

# TRAVEL LOG

INSIDE:

- ★ Houston exhibit uses *Star Wars* props, costumes and models to explore possible technologies
- ★ Morning Glories sculpture gone as Aquarena Center continues a restoration to its natural state
- ★ Kemah's boardwalk attraction noted among the nation's best

TRAVEL NEWS

**E**LLINGTON Airport in south-east Houston will soon be known as Ellington International Airport. A bevy of improvements are underway to make the airfield ready for domestic and international traffic, including a \$10 million-plus project for a new terminal, tower and inspection station for this extension of the Houston Airport System. Galveston's Lone Star Flight Museum also is planning a move to the campus.

It is expected to take up to 18 months to complete the airport's new terminal, which will serve domestic and international air traffic, and the inspection station for U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents.

An aircraft museum, including two new hangars, could serve as new home to museums already considering the move. The Lone Star Flight Museum in Galveston—inspired by the desire to protect its collection from hurricanes—is set to move its collection to the Ellington campus.

Also on the horizon is a \$50 million-\$57 million new regional facility for the U.S. Coast Guard; expanded facilities for the U.S. military, including training, logistics and a battle command centers; and a \$70 million-\$80 million mixed-use business development on the airport's north side, which will include a cargo facility, warehouses, a tarmac and parking for aircraft.

New hangars to be leased to individuals or corporations for storing, building and/or maintaining aircraft also will be constructed at \$60 million-\$70 million.

Brian Rinehart, general manager at Ellington International Airport, told the *Houston Business Journal* that six areas of the Ellington airfield campus are slated for construction and expansion, with projects completed in phases during the next five years.

"These projects will total about

STATE OF A FAIR

**I**N THE MIDST of the State Fair of Texas' 125th anniversary, the State of Texas' 175th milestone also will be given the spotlight via a new attraction—*TEXAS! The Exhibition*—featured at the Hall of State building at Fair Park from Sept. 30-Dec. 4.

The Hall of State building at Fair Park remains closed for the exhibit installation until opening day, when State Fair visitors can get a glimpse of the cultural heritage that built the state. Each room will highlight special events in Texas history.

"Texas is known for a lot of things, and this grand exhibition boasts what's great about the Lone Star State and highlights some of its outstanding attributes," says J.P. Bryan, guest curator for *TEXAS! The Exhibition* and a direct descendant of Moses Austin, Stephen F. Austin's father. "From notorious warriors responsible for the birth of a one-of-a-kind republic and state, to famous events and a vast collection of artifacts, these collected works provide a vivid glimpse into the rich heritage of Texas."

Exhibit artifacts include Davy Crockett's pipe and pistol, Santa Anna's spurs and vest, the sword used to capture Santa Anna, Sam Houston's battle of San Jacinto report,

\$300 million to a half-billion dollars and create as many as 600 jobs," he says.

**A**T THE RECENT Texas Association of Convention and Visitors Bureau's Annual Conference in San Marcos, various CVBs were noted for their efforts in advertising, tourism promotion and more. Judges Choice Awards went to San Marcos CVB for advertising as well as convention promotion; Waco CVB for cooperative marketing; Bryan-College Station for local awareness; Abilene for National Tourism Week; The Colony for



COURTESY STATE FAIR OF TEXAS

Along with the special *TEXAS!* exhibit, State Fair visitors can expect fried concoctions, the Midway and the annual Cotton Bowl game portrayed here in last year's annual butter sculpture.

Stephen F. Austin's pocket telescope, the only original Juneteenth document declaring emancipation for all Texas slaves, and a life-sized replica of the Alamo.

The exhibit is a collaborative effort presented by the Dallas Historical Society with assistance from the Houston Museum of Natural Science,

the Heritage Society of Houston, San Jacinto Museum of History and the Torch Collection in Houston.

*TEXAS! The Exhibition* is open 10 a.m.-7 p.m. and is free during the State Fair of Texas, which runs through Oct. 23.

