



SAFETY *Leads to* SUCCESS

*Teamwork helps Seymour Section
celebrate an astonishing safety
record – Page 8*



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Letter from Phil Wilson

Executive Director

This past October, I celebrated my first year as executive director. In that year, I've crisscrossed Texas hearing from and talking to our employees, partners from metropolitan planning organizations, regional mobility authorities, cities and counties.

I've read letters and emails from countless Texans. Most are complimentary about our agency; others are concerned about a particular project. And a few are from citizens who complain about something we've done or failed to do. I try to respond to them all because every one is an opportunity to talk about the good things we're doing. Even when we've made a misstep, and must commit to doing a better job, it is an opportunity to let Texans know we listen and will take action.

I've talked to many of you who have some great ideas to improve your jobs and this department. I appreciate you sharing them, and encourage you to keep sending them to me.

But this year has been about more than learning and listening. It's been about doing. We've made a lot of changes. We've centralized our human resources, information technology, finance, communications and right of way functions.

We're implementing a performance management process that will help us recognize and compensate our top performers, pay market-based wages and allow employees to weigh in on their performance reviews.

We're upgrading the way we communicate and plan with new resources like Outlook, Compass and the Project Management Office.

I am especially proud of the progress we have made on the safety front. We just ended fiscal 2012 with the best safety numbers in the department's 95-year history.

Thank you for your patience and all your hard work.

When I came to TxDOT, one of my goals was to make us a best-in-class agency. We're getting there, but we have more work to do. The fact is, we will always be working to improve. As long as our job is to provide transportation to a state that is rapidly changing, we'll always be changing to meet that mandate. That is called progress, and there is no group of people ready to move Texas forward than the men and women of this agency.

I'm looking forward to my next year, and all that we'll accomplish.



Phil Wilson
Executive Director



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TxDOT photo

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TxDOT has implemented a new performance process, incorporating feedback and empowering employees and supervisors to improve how employees are evaluated and rewarded.

12 Awards Honor Standout Employees

'Tis the season for awards and highlights of the achievements and dedication of those who help keep TxDOT a best-in-class agency.

18 TxDOT Keeps Conservation Top of Mind

TxDOT projects require sensitive attention to possible environmental impacts on our natural resources. In this case, we're saving threatened species like freshwater mussels and a rare, cave-dwelling spider.



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Rose Guajardo Walker shares how her background has prepared her for the challenges and opportunities of being the chief clerk to the Texas Transportation Commission.



24 Employee Q&A

Bryan District P6 Coordinator Maurice Maness takes a minute to sit down with TN about his job, life and the holidays.

25 Where Am I?

Texans from all across the Lone Star State can measure their expertise by identifying the landmark in this photo.

on the cover

The Seymour Maintenance Section gathers for a team photo. Their selfless camaraderie has inspired a safety-focused environment and resourceful innovation.

TxDOT Team Members Chime In

What is your must-see Texas holiday display?



Kathy Baca

Auditor, Internal Audit

Mill Pond Park in San Saba. Volunteers make delightfully decorated, lighted displays and nutcrackers.



Lennerd Byrd

Business Services Coordinator, Odessa District

Starbright Village in McKinney Park – the largest holiday display in the Permian Basin.



Elizabeth Paradise

District Engineer's Secretary, Pharr District

The Great Pumpkin Carnival at University of Texas – Pan American in Edinburg.

5 THINGS

FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW RIGHT NOW

1 TxDOT leadership has added three new skeleton-crew holidays for employees. This year, TxDOT will have minimum staff holidays on the day before Thanksgiving, Wednesday, Nov. 21, and New Year's Eve, which is Monday, Dec. 31. There will also be a skeleton crew holiday on Good Friday, March 29, 2013. These new holidays give employees an opportunity to strike a better work-life balance and spend time with families and friends, especially around the holidays.

2 Paul Frerich is the new Yoakum District engineer, and Ron Johnston is the new Amarillo District engineer. Frerich, a 2011 Gilchrist Award-winner, began his TxDOT career in 1984 in the Austin District, and most recently served as director of transportation operations and director of transportation planning and development in Yoakum. Johnston, who began his career in Amarillo, most recently served as director of operations for the Dallas District.

3 The Compass Project — the new maintenance management information system — went live Sept. 4. The new statewide system centralizes reporting for all maintenance operations. Districts and maintenance sections use the new application to enter labor, equipment and materials associated with work orders, allowing for the easy reuse of information for planning, budgeting and operations needs.

4 The Texas Transportation Commission recently approved eliminating the cash payment option for the Central Texas Turnpike System (CTTS). The pay-by-mail option is administered via video to accurately read vehicles' license plate numbers. After passing the toll equipment, drivers' vehicles not enrolled in the TxTag program are billed through the mail. Learn more at www.txtag.org.

5 Beginning Jan. 1, 2013, qualified veterans will ride toll-free on Loop 1, SH 45 North, SH 45 Southeast and SH 130 (Segments 1-4) in the Austin area, as well as SH 255 near Laredo and Loop 49 in Tyler. The Texas Transportation Commission approved waiving tolls to benefit veterans who have a disabled veteran license plate or are recipients of the Purple Heart and/or Congressional Medal of Honor.

BEST-IN-CLASS AGENCY INITIATIVES

Texans expect only the best from TxDOT, and we're committed to delivering transportation solutions from a best-in-class agency. The department is implementing new procedures that improve our operations by making policy changes so we can get the most from our resources and is tightening up processes to get projects off the ground faster. Here are a few examples of how we use state resources more responsibly and efficiently, as we strive to become a better agency.

BOND MONEY FOR WIDENING SHOULDERS

In recent years, TxDOT has widened and added shoulders to more than 1,000 miles of rural, two-lane highways — a major safety initiative that is reducing collisions and saving lives. A Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) analysis of three years of pre- and post-crash data shows that on 1,159 miles of widened roadways, there were 67 fatalities and 1,135 injuries, compared to 200 fatalities and 2,030 injuries prior to widening. TTI estimates that these projects could save up to 44 lives each year or 880 lives over 20 years.

YELLOW PAINT EMPLOYEE INITIATIVE

The department will save almost \$2 million a year by not repainting off-road vehicles a shade known as "federal yellow." The 70-year-old practice applied to motor graders, rollers, reclaimers, loaders and other heavy equipment, which arrived in the hue of "manufacturer yellow" and were repainted at a cost of \$1,000 to \$9,000 per vehicle. North Region Fleet Manager Dalton Pratt recommended the cost-saving measure, which Executive Director Phil Wilson immediately implemented.

PRIVATIZE SELECT MAINTENANCE & FLEET OPERATIONS

TxDOT is expanding the opportunity for the private sector to perform routine maintenance on parts of I-35 and I-45 between Dallas and San Antonio, and Dallas and Houston. The department will issue a request for information to parties interested in performing routine maintenance — roadside mowing, litter removal, sign replacement, pothole patching and minor resurfacing — that could create value and yield cost savings. Estimates show that moving in this direction could result in more than \$90 million of maintenance contract work on these highways each year, but it would save TxDOT \$120 million over five years. TxDOT will invest the savings in other maintenance work. **TN**




Communications CONFERENCE

TxDOT hosted its annual Communicator's Conference Sept. 12-13 in Austin for all agency communicators, including writers and public information officers. These professionals had the opportunity to come together from across the state to share on-the-job experiences and learn from one another.

After a welcome from Chief Communications Officer Bob Kaufman, Executive Director Phil Wilson provided his thoughts and updates about the future. A variety of TxDOT speakers attended the event, including Deputy Executive Director John Barton and Chief Strategy and Administration Officer Scott Leonard. Participants also received updates on legislative affairs, planning and sections within the Communications Division.

The conference also featured a lineup of outside communication experts. Attendees learned about blogging and social media from Dell, public involvement from National Instruments and public relations best practices from individuals involved with the DFW Connector, North Tarrant Express, LBJ Expressway and SH 130 in Central Texas. Also, crisis communication experts from the University of Texas talked about the importance of preparing for emergencies — a day before UT evacuated its Austin campus following a bomb threat.

The Communications Division also hosted break-out sessions at the end of the conference, organizing participants into teams to problem-solve mock crisis scenarios and come up with a range of communication solutions. There was a lot of positive feedback, and the Communications staff looks forward to planning next year's event. 



Top middle photo: Darah Waldrip, Abilene and Brownwood District public information officer, presents her team's solution to developing a plan for a mock scenario.



Top: Teams of six and seven agency communicators problem-solve mock crisis scenarios using each others' experience and area expertise.

Right: Josh Donat, San Antonio public information officer, presents his team's plan for handling a communications crisis situation in his district.

Bottom: Leaders from Dell discuss innovative communication and blog writing with conference attendees.



AROUND THE STATE

From the Panhandle to the Valley and all points in between, TN looks forward to bringing you transportation highlights happening throughout our great state.



TxDOT photo


Groundbreaking Ceremony Kicks Off FM 2657 Reconstruction in Lampasas County

Officials with the city of Copperas Cove and TxDOT's Brownwood District marked the beginning of a major reconstruction project on FM 2657 in southeast Lampasas County Sept. 4 with a groundbreaking ceremony.

The project will completely rebuild 2.6 miles of the existing roadway from U.S. 190 to County Road 4744. The road currently has one 12-foot lane in each direction. The reconstructed highway will provide two lanes in each direction with a center turn lane. The work also includes the addition of 5-foot "shared use" lanes that can accommodate bicycles.

The expanded roadway will relieve congestion and greatly improve safety in a growing area, according to Brownwood District Engineer Elias Rmeili.

Although the FM 2657 reconstruction was developed separately from the ongoing Copperas Cove Loop project, which is being constructed nearby in the Waco District, the work will complement the loop once it is complete.

The project is expected to be complete by summer 2014. Big Creek Construction, Ltd. of Hewitt will construct the project for \$6.2 million. 

Pictured (from left): Retired Brownwood District Engineer Lynn Passmore, P.E.; retired Waco District Engineer Richard Skopik, P.E.; Chairman Jeffrey Burks, Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors; Chairman Dan Yancey, Copperas Cove Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors; Copperas Cove Mayor Pro-Tem Frank Seffrood; Wade Miller, Big Creek Construction; Brownwood District Engineer Elias Rmeili, P.E.; Copperas Cove City Councilmember Gary L. Kent; and Copperas Cove Mayor John Hull.



