

WHAT DID THEY DO? WHAT DIDN'T THEY DO?

Secrets of the 76th Legislature

The Truth Is...Out There

Rumors. Anxiety. Watercooler whispers and on-line gossip. Even the media can't be trusted to tell the whole story.

Did state employees get a raise? How much and when? And what about those must-have bills, such as the open container measure that lawmakers supposedly *had* to pass or risk federal penalties? Did they work together to save highway construction funds? What happened to other bills that affect TxDOT employees?

The work of the 76th Legislature this session is over, but the average TxDOT employee, even those with Internet access, is struggling to get answers.

A comprehensive and detailed summary of the activities of the Texas House and Senate during the last ses-



The truth eludes FBI Agents Scully and Mulder on Fox's weekly TV show, 'The X-Files.'

sion might read like the Warren Commission if written by Proust.

The following, therefore, is a brief summary, prepared by the Legislative Affairs Office, of the work of the past session:

Pay raises: The good news

The Legislature passed HB 1, the Appropriations Bill, which included a landmark budget of \$98 billion. This included a \$100 per month pay increase for state employees beginning with the September paycheck.

TxDOT's budget increased to \$8.6 billion for the fiscal year 2000 and 2001 biennium. This represents a 12.7 percent increase over what was spent this

biennium, or about \$1 billion. The state auditor's office

■ See **Lawmakers**, Page 4

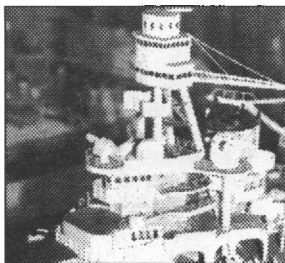
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Like a bird

TxDOT Aviation Advisory Committee member Mark Huffstutler engages in the European sport of soaring.

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Equality

The ranks of traditionally male-dominated jobs at TxDOT are being filled more often by women.

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Legislative session a productive one for the department

The 76th Texas Legislative session has come to a close, and I feel the department came through quite well.

The biggest surprise for me during this 140-day session was the rigorous schedule. I now have a better understanding and appreciation of the lawmaking process and a new respect for our previous agency heads whose footsteps I have followed.

There are really too many issues to discuss in this



Wes Heald

Straight talk

column, but overall, the session was productive. Beginning Sept. 1, employees will see a pay increase of \$100 a month.

That may not seem like much, but for more than 12,300 employees, this increase is better than the proposed 3 percent. In fact, 60 percent of our employees will see at least a 4 percent increase in salary.

The Legislature also changed the amount of time an employee must wait between merit

increases. Reducing the time from a year to six months will help us do a better job of rewarding our employees.

Our allotment of 14,726 employees remained the same. We must continue hiring and maintaining a qualified and diverse work force with strong recruiting and training programs.

In regard to revenue, we should see an increase from fuel taxes. While the point of collection was not changed, commitments of stronger enforcement against fraud will benefit the department.

Transportation issues along the Texas-Mexico border, condemnation of right of way, the off-state system bridge program, speed limits and traffic safety issues were also high profile topics.

There were approximately 1,500 bills filed that in some fashion were related to the department. Keeping up with so many bills is not a one-person or even a one-office operation.

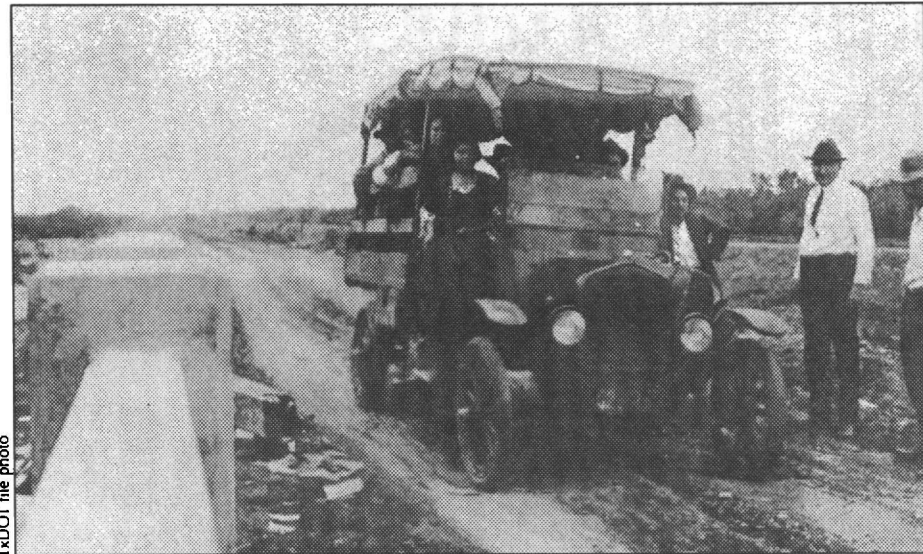
I commend all employees in the divisions, offices and districts who spent countless hours analyzing legislation, researching the issues and testifying before committees.

Representing this department before the Texas Legislature was another learning experience for me, and I know it has better prepared me for the next session.

It is now our job to take the direction set by legislators and continue providing the best overall transportation system possible.

I know I am ready to get back to the normal, day-to-day operations of running this agency. ★

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



TxDOT file photo

Vintage view

A motor truck on Texas Federal Aid Project No. 165 (circa 1922) hauls 15 passengers from Laredo to San Antonio for \$1.75 each. The truck paid a license fee of \$8.50 each year. The canvas on the roof would have been rolled down during inclement weather to shield passengers. Since the road had been graded, it would have been a dusty trip.

Lufkin district engineer resigns to take private sector position

David Justice will be resigning his position as Lufkin's district engineer to accept a position in the private sector.



Justice

His last day in the Lufkin District office will be June 25. His resignation will be effective Aug. 1.

Justice, 44, has been with TxDOT for 22 years. He earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Texas A&M University in 1977. That same year he began his career with TxDOT as an engineering assistant in the Yoakum District at the LaGrange Area Office. He served as supervising area engineer for three years

before moving to Waco as district administrative engineer in 1989.

In 1993, Justice was selected district engineer in Lufkin. Since then, he has been responsible for all TxDOT transportation-related activities in this nine-county district.

Justice is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Texas Good Roads/Transportation Association. He served on the board of directors of the Angelina Chamber of Commerce and the Deep East Texas Development Association.

Walter Hearnberger, director of operations in the Lufkin District, will serve as interim district engineer, effective July 1, until a replacement for Justice can be selected. ★

TxDOT subject of routine audit

The State Auditor's Office is conducting a routine audit of the Texas Department of Transportation's design and preliminary engineering function.

Anyone with concerns or information relating to this audit can reach the SAO through its toll-free hotline at 1-800-TX-AUDIT (1-800-892-8348), by mail at P.O. Box 12067, Austin, Texas 78711-2067, Attention: Ryan Simpson; through its web site at the address:

www.sao.state.tx.us; or by e-mail at auditor@sao.state.tx.us.

All information and comments will be kept confidential.

Once the audit is complete, a report will be available to the public. It will include the SAO's recommendations for improvement and responses from TxDOT. To obtain a copy of this report, call the SAO Report Request Line at (512) 479-4740. ★

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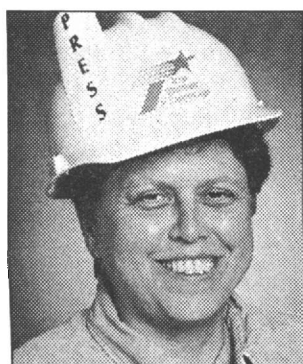
Transportation News July 1999

EASY RIDER

Agency's CPA biker defies buttoned-down stereotype

Usually, when I think of a CPA (Certified Public Accountant), I immediately envision a conservatively dressed, bespectacled, quiet-mannered, slightly built, thirty-something guy with thinning hair.

And if I had to conjure up the image of a guy who rides motorcycles, well, I'd picture either a tattooed menacing looking fellow with slicked-back hair and sideburns, a cigarette dangling from his mouth, a black



Eloise Lundgren

A Day in the Life

your mind fill up with these images.

Now, imagine, if you will, a CPA biker. (Allow yourself time here to savor fully that image.)

By now you're looking at the photograph that accompanies this column. O.K., so he's not really a biker like in "The Wild Ones" or "Easy Rider," but he really is a certified public accountant who rides Harleys. His wife and daughter do, too.

He's Scott Nichols, the assistant Prequalification and Proposal Issuance Branch manager for the Construction Division. That's a pretty impressive title, but what does it mean?

Well, it's all about getting those construction projects built across the state. After you get environmental clearances, acquire right of way and design plans for a construction project, you have to get someone to build it. That's where the Construction Division comes in — they are TxDOT's liaison to the contractors.

"We issue on the average about six-thousand bid proposals and qualify about fifteen hundred contractors a year," Nichols explained. When the contractors start calling in those bids, Nichols and the seven other members of the pre-qualification branch staff get busy determining if the contractor can indeed compete for a chance to build transportation projects.

TxDOT must be sure a bidder is a viable business — we must be sure he is who he says he is. So the examiners check with county clerks and the Texas Secretary of State; they look at audited financial statements; they verify the bid-

ders haven't exceeded the maximum amount they can have under contract to the department; they even have to make sure, if applicable, bidders are current on their child support payments.

They have 21 days during each letting period to accomplish this. Above all else, they must be consistent in their process.

"We can't even appear to be inconsistent in what we do," Nichols said. "Contractors feel comfortable knowing that everyone is on a level playing ground. It's just like any business — they'll play by the rules but they're going for the profit."

Finally, there's a two-day function each month when bid documents are issued, culminating in one thing — letting contracts.

"And then it takes off from there back to the districts," he said, "where the real work is done."

Nichols' analogy of the process is that of two funnels that meet — one funnel being the environmental, right of way acquisition, design work and the other being the actual construction — with the meeting point being the letting.

At the letting, "everything comes down with one rap of the gavel," he said. "The best way to describe a letting is 'organized chaos.'"

Lettings take place in Building 200 at the Riverside Annex in Austin, with a flurry of activity both mornings as contractors wander in and out all day.

"At noon we start gearing up," Nichols said, "and not infrequently you get someone coming in with a late bid. But if it isn't in our hands when the gavel strikes, then it isn't official. Situations like that can get pretty dramatic."

"At one o'clock," he continued, "when John Aldridge (Construction Division deputy director) raps that gavel, everything kind of settles down."

At the December letting, 27 projects totaling \$183.4 million in bid proposals had been issued.

Three projects ended up canceled, but the division still received 104 bids. After Nichols and his colleagues sort the bid packets, they meticulously go through

them to make sure all documents are enclosed, all checks are negotiable and all signatures are notarized.

As Frank Huerta, supervising examiner, explained, "We have numerous checks and balances in place to make sure we don't overlook anything. Once the sealed bid is opened and read out loud, it would be very difficult to throw it out since we've exposed it."

"Scott and Tommy (Nelson, branch manager), who are our jacks of all trade, are the final check," he said.

Contractors can and do make mistakes in preparing bid documents, and Nichols has been working on two new automated systems that should cut down on these kinds of errors.

He's nearly finished with the construction and maintenance contract system and is now working almost full-time on the electronic bidding system. "I'm not a programmer," he admitted. "I just try to spend time on making things better. The folks at ISD (Information Systems Division), particularly David Devoe, really came through for me."

Nichols is facing one tiny stumbling block with the electronic bidding system — there's no easy way to track money in an automated system. "It's very difficult to pull cash or a check out of a mouse," he chuckled. "And if I can't verify a bid from a contractor, then we've got a problem."

He's looking at the possibility of accepting credit cards, but there's a downside to that, too. "Not many folks have a one hundred thousand dollar personal credit card limit," Nichols said. "So small contractors would have a problem."

Never fear, though, because in a world that's increasingly driven by computer technology, there's something new and neat — E, or electronic, cash. "It's literally a new type of currency," Nichols said. "Virtual cash is really what it is, but it's so new that nobody's using it yet."

"There's also a new electronic check the Feds are looking at that might be viable," he continued, "but again, it's still so new and untried."