For more information on the State Fair, visit [www.bigtex.com](http://www.bigtex.com).

sports marketing; and Beaumont for tourism promotion and best website. The Judges Choice Best Overall Entry went to The Colony CVB for sports marketing.

The Idea Fair also netted Peoples' Choice winners based on budgets of less than \$350,000, from \$350,000 to \$999,999, and \$1 million-plus. Plano CVB won Best Overall Entry for its convention promotion.

In ascending order (based on budgets), the People's Choice first place winners were:

- **Advertising:** Conroe, San Marcos and El Paso

- **Cooperative Marketing:** Killeen, McKinney and Waco
- **Convention Promotion:** Killeen, San Marcos and Plano
- **Local Awareness:** Temple, San Marcos and Beaumont
- **National Tourism Week:** No entries for less than \$350,000, McKinney, and (tied) Abilene and El Paso
- **Sports Marketing:** The Colony, no mid-level entries and El Paso
- **Tourism Promotion:** Seguin, San Marcos and, (tied) Abilene and Beaumont
- **Website:** Kyle Chamber of

Commerce, Denton and Beaumont. For a complete list of Idea Fair Peoples' Choice winners, visit [www.tacvb.com](http://www.tacvb.com).

**I**N 1963, **Wimberley sculptor Buck Winn** was commissioned to create a sculpture that would offer shade to **Aquarena Center** visitors. He created "**Morning Glories.**" In August, the sculpture was **removed from Aquarena Center in preparation for a \$4 million restoration project** to restore **Spring Lake** to its natural state.

Texas State University bought the site in 1994 and has since been working to restore the land—home to the second-largest artesian spring in the country and to eight endangered species including the Texas blind salamander and the San Marcos gambusia, which has not been seen in the wild for nearly 30 years.

With that came the removal of the giant morning glories sculpture.

Piece by piece, the sculpture was airlifted from Aquarena Springs to their new home—back to the Winn family and their ranch in Wimberley.

Texas River Systems Institute Director Andrew Sansom says he thinks the Spring Lake endeavor is the "most significant environmental restoration project in the nation right now."

"We're trying as best as possible to restore it to its natural condition so when visitors come here in the future it will be a preserve rather than an amusement park," Sansom told the *Austin American-Statesman*.

Kevin Huffaker, vice chairman of the San Marcos Arts Commission, told

TSU student newspaper *The University Star*, "I was fascinated by the sculptures and began looking into them when I found out the university wanted to remove them. We learned the Winn family wanted them returned and thought that was a fine idea. These sculptures are family heirlooms and have found the best place they can be."

Andrew Winn, the sculptor's grandson, says the sculptures on the private ranch (where he also runs Wimberley Zipline Adventures) will be available to view for free, by appointment only.

Aquarena Center continues to offer the glass bottom boat and kayak tours, an aquarium, tours, diving and more.

For more information about Aquarena Center, call (512) 245-7570 or visit [www.aquarena.txstate.edu](http://www.aquarena.txstate.edu).

**T**HANKS TO several inches of recent rains, the **temporary closure of all High Chisos back-packing campsites in Big Bend National Park has been lifted**, including dispersed (zone) camping in the Blue Creek and Lower Juniper Zones. Full use, both daytime and overnight, of the Chisos high country is now re-opened and available. The Window Trail has also re-opened.

The closures were the result of extreme fire danger in the park.

Caution is still recommended throughout the park with any type of ignition source such as camping stoves or barbecue/charcoal grills. Smoking is prohibited on the High Chisos trails throughout the year. The charcoal ban, which was in effect for the Basin campground, also has been lifted.



Stormtroopers purchase tickets for the *Star Wars™: Where Science Meets Imagination* exhibit at Houston's Health Museum.

Park Superintendent Bill Wellman says, "We are relieved to see rain throughout many areas of the park, and especially in the High Chisos Mountains and Basin area. The rain will reduce the fire danger and be particularly helpful to wildlife and park resources after a prolonged dry period."