Grand Parkway Project Progressing

Houston traffic is legendary, and area highways are consistently among Texas' most congested. But relief is on the way for Houston drivers in the form of the Grand Parkway, a 184-mile outer loop around the city. Progress on the project reached a major milestone recently when the Texas Transportation Commission awarded a \$1.04 billion contract to Zachry-Odebrecht Parkway Builders for 37 miles of the project in northwest Houston.

The project will improve connectivity with other highways in the Houston area, increase vehicle capacity and provide additional hurricane evacuation routes out of the city.


"This is a major advancement, increasing mobility for motorists in the Greater Houston metropolitan area," said Texas Transportation Commissioner Jeff Moseley. "The innovative financial approach used here will make this project a reality much sooner, and that's great news for Houston motorists."

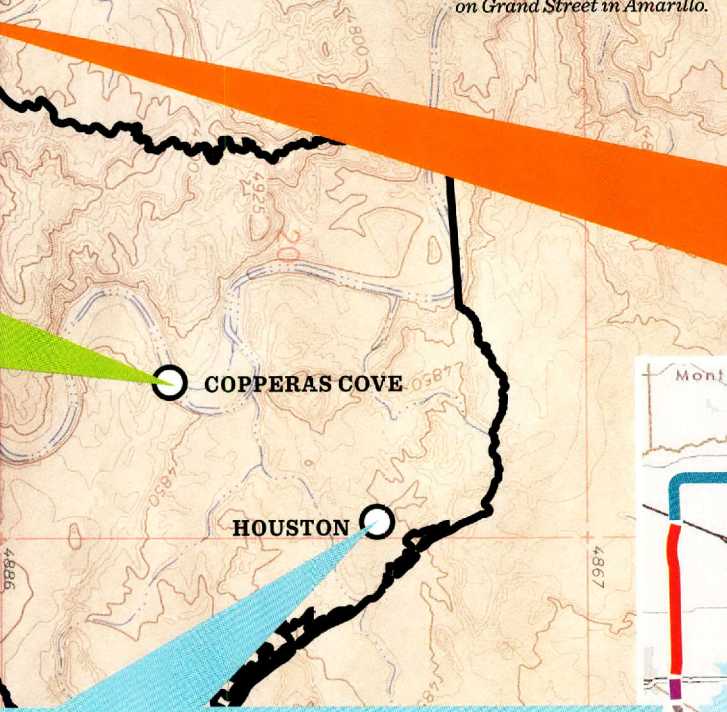


TxDOT photo

Amarillo media look on as BNSF Director of Public Relations Joe Faust describes the need to close the at-grade rail crossing on Grand Street in Amarillo.

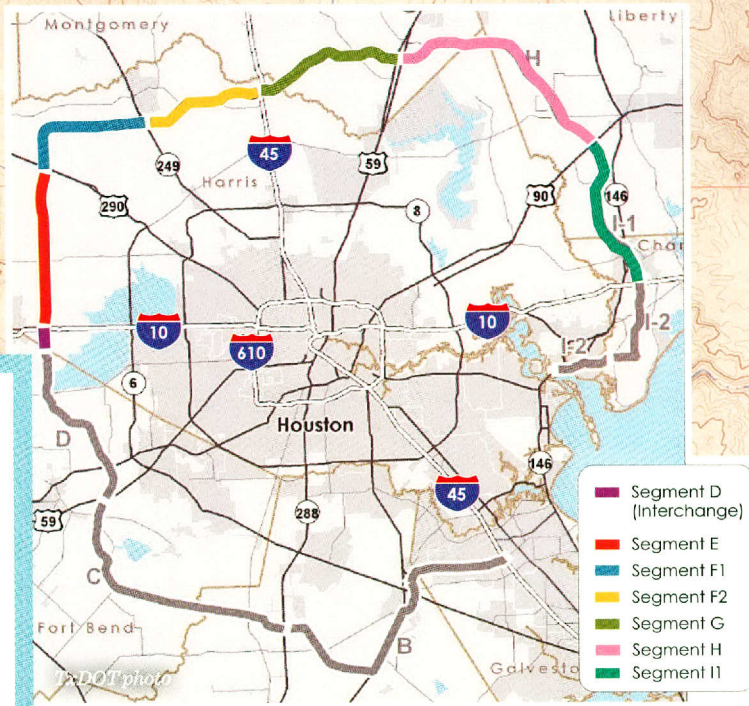
Grand Street Overpass Opening in Amarillo

With the opening of the new Grand Street Overpass in Amarillo, the at-grade crossing at Grand Street was finally shut down by BNSF workers on Sept. 18. The Amarillo District and city of Amarillo hosted a "Closing Safety Ceremony" to highlight the safety aspects of closing the crossing, which for many years had frustrated motorists and delayed emergency calls when trains were stopped on the tracks. The new Grand Street Overpass was the result of the city and TxDOT teaming together to design the project and qualify for federal stimulus funds, all within a 10-month period from design to Federal Highway Administration authorization. The \$9 million overpass will be officially completed in November but opened to traffic in early September. 




COPPERAS COVE

HOUSTON



The Comprehensive Development Agreement is a public-private partnership that includes the development, design, construction and maintenance of segments F1, F2 and G of the loop, which stretches from Hwy. 290 in Harris County east to Hwy. 59. The Commission also approved a toll equity loan agreement with the Grand Parkway Transportation Corporation to finance the project.

Grand Parkway project officials expect to break ground in early 2013, with a projected opening in 2015. 

SUCCESS in SEYMOUR

*Teamwork and Innovation
Help Keep the Section Safe*



Maintenance Technicians Brian Beaty (left) and Dalton Hembree adjust a rack that helps safely install snowplow blades. The team's creative approach to problem-solving is rooted in saving not only time and energy, but making processes safer.

➤ *The crew at the Wichita Falls District Seymour Maintenance Section* achieved a

milestone at the end of August by reaching 3,000 consecutive days without injury. Living and working with safety in mind, they help and support each other to achieve a common goal of safety. It is such a top priority for the Seymour crew, they've gone so far as to invent several tools to improve safety in their daily operations and improve efficiency.

"This is a very special group of individuals; they work so well together. No egos to get in the way," said Wichita Falls District Engineer Larry Tegtmeier. "The team that works in the Seymour Maintenance Office is a true success story. It shows in the quality of their roads and in their unwavering commitment to TxDOT's safety program."

The section built a rack for safely installing snow plow blades constructed to fit on a forklift and install quickly. Without the rack, two to four employees would have to handle the blades and hold them in place while someone else bolted them in. With it, the process takes less than 10 minutes, as opposed to 30 or more minutes, saving valuable time and energy, especially during stressful snow and ice conditions. Tegtmeier liked it so much, he had the employees make one for each maintenance section in the district.

For sign installations, the crew invented a simple clamp that holds the sign and post steady while lowering them into the hole. Now, one person can install a sign instead of two people. Using scrap materials from around the yard, the crew also built several pallet-like metal platforms that can be lifted with a forklift and placed in the bed of department trucks. Instead of placing all the cones, tools and other

materials loosely in the bed of the truck, one at a time, the pallets are preloaded with the necessary materials and then quickly loaded in all at once with a forklift, saving time and energy.

When temperatures hit more than 110 degrees during the summer, many rural roads will seep oil that sticks to people's cars. The standard practice is to spray a lime solution onto the affected areas to stop the "bleeding." The process of filling the truck tanks with the lime solution took about 45 minutes and included a worker or two having to physically lift bags full of solution and dump them into the spray tanks. The crew devised a system of pumps and hoses to quickly mix the lime and water solution and fill the truck tanks, cutting the labor-intensive, 45-minute process down to only 10 minutes.

"Our district has a good Safety Committee focused on preventing accidents and injuries, and being innovative when it comes to safety," said Shan Slaggle, Seymour Maintenance Section supervisor. "Our Safety Officer Larry Gulley also works very well with the crews. He is there to help make us better and safer, not just catch people doing the wrong things. And our district has created a 'Focus on Safety' group to look into ways to help improve our safety."

The section has many different tools and processes to prevent injury. Some of these include the use of LED lights, which last longer and are more visible than regular bulbs, causing less strain on batteries and alternators. They allow the crew to turn off vehicles while taking care of litter and dead animals on the roadway, and enable them to hear oncoming traffic better.

The team also uses new handheld radios to keep communication flowing, ensure good work zone traffic control and to keep watch over each other. Not taking anything for granted is important to the team because they know that each day brings along new challenges, and work zones can change without notice. Using proper equipment for a job, adapting for changes in weather and adopting a group effort mentality are all important parts of overcoming these challenges.