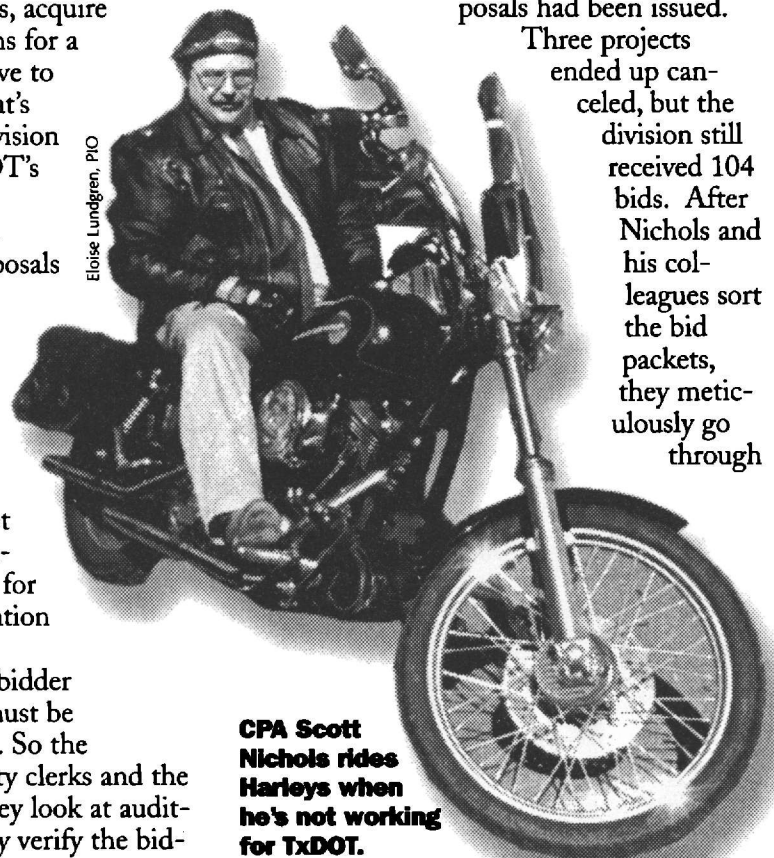
He dismisses the idea of allowing bid bonds. "That's technically a surety company and brings a whole other entity into the picture," Nichols said.

Hoping to have some kind of an electronic bidding system in a test environment by late January, Nichols feels fairly confident he could have some contractors using it by March. "We're all expecting great things from it," he said. At any rate, it's a far cry from putting bid proposals together by hand with an old Addressograph machine.

According to Nichols, the division started looking at automated systems in 1987.

He never thought that when he was hired in 1982 to review contractor prequalification status he would end up involved with electronic applications. "When I started after graduation from Southwest Texas State University, there were only thirty-five people in the division," he remembered. "Now we're huge."

■ See NICHOLS, Page 12



CPA Scott Nichols rides Harleys when he's not working for TxDOT.

Lawmakers pass some, not all transportation bills

Continued from Page 1

had proposed a 3.9 percent increase for employees over the next biennium. That proposal died before the bill made it to the conference committee. But the \$100 a month raise represents, for 60 percent of TxDOT's employees, a 4 percent increase.

Lawmakers also passed bills addressing various human resources issues, such as Senate Bill 1130 by Sen. Kenneth Armbrister, D-Victoria, which benefits retirees. Under this legislation, all retirees and those who retire before Sept. 1, 1999 will receive an ad hoc annuity increase. The percentage of the increase will depend on the individual's retirement date, but the increase ranges from 1 to 54 percent.

The bill also provides for a 13th check to be given to annuitants in January 2001. As of Sept. 1, 1999, annual leave will be allowed to be counted as service credit to meet eligibility requirements.

SB 107 by Sen. Carlos Truan, D-Corpus Christi, created an optional state holiday. March 31 is now Cesar Chavez Day and can be taken off by state employees in lieu of another state holiday.

SB 174 by Sen. Bill Ratliff, R-Mount Pleasant, codified many provisions formerly as riders in the Appropriations Act, including the state holiday schedule and accrual of sick leave, annual leave and compensatory time. Beginning Sept. 1, new categories have been added for vacation accruals, which will go up to 20 hours per month with 35 or more years experience with a maximum carry-over of 520 hours. SB 174 also allows supervisors to give their employees one-time merit raises. Merit salary increases can now be given in six-month increments as opposed to the current 12-month increment.

Pedal to the metal

The Legislature approved House Bill 676 by Rep. Carl Issett, R-Lubbock, which removes the existing truck/car speed differential and makes the maximum speed limit for a truck on an Interstate, U.S. or State highway 70 mph during the day and 65 mph at night.

The maximum truck speed limit on an FM or RM road would not change but would continue to be 60 mph during the day and 55 mph at night.

"Evidence shows that there are more likely to be wrecks when there is a difference in speed among cars and big trucks. It's safer to equalize the speed limit," Issett told the *Austin American-Statesman*.

HB 3328, which failed, would have increased the speed limit to 75 mph on state and federal highways, and 80 mph on east-west interstates in areas with a population of 25,000 or less. This measure failed because legislators expressed concern about the combined effects of this bill and HB 676, which would have allowed large trucks to travel at 80 mph.

One for the road?

Lawmakers OK'd SB 114 by Mario Gallegos Jr., D-Houston, which changed the legal concentration of alcohol in the blood as a measure of intoxication from .10 to .08. As a result, Texas will receive incentive funding under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, which can be used for anything eligible under Title 23 of the United States Code.

The Legislature, however, failed to pass a true open container law and stricter penalties for repeat driving while intoxicated offenders. Early in the legislative session, Transportation Commissioner David Laney urged lawmakers to strengthen these laws or risk losing millions of dollars in highway construction.

Because this bill failed to pass, \$40 million of highway construction funds will be transferred to the state's traffic safety program and the Hazard Elimination Safety program beginning Oct. 1, 2000. This penalty will continue will increase to \$82 million by Oct. 1, 2002 and will continue for every year that the state has not passed and enforced a law meeting the federal requirements for both open containers and repeat DWI offenders.

Why did lawmakers fail to pass this legislation? The answer is complicated, but political, legislative analysts said. Versions of the bill reached their destination in various points of the consideration

process too late. Therefore, the bill died in both Houses.

The run on the border

Attention to the needs of the Texas border region led to a number of legislative proposals this session. SB 913 by Sen. Eliot Shapleigh, D-El Paso, requires TxDOT to spend \$8 to \$9 million over the biennium on design, site selection, purchase and construction-related costs of three one-stop inspection facilities in Brownsville, Laredo and El Paso. HB 564 by Rene Oliveira, D-Brownsville, and SB 1136 by Shapleigh require the governor to designate a border commerce coordinator in his office, with HB 564 giving the governor the option of designating the coordinator in the office of the Secretary of State.

SB 1375 by Shapleigh requires the Comptroller of Public Accounts to conduct a study of the movement of commercial vehicles across the Texas-Mexico border to determine how separation of state government functions involving regulation of commerce from functions involving detection and prevention of crime would reduce traffic congestion.

SB 370 by J. E. "Buster" Brown, R-Lake Jackson, requires Departments of Public Safety to provide a report to the Transportation Commission and the Legislature about a longterm need assessment for enforcing truck safety standards. The bill also requires TxDOT and the DPS to jointly plan jointly for infrastructure needs to assist enforcement.

Long arm of the law

Legislation to split the Motor Vehicle Division off into a separate agency failed, but HB 3092, which passed, did clarify the separation of duties of the Transportation Commission and the Motor Vehicle Board.

One of the major initiatives spearheaded by Commissioner Robert Nichols was

designed to increase transportation funding by reducing the amount stolen through motor fuels tax fraud. Leaders in the House and Senate worked with TxDOT, farmers, convenience store owners, gas companies and other interested parties to fashion an approach acceptable to all. The result was SB 1547, which improves detection of illegal fuel blending and provides for better tracking of imports and exports. This should increase revenue to Texas by \$30 million a year.

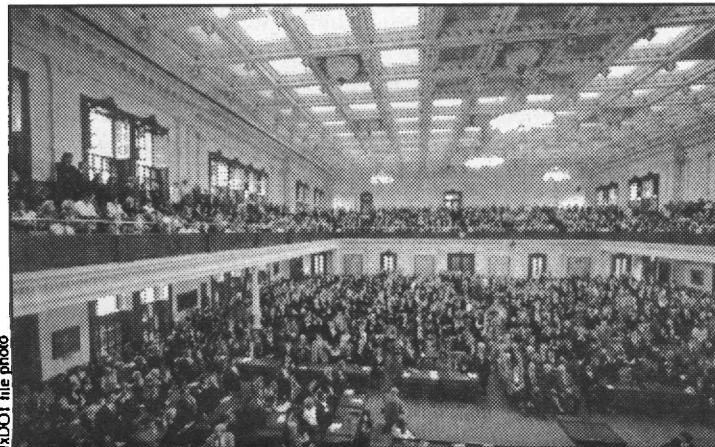
A bigger kitty

Turnpikes will be easier to finance now because SB 926 by Sen. Jeff Wentworth, R-San Antonio, which allows pooling of projects, or intermingling of financing. Two or more projects in an Metropolitan Planning Organization or projects in two adjacent TxDOT districts can now be pooled; projects can be pooled more than once.

Left on the table

Several bills relating to county road funding that would have shifted tax revenue from the highway fund to counties did not pass. SB 713 would have increased lateral road funding for counties from \$7.3 million per year to \$50 million as filed. Other bills of this nature included HB 2771 by Dennis H. Bonnen, R-Angleton, which would have diverted 1 cent of the gasoline tax or about \$100 million to counties; SJR 29/SB 1283 by Wentworth, which would have allowed political subdivisions to impose a 1-cent gasoline tax; and the ultimate, HB 3389 by Rep. Harvey Hilderbran, R-Kerrville, which would have taken 1 cent of the gasoline tax and sent it back to the city or county where the fuel was pumped. SB 1523 by Sen. Frank Madla, D-San Antonio, would have resulted in diverting some VTR funding to counties. A new appropriations rider, which did get adopted, clarifies that TxDOT may assist city street maintenance with technical expertise and surplus materials.

Legislative proposals to provide for damages in condemnation cases did not pass (HB 1414, HB 3356, SB 1010 and SB 1316). Another bill that failed would have significantly delayed some right of way acquisitions; HB 1186 required a condemnation hearing to be scheduled within 90 days of the filing of the petition; if not, the case could be dismissed and would have to be refiled. ★



The state Legislature passed some bills on the TxDOT agenda — but not all.

SMOOTH SOARING

TxDOT Aviation Advisory committee member enjoys flight sport competition

By Chante Bergmann
Public Information Office

Soaring isn't just for the birds anymore. This popular European flight sport is making headway in the United States.

TxDOT Aviation Advisory Committee member Mark Huffstutler is no stranger to soaring. This unique sport depends solely on nature's energy to power the sailplane. Huffstutler is the current U. S. Soaring Team Committee chairman and has been soaring since 1983.

Sailplanes, sometimes called gliders, gain altitude and maintain continuous flight with energy derived from the atmosphere. In Texas, pilots can soar almost any day because of the frequency of the clear, sunny days required to create the convection needed to power the plane. Pilots can fly almost every day in South Texas, making it a very popular site for soaring contests.

Huffstutler, a licensed pilot, regularly competes in contests. "Probably the most challenging aspect of being a pilot without a motor is that you rely completely on skill. If you don't have the skills, you end up in some farmer's field and have to call your crew to come pick you up," Huffstutler said.

Huffstutler also has a professional interest in flying. He is manager of the Uvalde airport and owner Sierra Industries, an aircraft modification, maintenance and repair company based in Uvalde.

As the owner of one of the largest busi-

nesses in the town, Huffstutler wanted to be able to hire employees and train them, rather than recruiting from elsewhere. He received a grant to start a three-month training program at the Southwest Texas Junior College. So far, this program has produced 52 new trainees.

"We applied for a third year and have been awarded a grant for \$130,000, which will allow for two further levels of training. This is very good for Uvalde's economy," he said. If the community retains skilled workers, Huffstutler said, it will introduce a higher level of skill into the local work force.

The projected impact of the training program on the Uvalde community is \$14 million.

Huffstutler said he is enjoying his success with TxDOT, the aviation industry and especially with the U.S. Soaring Team. The team will be traveling Bayreuth, Germany in early July to compete in the World Soaring Competition. ★

TxDOT Aviation Advisory Committee member Mark Huffstutler is the current chairman of the U.S. Soaring Team Committee.

