources Division** told me that there may be several proposals of interest to retired state employees, including an ad hoc annuity adjustment. At the time I write this column in early January, no specific percentage has been mentioned.

I am sure the Employee Retirement System will keep retirees updated on this issue and others in its monthly newsletters. ★

Applications now available for Conditional Grant

The Texas Department of Transportation began distributing applications for the Conditional Grant Program in October to interested high school seniors and current college students statewide.

Announcements dated Sept. 29, 1998 stated that the eligible degree areas were civil engineering, computer science, communications/journalism and accounting.

To focus on the department's employment needs, the accepted eligible degrees

have been changed to civil engineering and computer science only.

All other requirements of the program will remain the same.

The deadline for receipt of applications is March 1.

Applications that are mailed must be postmarked on or before the deadline date. All applications must be mailed to Texas Department of Transportation, HRD/Employment Opportunities, 125 E.

11th St., Austin, Texas 78701-2483.

All applications must contain an original signature.

Applications received with a reproduced signature will not be processed.

If additional information concerning the Conditional Grant Program is needed, contact Kay Howard at (512) 706-6374. ★

BELVIN

Continued from Page 3

the top down.

"I've just started restoring a 1949 four-door Cadillac," he said and grinned. "You'll have to come back for a ride in that."

When he's not indulging in restoration, Belvin enjoys fishing and skiing.

"I've got a boat and I'm a big fan of the lake," he said. But what he looks forward to most of all is coming home and reading a good book half the night, he admitted.

He's also happily anticipating new training for environmental staff in the near future.

"Some of the classes will be offered by the department while other training will be available outside," he said.

"Howard Payne University here in Brownwood now offers an environmental degree, so I plan to take some course work there, like an environmental law class."

Belvin believes that type of class will come in handy in the very near future.

"I see regulations getting even stricter," he predicted.

"Water quality will be a big issue, and noise and air quality will impact more and more on our construction projects.

"If we take the necessary steps with all the environmental agencies, then we'll do okay,"

But Belvin sees the tougher times ahead as interesting challenges.

"It's like the engineers who griped about having to build ocelot tunnels," he said and smiled.

"They probably really looked at that as an opportunity to design something creative and innovative.

"I think we can do anything we set our minds to do—after all, we've come this far up to now." ★

SESSION

Continued from Page 3

to official TxDOT positions.

Our procedures for dealing with legislators regarding departmental issues remain the same, in or out of session. All employees must work closely with their district, division or office legislative contacts, who in turn work with an analyst from our Legislative Affairs Office (LAO).

It is vital that this agency be responsive to legislative requests.

Responses to simple questions about project start dates, the dollar amount of an award or basic department statistics are normally best handled as promptly as possible, but these contacts must be reported to LAO.

What might appear routine could actually be part of a larger matter, so prompt reporting is in everyone's best interest.

Our working relationships with legislators are very important.

I am confident that as this session unfolds, we will provide legislators the information they need to appropriate funds so we can continue to provide a transportation system the citizens of Texas expect and deserve. ★

Wes Heald is executive director of the Texas Department of Transportation.

Coverson, Shelton selected 1998 VTR Star Award winners

When you have a division that's filled with customer service-oriented employees, choosing only two individuals for the VTR Star Award is no easy job. That was the challenge faced by the selection committee as it reviewed the nominations for 1998.

The two people who stood out this year were Carolyn Coverson for the headquarters office, and Linda Shelton for the regional office category. VTR Director Jerry Dike made the award presentations during a meeting of division managers in early November. Each winner received a star-shaped desktop adornment made of the same limestone that was removed from the state Capitol when the building was restored several years ago.

Coverson has been with the department since November 1982 and is the assistant branch manager for VTR's customer help desk. She is responsible for the day-to-day operation and employee staffing of the help desk's automation side. "Carolyn is a very intelligent and likable person," said help desk supervisor Bill Pool. "She's very well thought of by employees, peers, and anyone else who comes into contact with her."

Shelton has 26 years of service and is a customer service representative in VTR's Houston Regional Office. She receives all administrative and law enforcement calls and assists fellow employees with human resources matters. "Linda has what I call 'order disorder,'" joked Bill Dobson, Man-



Carolyn Coverson (left) is the Assistant Branch Manager of VTR's Customer Help Desk in Austin. Linda Shelton is a Customer Service Representative in VTR's Houston Regional Office.

ager of the Houston Regional Office. "Seriously, though, she's an efficiency machine who can find anything you ask for within a few minutes."