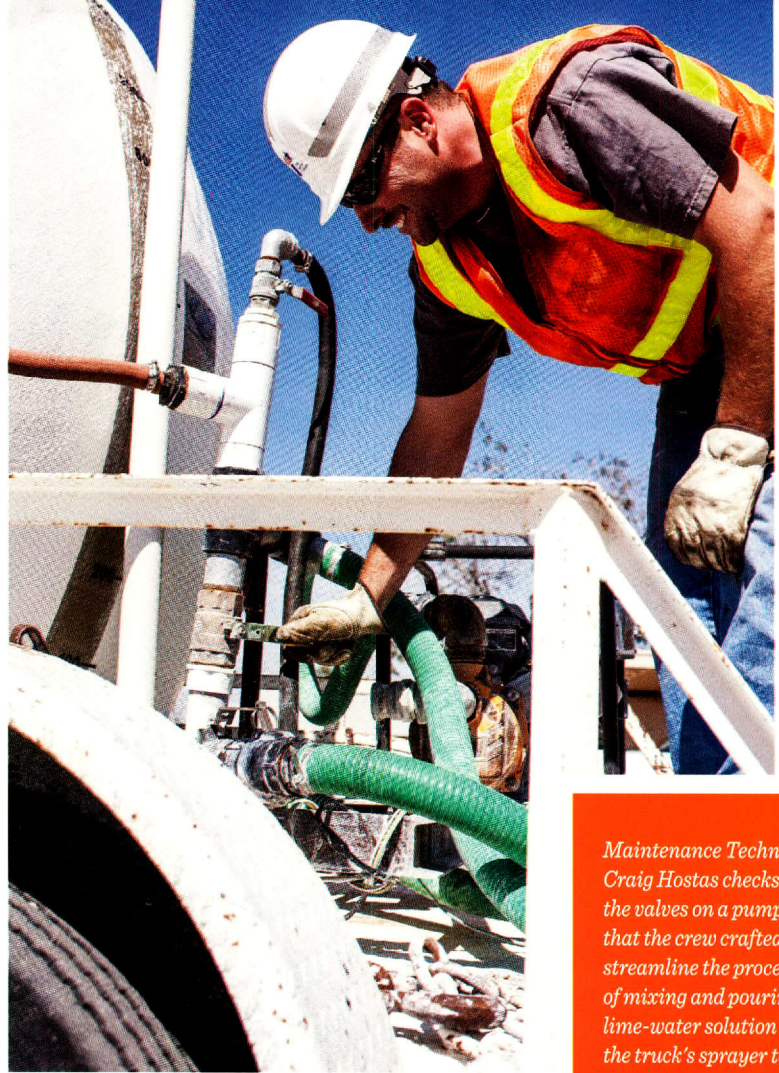
The district and the section foster a culture of innovation and encourage pre-planning and discussion of work operations before arriving at the job site. Safety tailgate meetings and monthly safety meetings are kept interesting with new speakers, topics and safety points-of-contact. They also start and end each day with the “play of the day,” or an example of what was done correctly to prevent injury.

The section’s perpetual short-term goal is making sure they have no injury or accident each day. As far as long-term goals, on June 6, 2013, the Seymour crew expects to reach nine years without an accident or injury.

“There is a general desire to do the best you can in the safest way possible,” said Area Engineer Jesse Fleming. “And there is support for us to work safely, with each employee playing an equal and important part in our unit.”

The section credits their district engineer, who they feel is open-minded and cares about his employees, for giving them the tools they need to perform their work safely each day. Tegtmeier comes to safety meetings and supports the employees on the job, as well as away from work.

Continued on page 10



Maintenance Technician Craig Hostas checks the valves on a pump that the crew crafted to streamline the process of mixing and pouring a lime-water solution into the truck's sprayer tank.

THE CREW HAS SEVERAL POSITIVE MESSAGES THEY SAY THAT KEEP THEM FOCUSED ON SAFETY:

- Safety isn't expensive; it's priceless.
- "Hurry up" can hurt.
- Prepare and prevent. Don't repair and repent.
- Alert today, alive tomorrow.
- The small deeds in safety will take care of the large deeds.



Maintenance Technicians Cody Coltharp (left), Ronney Stone (middle) and Craig Hostas (right) help guide pallets the crew created to speed up and organize truck loading.

Continued from page 9

The crew believes they must be united and be able to trust each other. One way they achieve this trust is by taking personal responsibility, creating an environment where people self-manage and at the same time, work well with others.

“Records are great, but today is a new day. We have to be focused on safety at all times,” Slaggle said. “This is a great crew that gets along with each other. They joke a lot and make work as enjoyable as possible. We communicate very well at all levels, and they have a great attitude and, at the same time, enjoy what we are doing.” **TN**



Section Supervisor Shan Slaggle and Maintenance Section Assistant Phil Hardin help foster an atmosphere of proactive teamwork that keeps the section inventive and serious about safety.

SAFEST TXDOT RECORD in 95 Years

SAFETY IS A PRIORITY AT TXDOT — not only to provide safety for the traveling public, but to create a safe work environment for the more than 11,500 employees statewide. The department wrapped up this last fiscal year with the safest record in its 95-year history, placing the agency among the safest transportation departments in the nation.

TxDOT ranked first in the latest national safety rankings with the lowest incident rate and lost-time injuries. This historic safety record is the best in the country among all state departments of transportation that report their rates. TxDOT had zero on-the-job fatalities in 2011 and expects to achieve the lowest lost-time rate compared to other DOTs for the third consecutive year in 2012.

TxDOT districts, divisions, offices and regions across Texas played a significant role in making this the safest year on record.

- Five districts — Paris, Bryan, Atlanta, Pharr and Brownwood — had zero lost-time injuries in fiscal 2012.
- The Brownwood District has the distinction of eight consecutive years without lost time on the job.
- Zero lost-time records were also set in the north and east regions and the agency’s Port Aransas Ferry operations.
- Ten districts ended the year with only one lost-time incident.
- Twenty-eight divisions ended the fiscal year with no injuries, 32 divisions with no lost-time injuries, 32 divisions with no lost production days and 33 divisions with no vehicle collisions.

In a year-to-year comparison (July 2011 to July 2012), TxDOT had 71 fewer injuries, 42 fewer lost-time injuries and 2,180 fewer lost production days.

TxDOT makes safety a priority, putting people first and creating a safe work environment. The most significant factor in our success is the commitment from TxDOT administration and employees. Field personnel begin and end each day with a safety discussion. This, reinforced with training and continuous communication, confirms the message that the most important job at TxDOT is getting employees home safely each evening. **TN**

STRIVING FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

NEW PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

According to Chief Strategy and Administrative Officer Scott Leonard, TxDOT has one of the best workforces he's ever seen.

"Every day, when I come in, I'm amazed at the dedication and commitment, the passion, intelligence and skills of the people I work with," Leonard said.

To better identify and reward TxDOT's most outstanding employees, the department has developed a new Performance Management System, similar to review processes used by other successful corporations and large organizations.

"We've spent some time focusing on how we evaluate performance and how to properly recognize and reward those who do a great job," said Deputy Executive Director John Barton.

The new system will encourage more thoughtful, candid and honest discussions between employees and managers, and result in more accurate employee ratings. Under the previous appraisal system, nearly 90 percent of all agency employees were rated "Superior" or "Exceeds Expectations."

"We want to give employees a sense of ownership in the performance review process through honest assessments that are proactive instead of reactive," said Human Resources Division Director Janine Mays.

Although there will be a new format, Mays emphasizes that the most important aspect of the new process is the quality of the content. Employees will have more input in the process, and managers can reward more of those who perform at the highest levels.

Barton and Leonard spoke to a group of employees in the Austin District in October to help roll out the new program. They believe the results are expected to be a more accurate distribution of employee assessments. This new system is also expected to reward employees who consistently go above and beyond their basic job duties with financial incentives.

"Under the new system, three times as many employees, approximately 7,500, will receive merit compensation," Leonard said. "Those employees can feel good that they are getting recognized for the hard work they've done."

Continued on page 23

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NEW PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

DEC

2012

- **Self-Assessments:** How did I perform this last year? Did I go above and beyond the call of duty with TxDOT goals in mind?
- **Performance Review Cycle:** July–December 2012
- **End-of-Cycle Review:** Specific job duties will be rated Exceeds Expectations; Above Expectations; Meets Expectations or Unsatisfactory.
- **Rated Factors:** Core employee functions, such as attendance and customer service, have been expanded.

- **Define specific job tasks and expected results to align with TxDOT goals**
- **Employee/manager collaboration**
- **Merits** will be based on 2012 overall rating for the employee from management: Superior; Exceeds Expectations; Above Expectations; Meets Expectations; or Unsatisfactory.

JAN

2013

APR

2013

- **2012 Merit Payout**

- **Mid-Cycle Self-Assessments:** How am I performing to date? Are there areas for improvement? Am I working toward TxDOT goals?
- **Mid-Cycle Review:** Time to discuss job tasks, results, rated factors and areas for improvement.

JUN

2013

- **Self-Assessments:** How did I perform last year? Did I go above and beyond the call of duty with TxDOT goals in mind?
- **Performance Review Cycle:** January–December 2013
- **End-of-Cycle Review:** Specific job duties will be rated Exceeds Expectations; Above Expectations; Meets Expectations or Unsatisfactory.
- **Rated Factors:** Core employee functions, such as attendance and customer service, have been expanded.

DEC

2013

Big 5 Awards

A yearly favorite of the Transportation Conference is the announcement of the Greer, Gilchrist, Perry, Stotzer and DeBerry awards. This year proved to be no exception. Recipients took the stage to accept the applause and appreciation from attendees at the 86th Annual Transportation Short Course on Oct. 16 at Texas A&M University. Lawrence Olsen, executive vice president of the Texas Good Roads/Transportation Association, made the presentations during the conference's opening session.

Dewitt C. Greer Award



Dean Van Landuyt was awarded the Dewitt C. Greer Award. The award, named after Greer who served as state highway engineer, Transportation Commission member and Commission chair, recognizes the skill and dedication of TxDOT engineers. This year's recipient is Dean Van Landuyt, transportation engineer, for the Bridge Division.

Van Landuyt has been instrumental in the design and construction of innovative and award-winning bridge projects since the mid-1980s. He designed many landmark projects including the U.S. 183 elevated segmental bridge in Austin and the U.S. 287/I-44 elevated expressway structures in Wichita Falls.

Van Landuyt has also won numerous awards for his work including awards from the Prestressed Concrete Institute for his design on the Liberty Laurel overpass in Beaumont and the Loop 340 overpasses in Waco. His work as lead designer of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway segmental bridge in Matagorda earned a Portland Cement Association 2010 Bridge Competition Award and a TxDOT-AGC Design Award.

He has authored several articles in national and international professional journals on bridge aesthetics and structural integrity, and serves on the Federal Highway Administration's Segmental Bridge Team and on the Transportation Research Board's Bridge Aesthetic Sub-Committee.

Van Landuyt continues to break new ground on bridge design as the lead designer on the West 7th Street Bridge in Fort Worth, which will become the world's first precast concrete network arch bridge when it is completed next year.

Luther DeBerry Award



Lufkin District Director of Transportation Planning and Development **Cheryl Flood** won this year's Luther DeBerry Award. The DeBerry Award is presented to an employee

who has made an outstanding contribution to the state of Texas in the field of transportation. DeBerry was the state highway engineer from 1973 to 1980. This year's Short Course program was dedicated in memoriam of DeBerry who recently died at the age of 98.