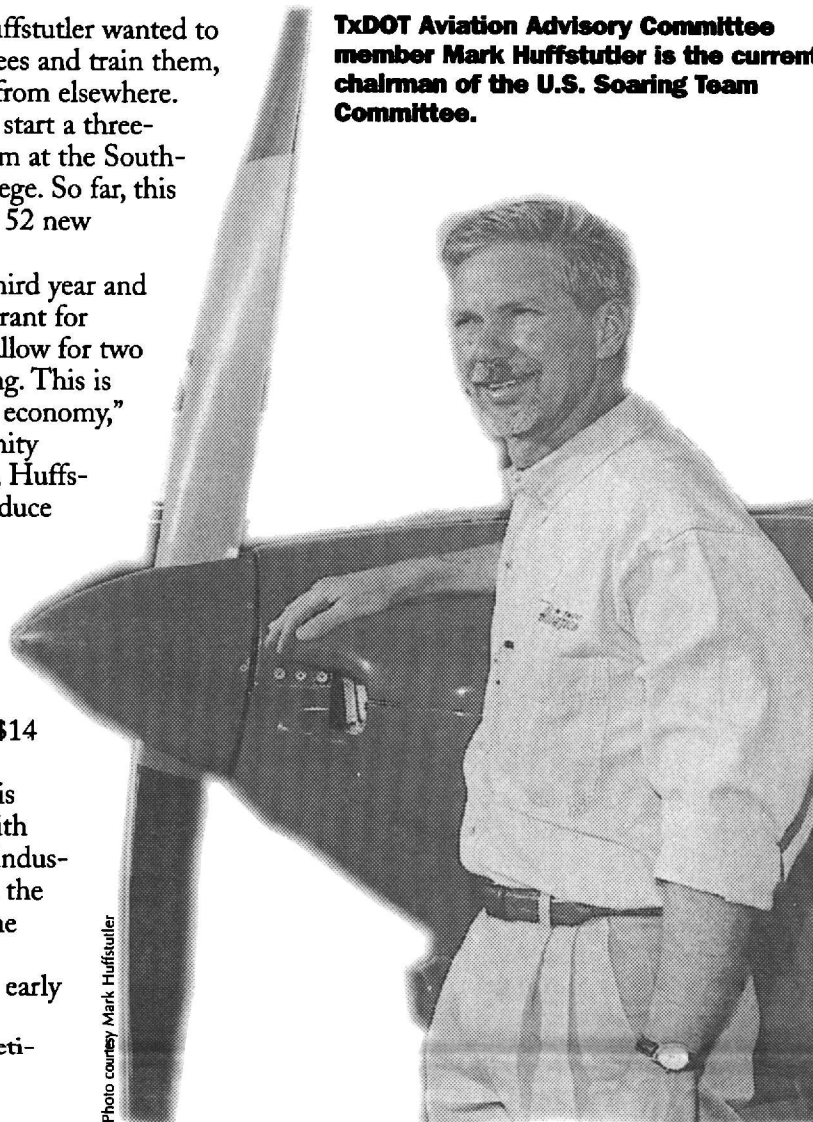


Photo courtesy Mark Huffstutler

More than 300 attend annual aviation conference in Austin

AUSTIN —The Texas Aviation Conference offered participants plenty to think about, but it also served as a festive gathering of friends and professionals.

The conference was held April 7-9 at the North Hilton Hotel in Austin.

The conference was co-hosted by TxDOT Aviation Division and the Texas Association of Airport Executives. This partnership's goal is presenting the best and most current information about Texas aviation to the public.

The conference attracted 360 participants from Texas, as well as aviation enthusiasts from around the country.

The program included a welcoming address by TxDOT Executive Director Wes Heald and by David S. Fulton, TxDOT Aviation Division director.

Panels and roundtables addressed the importance of general aviation and compliance issues of concern to Texas' airports.

This year's workshop titles ranged from "How Your Airport Lighting System Looks When the Sun Goes Down" to "Marketing Your Airport — How It Can Be Done Using New Marketing Technology?"

Other workshops included, "How Effective is the Routine Airport Maintenance

1999 AVIATION AWARDS

- **Airport Manager of the Year:** Darrell Phillips, New Braunfels municipal airport manager, New Braunfels
- **Airport of the Year:** Fayette Regional Air Center, La Grange
- **Most Improved Airport of the Year:** Granbury Municipal Airport, Granbury
- **Outstanding Reliever Airport of the Year:** McKinney Municipal Airport, McKinney
- **Career Contribution to Aviation:** Norman Scroggins, Bedford
- **International Aviation Art Contest winners:** first place, category 1 (ages 6-9): Hannah Pruitt, 6, Valley Oaks Elementary, Houston; first place, category 2 (ages 10-13): Brook Lennon, 11, Avery Middle School, Avery; first place, category 3 (ages 14-17): Aileen (Chih-Fang) Wu, 17, Clements High School, Sugar Land.

Program" and "How to Put On Airshows and Fly-Ins at Your Airport." ★

— Marie Peinado, AVN

Record attendance marks conference hosted by TPP

DALLAS—The Transportation Planning and Programming Division hosted the 1999 Transportation Planning Conference June 1-4 at the Dallas Hyatt Regency.

The conference is held annually to provide transportation professionals in the public and private sectors with the opportunity to meet, discuss, and exchange ideas on current transportation issues.

This year's conference attracted more than 480 registered participants as well as 11 exhibitors and set a new attendance record for the event.

Texas Transportation Commissioner David Laney and Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk were among the featured speakers at this year's opening session.

Also featured were mobile workshops that allowed conference attendees to tour the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, and the reconstruction of the U.S. 75 Central Expressway, one of the nation's largest public works projects. ★

— Michelle Conkle, TPP

Someone to watch over you

Employee Advisory Committee seeks solutions to workers' concerns

By Chante Bergmann
Public Information Office

AUSTIN — A two-day blood drive sponsored last spring by TxDOT's Employee Advisory Committee raised a record 115 units of blood that can be used by employees and their families throughout the state in the event of an emergency.

"This is a great response," said Curtis Howe, EAC coordinator of the blood drive, held May 11 and May 13 at the Camp Hubbard and Riverside annexes in Austin. The annual blood drive, administered by the Austin Area Blood Bank, which collects and stores the blood, began in 1985 for the use of TxDOT employees and their families.

Last year TxDOT employees made one such request for blood. Requests can be made through Howe or Ronny McClarron of the Transportation Planning and Programming, an EAC blood drive volunteer. A second blood drive is scheduled for October.

EAC also sponsors the Winter Holiday Activities Committee, which coordinates holiday food drives and donations of clothing and toys. In addition, EAC provides division/office employees with a quarterly newsletter to keep them up to date on employee issues.

But the goals of the EAC, convened in 1944 to mediate employee concerns, extend beyond community service.

The 11-member committee is comprised of TxDOT employee volunteers in Austin. The group's primary function is to handle the suggestions and concerns of Austin district and division employees, but it also acts on submissions from other TxDOT employees in divisions and districts not served by a



EAC members are (back row) Bernard Stafford, Paul Moon, Chris Willrich, Carolyn Icard, Vicky Nowlin, Ronny McClarron; (front row) Tom Bruechert, Bessie Mayfield, Virgie Rodriguez, Sandi Carmona and Curtis Howe.

its own EAC. Assistant Executive Director Kirby Pickett, who serves as the administrative liaison for the committee, said EAC is strongly endorsed by the administration.

"I wholeheartedly support the Employees' Advisory Committee and consider it a vital part of TxDOT," said Pickett, who last March asked districts and divisions without EACs to consider organizing them.

EAC functions as a sounding board for new ideas to improve the TxDOT work environment; it has no investigative or enforcement authority.

Last year the group fielded 113 submissions of inquiry, suggestion and concern. Those who submit to the EAC is accorded

anonymity. Employees in the districts who don't have a local EAC can submit suggestions to the EAC at headquarters via GroupWise at the address: TXDOTTEAC.

The EAC at headquarters receives between four and 10 submissions per month. Employees typically use suggestion boxes or GroupWise to make their submissions, said Virgie Rodriguez, chairwoman of the EAC.

EAC members meet on the third Thursday of every month to discuss employee submissions.

Members volunteer to mediate suggestions and work closely with division/office directors and district engineers for a response.

A committee member relays the response of the division/office director or district engineer to the employee who made the submission.

With EAC volunteers serving as liaison, employees and administrators can remain anonymous through the resolution process.

Preserving anonymity is a key element in the effectiveness of the program, EAC members said. ★

A MODEL HOBBY

Fort Worth design employee commemorates U.S. Navy losses with ship-building

By Chad Lorance
Fort Worth District

Did you know the USS Arizona battleship was 608 feet long? Well, Fort Worth District Central Design employee Mike Winters knows.

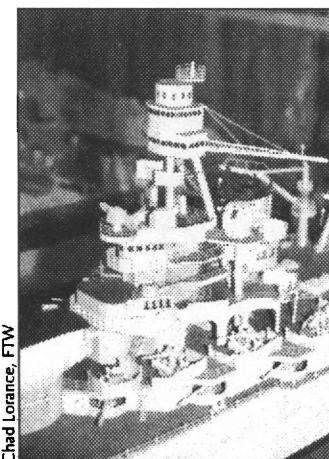
In fact, having spent the last two years re-creating a scaled-down version of the ship, Winters feels like he knows every nook and cranny of the famous vessel downed during the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

"I have seen so many diagrams and pictures of it the last few years, I can walk the deck in my mind," Winters said. "It's almost like I have been there."

In a small workshop behind his home in Whitney, Winters has spent countless hours building a 6- by 1- by 3-foot replica of the USS Arizona from scratch, using materials such as plywood, fiberglass and basswood to create each fine detail of the ship's exterior.

What began from scale drawings in October 1997 has turned into a detailed portrayal complete with guns, rudders, lifeboats and even the ship's aircraft crane.

Winters said he doesn't have anything



Mike Winters builds models like this replica of the USS Arizona

down into basic shapes."

Having served on the USS Enterprise, the three-year TxDOT employee still feels strong ties to the Navy and hopes the model can serve as a memorial to the crew and the ship.

"This is my way of paying tribute to those who served on the USS Arizona," Winters

said. "I want people to look at it and get the same feeling I do about what it was like to be there."

He hopes the model, which is estimated to be worth \$15,000, will be placed at either the Naval War Memorial or the Smithsonian Museum of American History once completed.

The USS Arizona is not the first vessel he has spent numerous hours re-creating. In fact, he has built replicas of the USS Texas, the Titanic and the battleships USS Michigan and USS Oregon. Most are on display at the Louisiana War Memorial in Baton Rouge, but the U.S.S. Texas can be seen at the Texas State Technical College in Waco.

Although most of his creations are put in museums, Winters says he plans on making one someday for himself.

"Most of them are on display somewhere. I would like to have one that I could keep at home. Of course, it would have to be much smaller because we wouldn't have room for one this big." ★

Still TxDOT, TTA cut from different cloth

Turnpike Authority's unique structure creates 'an agency within an agency'

By Mark Cross
Texas Turnpike Authority

For more than 80 years TxDOT has been in the business of building tax-financed roadways. With populations rising and automobile travel increasing across the state, this traditional method of financing transportation projects just isn't enough.

So what do we do? "Build some toll roads!" somebody hollers from over at that big, domed building across the street from TxDOT's Austin headquarters.

So the 75th Texas Legislature gave TxDOT authority to build turnpike projects to help meet the transportation needs of the traveling public.

Now, first things first. Toll roads, turnpikes. Are the terms interchangeable? The answer — yes and no. Toll roads are turnpike projects. Turnpike projects also include toll bridges and tunnels, high-occupancy vehicle lanes and other surface transportation projects that may assess a fee from facility users.

With all of this in mind, it's obvious that TxDOT's Texas Turnpike Authority Division is cut from a different cloth because of its unique structure and functions.

Considering structure might lead one to ask, "How will TTA operate?" Is it a division or its own agency? The answer — it's a little bit of both.

TTA is a mixed bag of goodies because it possesses characteristics common to divisions, districts and stand-alone agencies. Some have even referred to the division as an agency operating within an agency. But make no mistake — TTA is TxDOT. When you say TTA, you are really saying TxDOT.

Confused yet? Keep reading — this picture becomes as clear as a Texas road map. You can't get much clearer than that!

The TTA is responsible for studying, designing, constructing and operating turnpike projects as part of the state highway system.

The division's structure is similar to sever-

al other TxDOT divisions. TTA reports to a board of seven directors. The governor appoints six members to serve on the board. The seventh is a member of the Texas Transportation Commission, who serves on the TTA board as an ex-officio member.

But the day-to-day operations are lead by Phillip Russell, TTA's director. Russell is a 17-year TxDOT employee who brings TTA transportation project experience gained from developing projects in the Dallas and Bryan districts.

One of the authority's first goals is "to try to meld the strong reputation of the former Texas Turnpike Authority with TxDOT, which has one of the best reputations for building roads in the nation," Russell said.