The first-ever recipients of the VTR Star Award, in 1997, were Steve Elsner for the headquarters office and Linda Clynch (Wichita Falls) for the regional office category. Division administrators created the annual recognition program at the recommendation of a committee that reviewed employee morale. A separate group of VTR employees developed guidelines and the award's design. ★

— Mike Viesca, VTR

Paris District employee chosen to 1999 Leadership Texas Program

Eva Flenniken, human resources officer for the Paris District, has been selected to the 1999 Leadership Texas Program.

Her application underwent a district and statewide selection committee review and was selected by the Foundation for Women's Resources to participate in the year-long program. The program, which identifies women who are in competitive professions and are leaders in their communities, offers information on several topics concerning the state.

"It is a privilege to be able to participate in this program. I consider this like an extension of the Leadership Lamar County program, only this time I'm going to learn some interesting facts about the state, and how to

better serve my state," Flenniken said. "This is an excellent opportunity to strengthen my leadership skills and network with other professionals in different fields around the state."

Flenniken has been active in several professional and community organizations. She is a member of the National Society for Human Resource Management; Society for Human Resource Management State Council; Red River Valley Human Resource Association; Texas Good Roads/Transportation Association; Business Professional Women's Club; Texas Public Employee Association; Lamar County Chamber of Commerce; Leadership of Lamar County—graduate; Greater Paris Rotary Club; and a member of the First Baptist Church, Paris.

Her awards include the Reno Kiwanis Club—Club Building Award, and Outstanding Women in Texas Government Nominee for Customer Service Award.

Flenniken will begin in the program in March. ★



Flenniken

Letters

I would like to congratulate you on your staff. This was the first time for our company to acquire a Department of Transportation number. They were extremely helpful and assisted me 110 percent.

Special thanks to **Claudette Nielsen**. She did more than was required to help me.

Again thanks, she made a hard project much easier.

**Dale Crosby
Irving**

Claudette Nielsen is an administrative technician in the Motor Carrier Division.
.....

We really appreciate the milling the state did for us on North First Street in Abilene.

Jerry Black's crew handled the work in a very professional manner and they were very cordial.

As a result of your assistance, the improvements along that corridor won two first place awards. The Texas Downtown Association President's Award gave us an award for corridor improvements and for most improved park in cities comparable to Abilene. There were approximately 200 cities involved. This was the 16th Downtown Revitalization Conference and Abilene was the host city. All the other cities were here to enjoy our work.

We are proud of our city and we appreciate your willingness to assist.

**B. R. (Bob) Lindley, P.E.
Design Services Administrator
City of Abilene**

Jerry Black is supervisor of the Abilene district's Special Jobs Crew.
.....

(Keith Edwards, the security guard at the D.C. Greer Building in Austin, received the three following letters.)

I just want to pass on to you my appreciation for Keith Edwards. He is very helpful to people who come into this building. I am always impressed with his initiative to find the answer for folks. It is very helpful to PIO, because, otherwise visitors would be referred here. Keith always tries to help them himself and sends them our way if he can't solve their problem. He is very in-tune about what is going on around here, which is good security personnel. He's really on top of things. Please share my comments with whomever you like. Thanks.

**Lori Rowe
Public Information Office**

My husband and I wish to thank you most sincerely for the kind assistance you gave us when we were temporarily stranded in Austin. The bus trip from Llano seemed to be successful. Thanks to you, it was a good day for us, too.

**Charles and Maebell Simpson
Llano**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the help you gave two of our citizens who had missed the chartered bus back to Llano on Sept. 24. You were instrumental in helping get the bus turned around and back to the Greer Building to pick them up and bring them safely back to Llano. You offered them a cool place to sit and wait and something to drink.

It is refreshing to know that there are still some people that will take the time to help someone in need.

The Llano City Council

I am writing to express my thanks to members of the work crew who came to my assistance on Friday, July 20, while I was traveling on Interstate 20 about 20 miles

west of Tyler. The transmission went out on my car at about the 516 marker. Your work crew supervisor, **Don Lay**, allowed me to call my husband and a towing company. He asked one of his men, **Michael Turner**, a general engineering technician, to keep an eye out for my safety while I waited for the tow truck.

Michael went to the trouble of bringing me water (it was over 100 degrees outside) and allowing me to sit in his air-conditioned truck while I was waiting.