Flood, a 30-year veteran of the department, began her career as an engineering assistant in the Big Spring Area Office in the Abilene District after earning her bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Texas Tech University.

She has been involved in several projects, including the \$34 million overpass project from SH 150 to south of the Union Pacific Railroad; the construction of new main lanes on U.S. 59, a key project for future I-69 designation through East Texas; and the development of the U.S. 59 North/Loop 287 interchange project. That \$52 million project improves traffic flow on these two arteries and includes the construction of a new railroad overpass for U.S. 59 traffic.

Gibb Gilchrist Award



Steven Warren, director of transportation planning and development in the Lubbock District, is this year's Gibb Gilchrist winner. Like DeBerry, the Gilchrist Award is named for a former state highway engineer. Gilchrist served in the 1920s and '30s, and the award is presented to honor the performance of an outstanding TxDOT engineer.

According to Olsen, Warren is known as a coalition builder. While his primary duties are in Lubbock, he has assisted other districts to design projects in various parts of the state.

Most recently, Warren lent his engineering expertise to the Bryan District to assist with schematic designs on a \$15 million project to widen SH 19 and to the Beaumont District to help design new off-system roads for the city.

His ability to bring transportation partners to the table has resulted in funding for four Marsha Sharp Freeway phases, a major corridor that will improve mobility for the fastest growing area of Lubbock. Warren's work has resulted in the project being completed in 10 years, 15 years ahead of schedule.





Russell H. Perry Award



Corpus Christi Port Authority Commissioner **Judy Hawley** is the recipient


of the 2012 Russell H. Perry Award.

The Perry award recognizes citizens for their leadership in creating public awareness of the need for adequate transportation in the state.

Hawley has chaired the I-69 Corridor Advisory Committee which, along with the I-69 Segment Committees, was created in 2008 by the Texas Transportation Commission to research and make recommendations on developing the corridor through Texas.

Hawley also serves on several transportation boards including the Texas Transportation Institute Advisory Board and the Alliance for I-69. A former state representative from 1995 to 2003, Hawley represented the counties of Bee, Karnes, Live Oak, Refugio and San Patricio.

In her post-legislative career, she has continued to work on issues that strengthen the local and the state economy, including serving on the Texas Emerging Technology Fund Advisory Board and the Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corporation.

In 2004, Hawley was named a Texas Road Hand for her achievement and service to transportation in the state. 

Raymond E. Stotzer Award

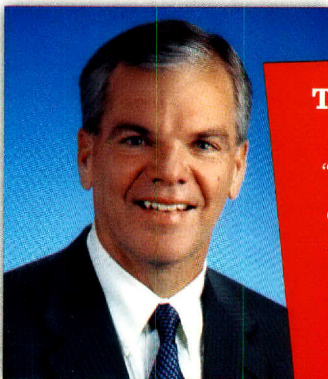


The Raymond E. Stotzer Award was presented to **Terry Pence**, the director of the Traffic Safety Section in the Traffic Operations Division. The Stotzer Award is presented to a TxDOT non-engineer who demonstrates outstanding leadership, dedication and service to the department.

Pence earned the award because of his 31-year career with the department and his work in various areas of traffic safety including child passenger safety, driving while intoxicated prevention programs and school bus safety.

Pence has been honored numerous times by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and has won more than 80 national awards, including both the 2010 AASHTO Bronze Excellence and WASHTO Quality Service awards for innovative media campaigns.

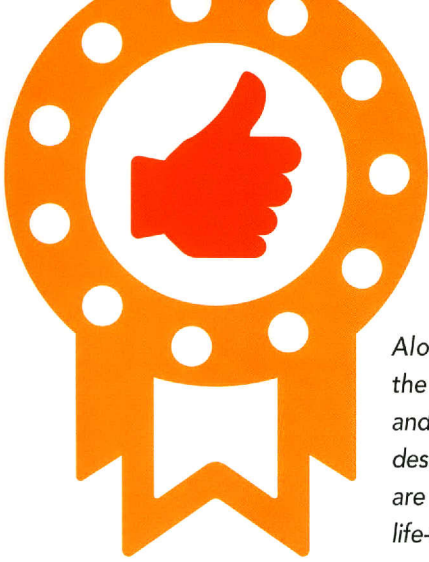
He was instrumental in developing TxDOT's award-winning Traffic Safety Electronic Grants Management System that streamlines the selection and management of grant projects and was a driving force in the "Click It or Ticket" safety program, which has been credited with a dramatic increase in the percentage of Texans wearing their safety belts.



A MINUTE WITH...

Texas Transportation Commission Chairman **TED HOUGHTON**

"Over the past few years, we have all had to learn to adapt. The Department has gone through a number of changes and everyone has been impacted. We have worked together and accomplished so much as a team. It hasn't always been easy but by working as one, we are making big strides forward. Thank you all for your focus and embracing the ever adapting world of TxDOT."



Extra Mile AWARDS

Along with honoring winners of the Greer, Gilchrist, DeBerry, Perry and Stotzer awards during the opening session of Short Course, TxDOT also paid homage to an equally deserving set of employees who went beyond the call of duty to help Texans in need. The Extra Mile Awards are presented to TxDOT workers who have helped save a life or prevented a situation from becoming life-threatening, either while performing their TxDOT duties or on their own time. The Extra Mile Awards were presented by Deputy Executive Director John Barton.

BRANDA WHITLEY AND DANNY MASSIE AMARILLO DISTRICT

Branda Whitley, a maintenance support technician, and Business Services Coordinator Danny Massie accepted their awards for coming to the aid of two men who had been badly injured in a vehicle accident this past summer. In June, Whitley and Massie were traveling back to the district office from a meeting when they came upon the two men sitting in a ditch not far from their wrecked vehicle. Both had been badly injured, one with a head trauma, the other with a severely bleeding gash to his hand.

Whitley, a volunteer emergency medical technician for the city of Claude, immediately went to work helping the two victims. She quickly assessed both men, determining that the best course of action for the head trauma victim was to keep him awake, so she asked some passersby who had stopped to help to keep the victim talking and alert until medical personnel arrived. She then turned her attention to the other injured man, but was rebuffed. After several attempts to help, she finally convinced him to allow her to dress his wound and staunch the bleeding.

While Whitley attended to the victims, Massie turned his attention to the traffic. He positioned their TxDOT vehicle along the side of the road and directed traffic safely away from the crash scene until first responders arrived.

"Fortunately, not only did both of the men recover from their injuries, but the victim, who had originally rebuffed Whitley's help, sent her a note thanking her for the first aid and her reassuring presence," Barton said.

JASON DELEON CORPUS CHRISTI DISTRICT

On March 19, Sinton Maintenance Section Crew Chief Jason DeLeon and his crew had been working on a maintenance project on SH 359 in Tynan.

Satisfied that the crew was making progress, DeLeon took to the road to inspect the rest of the county, looking for anything that would demand their attention later.

Not long into his drive, a call came over the radio, notifying him that a one-car rollover accident had just happened on I-37 between Mathis and Edroy, leaving several people trapped inside an SUV.

DeLeon called for help, getting two of his co-workers, Rudy River and Benito Galvan, to meet him at the crash site.

By the time DeLeon got to the accident, emergency workers had already arrived. Law enforcement officers were directing traffic around the crash, and River and Galvan stepped in to help.

The Mathis Volunteer Fire Department was removing some of the passengers from the vehicle. DeLeon and some of the volunteer firefighters formed a human chain and carried five of the six occupants away from the accident and to waiting medical personnel. The driver was still trapped inside under the weight of the collapsed steering wheel.

DeLeon, who had been a volunteer firefighter for the city of Sinton, suggested using the Jaws of Life[®] to free the driver, but the firefighters dispatched to the scene didn't have much experience with the equipment. DeLeon stepped in and guided the crew through the work.

"With an opening that was finally big enough, they lifted the driver out and to a waiting helicopter that had landed at the scene. With only a broken ankle and an injury to his head and chin, the driver survived the crash because DeLeon went the extra mile," Barton said.



Extra Mile Award winners (from left to right): Jason Dale, Jason DeLeon, Ross Ozuna, Caleb Bryant, Branda Whitley and Danny Massie.

CALEB BRYANT AND ROSS OZUNA HOUSTON DISTRICT



In late May, Engineering Assistant Caleb Bryant and Summer Engineering Technician Ross Ozuna were wrapping up work when they heard a series of sounds coming from outside their U.S. 290 project office. When they went outside to investigate, they saw an SUV had landed, upside down, on the porch deck of the office building. The driver had been traveling on the elevated HOV lanes on I-10 when she lost control, hit a barrier wall and went airborne before landing on the roof of the building's porch.

After checking to see if anyone was in the area or under the rubble, Bryant called for police and an ambulance. Ozuna concentrated his efforts on the driver who was still trapped in the car. With no way to move the piles of sheeting that had once been the porch roof, Barton said both men were desperate to get help to the trapped driver.

Because the project office was a temporary structure located under a freeway overpass, emergency personnel could not locate it on their dispatch system, but Bryant and Ozuna were undeterred. Bryant continued to call for help, while Ozuna assisted an off-duty nurse who had stopped to help.

Fortunately, emergency workers arrived and transported the driver to the hospital. "Because of Bryant and Ozuna's quick actions, that driver is alive today," Barton said.


JASON DALE AND DEAN GATLIN PARIS DISTRICT




In late March, a fast and hard-hitting rainstorm hit Hunt and Rains counties. Within seven hours, waters rose to nearly three feet, covering roads, ranches and everything else in sight. Maintenance Equipment Operator Jason Dale and Dean Gatlin, who recently retired as a transportation technician in Rains County, had been dispatched to check on roads in the two adjoining counties. Many of the roads were passable, but some looked more like small lakes, and all had the potential for danger. So Dale and Gatlin began barricading roads and low-water crossings, hoping motorists would get the warning.

It took most of the morning to set up roadblocks. FM 1565 and nearby FM 35 in Rains County seemed to be the hardest hit. Water was cascading over the main lanes, but drivers seemed to be minding the roadblocks and staying away. By midday, the rain was still coming down, so Dale and Gatlin decided to take another pass at FM 1565.