Now, you ask, just how does this concept of toll-based financing work?

The TTA can sell revenue bonds to aid the development of turnpike projects. The bonds are repaid through tolls charged to motorists who choose to travel the specialized facility.

The advantage: Financing turnpike projects from revenue bond sales can help expedite construction of transportation projects earlier than traditional funding allows.

Turnpike projects give motorists the option to pay and decrease travel time or to continue to travel tax-based financed roads, facing possible travel time delays, due to congestion.

The shock of the state adopting such a policy shouldn't be too great. Especially since toll roads aren't new to Texas.

In 1953, the Texas Legislature created the first Texas Turnpike Authority to build the state's first toll project, the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike. That project is the current Interstate 30 freeway between Dallas and Fort Worth.

The DFW area has several turnpike facilities built by the former Texas Turnpike Authority, now the North Texas Tollway Authority.

The residents in the South Texas area are also familiar with the concept of turnpike projects. In particular, the Texas-Mexico

border area has several toll bridges currently operating to facilitate cross border traffic.

In 1983, Harris County approved a referendum to create the Harris County Toll Road Authority, which has built more than 80 miles of toll roads in that region since it began operation.

So, you might ask, with these other authorities operating, where will TTA operate? The answer — just about anywhere in the state.

The Texas Transportation Commission and the TTA board work together with regional toll authorities, resource agencies, cities, counties and municipalities to develop turnpike projects.

"Our attention is focused on urban and metropolitan areas right now," Russell said.

Texas should expect to see TTA's first project built in the Central Texas area, Russell said. The authority is developing the Texas 130, Texas 45, Loop 1 extension and U.S. 183-A projects in the Austin area.

"We're also looking at potential projects in San Antonio, Dallas and the Valley and Gulf Coast areas," Russell said.

Even though turnpike projects aren't exactly new to Texas, they tend to bring about a different attitude when it comes to transportation. It's TTA's job to make sure this attitude doesn't reflect negatively upon TxDOT.

That in itself may be difficult when you consider the state will be asking motorists to pay a little more for transportation.

So TTA's tasks may appear monstrous to those standing on the outside looking in. But successful completion of those tasks could yield some monumental results.

The most important thing to remember about turnpike projects is that, in most cases, they give motorists a traveling option.

To sum it all up — TTA is just another one of the pieces of the puzzle that make up the Texas Department of Transportation.

So if you've been wondering exactly what it is TTA does, now you know! Or did you decide that you'll never conquer a Texas road map anyway? ★

Bryan maintenance techs rescue driver trapped 15 hours

By Linda Ribble
Public Information Office

BRYAN — A routine day last spring turned into a harrowing exercise for two transportation maintenance technicians.

Bryan District employees Billy Johnson and James Riley discovered 22-year-old Jeremy Ivan Stavinoha of Bryan trapped in his overturned vehicle on Texas 21. By the time they found him, Stavinoha has been trapped for 15 hours. Riley and Johnson may have saved his life.

The two transportation maintenance technicians were returning to the district sign shop at about 3:30 p.m. April 14, when Riley, 36, caught a glimpse of what he thought to be the bottom of a vehicle below a Wixon Creek bridge on Texas 21. The men stopped to investigate.

"The car was turned completely around, and I didn't really expect anyone to be in the vehicle," Johnson, 38, said. "I got down on my hands and knees to look through the passenger's side window, and the guy was staring back at me."

The driver, Stavinoha, was penned in the vehicle but able to talk to Johnson. Johnson remained with Stavinoha while Riley went back to the truck and radioed for help.

"The top of the vehicle was crushed, so I didn't think anyone could have survived. I was very surprised," Riley said.

At 10:30 p.m. the night before, while traveling eastbound on Texas 21 about eight miles from Bryan, Stavinoha failed to follow a curve in the road, Stavinoha told his rescuers.

His vehicle left the road, traveled along

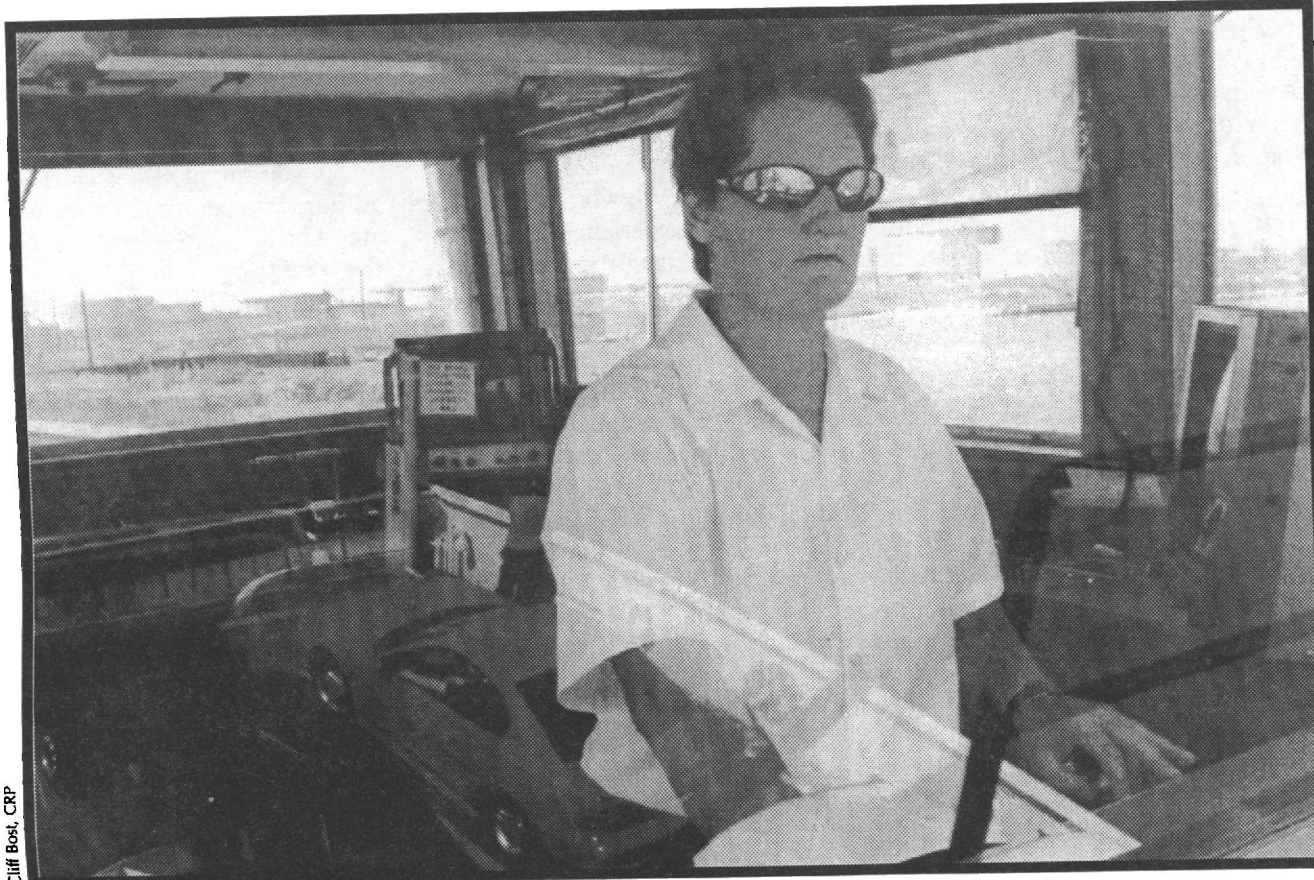
the bank of a ditch and overturned, landing on its roof.

The angle of the overturned vehicle prevented motorists traveling in either direction from noticing the vehicle. Johnson and Riley noticed it because they were traveling in a 2-1/2 ton shadow truck, which is used to follow striping vehicles and sits about seven feet above the road.

Although the cause of the crash is still under investigation, it appears mud in the creek caused the vehicle to overturn, according to Trooper Gene Wilganowski of the Department of Public Safety.

Stavinoha was taken to St. Joseph Regional Health Center. He suffered a broken arm in the accident. ★

Women on board



Cliff Best, CRP

Lori Register, one of the state's few female ferry boat captains, ferries motorists to and from Port Aransas. Register describes the TxDOT working environment as one of mutual respect and sharing.

TxDOT has opened range of non-traditional jobs to female workers

By Chante Bergmann
Public Information Office

Ferry captain. Engineer. Mechanic. Maintenance supervisor. Twenty years ago, the people the Texas Department of Transportation hired to fill these jobs were almost exclusively men.

Now it's not unusual for women to hold — and excel in — these same positions while earning the support and respect of male co-workers, their families and friends.

Often beginning their TxDOT careers in lower level clerical jobs, women are reinventing the image of previously male-dominated jobs. Of the more than 14,000 people employed by TxDOT, 3,620 are women.

The roles of women within the state's transportation department have changed dramatically since the agency's inception in 1917.

Until the early 1970s, most women occupied clerical positions in the department. The few women who did have professional credentials were often kept at entry level pay, often two or three grades beneath men with similar qualifications.

One of the first women to make it to a supervisory level was Bessie Bergstrom, who became chief clerk in 1929. After that, no other woman would hold a similar management position until Dian Neill became the director of the Motor Vehicle Division, now the Vehicles, Titles and Registration Division, in 1986.

In April 1938, Leah Moncure became the first woman to become a registered engineer



Mary Beth Kilgore, ABL

Nan Sharp, left, works in the field with Billy Adams, right, contract inspector out of the Synder Area Office. Sharp was employed in the oil fields before coming to work for TxDOT.

in Texas and a TxDOT employee. Since then, the number of women engineers has steadily increased; TxDOT employs 90 women engineers this year.

Women were restricted in other ways besides from climbing the ladder of success. In 1964, TxDOT women were not allowed to drive state cars. In some districts, women were not even allowed to ride in state vehicles. This rule eventually dissolved as necessity took over in the case of Tommie Pinkard, then editor of *Texas Highways*. She

needed a car to drive to Houston to report on a story. After some investigation, Pinkard found it wasn't her status as a woman that prevented her from driving a state car, but rather the fact the insurance carrier required drivers to take a physical exam.

Pinkard took the physical and gained the right to drive a state car.

A landmark 1970 decree from James Dingwall, state highway engineer, also had a progressive impact on the role of women in the department. Dingwall allowed women to trade dresses

for "pant suits with coordinated tops" as long as the outfits kept with "current fashions and still maintain an appropriate appearance in public." That same year Marilyn Stauffer became the Bryan District accountant and the first woman in a key district job.

Other changes helped women keep their jobs during pregnancy and allowed married couples to work for the department, giving them to opportunity to take holiday leave

together and to share sick time, vacation time and benefits.

In 1991, the Training Delivery Branch of the Human Resource Division asked employees to describe their vision of what the department would be like when it reached 100 years old. One student replied, "Women will be paid better and will go through the corporate ladder, hired on qualifications and doing the same jobs as men."

Women in non-traditional positions say this prediction is being realized long before the department's birthday in 2017.

Today, TxDOT employs hundreds of women whose salaries equal their male counterparts as they work alongside men in the field and in administrative offices.

Lori Register, ferry boat captain

"It's pretty neat to be a female who has achieved so much in a career dominated by men," said Lori Register, 34, of Port Aransas, the city's first female ferry boat captain.

"I get a lot of compliments when I come down from the wheelhouse. It makes me feel good," she said. "You're in it for the heart but also to achieve your goals and to make a living."

Register's ascent to ferry boat captain was noted by the local media. The response has been positive, she said. Often when she hits the deck after her shift, passengers give her the thumbs up.

"People know me from the local paper. They think it's neat to see a woman ferry boat captain," she said.

Becoming somewhat of a celebrity in this gulf-side town hasn't spoiled her, though. Register still maintains her lawn care business in addition to working full time on the ferry.

After working for the department for a year, she set her goal on becoming a ferry boat captain. In October 1998, Register realized her dream. She now drives a boat five shifts a week — two graveyard shifts included— from the Port Aransas to Harbor Island.

Her relationship with the ferry's crew is also a positive one. A sense of mutual respect and sharing is how Register describes working relationships at the Port Aransas ferry operation. Register is hoping to teach her deckhand, Eddie Phelps, how to drive a boat so he eventually can be a captain one day, too. Women have something to teach their male co-workers about skill such as driving a ferry boat, she said.