I appreciate both the kindness and courtesy they extended to me during this stressful time.

**Norma Gross
Jasper**

Michael Turner works in the Mineola Area Office of the Tyler District.
.....

Bill Moorhouse, an investigator in the Motor Carrier Division's Compliance and Enforcement Branch, received the following letter

Thank you for being courteous and responding so quickly to my request. You were a pleasant surprise.

**Janis Raab
Arapaho, Okla.**

I would like to extend a very heartfelt thank you to the Lubbock District of TxDOT for the response to our call for assistance July 5, 1998. The wildfire suppression that was accomplished could not have happened without your quick response. This goes for the local personnel at Floydada and other members of TxDOT who responded to our call for help.

These persons did an outstanding job in getting to the fire quickly and providing needed assistance in the fire suppression effort.

**Rodney Williams, Chief
Matador**

The Lubbock District's Floydada and Plainview Maintenance sections helped battle the fires.
.....

(Irene Hill, a title information analyst in the Vehicle Title and Registration Division's customer services branch, received this letter:)

Thank you for the exceptional work on the certified title histories I recently requested. I tend to request a mass of documentation at a time, so I know the work was burdensome. I appreciate the expeditious manner that you applied to my request.

**Rosalie Savage
McAllen**

While traveling recently, I had a blow out. I have no idea what I ran over, but you should have seen the hole on my tire. I was in the left lane, and I did not lose control. I was very lucky the cars around me slowed down and gave me the opportunity to get on the shoulder. I parked my car as close to the right side as I could. Not even 15 to 20 minutes later, a truck from the transportation department parked behind me and **Vidal Quintanilla** came to my rescue. I salute Quintanilla and feel as though he was my guardian angel.

**Sonjia De La Garza
Weslaco**

Vidal Quintanilla works as a pavement engineer technician in the Pharr District Office.
.....

I would like to express my deepest appreciation for the services that you and the

Texas Department of Transportation provide.

On July 31, at around 10:39 p.m., I had broken down on the South Loop around Stella Link and by myself, I didn't know where to turn. A Metro Police officer stopped and asked if I needed any help. I told him that my car had stopped and didn't know what was wrong. He radioed his dispatcher and told them to contact your Courtesy Patrol and have them come out and see if they could help.

In about 15 minutes, **Donald Cathey** arrived and helped me get my car started. Come to find out I was out of gas, and Mr. Cathey gave me some gas and then followed me to a gas station, to make sure I made it OK.

I offered to pay him for the gas, but he informed me that the state provided this service, and he could not accept anything for just doing his job.

I would like to thank Cathey for his professional attitude and manner by which he conducted himself. He gave me informative leaflets about the other Courtesy Patrols around the state and stated that all the services were to assist the citizens and visitors of our state.

Thank you again for your fine service and dedicated employees.

**Mildred Mayfield
Houston**

Donald Cathey works as a courtesy patrol officer in the Houston District's TranStar office.
.....

Tommy Busby found my navy blue drowned purse on a bridge near Pettus. A man grabbed it from me as I was getting out of my car in my own garage about three years ago. I felt so lucky to escape intact that I never dreamed I would see the purse again. The thief, of course, took the money and one of the credit cards.

Thank you very much for returning the cards plus the still-valid driver's license. It was very kind of you to take the trouble.

**Ann C. Major
Corpus Christi**

Tommy Busby handles speed zone monitoring in the Transportation Operations Section of the Corpus Christi District.
.....

My husband and I just want to thank the two employees in your department, **Gabriel Castro** and **Roy Hernandez**, for their willingness and kindness to rescue us while we were in desperation on Interstate 20 on Dec. 11. We had a flat tire and the snow was flexing its muscle on us.

Gabriel and Roy helped us change our tire and directed us to Monahans to replace the flat tire. Gabriel and Roy were our guardian angels. The most touching part was their refusal of accepting our monetary offer to show our gratitude and they told us they could not accept money because they work for the state of Texas. They are the true Texans and true Americans.

**Cecilia Leonard
Carlsbad, Calif.**

Gabriel Castro and Roy Hernandez are maintenance technicians in the Odessa District's Monahans Maintenance Section.