As they approached the rain-soaked road, they saw a car in the distance, stalled in the middle of the road. Dale and Gatlin carefully drove into the running water in their patch truck. When they reached the car, they found three women inside.

"Gatlin lowered the gate, and with Dale in the back, he lifted each of the women out of the car into the back of the truck. And those three women are alive today because of Gatlin and Dale's actions," Barton said. 



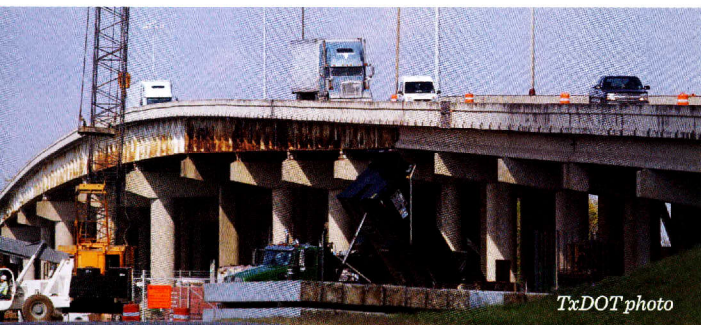
TEXAS PROJECT AWARDS RECOGNIZE TRANSPORTATION ACHIEVEMENTS

TxDOT photo

The historic Brazoria River bridge was built in the 1930s.

The annual Texas Project Awards provide opportunities for TxDOT and the Association of General Contractors to honor outstanding projects that required collaboration and teamwork. This year, eight projects were selected for construction awards, and three transportation engineers received design awards.

BRIDGE TO HEAVEN One award-winning project involved replacing a 1930s-era bridge crossing the Brazos River and widening a 2.4-mile segment of SH 332 in Brazoria County. Over the years, some residents called the new bridge and related construction a monstrosity. In the end, Brazoria's mayor called the results the Bridge to Heaven.



TxDOT photo

TxDOT engineers developed a design plan to install massive support structures for the new bridge, while protecting sensitive wetlands.

The historically significant bridge passed over sensitive wetlands, which required assistance from the Environmental Affairs Division, Texas Historical Commission, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, among others.

"It took a whole lot of coordination," said Houston District Transportation Engineer Michelle Milliard, winner of a design award for the project. "The high-quality wetlands provided for challenging design and

construction methods in order to provide enough access for the contractor, while reducing permanent and secondary impacts to the surrounding wetland area."

Graves from the historic Pioneer cemetery located in the right of way required TxDOT archaeologist to exhume and re-inter remains. Reports of a possible pirate ship in the Brazos River resulted in a search, although remnants of the vessel were never found.

A leaking petroleum tank in downtown Brazoria created a hazardous material site within the limits of the proposed storm sewer work. And perhaps the least popular phase for residents was disruption of a one-mile stretch through the town of Brazoria, as the two-lane main street was widened to a four-lane, divided road.

Construction contracts were finally awarded in 2007, and the job was completed in 2011.

The project also included coordination with TxDOT's Bridge and Traffic Divisions, the Texas General Land Office, U.S. Coast Guard, Federal Highway Administration and the Union Pacific Railroad.

The project garnered both design and construction awards at the September ceremony in Austin. Milliard and fellow Houston District Transportation Engineer Rajendra Hada, who won the construction award for the project, collaborated with contractor W.W. Webber. Retired TxDOT employees who had worked on the project at the beginning attended the dedication ceremony.

"At first, the area residents complained because the bridge was a lot bigger than expected," Milliard said. "Now, it's their prized possession. At the bridge-opening ceremony, they were just thrilled."

There were some bright spots along the complex journey. Because the highway is a hurricane evacuation route, additional funds became available, which allowed the \$55 million project to be completed in its entirety. Looking ahead, engineers have already designed a hike and bike facility for the historic bridge as the next phase of the project.

Other Texas Project Award Winners

AUSTIN DISTRICT: I-35/U.S. 290

- Brett Walker, transportation engineer
- Brenda Guerra, transportation engineer
- Lloyd Chance, engineering specialist
- Michael Miller, engineering specialist
- John Hurt, public information officer

Four direct connectors at I-35 and U.S. 290, south of downtown Austin, increased connectivity in all directions and improved access to the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.



TxDOT photo

Local dignitaries, transportation officials and TxDOT executives cut the ribbon at the grand opening of the I-35/ U.S.290 interchange in Austin in December 2011.

AMARILLO DISTRICT: I-40 PAVEMENT

- Reid Steger, engineering specialist

This project involved installing continuously reinforced concrete pavement after removing 14 inches of old asphalt and flex base on I-40. However, the subgrade was holding moisture, and Steger quickly worked with the contractor to find a solution by adding fly ash to stabilize the existing subgrade.

BRYAN DISTRICT: WELLBORN ROAD

- Ryan Jackson, transportation engineer
- Paul A. Warden, transportation engineer (design award)

Two projects: 1) This 2.7 mile project widened Wellborn Road in Brazos County from a two-lane roadway to a six-lane, curb and gutter-section highway. 2) Grade separation constructed at FM 2818 and FM 2154, and the Union Pacific Railroad.

SAN ANGELO DISTRICT: JUNCTION

- Louis Leinweber, transportation engineer
- Dennis M. Heap II, transportation engineer (design award)

This project extended FM 2169 to U.S. 377 in Junction. Prior to construction, the two roadways were connected by Flatrock Lane, which is a city/county road with a low bridge structure crossing the South Llano River.

SAN ANTONIO DISTRICT: I-37/LOOP 13

- Paul Kieke, engineering specialist

This project raised three underpass structures on I-37 in Bexar County and converted a cloverleaf interchange at I-37 and Loop 13 to a diamond exchange.




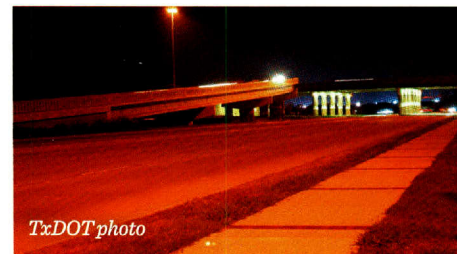
TxDOT photo

San Antonio District was recognized for the project at I-37 and SE Military Highway.

SAN ANTONIO DISTRICT: FM 1620/FM 464

- Jerome Pavliska, transportation engineer

This award represents work on two projects to rehabilitate FM 1620 and FM 464 and replace the intersection near Commercial Metals Co. to better accommodate heavy traffic from deliveries and shift changes. 



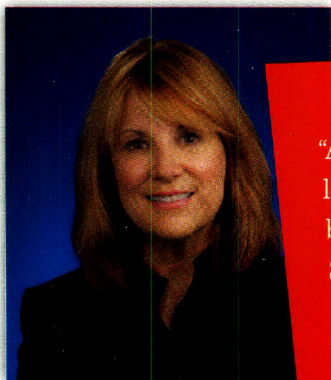
TxDOT photo

Award-winning Bryan District projects widened Wellborn Road to increase vehicle capacity.

A MINUTE WITH...

Director of Internal Compliance **SUZANNE LATIMER**

"All TxDOT employees must comply with all applicable laws and policies. Moreover, it is important, both legally and morally, that each of us conducts business in an ethical manner. Ethics is a culture. Ethics must be something you do not have to think about; you just live it. I like to use the quote from deceased United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, which says, 'Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do.'"



TREADING CAREFULLY TO CONSERVE

TxDOT forms partnerships to protect threatened Texas species



Building up mussels

When TxDOT's Brownwood District replaced a bridge in San Saba County this summer, they built partnerships, too.

It turns out several threatened species of freshwater mussels were likely to exist in San Saba County, so TxDOT's Environmental Affairs Division (ENV) staff needed to study the area before the bridge project got under way. According to Brownwood District Environmental Specialist Andrew Chisholm, the survey found many mussels, including three threatened species: the smooth pimpleback, the Texas pimpleback and the Texas fawnsfoot.

These creatures are important to the health of rivers and other wildlife, explained Andy Blair, an environmental specialist with ENV. Mussels are filter feeders, removing pollutants and toxins from the water. They eat algae and bacteria and are a food source for fish. Most of the threatened mussel species in Texas have a very small range, and their habitats may be shrinking due to pollution, drought and urban water needs.

"The San Saba River has many areas with fairly pristine conditions, so that may be why we're finding these particular mussels here," Blair said.

Female mussels release fertilized larvae that must attach to a host fish and feed from it for a few weeks. The mussels then drop off and grow to maturity. Mussels need a specific type of fish to complete this process, so if the host fish aren't there, the mussels will disappear.

"Part of the problem is that we know very little about the mussel species in Texas, and we don't know exactly what the host fishes are," Blair said.

TxDOT staff believed the mussels could provide a valuable learning opportunity, so they entered into an interagency agreement with Texas A&M University for research, Chisholm said. A doctoral student took on the effort as a dissertation project.

Meanwhile, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) had recently developed a plan to establish "mussel runs" at the state fish hatchery in San Marcos due to concerns about the drought straining mussel habitats — but they had no money to build the facility. TxDOT needed to protect the mussels, so they signed another interagency agreement and provided funds for TPWD to complete the mussel runs.

In June, TxDOT staff gathered at the San Saba River with their partners from Texas A&M and TPWD to relocate about 700 mussels. The new facility at the hatchery received 146 mussels and the rest were either moved to a safe control site immediately upstream or to a relocation site further downstream. Each mussel was measured, weighed and identified with an electronic tag. Some mussels already living at the downstream site were also measured and tagged, and these will serve as a control group for research purposes.

The mussels have done well at the hatchery, with only five mortalities over the last few months, Chisholm and Blair report. The mussels from the hatchery will be moved to their original location by November. All the mussels will be monitored for the next two years to determine long-term outcomes.

Top: The old concrete bridge over the San Saba River in San Saba County. Bottom left: Clint Robertson from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department collects a mussel for relocation during the San Saba bridge replacement project. Bottom right: Landowner David Leonard (left) and farm manager Johnny Duncan (right) discuss the bridge replacement plans with TxDOT Inspector Mark Hale (center).