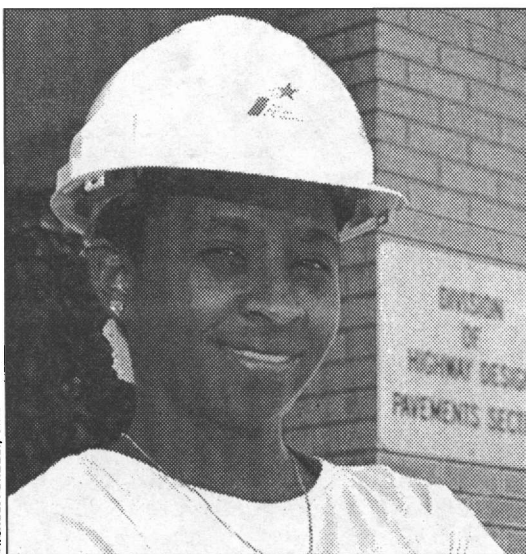
"Each captain has a different technique when driving the boats, so it's important to learn several ways to drive," she said.

She credits a lot of her learning to fellow captains' instructions and the support of her family and fellow workers.

"My parents are 100 percent supportive of me. They are more excited about my accomplishments than I am at times," Register said.

She also receives the backing she needs to grow in her position. "I am constantly learning on the job. I don't know everything about the boat engines, but the men have been really supportive and will answer all of my questions."

Capt. Ernest Hinojosa said Register is an excellent worker. "In my opinion her work has always been better than average. She is a steady worker and very friendly with the traveling public."



Michael Amador, TRV

'At meetings often I would be the only woman, the only black person, the youngest person...you become very conscious of who you are, but now it doesn't phase me.'

— Debbie Walker, engineer



Mary Beth Kilgore, ABI

'One man who wanted to hire me told me that a single woman on his work force would improve work output by 90 percent because the men would work even harder to keep up with that one woman.'

— Nan Sharp, maintenance supervisor

Hinojosa said Register's co-workers support her as captain mainly because they have worked with her long enough to be comfortable with her at the helm.

Register said being a woman hasn't made her vulnerable to discrimination at work.

"Each person is different when they drive a boat. I'm treated just like anyone else," she said.

Nan Sharp, maintenance supervisor

As TxDOT's first female maintenance supervisor, Nan Sharp, 44, is no stranger to hard work. In the early 1980s, after serving as billing clerk for the city of Lamesa, Sharp began work in the oil fields of the Abilene

area.

"My husband broke his back when I was pregnant with our first child. The pay for women wasn't good in the area so my father-in-law told me about a job in the oil fields using heavy equipment."

As soon as both baby and husband were doing fine, Sharp was rough-necking in the oil fields. Her hard work paid off, and she moved through the ranks to the position of supervisor.

In 1987, after her stint in the oil industry, Sharp took a job as a maintenance technician at the Borden County Maintenance Office, the first woman in the office. She was in the right place at the right time. The supervisor and assistant supervisor in the office retired simultaneously, leaving the door wide open for Sharp to put her oil field supervisory experience to use. For the past six years, Sharp has served as the transportation management supervisor in Borden County.

TxDOT work, though, has little to compare with the oil fields, she said.

"In the field there aren't as many policies. There wasn't a lot of discrimination, but there were also no guidelines. I had to fit in a strictly man's field. If you earned their respect, you had it forever."

TxDOT's policies have ensured Sharp the same supervisor's salary that a man of comparable experience would make. Sharp, who manages nine employees, attributes the equal pay to the department's pay scale system.

"How much you end up making generally depends on how hard you want to work," she said.

Sharp is aware that not everyone relishes the idea of working for a female maintenance supervisor. One of the first questions she asks job applicants is if they are aware they will be working for a woman.

"They are shocked at first but accept it. They respect my skills and I respect theirs," she said.

When someone outside the agency shows up on a maintenance site, he often expects to see a man in charge, Sharp said. "When they realize that I'm in charge they'll turn red, and then it's business as usual."

But, Sharp said, it's even possible for a woman to benefit from the occasional narrow-mindedness of certain male co-workers.

"One man who wanted to hire me told me that a single woman on his work force would improve work output by 90 percent because the men would work even harder to keep up with that one woman," she said.

Debbie Walker, civil engineer

Some TxDOT women in non-traditional jobs enjoyed the support of male and female mentors from an early age. In the eighth grade, Debbie Walker knew she wanted to be an engineer. "My math teacher noticed that I excelled and told me that I should pursue a career in engineering" said Walker, now 31.

After the seed had been planted, teachers throughout high school encouraged her to follow her dream. Her high school drafting teacher suggested civil engineering because, at the time, there weren't many women involved in it.

After shadowing a civil engineer for a day, Walker knew that this was the job for her.

■ See WOMEN, Page 11

Fast Facts

Governor's Community Achievement Awards

Nine communities have been selected by Keep Texas Beautiful as recipients of the 1999 Governor's Community Achievement Awards. The awards were to be presented July 2 during the Keep Texas Beautiful Annual Convention in Austin. Winning cities are to be awarded the following landscape funds:

■ Austin

Austin District
Population: over 250,000
Authorized: \$265,000

■ Waco

Waco District
Population: 100,001-250,000
Authorized: \$155,000

■ Nacogdoches

Lufkin District
Population: 50,001-100,000
Authorized: \$130,000

■ Lufkin

Lufkin District
Population: 25,001-50,000
Authorized: \$95,000

■ Greenville

Paris District
Population: 17,501-25,000
Authorized: \$85,000

■ Taylor

Austin District
Population: 7,501-17,500
Authorized: \$75,000

■ Whitehouse

Tyler District
Population: 3,501-7,500
Authorized: \$70,000

■ Muenster

Wichita Falls District
Population: 1,001-3,500
Authorized: \$65,000

■ Quintana

Houston District
Population: Up to 1,000
Authorized: \$60,000

Source: TxDOT

Trust no one?

A poll of 1,014 adults asking whose advice and information would they trust about the Y2K problem discovered:

- 49 percent would trust Al Gore
- 54 percent would trust Bill Clinton
- 63 percent would trust Ralph Nader
- 68 percent would trust a military expert
- 80 percent would trust Bill Gates
- 86 percent would trust computer academicians
- 89 percent would trust a Y2K-trained computer expert

Source: Home Office Commuting Magazine



Patsy Maddux, SIT

New recruits

Retiree Bobby Evans, former Tyler District Engineer and father of the Adopt-a-Highway Program — seated on top of a pile of trash with his wife, Billie Jean, left — still promotes his anti-litter message. He serves as honorary member of the newly organized TxDOT employees-San Angelo District volunteer group. Volunteers held their first clean-up May 22.

ETHICAL QUESTIONS

Use objective facts to evaluate applicants for TxDOT positions

By Darrell Colbert
Office of Civil Rights

The Comptroller's Office of New York City posted several job openings for entry level auditing positions in 1994. The minimum requirements included an associate's degree with emphasis in accounting. The comptroller's office recruited applicants at Baruch College.

Donald Hamm was graduating with a bachelor's degree in accounting and applied for one of the positions. At the time Hamm applied for the position, he was 49 years old. Hamm's resume indicated he also holds a bachelor's degree in finance, has 12 years experience as a consultant in the securities market and was an experienced trader in the stock market.

Ms. Sheehan, audit manager, interviewed Hamm. Although she recommended Hamm for a second interview, she indicated in her interview evaluation that Hamm was "overqualified and would be bored and might not fit in." Mr. Morgese conducted the second interview. After interviewing Hamm, Morgese recommended Hamm not be hired because he was not interested in the job. Morgese's opinion was based on the fact Hamm did not ask any questions regarding the job duties of the auditing position. The applicant only asked questions about job security and benefits.

Hamm was not selected for the auditor's position and subsequently sued the New York Comptroller's Office, arguing he was

not hired because of his age.

The comptroller's office asked the federal court to dismiss the lawsuit. The court held that before dismissing the lawsuit, the evidence must carefully be reviewed for "circumstantial evidence that could support an inference of discrimination." The evidence the court used was the term "overqualified" used by Sheehan.

The court ruled Hamm had presented enough evidence of discrimination. The court added the word "overqualified" might often be a code word for "too old."

This ruling by the federal court should remind hiring officials to use objective facts when rejecting job applicants. State the specific reason an applicant meeting the minimum requirements for a position was not hired. It should be noted, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals held, that the term "overqualified" might be correlated with age. Basing an employment-related decision on this factor does not, in and of itself, indicate that age discrimination has occurred.

Although there have been split decisions in the courts on the interpretation of the term "overqualified" when referring to applicants 40 years and older, it is highly recommended that hiring officials not use the term when making hiring decisions. ★

Darrell Colbert is an investigator in TxDOT's Civil Rights Office.

WOMEN

Continued from Page 9

Federal Highway Administration on a two-year employee loan program.

"This was a good experience because I got to meet so many people. Many of them I still continue to work with," Walker said.

This loan staff program allowed her to get additional training for Long Term Pavement Performance (LTPP), which prepared her for her current job duties at TxDOT. She is an engineering assistant with the Pavement Management Information Systems. PMIS uses a computer program that stores pavement data from surveys on roadways. Walker analyzes the information and then writes an annual report comparing the current road conditions with the previous four years' data to see how well the pavements have withstood or deteriorated.

In addition, Walker still works with the LTPP as a liaison for the pavement section and has taken the lead in establishing a yearly, statewide meeting of the district LTPP coordinators. Texas has more LTPP sections than any other state in the United States. She manages traffic control for the LTPP program in Texas when the sections are being monitored or evaluated for situations such as road distress or data collection.

At first working at FHWA, Walker said, she was treated like a secretary rather than a skilled engineer. "I wasn't getting any engineering experience so I took charge of the situation and talked to my LTPP division director who helped me make the appropriate changes," Walker said. "At meetings often I would be the only woman, the only black person, the youngest person, the smallest person...you become very conscious of who you are, but now it doesn't phase me."

Walker's attitude and skills have made her a valuable TxDOT employee, co-workers said.

"Debbie is a very positive, creative individual who enjoys sharing information and ideas with other people, especially through her technical writing skills," said Mike Murphy, assistant director of the Pavement Section in the Design Division, who has worked with Walker for the past seven years.

Walker has found some challenges in balancing her work and home life, including her role as parent to her 2-year-old daughter.

"I want her to have good memories of her childhood rather than remembering that mommy was always working," Walker said. "TxDOT has been very accommodating with me after having a child."

She has been allowed to telecommute to work. This program allowed her to spend half a day at the office and then go home and continue working via computer.

Her husband is also very supportive. "He knows I'm a workaholic. If I have to come up on the weekends or stay late, he picks up the slack."

For example, in March 1997, just two weeks after she gave birth to her daughter, Walker had to organize an LTPP conference. "My husband helped me make labels, stuff folders and organize the room. He likes to get involved."

Walker said she doesn't believe being a woman hinders her in her job or in attaining her job goals.

"If there is something that I really want, I research it and I go out and get it. If anything, being a woman has pushed me even



Blanca Del Valle, ELP

Gloria Carbajal of El Paso is TxDOT's first female courtesy patrol officer. Carbajal is an experienced mechanic whose job it is to rescue stranded motorists. She occasionally shows male drivers how to change their flat tires.

more to attain my goals."

Although engineering is her livelihood, her passion is writing. Walker has a liberal arts degree from Lincoln University in Worchester County, Pennsylvania. She enjoys technical writing and jumps at the chance to use her skills "My next goal is to get my engineer's license. I expect to have it within the next couple of years."

Gloria Carbajal, patrol officer

An extra long stretch of Interstate 10 coupled with the hot sun on the dusty El Paso desert terrain creates more than favorable conditions for car trouble. But don't be surprised when a woman comes to your rescue.

Gloria Carbajal, TxDOT's first female courtesy patrol officer, has worked as an auto mechanic since 1975 and has been helping stranded motorists for the past five years.

"You'd be surprised at how many men out there that don't know how to change a flat," said Carbajal, 48. "Even this morning I surprised a stranded male motorist with the mechanic knowledge that I have."

Courtesy patrol officers assist stranded motorists with flat tires, mechanical problems or those who have run out of fuel. They also aid the El Paso police department with traffic flow problems. Local state troopers and police depend heavily on the six-member courtesy patrol team as a line of first response, district officials said.

Carbajal's interest in auto mechanics began early. By age 12, she was fascinated with cars and used to watch her uncles or neighbors fix cars. This interest eventually led her to attend community college and pursue a degree in auto mechanics.

In the late 1970s, Carbajal got her first job at a department store auto repair shop, and with it came her first taste of sexual discrimination.