Retirements

August
Fort Worth District
 Ronald O. Newman, Director III, 29 years

Houston District
 Janis B. Frank, Engineering Technician V, 29 years
 George F. Gonzales, Contract Specialist I, 27 years

Lubbock District
 Julian G. Lopez, Engineering Technician III, 16 years

October
Houston District
 Juan DeLaCerde, Transportation Maintenance Supervisor I, 30 years

Dallas District
 Gene O. Rodgers, Engineering Technician III, 26 years

November

Atlanta District
 Glen R. Busby, Motor Vehicle Mechanic III, 31 years

Austin District
 John H. Washington, Engineering Technician III, 28 years

December
Amarillo District
 Emmitt L. Henderson, Engineering Technician III, 16 years

Beaumont District
 Norman W. Woodside, Engineering Specialist II, 25 years

Brownwood District
 Jimmy D. Hendricks, Engineering Technician III, 16 years
 Claude G. Russell, Engineering Technician III, 18 years
 Dodie G. Montague, Human Resources Specialist IV, 30 years

Houston District

Earl B. Herring, Engineering Technician IV, 10 years
Antonio Rodriguez, Maintenance Technician IV, 31 years

Lufkin District
 Cloyce G. Evans, Engineering Technician V, 33 years

Waco District
 Richard P. Guthrie, Custodian II, 16 years

Yoakum District
 Elroy J. Holik, Transportation Maintenance Supervisor IV, 31 years
 Jim Marshall, Engineering Technician III, 21 years
 Harold D. Hunger, Engineering Technician IV, 30 years

Vehicle Titles and Registration Division
 Theresa W. Chambers, Statistician II, 28 years

In Memoriam

Employees

El Paso District
 Jose M. Perez, Purchasing Clerk III, died Nov. 15, 1998

Pharr District
 Arturo R. Silva, Jr., Purchaser I, died Nov. 18, 1998

Right of Way Division
 Joe A. Hernandez, Administrative Technician I, died Dec. 5, 1998

Retirees

Abilene District
 Burl D. Darnell, Maintenance Construction Foreman III, retired in 1983, died Sept. 20, 1998.

Atlanta District
 Bennie C. Bradley, Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1972, died Sept. 17, 1998

Austin District
 George S. Hanna, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1978, died Oct. 16, 1998
 James F. Maxwell, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1980, died Sept. 22, 1998

Beaumont District
 Oggden P. Wood, Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1979, died Oct. 3, 1998

Brownwood District
 T. K. Adams, Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1981, died Oct. 24, 1998

Dallas District
 Herbert J. Drozd, Shop Foreman IV, retired in 1977, died Oct. 17, 1998

El Paso District
 Marcelo G. Pena, Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1983, died Oct. 9, 1998

Fort Worth District
 Oscar V. Foust, Engineering Technician V, retired in 1976, died Oct. 4, 1998
 Bernard K. Payne, Jr., Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1991, died Oct. 2, 1998

Houston District
 Roy E. Franklin, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1980, died Oct. 4, 1998
 Louis A. Tully, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1980, died Oct. 14, 1998

Lubbock District
 Ira L. Hagerty, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1975, died Oct. 28, 1998.
 Gillie E. Hinson, Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1975, died Oct. 12, 1998
 Johnie W. Sartor, Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1972, died Oct. 24, 1998

Lufkin District
 John D. McNeil, Drafter III, retired in 1993, died Oct. 4, 1998

Odessa District
 James A. Wilborn, Engineering Technician V, retired form the 1992, died Sept. 23, 1998

Paris District
 John M. Henley, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1985, died Sept. 15, 1998

Pharr District
 Rodolfo Gonzalez, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1976, died Sept. 10, 1998

San Angelo District
 Rex D. Saunders, Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1987, died Oct. 4, 1998

San Antonio District
 Harold J. Bodin, Engineering Technician V, retired in 1990, died Sept. 8, 1998.
 Docia W. Curtis, Stenographer III, retired in 1974, died Sept. 21, 1998
 Billy R. Love, Engineering Technician V, retired in 1982, died Oct. 9, 1998

Willie F. Seelk, Jr., Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1993, died August 28, 1998.
Alroy R. Zercher, Maintenance Construction Supervisor III, retired in 1992, died Sept. 11, 1998

Tyler District
 Warren H. Alfred, Right of Way Appraiser III, retired in 1977, died Sept. 14, 1998
 Jimmie H. Anderson, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1987, died Oct. 12, 1998
 William S. Hale, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1977, died Sept. 3, 1998
 Weldon O. Rice, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1984, died Sept. 22, 1998