How do you find a Texas pigtoe?

It sounds like the beginning of a joke, but there's no kidding around about the mussel known as *Fusconaia askewi*, found in the Trinity River in Dallas early this year. Its cousin from the bayou, the Louisiana Pigtoe (*Pleurobema riddellii*), was also found.

The discovery of the mussels during a standard environmental survey at the beginning of Dallas' California Crossing bridge reconstruction project got some attention. Both species are on the state's threatened list of animals that could become endangered. In order to keep the historic bridge project on track, the pigtoes had to be moved fast.

A team of mollusk specialists were called in to not only locate the bivalves, but move, tag and monitor them for three years to make sure they are thriving in their new, temporary digs. Literally. The mussels dig about halfway into the sediment at the bottom of a body of water, making finding them a challenge.

For weeks, divers took to the murky depths of the Trinity River in sectioned-off squares made of PVC, and felt around the river bed for mussels. The hand-picked mussels were then transported by kayak to the river bank, identified, categorized, counted and practically given first names.

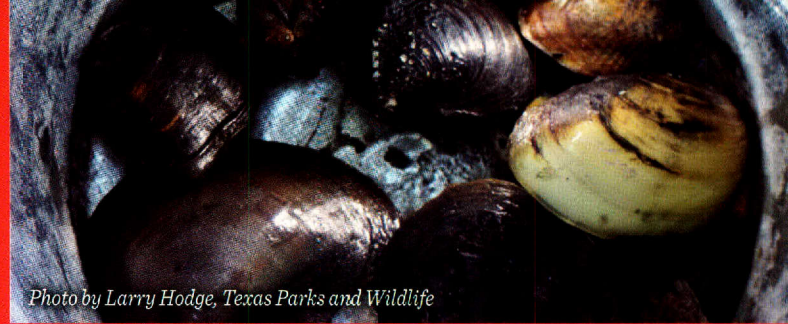


Photo by Larry Hodge, Texas Parks and Wildlife

Pigtoes collected by divers at the San Saba River site.

Once separated from the Bleuler, Pistolgrip, Southern Mapleleaf and Deer Toe mussels, among others, the special species were tagged and then transported upstream.

About 300 mussels were moved for the California Crossing project and are thriving nicely in their new environment, and when the project is finished, they will be returned. In all, 41 Texas Pigtoes and five Louisiana Pigtoes were discovered — a record amount found at one location within the Trinity River Basin.

One of the divers was asked, "How can you find them and identify them in the water without even seeing them?" He replied that it was a special skill. "You get into your PVC square and you get into the zone — it's very Zen."

Spider discovery

The presence of an extremely rare, blind, cave-dwelling spider on a highway construction project managed by TxDOT has led to a collaborative effort between state and federal agencies.

"This highlights how seriously TxDOT takes its responsibility to protect state natural resources," said TxDOT Lead Biologist Stirling Robertson, who holds a doctorate in biology.

The initial project — a \$15.1 million effort to separate cross traffic getting onto SH 151 from mainlane traffic on state Loop 1604 by extending lanes of Highway 151 under Loop 1604 and connect them to Alamo Ranch Parkway — has been sent back to a group of engineers and biologists now collaborating on a new plan.

"TxDOT is working closely with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to develop solutions," said San Antonio District Transportation Planning and Development Director Jonathan Bean. "These solutions could include a complete redesign and appropriate mitigation measures to avoid impacts to the spider's habitat."

The collaboration began before the finding of the *Cicurina venii*, or Braken Bat Cave Meshweaver, which was last seen only once before: 32 years ago in a small cave a few miles away from the project. Knowing chances of uncovering a *Cicurina* spider were high on this project, the three agencies agreed full-time biologists should be on-site during construction.

The *Cicurina venii*, or Braken Bat Cave Meshweaver, was last seen once before over 30 years ago.




Photo by Jean Krejca, Ph. D., President, ZARA Environmental, LLC

Robertson says this is routine any time the department finds a project to be in the path of any one of more than 1,200 species of rare plants and animals. Each project is surveyed well before construction begins, allowing experts to determine whether a potential habitat for endangered or protected species may exist in the area.

"If such a feature is identified, we take steps, to protect the feature and avoid impacting the habitat if at all possible," Robertson said. "If adverse effects are unavoidable, then we attempt to minimize them."

The lead federal agency through the process is the FHWA, though TxDOT serves as the designated non-federal representative and consults directly with FWS on a day-to-day basis. Together, the agencies develop a project plan protecting the valuable natural resources supporting the continued existence of the species discovered.

Until that plan can be developed, TxDOT will connect with more than 20 other partners — including the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality — to return some of the project area to a natural state, where possible.

In time, the highway intersection will be built up to meet the needs of Bexar County's fastest-growing precinct and get motorists to their destinations safely and reliably. 

Activities Committee in Abilene ENHANCES morale, wellness and safety



The Abilene District is helping employees maximize their potential, assisting them through difficult situations, encouraging wellness and promoting safety—with an overall message of overcoming day-to-day hurdles, or in this case, speed bumps.



TxDOT photo

Last year, Abilene District Engineer Lauren Garduño felt it was necessary to bring employees closer together, boost morale, and increase wellness and safety. So he created a committee charged to help with that need.

The committee initially formed to enhance employee morale, but it later evolved to help serve the district's safety and wellness programs. The committee's goal is make employees feel part of a team, look out for each other and feel a greater responsibility to take care of themselves.

The first official meeting began August 2011. After a district-wide "name the committee" contest, the committee became known as The Speed Bumps.

"It's a fun name, and we've found that it's very fitting because sometimes you have to slow down a little to focus on what's important," Garduño said.

Before the committee started, a district-wide morale survey circulated to look for improvements. The survey asked about what kinds of activities employees would enjoy doing together and which ones they would be willing to volunteer for.

Meeting approximately every month, the eight-member committee represents the Abilene District office complex, field offices and the West Region. Members rotate every August, so new members get a chance to join and share ideas. After collaborating with the San Antonio District — who started their own successful committee years ago — The Speed Bumps received advice on how to create activities that work well and raise funds to support events.

Every year, the committee plans at least six events, with at least three major, district-wide gatherings. The committee hosted a luncheon for truck "Rodeo" participants last fall, a Safety Summit chili cook-off last winter and the Safety Luau this past summer. The district also had its first district-wide holiday celebration in December 2011. For every celebration, the committee makes it a point to focus on safety — and Garduño never passes up the chance to talk about safety with a captive audience.

Wellness is also an important factor. At the safety luau, local health care providers offered screenings and wellness information, as well as chair massages. The committee also helps employees facing difficult situations, such as serious medical issues involving themselves or family members. The



TxDOT photo

Top: James Johnson of the Baird Maintenance Section enjoys the Abilene District's Safety Luau.

Above: Robin Bradley of the Aspermont maintenance section tries her hand at some lawn games during the Abilene District's Safety Luau.

committee hosts fundraisers at most events for this effort. If


an employee is facing a serious life event, The Speed Bumps try to help with incidental expenses, such as gasoline or meals.

Other activities include: collecting toys and school supplies for children in foster care, collecting items for troops serving overseas and partnering with area schools to make cards to send along with supplies for troops. As a good community partner, the committee builds support and awareness for TxDOT among its neighbors.

For The Speed Bumps, morale, safety and wellness are all tied together. The Abilene District's safety record this year was much better than the previous year's, and the district's Survey of Employee Engagement scores also improved.



TxDOT photo

"These improvements can be attributed to a combination of factors, but I'd like to think that the committee had a hand in it," Garduño said. 

Snyder Area Engineer Mike Molter, gets ready for another drenching in the dunking booth at the Abilene District's Safety Luau.

BRIGHT LIGHTS: Serving West Texas

As a public information officer in the Childress District, Barbara Seal builds relationships serving the community and the department. It's a long way between towns in West Texas. The roads and highways are the lifeblood connecting communities. Seal knows those roads well and travels them often to visit area offices, public officials and media contacts.


"Barbara is very good about bragging on the hard work our employees do, for which they get very little recognition or praise," said Childress District Engineer Marty Smith. "She's a people person who's never met a stranger."

One of those strangers was Sherry Hougard, a mother of two returning to California after several weeks of Texas sightseeing. Hougard hit a deer with her van outside of Matador in the late afternoon. Seal drove to find help for the family. When she arrived in Matador, nearly everything was closed, so Seal started knocking on doors. She finally found a local judge she knew, who contacted law enforcement personnel to assist the family.

Hougard wrote a letter of thanks to Seal, which was featured in Bright Lights: Where Employees Shine on Crossroads.

"All things considered, I'm not sorry about that experience, because of what my kids learned through it, through the kindness of people like you," Hougard wrote.

Seal personifies the employees who make TxDOT a best-in-class state agency.

Bright Lights also featured an email from a Childress radio reporter who wrote about Seal's dedication to keeping the public informed. Another email of thanks came from a potato truck driver who swerved off an embankment and hit a bridge. Seal was on the scene along with several other Childress District employees at 4 a.m. She made sure the driver had lunch, and other district employees donated shoes and other items for the driver's trip home. 

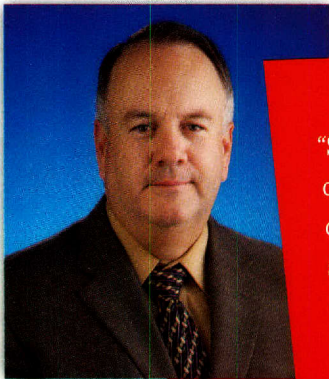
Read compliments sent to the department about other great TxDOT employees at Bright Lights on Crossroads. Please spread the word and help keep this effort going by sending any compliments you receive to AskTxDOT so we can shine Bright Lights on your achievements as well.

Check out: <http://crossroads/brightlights/index.asp>



Childress PIO Barbara Seal on stand-by at local Childress radio station K-96. Seal was interviewed for a story to promote TxDOT efforts to prevent drinking and driving over the Labor Day weekend.

A MINUTE WITH...