**ON EXHIBIT**

**T**HE *STAR WARS™: Where Science Meets Imagination* exhibit at **The Health Museum in Houston** uses **more than 100 props, models, costumes and Star Wars artifacts** to look at the fantasy technologies in the films, the science behind them, and current research that may lead to real-life versions of these technologies—especially in terms of transportation and robotics. This exhibit runs through Sept. 18.

Museum-goers learn how ideas become technologies in real life through hands-on multi-station engineering labs, where they can design, build and test solutions to challenges, including designing a robot. Visitors also participate in immersion experiences and cutting-edge innovations that help them see how ideas become technologies in real life.

After examining Luke Skywalker's Landspeeder and other floating vehicles from *Star Wars*, visitors discover how things move without touching the ground in the real world, from models of flying cars to commercial spaceplanes.

Visitors also meet C-3PO and R2-D2 and explore how people relate to

the robots in *Star Wars*. The exhibition also features the creation of real world robots that navigate, sense and understand the world around them while communicating in increasingly sophisticated ways.

Other film artifacts include models for items like the Sebulba Podracer or Queen Amidala's Nubian Starship, as well as costumes for Darth Vader, Anakin Jedi, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Princess Leia, Snowtrooper, Stormtroopers and others.

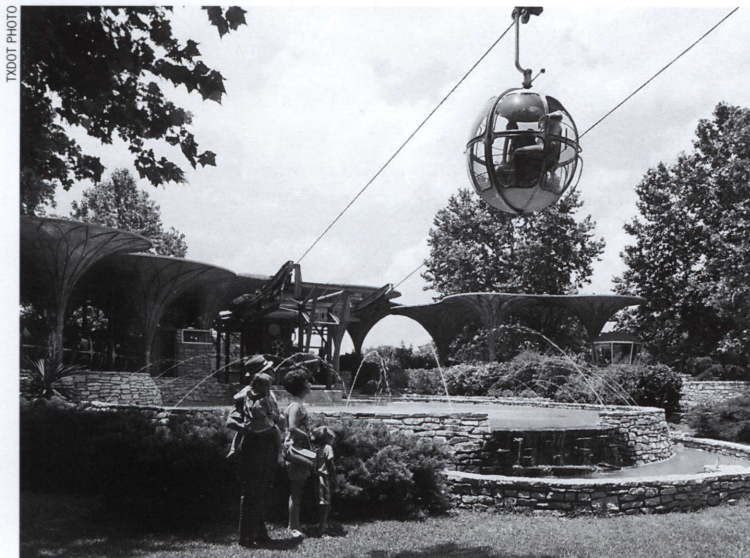
Admission is by timed ticket only, which includes general admission to The Health Museum's other exhibits. Tickets are \$20/\$18 for adults or seniors/children. Special pricing is available for members and groups.

For more information, call (713) 521-1515, ext. 136 or visit [www.the-healthmuseum.org/starwars](http://www.the-healthmuseum.org/starwars).

**W**WI: *Final Survivors*, a photo exhibit showcasing the last survivors of World War I, will be on display at the **Museum of The Gulf Coast in Port Arthur** through Sept. 18.

The exhibition is part of Survivor Quest, photojournalist David DeJonge's years-long project to locate, identify, interview and photograph the last surviving WWI witnesses that served from 1914–19.

When DeJonge finished his interviews of the United States WWI survivors, he then went to England and documented their last three survivors. Their ages ranged from 105–112 years. The oldest, Henry Allingham, was the last person to have



In this archive photo, the "Morning Glories" sculpture stands tall in the shadow of Aquarena Springs' Swiss sky ride.

COURTESY OF THE HEALTH MUSEUM

TKOOT PHOTO

flown in a biplane during combat. Frank Woodruff Buckles, who also was a civilian POW in the Philippines during WWI, was the last of the survivors. He died at 110 years on Feb. 27.