"The other employees would sometimes try to sabotage my repairs. Say if I did a tune up, they would go back and cross the wires and try to make me look bad," she said. "If

we would have had harassment laws when I first started back in 1975, I'd be rich by now."

Despite her negative experiences in the private sector, Carbajal believes that TxDOT offers her an equitable working environment.

"TxDOT treats me fairly rather than by biasing on gender," she said. "At private corporations I got equal pay. But at smaller stations I got paid a lot less even though I had the same qualifications. When I first started working, men were paid more than females across the board."

The atmosphere is different at TxDOT, Carbajal said.

"We get along fine. Everyone gets a chance to add input. It's a fair exchange of information on the job."

When Carbajal first got the job at TxDOT, then District Engineer Mary May was elated.

"We were in the process of building up the courtesy patrol and expanding their role in the community. She has been a tremendous asset to the program and definitely added a new dimension to the crew," May said.

Adding a patrol officer as qualified as Carbajal was a tremendous gain for the department and set a new example for the department's professional women, she said.

Carbajal was confident that her qualifications and experience put her in a good position to win the TxDOT job.

"Of all of the patrollers, I'm the one with the most mechanical experience. I can get into the major motor overhauls or rebuild transmissions," Carbajal said.

She is passing down her mechanical knowledge to her children.

"My oldest son has learned a lot of my knowledge. The boys have always been very proud of me. Not to mention they end up saving a lot on car repairs." ★

Retirees choose ranching as avocation

As we begin our second year of publishing this column, I want to thank the retirees for sharing a part of their lives with us. It has been fun writing about the various activities of our former department employees. And there is still more to come.

This month, we begin with a congratulations to **Robert Mills**, who was recently married. Robert bought a 50-acre farm and is raising cattle. The 1995 retiree plays golf when he wants to and does a little traveling. Robert worked in the **Childress District** for 38 years.

Ranching is among the retirement activities of two **Pharr District** retirees, **Eliobardo Garza** and **Amado Pena**. Eliobardo retired in 1983 with 30 years.



Helen Havelka

The Good Life

Amado also spends time fishing, hunting, traveling and camping. He had 24 years when he left in 1992. **Fran Moore** can be found helping family members. The former VTR employee from Lubbock finds time to travel, hunt antiques and visit friends. Fran retired in 1991.

Harold Hunger from the **Yoakum District** took a few minutes from his busy schedule to send us a card. Harold, who retired last year after more than 31 years of service, is finishing his cabin in the country. He also spends time visiting with his family, fishing, camping and gardening.

Bette Arnold is certainly staying busy since retiring from the **Pharr District** in 1991. Bette, who had 26 years, is involved in church activities and volunteers at the hospital. She loves to travel and finds time to join other **TxDOT** retirees for lunch once a month.

Another **Pharr District** retiree, **Guillermo Villarreal**, joins other retirees for coffee. The 26-year veteran, who retired in 1995, said that he is staying home and enjoying retirement.

Received cards from **Edmundo Cobos** and

Ben Muschalek from the **Odessa District**. **Edmundo** retired in 1993 with 32 years of service. Ben had 28 years when he left in 1992.

Since retiring in 1976 from the **Travel and Information Division**, **Joseph Alexander** has been enjoying life. The 28-year veteran breeds and races quarter horses, and builds low-income housing. Joe is able to work in a round of golf almost every day. Don't work too hard, Joe.

Checking in with us were **Jose Gonzales** and **Refugio Castillo** from the **Pharr District**. Jose worked 42 years before retiring in 1988, while Refugio began his retirement in 1987 after a 38-year career with the department.

Glenn McLain has spent most of his retirement years traveling. The **Childress District** retiree posted his 40th year in 1988.

Treva Ray from the **Amarillo District** celebrated her 1996 retirement with a cruise. Travel and keeping tabs on her grandchildren also occupy much of her time. The 27-year veteran actually went back to work at her old job for a six-month stint, but she has retired again.

Antonio Morales spends much of his time reading. The **Pharr District** retiree completed a 28-year career in 1985.

Vince Dungan from the **Information Systems Division** took to the road after retiring in 1997. After a 30-year career with **TxDOT**, he enjoys staying in touch with department employees and retirees. Vince hasn't completely stopped working; he often helps his neighbors with various jobs.

Fishing, traveling and enjoying family and friends tops

Milton Howard's retirement itinerary. Milton worked in the **Childress District** for 35 years, retiring in 1987.

Helping as a bus monitor and working in his nursery are some of **Roberto Lopez's** retirement activities. He retired from the **Pharr District** in 1994 after 24 years.

Tom Woods from VTR has been busy refurbishing an old home for resale since retiring in 1997. He had 31 years with the department.

"Enjoy life," wrote **D.G. "Quig" Quigley** from the **Amarillo District**. Quig, who retired in 1993, spends time walking, watching television and reading. He had 32 years of service with the department. "I don't miss the work, but sure miss the people."

Coaching Little League and a little part-time work is what has kept **Rene Ramirez**

active. Rene completed a 30-year career in the **Pharr District** in 1997.

Working is also where you will find two 1995 **San Antonio District** retirees. **Maxie Neal** left with 37 years, and **Stayton Woodall** had 32 years. Stayton also finds time to travel.

Like many retirees, it took **Arnoldo Cisneros** a little time to adjust to retirement. But the 1985 retiree wrote that he is now enjoying it. Arnoldo works in the yard and likes spending time with his grandchildren. He worked for almost 28 years in the **Pharr District**.

W.T. Sullivan has enjoyed traveling since retiring in 1993. The **Amarillo District** retiree heads south during the winters and can be found in the mountains during the summer. This 40-year veteran also keeps up with his grandchildren.

Keeping his "honey-do list under control" is what **Bill Bockmon** wrote. It's not all work for the **Bryan District** retiree who finds time to play golf, watch his grandchildren play softball and baseball, and attend Texas A&M ball games. Bill retired from the **Bryan District** with 32 years in 1990.

Pharr District's Lawrence Wilks made a big move last year. The Valley native moved to the Lake Conroe area. Lawrence retired in 1993 after 41 years.

VTR's **Georgia Hamilton** has also recently moved into a new home. She spends some of her time on the Internet, e-mailing friends. Georgia had 12 years of service when she retired in 1995.

Speaking of e-mail, I have another first to report — the first retiree to send me his "Good Life" information via e-mail.

Wesley Burford from **General Services Division** wrote that he is finding less free time now than when he worked. The 1995 retiree is helping his wife with her catering and cake-making business. Wes, who had 31 years of service, has two sons working for **TxDOT** — Scott in **ISD** and Wes in the **Austin District**.

Since we are on the subject, on-line retirees can send me information for this column via the Internet. My address is hhavelk@mailgw.dot.state.tx.us.

Whether a retiree contacts me through e-mail or simply a card or letter, I need to know in which district/division/office you worked, when you retired, how many years of service you had and your recent activities. I look forward to hearing from you. ★

NICHOLS

Continued from Page 3

Just completing his 16th year with **TxDOT**, Nichols is proud to still work in the division in which he started. "I've been here the whole time," he smiled. "Same boss, too. I learned a lot from Tommy Nelson. In fact, I can really say he taught me everything I know."

Nichols really appreciates the **TxDOT** family concept as re-introduced by Executive Director **Wes Heald**. His father was an area engineer for the Federal Highway Administration. His sister works for the **General Services Division**; his mother-in-law worked

in the **Human Resource and Training, Quality and Development** divisions; and his brother-in-law works in the **Austin District**.

So how did Nichols get into Harley hogs? (Thought I forgot about that, didn't you?)

"My wife and I had been interested in taking up motorcycles," he said. "In fact, we talked about it for ten years. Finally, one day we just decided we weren't getting any younger, so we bought a ninety-three Harley-Davidson."

Apparently, they both enjoyed this new hobby so much that **Brenda Nichols** decided she had to have her own — a bright yellow Harley. Together they attend rallies throughout the country. They also belong to an **Austin Harley** chapter, a really diverse

group of people, according to Nichols, that includes doctors, lawyers — and even CPAs.

"It's a real different experience traveling by motorcycle through other states," he said. "Everyone ought to try it. You find out just how good Texas roads are."

The Nichols' daughter, **Lissa Marie**, a **Pflugerville High School** freshman, often rides with them, when she's not too busy playing clarinet in the school marching band.

Nichols said the real reason he rides is because "it's fun," but he admitted his 20th high school reunion was coming up, and he wanted to make a lasting impression on his old school mates. No one will ever call Scott Nichols a bean counter. Trust me. ★

TxDOT Roundup

Bandera using alternative to flagger at work sites

BANDERA — The Bandera County Maintenance Office has been using a new method of traffic control at work sites in place of a flagger. The innovative procedure involves the use of mobile traffic signal devices.

The traveling public recognizes and heeds the traffic signals while a flagger is sometimes ignored, according to Bandera Maintenance Supervisor Bruce Elikor.

"The recognition factor is a big plus — people are used to seeing a traffic signal, and there is no mistaking what a red light means," Elikor said. "We can free up a man from the flagging position and assign him other duties on the job to get more work done."

Kerrville Area Engineer Bill Tucker saw the feasibility of using this technology and suggested Bandera maintenance section give it a trial run.

Elikor delivered a presentation at the recent Maintenance Conference on the benefits of this new traffic control system. He will be addressing civic groups in his area to increase recognition and awareness of these new traffic control devices.

The mobile traffic control system is made to work on two-lane rural roadways, where lane closures must occur in order to get work done. Removable stop bars are also placed on the roadway to increase the awareness of the traveling public.

This system not only enhances safety, it also increases productivity by freeing employees who previously had flagging duties to perform other tasks.

The Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) is studying the feasibility of using these devices, and if they are found to perform as designed, they may be in use in other counties as well.

— Roger Leal, SAT

Ferry landing to be renamed for longtime ferry manager

CORPUS CHRISTI — The Texas Department of Transportation Ferry Landing at Port Aransas is expected to be renamed in honor of Melvin O. Littleton, a longtime Port Aransas resident and ferry manager for 30 years.

Authorizing TxDOT to designate the Port Aransas ferry landing as the Melvin O. Littleton Ferry Landing, House Bill 3002 was sent May 29 to Gov. George W. Bush for his signature. Bush is anticipated to sign the bill, written by state Rep. Gene Seaman, R-Corpus Christi, and sponsored by state Sen. Carlos Truan, D-Corpus Christi.

Born in Snyder, Littleton moved to Port Aransas in 1936 and began working at the ferry in 1951. He was instrumental to the ferry's continued operation during and following its transition from Nueces County ownership to state responsibility in 1968, and managed the ferry operation for 30 years.

Other accomplishments include paving Port Aransas roads, and developing a gate system on the nine-vehicle ferryboats that prevents people from driving into the water. He died in 1994 at 73.

— Becky Kureska, CRP

Special Services Section wins Goodwill award for VTR

Goodwill Industries of Central Texas presented its 1998 Mail Solutions Award to the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division's Special Services Section. Goodwill has a \$250,000 a year contract to mail special plate renewal notices and letters to the state's 254 county tax assessor-collectors.

The award recognizes VTR's dedication to helping Goodwill fulfill its mission of providing job-related services for people with barriers to employment. In fiscal year 1998, Goodwill's 15 job trainees handled approximately 70,000 pieces of mail for VTR. The Travel Division and *Texas Highways* are also part of Goodwill's Mail Solutions program.

— Sarah Wilson, VTR

Governor's Commission to host women's conference

AUSTIN — The Governor's Commission for Women will be sponsoring the 11th annual Professional Development Conference for Women on July 15 at the Austin Convention Center.

This daylong event will include keynote speakers Jody Conradt, University of Texas women's basketball coach, and Patricia Hayes, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Seton Healthcare Network. Motivational workshops will be held throughout the day. The fee is \$70.

"This is an excellent opportunity for professional women to network with the over 1,700 attendees from across the state," said Deryl Creekmur, the Texas Department of Transportation's representative to the commission.

Each state agency has an appointed representative and one alternate to the commission, who are responsible for identifying women's concerns and addressing these issues on the state level.

"Women in state government get to see the direct benefit of the GCW by serving on committees and attending programs designed for women," Creekmur said.

The commission is involved in women's affairs at many levels. At the state level, the commission aids the governor in finding and recommending Texas women for appointed office. Other goals include community outreach, public-private partnerships and coordination of community and state resources to improve the status of women. By working with established task forces and policy groups on women's issues they can monitor federal and state legislation pertaining to women's issues.

The commission also sponsors several events throughout the year. The Texas Women's Hall of Fame recognizes women who have made a significant impact on the lives of Texans. An ongoing partnership with M.D. Anderson Cancer Center has made free breast cancer information available at more than 500 public libraries.