Houston District Engineer **MIKE ALFORD**

"Serving as the Houston District engineer has many different challenges. Some of the biggest high-profile opportunities include the deliveries of the SH 99, U.S. 290 and SH 288 programs. However, we face daily challenges in planning, designing, constructing, maintaining and operating our roadways and ferry system. Every employee has a role to play. And every employee makes a difference. Thanks for your dedication and hard work."

I AM A...

Chief Clerk to the Commission

Rose Guajardo Walker grew up in Gatesville and graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in government. She joined TxDOT in November 2010 as a legislative liaison and became the chief clerk to the Texas Transportation Commission earlier this year. A self-confessed political nerd, Walker enjoys hanging out with her large family, which includes four sisters and a brother. She and her husband, Toby, have two daughters: 5-year-old Ava and 3-year-old Evelyn.

WHAT IS THE TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION, AND WHAT IS ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH TxDOT?

TxDOT is governed by the five-member Texas Transportation Commission, which selects our executive director. Commission members serve overlapping six-year terms and are appointed by the governor, who also designates the chair of the Commission. The Commission, with the advice of the executive director, approves rules for the operation of the department, construction and maintenance contracts, state transportation plans, tolling projects and the state infrastructure bank, just to name a few.

WHAT PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE HELPED YOU PREPARE FOR THIS JOB?

I feel like I have truly come full circle. I have a legislative background and began my career with the state in the Chief Clerk's Office for the Texas House of Representatives. It provided me with a great understanding of process and procedure. I then worked for Speaker Pete Laney, and four years later, moved to the Senate to work for Sen. Kel Seliger where I was responsible for handling all of his transportation legislation and policy.

**ROSE
GUAJARDO
WALKER**

WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES?

Preparing and planning for the monthly Commission meeting would be my largest responsibility. Recently, I was tasked with organizing the traveling Commission meetings; there is a huge amount of coordination that goes on to ensure they happen successfully.

DO YOU OFFER COUNSEL FOR THE COMMISSION AND/OR THEIR AIDES?

I keep everyone well aware of items of interest on the agenda and make sure staff decisions are in line with the Commission's direction. It's critical there is proper communication between the two to allow for informed decisions.

WHAT CHALLENGES EXIST WITH YOUR JOB?

My position allows me to work with every district, division, office, region and members of the Administration and Commission. They all operate very differently, so ensuring communication takes place and deadlines are met continues to be a challenge.

HOW DO YOU STAY ORGANIZED?


Assistant Chief Clerk Kristen Webb keeps me on track!

HOW ARE YOU MAKING THINGS MORE EFFICIENT AND INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY?

Upon receiving my new position, I was instructed to find a way to provide an electronic briefing book for the commissioners. I initiated a pilot program utilizing my personal iPad. I created an electronic briefing which the Commission found to be easy to navigate and much more manageable than a 1,000-page notebook.

Overall, this allows information to be received by the Commission faster, and updating is efficient. Our office has also worked to ensure electronic versions of the agenda planning and approval meeting documents have been added to Crossroads and are sent electronically, saving paper and staff time.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST FUN OR MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE AT TXDOT THUS FAR?

I had the most fun scouting the Rangers Ballpark in Arlington for our Commission meeting in November. My most memorable experience came with meeting with the district staff in Tyler. Their level of commitment to the job and their sincerity in ensuring the safety of the traveling public really impressed me. 

Continued from page 11

STRIVING FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT NEW PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In the old review system, despite the fact that 90 percent of agency staff received favorable overall ratings, only 20 percent of the TxDOT workforce received a pay increase last year.

The goal of this new system is to bring more traditional rating uniformity to the process, and provide employees with true, accurate assessments of their performance. This will result in an agency-wide rating distribution that reflects:

- Approximately one-third of our workforce will earn overall ratings as **Superior or Exceeds Expectations**.
- Approximately one-third will earn overall rankings of **Above Expectations**.
- Approximately one-third will be rated as **Meets Expectations or Unsatisfactory** and given opportunities for improvement to become eligible for pay increases.

Within these distributions, the top 10 percent will earn up to a 6 percent annual pay increase or a 12 percent one-time merit. Employees in the next 23 percent could earn up to a 3 percent pay increase or a 6 percent one-time merit. The middle one-third could earn up to a 2.5 percent one-time merit.

"Once you do reach those higher levels, we think you need to get a little extra in the pocketbook," Leonard said. "Paychecks don't mean everything, but they are a concrete way to demonstrate how important you are to the organization."

To develop the new evaluation process, a team of field and division supervisors, human resources staff and other employees gathered feedback through surveys and conducted 15 focus groups. The new performance management process used that input and retained the best aspects of the previous process to develop recommendations for improvements.

Leonard calls the new Performance Management System a work in progress.

"We are going to get some things right, and there may be things we may want to change next year," he said. "But we think we are on a better path than we were before." 

Q&A

with Maurice Maness



Maurice Maness is the Bryan District P6 coordinator. He lives in College Station with his wife, Melissa (whom he married in the infield at Texas World Speedway 13 years ago), and daughters Brooke, 5, and Sabrina, 3.

A 1988 graduate of Texas A&M University in civil engineering, he worked for the Oklahoma DOT after college and joined TxDOT in 1989, working in maintenance for the San Antonio District.

What job does a P6 coordinator do? I work with the project management scheduling program for the Bryan District, which feeds information into the TxDOT Project Tracker. This keeps the public aware of what projects we're working on.

What was the best present you ever received as a kid? Believe it or not, it was a dinosaur playscape that had 50 to 100 dinosaurs with their names on their bases.

What TV shows are recorded on your DVR right now?

I have two: World Superbikes and Moto GP, both motorcycle races. All part of my fascination with riding and teaching motorcycle safety.

Do you send traditional holiday cards or email greetings? I'm afraid these days it's emails, and not those page-long rundowns of my family's activities in the past year. I'm not that creative.

What's your favorite holiday song? "Sleigh Ride." It sort of catches the atmosphere of Christmas for me.

Which famous actor would portray you in a movie about your life? I'm a fan of Mel Gibson but in the early years of his movies. Not after he recently went off the deep end.

What is your favorite holiday tradition? The kids waking you up at 5 a.m. on Christmas because they want to see what Santa brought them. It warms your heart.

If you didn't work for TxDOT, what job would you do? I think I'd teach motorcycle safety full time.

Fruitcake: yummy treat or paperweight? I don't let them into the house. Paperweight.

Best holiday-themed movie? My absolute favorites are "Scrooged" with Bill Murray and "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation."

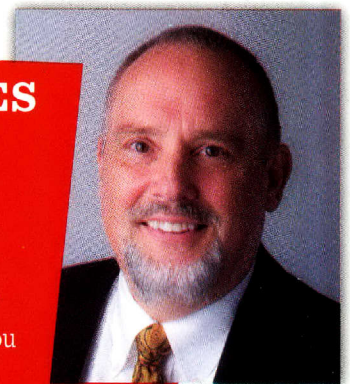
When was the first time you saw snow? I first saw snow in 1968, when my military family moved back to Colorado. I remember it from watching home movies, not because I actually remembered it happening. I was very young at the time.

Continued on page 27

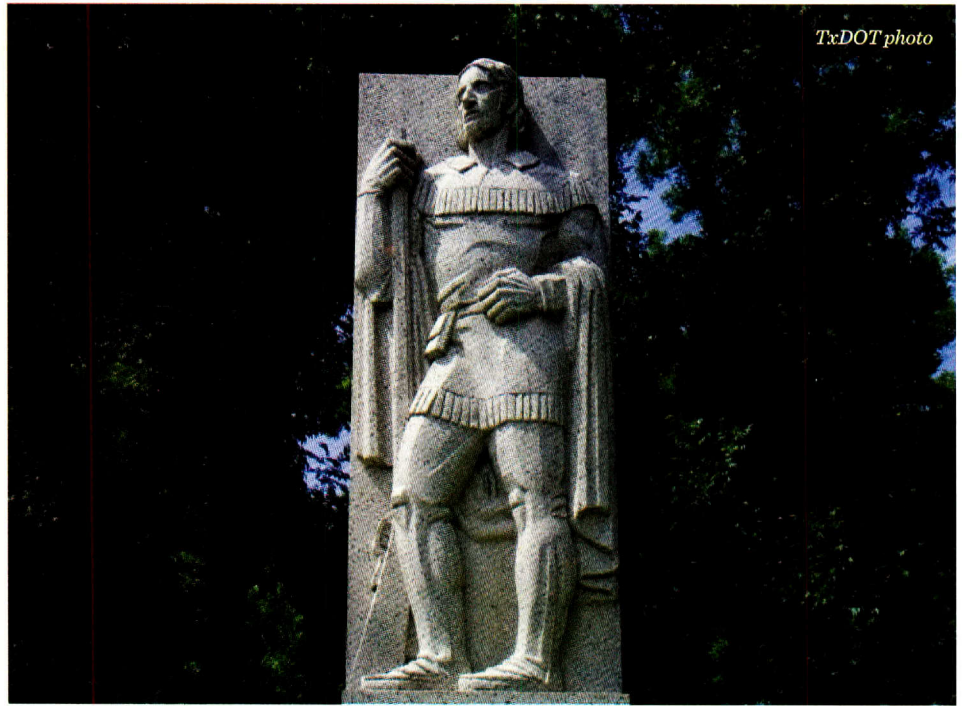
A MINUTE WITH...

Director of the Office of Public Involvement **JEFFERSON GRIMES**

"TxDOT has a tremendous responsibility to openly communicate with the public throughout our transportation decision-making processes. The Office of Public Involvement (OPI) was established to help districts and divisions with their public involvement initiatives. We provide support and ideas for how best to reach the public. The OPI Crossroads site contains helpful information, including best practices in public engagement. The public's expectation of government is rapidly changing — it is key that we know who our affected parties are and reach out to them early and often. OPI is here to help you with these efforts."



The Communications Division supplied this picture selecting identifiable landmarks you might see while traveling across Texas. If you can identify this picture or where it was taken, please contact Bill Powell at Bill.Powell@txdot.gov or (512) 463-8606. Deadline for guesses is Nov. 30.