Visitors can see 38 framed pictures, including 13 survivor portraits taken from 2006–2009 for the 90th anniversary of WWI. Each portrait is accompanied by a story that includes exclusive interviews and reflections by the veterans. In most cases a vintage portrait of the survivor also is featured.

The project, which has been on view at the White House and Pentagon, has received numerous accolades and extensive media coverage.

For more information, visit [www.museumofthegulfcoast.org](http://www.museumofthegulfcoast.org).

### IN THE RANKS

**K**EMAH's Boardwalk ranks third in [ShermansTravel.com](http://ShermansTravel.com)'s list of the best boardwalks in the country, falling just behind the iconic boardwalks in Atlantic City, N.J., and Coney Island, NY.

The editors of [ShermansTravel.com](http://ShermansTravel.com) selected boardwalks that were tops in "pure, unadulterated summer fun" for their amusements, live entertainment, people-watching and nostalgia.

"Whether you're in town to catch a Texaribbean cruise or just for the fun of it, Kemah's amusement park rides, marina, beach and family-friendly activities should factor high on your local agenda," the site reports. It adds that, "with rides like the Boardwalk Bullet (a terrifying wooden roller coaster that debuted in 2007) and attractions like a 4-D theater (featuring *SpongeBob SquarePants*), Kemah Boardwalk is poised to give the old Eastern Seaboard boardwalks a run for their money."

Also noted was the onsite Boardwalk Inn.

For more information, visit [www.kemahboardwalk.com](http://www.kemahboardwalk.com).

**U**SA TODAY tracked down six great Labor Day weekend hotel packages to serve as the perfect last hurrah of summer, including *Travaasa Austin*, the Hill Country experiential retreat spa in the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve.

Noted for serving up "huge helpings of authentic Austin-style adventure, culinary activities, culture, fitness, and wellness," *Travaasa* also



Kemah's main attraction is noted, again, as one of the best boardwalks in the country surpassed only by Atlantic City, N.J. and Coney Island, N.Y.

boasts zip-lining over the preserve's treetops, Lake Travis sunsets and a mechanical bull-riding workout.

Other noted getaways were in Williamsburg, Va.; Davenport/Olando, Fla.; Winter Park, Colo.; Sausalito, Calif.; and St. Pete Beach, Fla.

### INDUSTRY INSIDERS

**T**HE TEXAS Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus awarded **Sudie Burditt** and **Vic Mathias** the 2011 Legacy Awards during the 2011 Annual Conference in San Marcos in August.

Burditt, of the Kerrville Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Mathias, formerly with the Austin CVB, were recognized as individuals who helped build the foundation of the Texas Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus.

The award acknowledges tourism professionals committed to the improvement, growth and professionalism of TACVB and the Texas travel industry. These visionaries see what their future and the future of CVB's could be and put into place the plans and leadership required for that future. They are inspirational to all professionals in the travel and tourism industry.

**MERIANNE ROTH** joins the Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau as its new vice president of marketing communications.

Roth, who most recently served as

the consumer brand marketing and publicity director for JCPenney Corporation, has more than 16 years of experience in messaging strategy, public relations, brand marketing, promotional events, corporate communications, media relations, and crisis and issues management.

Roth also previously served as the senior manager of public relations for Pier 1 Imports.

"It's an exciting time to join the CVB and the work of so many to promote Fort Worth's friendliness and sophistication," Roth says. "Where else can you go for authentic Western heritage living hand-in-hand with unparalleled cultural amenities and one of the nation's most dynamic downtowns? It's a wonderful place to live and an amazing place to visit!"

**DARREN TEMPLE** is the new senior vice president of sales and services for the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau. His duties in-

clude leading convention sales and services, member and visitor information services, and working to boost existing sales efforts and partnerships while increasing Dallas' visibility through industry involvement.

"Darren's leadership, enthusiasm and proven track record of creating teams and accountable business development efforts will be tremendous assets," says Dallas CVB President and CEO Phillip Jones.