The commission also produces the Layman's Guide to Legislative Process. This guide promotes participation in public policy process.

TxDOT women interested in volunteering can contact Creekmur at 416-3346.

— Chante Bergmann, PIO

TxDOT employees assist in tornado clean-up effort

Employees from seven northeast Texas maintenance sections assisted in the clean-up efforts in and around DeKalb in the aftermath of the tornado that ripped through the area May 4.

"We (had) about 37 employees using Gradalls, front-end loaders, chainsaws and dump trucks to help clear much the debris and rubble away," said Ira Wisinger, TxDOT maintenance section supervisor in New Boston. "We had all the roads open to emergency traffic that night, and then cleared most of the other debris from the local highways by Thursday. On Friday, we began work on removing debris from the homes a businesses destroyed by the tornado."

At one time, Wisinger said, a double-wide mobile home lay upside down across Farm-to-Market Road 992 just outside DeKalb. The home belonged to the Sherry and Tim Forsythe, the daughter and son-in-law of Roy Russett, Daingerfield Maintenance Supervisor. After assisting the Forsythes — who were not home at the time the storm hit — in removing their salvageable belongings, they were able to push it off of the roadway so traffic could pass.

Debris was disposed of at the old DeKalb landfill and Red River Army Depot under the supervision of the Department of Public Safety, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission and the Texas Division of Emergency Management.

TxDOT maintenance sections from the Atlanta and Paris districts assisting in the clean-up are from Clarksville, Daingerfield, Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon, Paris, New Boston and Texarkana.

— Marcus Sandifer, ATL

El Paso District establishes child car seat inspections

EL PASO — In celebration of a Mexican holiday honoring children, the El Paso District has helped set up a program to inspect child safety seats.

Pat Dalbin, El Paso District transportation funding administrator and safety specialist, was instrumental in establishing a permanent inspection site for child safety seats, only the second such site in the nation.

April 29, *el Dia del Nino* (Day of the Child), a day of celebration in Mexico, officially was chosen to inaugurate the El Paso inspection site.

Another border safety campaign, "Buckle the Border," went into effect in June. This is an educational and enforcement campaign is designed to increase seat belt use in in border communities. The campaign is a joint venture between TxDOT and the U.S. departments of the Treasury, Justice, and Agriculture. These agencies, responsible for regulating people and goods entering into the United States, have placed bilingual Buckle Up America signs at all the inspection lanes on international bridges from El Paso to Brownsville.

— Blanca Del Valle, ELP

■ See TXDOT, Page 15

Service Awards

Ablene District

30 years
Tommy J. Higgins
Arturo R. Melendez
25 years
Alfred R. Davis
15 years
Charles A. Dalbert
Miguel Santos

Amarillo District

25 years
Eugene R. Shrauner
20 years
Leslie H. Kistner
15 years
Victor D. Chandler
Helen N. Freidell
Wesley N. Hopson
10 years
Kenneth W. Corse
Michael C. Fowler
Albert L. Fulcher

Atlanta District

35 years
Dan R. Thomas
25 years
Darlene C. Walker
15 years
Allen R. Stallings
5 years
Walter L. George

Austin District

25 years
Raymond S. Allen
David B. McHugh
15 years
Elizabeth T. Norris
Steven O. Sylvester
5 years
Christopher P. Flores

Baumont District

30 years
Leonard M. Durow
5 years
Bruce A. Myrick
Catherine A. Ramsey

Brownwood District

25 years
Carl D. White
10 years
Sigifredo Bustos Jr.
Michael G. Ray

Bryan District

35 years
Bobby R. Vernon
30 years
Stanley M. Wade
5 years
Connie J. Flickinger
Kerry D. Jones
David Polk III

Childress District

5 years
Charles L. Christy
Otis J. Franks
Hazel B. Jones
Luis Leos
Terry L. Manuel
Keith R. Milhoan

Corpus Christi District

30 years
Samuel Morales
Dexter C. Turner
25 years
Daniel Aguilar
20 years
Theodoro M. Garza Jr.
Karen K. Whitsitt
15 years
Lloyd Clifton
Raul Valdez Jr.
10 years

Luis S. Flores
Abelardo R. Solis
5 years
Ashraf I. Hafez
David W. Potter
Larry H. Wenger Jr.

Dallas District

35 years
Charles R. Tucker
30 years
James E. Hunt
25 years
William R. Crosby
15 years
Bobby L. Bland
Charlotte A. Robinson
5 years
Douglas D. Cathcart
George B. Cornue
Micheal D. Culton
Zelda D. Cummings
Alice F. Engledow
Sara T. McFadin
Georgie C. Reeder
Kenneth P. Riddle
Benny W. Scarfone

El Paso District

40 years
Lasaro R. Salgado
35 years
Gilberto Mendoza
25 years
Isabel O. Salas
20 years
Reynaldo R. Loya
George Ortiz
Daniel Trevizo
15 years
Peter H. Bustamante
5 years
Maria R. Chavez
Daniel Flores
Domingo V. Hernandez
Magdalena Leal

Fort Worth District

35 years
Billy H. Blevins
30 years
Ruben T. Lehrmann
15 years
David B. Dennis
Samuel Gomez
Thelma D. Patterson
10 years
James R. Neely
5 years
Baldemar Galindo
Ross D. Johnson
Patrick G. Quarles Jr.
Mikel J. Riley

Houston District

30 years
Joe D. Keeton
25 years
Charles L. Carethers
William P. Davis
Charles R. Parker
20 years
Sandra M. Allen
Catherine T. Nguyen
15 years
Robert F. Schultea
Fawn M. Snyder
10 years
James C. Bryant
Gerardo C. Davila
Stephen L. Leffingwell
Jerry Roach
Maria Toybina
5 years
Tommy W. Keasling
Russell G. Morgan
Debra A. Williams

Laredo District

25 years
William A. Boatwright

Uvaldo G. Garcia Jr.
Leopoldo Guerrero
20 years
Raul Flores
Crispin J. Jimenez Jr.
15 years
Juan J. Espinosa
Roberto P. Sepulveda
5 years
Yolanda A. Balderas
Elia Hernandez
John H. Long
Eduardo Rodriguez Jr.

Lubbock District

25 years
Matthew H. Askew Jr.
Mercedes L. Estrada
Don J. Garrett
20 years
Jimmy W. Atwood
Gregory O. Moorhead
Donna M. Ogerly
15 years
Ronnie D. Robertson
William E. Smith
10 years
Herman L. Guthrie
Charles S. Renfro
5 years
Guy R. Sledge

Lufkin District

10 years
Douglas K. Mark
5 years
Matthew B. Murray

Odessa District

30 years
James T. Beckham Jr.
20 years
Luis A. Chapa
Ruben F. Rodriguez
15 years
Victor M. Martinez
Alfredo R. Martinez
10 years
Ricardo A. Garcia
Diana J. Ortiz
5 years
Joe W. Bumpus

Paris District

30 years
James K. Baker
Larry W. Clark
25 years
Charles W. Crossland
15 years
Terrence M. Maxwell
5 years
Herman D. Andrus
Rafael A. Riojas

Pharr District

35 years
Jose A. Flores
25 years
Domingo Charles
5 years
Joe B. Casas
Cruz E. Garcia
Maria C. Gwynn
Jesus M. Hernandez
Aurora B. Morales
Roel Silva
Graciela G. Soto
Bill C. Taitague

San Angelo District

20 years
Stacey L. Huber
15 years
Othol K. Long
Fernando B. Sanchez
10 years
Darren S. Crenwelge
5 years
Philip T. Horne
David C. Hortness

James F. Palacio
Luis P. Ramirez
Edwin L. Smith
Martha F. Villarreal

San Antonio District

40 years
Richard E. Rodriguez
35 years
Jorge Camarillo
Paul W. Jungmann
30 years
Pablo G. Gonzales
Ronnie L. McGuffin
15 years
Thomas J. Hill
Joe P. Valadez
10 years
Anthony G. Perez
Irene C. Ugarte
5 years
John C. Ferguson Jr.
William Koerner
Tony S. Martinez
Michael J. Shelton
Nancy L. Tarbox

Tyler District

35 years
Eldon L. McCurley
25 years
Nathaniel Temple
20 years
John A. George
15 years
Billy J. Cooper
Glynn C. Starnes
5 years
Marlin L. Gallender
Charles N. Kirby

Waco District

20 years
Vivian A. Powers
15 years
Tama G. Keahey
5 years
Ernesto C. Garcia
Raymond Roddy Jr.
Rakesh Tripathi

Wichita Falls District

15 years
Jo P. McDaniel
5 years
Michael D. Beaver
Angelia D. Thomason
Anthony J. Walser

Yoakum District

30 years
Emil P. Kloesel Jr.
25 years
James M. Tippins
15 years
Lonnie J. Gregorcyk
William G. Hundl
10 years
Timothy R. Kalich

Aviation Division

15 years
John Wepryk Jr.
10 years
Harold R. Lafitte

Construction and Maintenance Divisions

35 years
Harold Albers
5 years
Roy A. Contreras
James O. Hamm

Design Division

10 years
Joseph E. Owen
5 years
Marcos T. McManus
Michelle N. Minjarez

Environmental Affairs Division

25 years
Elvia R. Gonzalez

Finance Division

10 years
Leticia Cruz
5 years
Rose Ann Juarez

General Services Division

30 years
L. D. Washington
20 years
Debra D. Beers
Noe Molina
15 years
James L. Jarrett Jr.
Gerald E. McLeod
10 years
Kenneth J. Winkler
5 years
Gregory N. Cole
Jose M. Serrano
Toby R. Nipp

Human Resources Division

10 years
Martha L. Martin

Information Systems Division

25 years
Johnnie L. Zak
20 years
Tommy L. Haydon
15 years
Joseph M. Bradford
Mary R. Sikes
10 years
Gary M. Popp
James T. Wilder Jr.
5 years
Lynette K. Waters

Internal Audit Office

15 years
Merle K. Williamson

Public Transportation Division

5 years
Paul S. Moon

Right of Way Division

5 years
Tami W. Rogers

Traffic Operations Division

5 years
Christine E. Johnson

Transportation Planning and Programming Division

25 years
Virginia G. Anderson
10 years
Cheryl L. Heflin

Travel Division

15 years
Mary E. Ulrich Jackson
Melissa M. Vian
5 years
Sandra J. Kissman
Nora R. Molina

Vehicle Titles and Registration Division

30 years
Mavis R. Tennon
15 years
Cynthia D. Medrano
10 years
Nancy Naysmith
5 years
Nicole Mathis

Retirements

Dallas District

Jerry D. Shepherd, Engineering Specialist III, 36 years
Johnny E. White, Engineering Technician III, 29 years

Fort Worth District

Joseph W. "Sarge" Merchant, Transportation Maintenance Supervisor I, 7 years

Vehicle Titles & Registration Division

Gilbert C. Groven, Program Administrator I, 26 years

May

Atlanta District

Elvin E. Rousseau, Director III, 37 years

Dallas District

David A. Phelps, Engineer III, 29 years

San Angelo District

Leonard L. Sanchez, Motor Vehicle Mechanic II, 21 years

Wichita Falls District

Norma S. Sharp, Administrative Technician III, 20 years

Finance Division

Joyce E. Cumpton, Program Administrator II, 21 years

June

Fort Worth District

Randy Burkett, Director I, 29 years

Odessa District

Roberto H. Herrera, Engineering Aide, 29 years

Pharr District

Richard G. Buchen, Director III, 35 years

Yoakum District

Louise M. Lorke, Systems Support Specialist IV, 32 years

Vehicle Titles & Registration Division

Gary Castello, Investigator II, 29 years

Got news?

Did your district newsletter run a story you think other TxDOT employees would enjoy reading? Do you know of a co-worker with an interesting hobby? Would you like more information about changes in TxDOT policy? We want your story ideas. To contribute, contact your district Public Information Officer. He or she can pass it along to us. Or you can contact Editor Lisa Trow by phone at 512-463-8609 or via Group-Wise at LTROW.

Letters

I wanted to thank Courtesy Patrolmen **Charlie Deskin** and **Jesse Camacho** for changing my tire on a morning in February. My tire blew out, and I was stranded on U.S. 281 South and Sunset Road. I really do appreciate their friendliness and efficiency. They changed my tire in a matter of minutes, and I was on my way to work.

I appreciate this service very much and was not aware of it until Charlie and Jessie pulled over to help me. I believe this a very worthwhile use of highway tax revenues.