Waco District
 Jerry A. Lanford, Maintenance Mechanic II, retired in 1997, died Sept. 18, 1998
 Vester E. Mimms, Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1972, died Oct. 12, 1998
 Barney Smith, Maintenance Technician II, retired in 1987, died Oct. 1, 1998

Yoakum District
 Chrysteen M. Kuhns, Administrative Technician II, retired in 1997, died Nov. 29, 1998

Transportation Planning and Programming Division
 Richard H. Spiller, Jr., Engineer V, retired in 1975, died August 16, 1998

Equipment and Procurement Division
 Henry J. Evans, Maintenance Technician III, retired in 1977, died Oct. 23, 1998

Calendar

FEBRUARY
 8-12 Two Week TxDOT Highway Materials Engineering Course, Austin, CST
 15 Presidents' Day (holiday)
 17-19 Advanced Public Purchasing, Houston, GSD
 23-24 GEOPAK Drainage Training, Austin, DES
 25 Commission Meeting, Austin
 25-26 GEOPAK Drainage Training, Austin, DES

MARCH
 2 Texas Independence Day (holiday)
 3-5 CPPB/CPPO Review/Exam, Austin, GSD
 16-17 1999 Construction Conference, Austin, CST
 17-19 Intermediate Public Purchasing, Houston, GSD
 25 Commission Meeting, Austin
 29 DPE & PMIS Coordinators Meeting/LTPP Meeting, Austin, DES

APRIL
 1 DPE & PMIS Coordinators Meeting/LTPP Meeting, Austin, DES
 7-9 Texas Aviation Conference, Austin, AVN
 13-14 1999 Maintenance Conference, Waco, MNT
 14-16 Competitive Sealed Proposals/Competitive Negotiations, Houston, GSD
 14-16 General Public Purchasing, Austin, GSD
 21 San Jacinto Day (holiday)
 29 Commission Meeting, Austin

MAY
 5-7 INTERMEDIATE PUBLIC PURCHASING, AUSTIN, GSD
 13-15 CPPB/CPPO REVIEW/EXAM, HOUSTON, GSD
 20-21 CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION, SAN ANTONIO, GSD
 27 COMMISSION MEETING, AUSTIN
 31 MEMORIAL DAY (HOLIDAY)

JUNE
 16 HOW TO PROCESS AND EVALUATE BIDS, SAN ANTONIO, GSD
 16 SPECIFICATION WRITING, SAN ANTONIO, GSD
 19 EMANCIPATION DAY (HOLIDAY)
 23-25 GENERAL PUBLIC PURCHASING, LEWISVILLE, GSD
 24 COMMISSION MEETING, AUSTIN

JULY
 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY (HOLIDAY)
 29 COMMISSION MEETING, AMARILLO

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Service Awards

Continued from Page 14

Wichita Falls District
15 years
 Ronnie L. Montgomery
 Jimmy C. Thomas
5 years
 Moses Gonzales
 Raquel S. Hardesty
 Harold W. Mason

Yoakum District
20 years
 Jewel F. Pleasant
 Stephen J. Werner
15 years
 Frederick R. Lerma
5 years
 Shirley J. Hrabovsky
 Francis L. Klekar
 Donna M. Steffek

Construction Division
25 years
 Lloyd S. Eveland
 Paul E. Northcutt
20 years
 Manuel M. Mercado
15 years
 Elizabeth S. Boswell
10 years

Information Systems Division
20 years
 Richard Torres
15 years
 Cynthia M. MacUk
10 years
 Marilyn L. Barrows
 Armando Leyva

Legislative Affairs Office
5 years
 Coby C. Chase

Motor Carrier Division
5 years
 Joel D. Thompson

Motor Vehicle Division
10 years
 Alice Suniga
5 years
 John L. Barajas
 Juan F. Barbosa

Occupational Safety Division
5 years
 Deryl S. Creekmur

Public Information Office
10 years
 Jeffrey A. Carmack

Right of Way Division
10 years
 Robert W. Briggs

Transportation Planning and Programming Division
5 years
 Shirley J. Albert
Traffic Operations Division
20 years
 Bertha G. Riesters
5 years
 David Valdez

Travel Division
10 years
 Lois D. Johnson

Vehicle Titles and Registration Division
25 years
 Pamela M. Arnold
 Ruth H. Howard
20 years
 Diane E. Counts
 Arthur S. Hubbard
15 years
 Rita Contreras
5 years
 Paula K. Lancaster