**EMILEA WHITE** joins the Amarillo Convention and Visitor Council as convention sales manager for the SMERF market (social, military, education, religious and fraternal groups).

"Emilea's experience in the hospitality industry will be a great benefit to the CVC," says Jerry Holt, Amarillo CVC Vice President.

White most recently was director of sales for the new Holiday Inn West Amarillo.

### NEW ORDINANCE

**E**FFECTIVE Jan. 1, beer cans and other disposable containers will be banned from the Comal and Guadalupe rivers within the New Braunfels city limits in a reported attempt to keep rivers free of trash, often attributed to tubers.

The ordinance, which the New Braunfels City Council passed Aug. 22 by a 5-1 vote, includes a ban on all disposable food and beverage containers, including water bottles, plastic food bags, plastic silverware and kids' juice boxes.

For more information, visit [www.nbtexas.org](http://www.nbtexas.org).

**TEXAS TRIVIA**

**Which Texas museum boasts the largest collection of Norman Rockwell Scout paintings under one roof?**

The National Scouting Museum in Irving has an extensive 61-piece collection of Norman Rockwell paintings that includes Rockwell's first Scout painting, which he created in 1918 as an illustrator for *Boys' Life* magazine. This official museum of the Boy Scouts of America also features a 15-minute Cinemascope video at the BSA History Theater, scouting history and memorabilia, many interactive exhibits and games. The Scout Reservation Trail, which also includes interactive exhibits, follows Scouting life from Cub Scouts to Eagle Scouts. For more information, call (800) 303-3047 or visit [www.bsa-museum.org](http://www.bsa-museum.org).

**TEXAS TRIVIA**

**TEXAS TRAVELOG** is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, Travel Information Division. Please send news items of interest to the Texas travel industry to Texas TraveLog, P.O. Box 141009, Austin, TX 78714-1009. (512) 486-5874, fax (512) 486-5879. E-mail: [trv-log@dot.state.tx.us](mailto:trv-log@dot.state.tx.us). Deadline for each newsletter is the 15th of the month preceding the issue date. To receive this publication electronically, please e-mail [trv-log@dot.state.tx.us](mailto:trv-log@dot.state.tx.us).

EDITOR: Lois M. Rodriguez

DESIGN/LAYOUT: Kirsti Harms

 PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

**TEXAS TRAVEL INFORMATION CENTERS**

**VISITOR NUMBERS as of July 31, 2011**

TRAVEL CENTER	Month Visitors	Percent Variation*	Year-to-Date Visitors	Percent Variation*
AMARILLO	10,933	-11.53	55,476	-2.93
ANTHONY	4,642	-30.88	37,916	-29.03
CAPITOL	8,471	-11.71	47,879	-9.70
DENISON	35,845	-0.46	189,881	+2.14
GAINESVILLE	29,979	-5.88	150,178	-18.38
LANGTRY	2,811	-25.99	30,009	-18.59
LAREDO	7,560	-14.11	45,032	-28.23
ORANGE	43,914	+0.92	258,133	+5.79
TEXARKANA	18,960	-44.31	71,395	-59.70
VALLEY	7,766	-14.60	91,345	-12.57
WASKOM	35,322	-4.52	199,270	-14.04
WICHITA FALLS	19,120	+10.53	98,255	+9.48
<b>CENTER TOTALS</b>	<b>225,323</b>	<b>-9.90</b>	<b>1,274,769</b>	<b>-13.88</b>

\*Compared to last year

Dial toll-free (800) 452-9292 for travel assistance from  
 TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers  
 (8 a.m.–6 p.m. daily, Central Time)

[www.traveltex.com](http://www.traveltex.com) • [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com)  
[www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov) • [www.dontmesswithtexas.org](http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org)

AUSTIN, TX 78714-9249  
 P.O. BOX 149249

TRAVEL INFORMATION DIVISION