Lauren L. Foster
San Antonio

Clarence D. Deskin is an engineering technician and Jesse Camacho is an engineering aide. Both work for the San Antonio Courtesy Patrol.

While visiting in Claude, my family and I had a flat on County Road 1151. Almost the moment we stopped, a Texas Department of Transportation pickup, driven by **Lorenz Jaramillo**, pulled up to help us. In a few minutes, another pickup, containing **Roger Kendrick** and **Johnny Cordova**, stopped. They not only fixed our flat but directed us to Amarillo to get another tire. I was really afraid to go into Amarillo because I was so unfamiliar with the town, but with the directions Kendrick gave us, we found a department store, got a new tire and had a safe trip home.

I just wanted TxDOT to know how much I appreciated TxDOT employees stopping to help. They were "angels" in my eyes and I think they need special recognition for their time and help.

We were visiting relatives in Claude and probably will never be back. I will always remember their kindness.

Barbara Gowin
Snyder

Roger Kendrick, Johnny Cordova and Lorenz Jaramillo are maintenance technicians in the Claude Maintenance Office of the Amarillo District.

This letter is to thank the gentlemen who helped me while on my way back to Houston. I was several miles from a town when I had a flat tire. Since I had never changed a flat, I was reading the directions when **William Fitch** and **Harold Shilling** drove up. Needless to say, I was overjoyed they stopped. They were very professional and efficient. I was back on the road in 15 minutes. They even went so far as to follow me to the next town so they could put air in my spare tire. I just wanted to thank them again for helping me. Please let them know I will not forget their kindness that day.

Debbie Hihn
Houston

William Fitch and Harold Shilling are maintenance technicians in the Waco District's Center Stripe Section.

Correction

Due to an editing error in a story on commuter rail in June's issue of *Transportation News*, it was incorrectly reported that residents in the area of a studied Central Texas commuter rail route objected to a proposed 11-cent sales tax increase to fund the plan. The actual proposed sales tax increase is .11 of a cent.

TxDOT Roundup

PBS features TransGuide on weekly science program

SAN ANTONIO — First it was bridges, now it's TransGuide.

The HEB "Science Treehouse," a weekly television program on the Public Broadcast System station KLRN, filmed a segment of its program at TransGuide.

"Science Treehouse," which is produced in conjunction with the Witte Museum, focused on transportation and the use of global positioning satellites (GPS).

The program aired on March 23. "Science Treehouse" host Karen James interviewed San Antonio Director of Transportation Operations Pat Irwin from the operations center. Irwin's segment of the program discussed the purpose of TransGuide and how effective it is in serving the community of San Antonio.

During a question-and-answer segment of the show, calls were received from all over the United States about TransGuide.

— *Laura Tavitas, SAT*

Pharr employees honored at safety awards ceremony

PHARR — Pharr District employees from Brooks, Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, Starr, Willacy and Zapata counties recently gathered to celebrate their 46th Annual District Safety Awards meeting at the Pharr Convention Center.

Transportation Commission Member John W. Johnson joined District Engineer Amadeo Saenz Jr. in recognizing 373 district awards recipients.

A total of 192 employees received No Injury Awards, and 181 received Safe Operator Awards. Special Maintenance Awards were presented to the maintenance sections in Falfurrias for overall appearance; Raymondville for contract administration; Hebbronville for accountability; and Rio Grande City for preventative maintenance and pavement patching.

Keynote speaker for the event was Capt. Hector Ramos with the Department of Public Safety, whose presentation addressed "Partnering Among State Agencies."

"Working together, whether during a disaster or on a daily basis, is best done when two agencies work together," Ramos said. "We both have the same interest, public safety."

— *Mary Bolado, PHR*

WIN offering its cookbooks at temporarily reduced cost

AUSTIN — Members of the Women's Information Network is offering a summer promotional sale of its cookbook, "WINning Recipes, at a \$1 reduction of the \$8 price.

During the promotional period, employees can buy the cookbook for \$7.

To obtain a cookbook, send your request and a check or money order to: Cindy Bordovsky-Stone, ISD, Building 6, Camp Hubbard, 5E03. Requests must include your name, address, phone and number of copies.

— *Cindy Bordovsky-Stone, ISD*

Traffic safety campaign wins annual PACE award

AUSTIN — TxDOT's winter holiday traffic safety campaign targeting drunk driving is a winner with the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators.

The association honored TxDOT with its Public Affairs and Consumer Education (PACE) Competition Region II Award in the marketing campaign category. The PACE award recognizes public relations, public affairs and consumer education excellence among motor vehicle, law enforcement and traffic safety agencies across North America.

Launched in December on the south steps of the state Capitol, assisted by Santa, elves posing as a group of fifth graders, and state troopers, TxDOT's campaign, developed by Sherry Matthews Advertising and Public Relations, coined the slogan "Santa is Coming to Town. Please Don't Hit Him. Don't Drink and Drive."

Radio public service announcement spots and "Don't Drink and Drive" pens helped promote the message.

People viewed the message as a fun, light-hearted reminder to exercise good judgment during the festive season, said Karen Gibson, traffic safety program administrator of the Traffic Operations Division.

Nominations were judged on creativity, quality of production and how well they met objectives.

First place qualifies TxDOT's entry for international competition. Regional awards were to be presented June 20-24 in Nashville, Tenn.

International awards will be presented Aug. 29-Sept. 2 in Bretton Woods, N.H.

— *Linda Ribble, PIO*

TxDOT employee athletes participate in triathlon

AUSTIN — Three TxDOT Construction Division employees placed second in the Corporate Team Relay Division of the 10th Anniversary Danskin Women's Triathlon Series on June 6.

Katherine Holtz, manager of CST's Materials Section, Dawn Scheel, field area supervisor, and Judy Alonzo, engineering technician, completed the triathlon series, held at Camp Chautauqua in Pace Bend Park, with an overall time of 1 hour 36 minutes 42 seconds. Holtz competed in the 0.75-kilometer swim in Lake Travis; Scheel participated in the 20K bike; and Alonzo completed the 5K run.

DWTS benefits the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. More than 40,000 women have participated in the triathlon series, which is committed to the first-timer and the age-group competitor. This year entries numbered 1,860, making it the largest triathlon held in Texas, according to an *Austin American-Statesman* report.

Alonzo found it much harder than anticipated, she said. "I'm already training for next year, so I can do even better," Alonzo said. "My teammates were terrific, and we had a great time."

— *Linda Ribble, PIO*

From the archives

(POEM)

AN ENGINEER'S LAMENT

My car is old.
My shoes are thin.
My suit is out of date.
For I'm a highway engineer
A workin' for the state.

I like my boss.
I like my work,
And those with whom I mingle
But Lord I'd like to pay my bills
And still have coins to jingle.

I've worked and studied many years.
Of degrees I have a number.
It seems to me
My pay should be
At least that of a plumber.

Highway News, April 1951

(JOKE)

Contractor: How much will this bridge for my teeth cost?

Dentist: Oh, about \$175.

Contractor: Couldn't you just put in a culvert?

"Not in the Contract," EXCAVATING Engineer, October 1939

(EDITORIAL)

GHASTLY SIGHT

As one drives along Grand Avenue a feeling of sadness creeps into your mind as the desolate scenes present themselves. Grand Avenue was once a pretty street, and one's feelings were buoyed up by the beautiful pictures presented, but now that is changed. The dust has covered every tree and shrub, the houses are ghost pale, and the air is almost unbreathable. Lampasas was given every assurance by the highway department that hardsurfaced topping would be on Grand Avenue long before this time. The rock has all been crushed for the job, the base has been properly treated, and the community of Lampasas is over ready for the job to start. Why isn't something done? If something is not done in a very short time the base for the topping will be worn completely away, and the very unpleasant conditions that we are now enduring will have to be gone through again. The dust that is kicked upon Grand Avenue covers the entire town, and is more or less of a menace to the health of the community. And another thing, draperies, furniture and rugs are suffering untold damage. There must be something that can be done to relieve the situation that now exists.

Lampasas Leader, Aug. 14, 1936

Calendar

JULY

- 6-7** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 6-8** DE/DD/OD Meeting, Austin, ADM
- 13-15** 1999 Statewide Radio Communications Workshop, Austin, TRF
- 29** Commission Meeting, Amarillo

AUGUST

- 3-4** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 4-5** Texas Ports and Waterways Conference, Brownsville, TPP
- 10** Board of Directors Meeting, Austin, TTA
- 11** Specification Writing, Austin, GSD
- 12-13** Contracting for Services, Austin, GSD
- 17** ATPA Board of Directors Meeting, Austin
- 26** Commission Meeting, Austin
- 27** LBJ's Birthday (holiday)
- 29-9/1** National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives Conference, San Antonio, TRF
- 31-9/1** GEOPAK Drainage Training, Houston, DES

SEPTEMBER

- 1** GEOPAK Drainage Training, Houston, DES
- 1** National Assoc. of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives Conference, San Antonio, TRF
- 1-2** Environmental Coordinators Meeting, Austin, ENV
- 2-3** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 2-3** GEOPAK Drainage Training, Houston, DES
- 9-10** Third Annual Employment Law Conference, Austin, OCR
- 13-15** Human Resources Conference, Austin, HRD
- 15-17** Intermediate Public Purchasing, Lewisville, GSD
- 23-24** Inventory and Warehouse Management, San Antonio, GSD
- 30** Commission Meeting, Austin

OCTOBER

- 5-8** Public Purchasing Management, Lewisville, GSD
- 6-7** Bid Letting, Austin, CST
- 11** DE/DD/OD Meeting, College Station, ADM
- 11-13** TxDOT Transportation Conference, College Station, ADM

In Memoriam

Employee

Beaumont District
Robert G. Baker,
Engineering Technician
II, died March 29, 1999

Retiree

Amarillo District
Clarence Bashford,
Maintenance Technician
III, retired in 1976, died
March 18, 1999

Austin District

William E. DuBose,
Maintenance Technician
III, retired in 1986, died
March 10, 1999.

Bryan District

Odie W. Malone,
Maintenance Technician
III, retired in 1974, died
March 23, 1999

Childress District

Lon W. Hall, Purchasing and
Supply Officer I, retired
in 1989, died March 1,
1999

Corpus Christi District

Francisco Ybanez, Assistant
Foreman, retired in
1987, died March 28,
1999

Dallas District

Alvin L. Bell, Maintenance
Technician III, retired in
1986, died March 1,
1999

John W. Currie,
Maintenance Technician
III, retired in 1973,
died March 31, 1999

Raymond J. Howell,
Maintenance Technician
II, retired in 1978, died
March 4, 1999

Joe T. Lofland, Maintenance
Construction Supervisor
III, retired in 1977, died
March 20, 1999

El Paso District

James V. Byler,
Maintenance Technician
III, retired in
1985, died March 29,
1999

Fort Worth District

R. L. Brandon, Engineering
Technician II, retired in
1979, died March 10,
1999

Lonnie L. Burns,
Maintenance Technician
III, retired in 1986, died
Feb. 20, 1999

Allen E. Smith,
Maintenance Technician
V, retired in 1996, died
March 5, 1999

Houston District

Joseph A. Pehnke Jr.,
Marine Technician III,
retired in 1993, died
March 26, 1999

Paris District

Peggy J. Churchwell,
Administrative
Secretary, retired in
1993, died April 21,
1999

San Angelo District

Joe Gomez, Maintenance
Technician II, retired in
1989, died February
21, 1999

Perry A. Mixon, Engineering
Technician IV, retired in
1971, died March 3,
1999

San Antonio District

Fernando Flores,
Maintenance Technician
III, retired in
1977, died Feb. 17,
1999

Isidore Rodriguez,
Maintenance Technician
III, retired in 1975, died
March 18, 1999

Tyler District

Dorothy E. Albertson,
Draftsman II, retired in

1977, died March 25,
1999

Wichita Falls District

Mary H. Pappan,
Administrative
Technician II, retired in
1991, died March 12,
1999

Yoakum District

Horace W. Boothe Jr.,
Maintenance Technician
III, retired in 1982, died
April 27, 1999

Roy J. Wood, Maintenance
Construction Supervisor
II, retired in 1983, died
March 1, 1999

Jimmie V. Smolik,
Maintenance Technician
III, retired in 1990, died
April 7, 1999

Management Services

Office
Lewis M. LeFevre, Director
II, retired in 1997, died
April 23, 1999

Transportation Planning

& Programming Division
Billie R. Kaufman,
Engineering Specialist
II, retired in 1991, died
Feb. 25, 1999

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