Identified:

The caption supplied by the Travel Information Division says the picture from the last issue of TN is of a memorial dedicated to the 103rd Infantry Division of World War II, located at the Gainesville Travel Information Center on I-35 in Gainesville.

Congratulations to our official first identifier: Chris Cowan of the Bryan District. Others correctly identifying the picture include Danny Williams (BWD), Renee Zavala (CRP) and Tracy Sult (TRV).

SH 130 CONNECTIONS COMPLETED

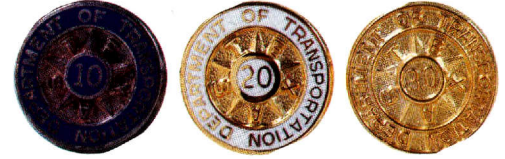
Segments 5 and 6 of SH 130 officially opened to traffic on Oct. 24, marking the completion of the \$1.35 billion project that forms a 41-mile link from Mustang Ridge through Travis, Caldwell and Guadalupe counties to I-10 near Seguin. The road will remain toll-free until Nov. 11. SH 130 is now a 91-mile tollway, providing relief to congested I-35 through Central Texas. Read more at www.mysh130.com. 



Governor Rick Perry and transportation officials cut the ribbon on the SH 130 tollway during an Oct. 24 event in Lockhart.

MILESTONES

September 2012 Service Awards



District:

Abilene

- 5** Mike Rosas
Troy L. Walker

Amarillo

- 35** Jimmy D. Cotter
- 10** Melvin E. Jobe
- 5** Gerald A. Ewers
Joseph M. Gambrell
Daniel B. Hernandez
Robert A. Jameson
Jonathan C. Kabetzke

Atlanta

- 35** Oliver W. Sparks
- 15** Gary D. Messer
Derek W. Rodgers
- 5** Michael W. Smith

Austin

- 35** James E. Wilhelm
- 30** Paul D. Meinke
- 20** James P. DeLeon
Mary A. Griss
David W. Klipple
- 10** Randy A. Kalka
David R. Pruitt
- 5** Charles E. Banks
Mojtaba Ranjbar
Clarkson J. Reid
Denzal E. Wright
Benjamin R. Young

Brownwood

- 20** Merlin T. Harrington
- 10** Donald I. Epperson
- 5** Kody K. Dannheim

Bryan

- 15** Brad E. Partee
- 10** William S. Stuart

Childress

- 30** Barry L. Atkinson
- 25** Darwin L. Lankford

- 20** Ricky M. Diggs
Maximillian Gerhardt III
Delbert R. Glover

Corpus Christi

- 20** Joel F. Longoria
- 10** Ricardo S. Aguilar
Michael D. Woods
- 5** Sarah F. Munoz

Dallas

- 35** George W. Coppock
- 30** Gary L. Stegall
- 25** Stephen N. May
- 20** Christopher P. Briggs
Thomas T. Dellinger
- 15** Sandra R. Williams
- 10** Walter V. Caraig
Derick L. Davis
Rashidah Dyer
Monty R. Hilliard
- 5** John L. Johnson

El Paso

- 30** Hector R. Granado
Joseph W. Hudy
Johnny C. Vasquez
- 15** Noemi L. Horn

Fort Worth

- 20** Alex G. Bell
Kenneth W. Johnson
John M. Rooney
Charles C. Rose
- 15** James H. Colwell Jr.
- 10** John B. Nolt Jr.
- 5** Olevis Valdez

Houston

- 30** Michael J. Montalbano Jr.
- 25** Robert S. Bissett Jr.
William R. Brudnick
Marc Allen Coppock
David E. Fink
Michael Hobbs
Lucio F. Ortiz
- 20** Alan J. Wang

- 10** Stephen V. Lowery
Guadalupe J. Reyna
- 5** Israel Cuellar
Shimin Jung
Patrick Trube

Lubbock

- 20** Carl Smiley
- 10** Cody S. White

Lufkin

- 30** Robert W. Hutto
- 20** Leonard McGowen Jr.
- 15** Billy W. Jones
- 5** Roy N. McClendon

Odessa

- 20** Lennerd Byrd
Javier Lozano
Rhonda G. Thane
- 10** Martin Arredondo Jr.
Melonie F. Ikeler
- 5** Oscar M. Sandate

Pharr

- 25** Stephen P. Walker

San Angelo

- 25** Ricky R. Moore
- 15** Norma K. Day

San Antonio

- 15** Jack E. Dugas
Keith H. Hutzler
- 10** Mark A. Jung
William J. King
- 5** Paul W. Wernli Jr.

Tyler

- 30** Arnold Gonzales
- 25** Terry D. Williams
- 10** John N. Curtis
Leslie R. Drinkwine
- 5** Timothy A. Bender

Waco

- 20** Donna G. Mills
Leslie W. Thompson

Wichita Falls

- 25** James S. Reed III
Wallace S. Slaggle
- 20** Jerry L. Fairchild
Eliazar G. Salinas
- 5** Jimmy C. Lester

Yoakum

- 35** Johnny J. Parr
- 10** Barton R. Braeuer
William L. Dickens Jr.
Todd N. Dierschke
Nicholas C. Ureste
- 5** Robert C. Watson

Division/Office/ Region:

Audit

- 10** Kent T. Leipold
- 5** Allison L. Beck

Bridge

- 25** Jon T. Ries
Leon D. Wegele
Lloyd M. Wolf

Communications

- 5** Timothy A. Harriman

Construction

- 25** John F. Obr
- 5** Gary E. Arbuckle

Environmental

- 15** Douglass J. Mack

Federal Affairs

- 5** Robin D. Ayers

Finance

- 5** Vilma V. Ruiz

General Services

- 40** Douglas M. Peeples
- 15** Johnie Q. Muller
- 10** Weaver T. Jackson
- 5** Christopher R. Trevino

Human Resources

- 20** Benjamin C. Abattam
Paul E. Summerbell

IT Customer Service

- 25** Jacob K. Moore
- 10** Jonathan S. Rogers
Jose A. Saldana

Maintenance

- 5** Michael E. Throckmorton

North Regional Support Center

- 15** Christopher E. Medley
Steven L. Sluder

Right Of Way

- 20** Ervin L. Middlebrook Jr.
- 10** William J. Koch III

South Regional Support Center

- 35** Alfredo Robledo
- 30** Cathy T. Floyd
- 25** Mario Guerra
- 10** Jose R. Trevino

Technology Services

- 25** Amber M. Allardyce
Karen D. Garcia
William L. Gasper
Brian R. Wetzig
- 5** Han M. Dao
Donald E. McGrew

Traffic Operations

- 5** Adam J. Arias
Diana A. Armendariz
Candace H. Arnold
Maria G. Avila
Dawn M. Bachmann
Estella Benavides
Timmie Black
Matthew W. Bolender
Sylvia M. Campbell
Harold E. Campbell Jr.
Jennifer L. Castillo
Anna M. Chandler
Deborah A. Coleman
Tiffany M. Colvin
Joseph A. Conrad
Daphne L. Eason
Kimberly R. Frazier
Shannon Y. Hall
Geraldine A. Hays
Timothy L. Jeffcoat
Steven D. Jones
Jenny C. Jordan
Lois M. Joyner
Amber L. Kelley
Cindy L. Kelley
Lana D. Kovar
Amanda E. Martinez
Debye J. McGuire
Raquel F. Mendoza
Rosa A. Moreno
Sophia G. Morris
Patricia E. Patterson
Beatrice Pyle
Janice F. Roberts
Melissa G. Rodgers

- Mary L. Russell
Walter L. Scott
Tony N. Small
George W. Stafford
Carol L. Thomas
Lesley A. Trevino
Pauline A. Turnage
Yvette Viera
Paul Villalobos
Lisa J. Villanueva
Lorella J. Wagoner
Shawn R. Wilkerson
Debbie L. Williams
Lori E. Williamson
Peggy S. Wills
Nicole N. Wolfe
Rebecca S. Woloshen
Tony Zamarripa

Transportation Planning and Programming

- 25** Victor G. Hernandez
- 20** George W. Petrek III


Continued from page 24

EMPLOYEE Q&A

What is your district doing to make TxDOT a best-in-class agency? We all believe in communicating what we're doing in the simplest terms. It makes it easier for the people we serve to understand. Engineers are not known for language simplicity.

Have you ever fried a turkey? I've stood back and watched my family do it. It's kind of scary to think what might happen if you do it wrong. To me, it always seemed like you could set the house or yourself on fire.

What is the best part of your job? The best part is everything having to do with P6. It's enjoyable using the database, from programming to teaching new users how to work the system.

What advice would you give someone wanting to work at TxDOT? I'd say find a job you really like and go for it because TxDOT will take you where you want to go in a rewarding way. 

MILESTONES

October 2012 Service Awards



District:

Abilene

- 15** Edward L. Hart
Paul W. Martin
Isabel A. Valero
Michael T. Walker
- 5** Randall W. Burns

Amarillo

- 5** Floyd D. Finney
Daniel B. Hernandez

Atlanta

- 30** Eddie J. Thompson
- 10** Michael A. Jaco
- 5** Gary L. Winchester

Austin

- 25** Anthony J. Reitan
Randolph P. Tesch
- 20** Gary C. Rice
Scott D. Scott
- 15** Anthony W. Paidle
- 10** Jacob W. Wells

Beaumont

- 20** Mark A. Cox
Thomas W. Hawthorne
Cheryl A. McCray
- 5** Jay R. Castleberry
Amber J. Couthran

Brownwood

- 20** Joseph D. Finnigan
Glenn A. Turner
- 15** Kent A. Clements
- 10** Bartholomew R. Fris
Willard L. Johnson II

Bryan

- 20** Patrick A. Braun
Karl R. Nelson
- 15** Carlos Neveu Jr.
- 10** Donald E. Wingard

Childress

- 10** Wendell R. Reed
Guadalupe Villarreal
- 5** Jonathan K. Hamby
Jackie J. Lynn

Corpus Christi

- 10** Lydia F. Rodriguez
- 5** Robert G. Batey
Felix Sanchez III

Dallas

- 30** Wade E. Goodwin Jr.
Roland Paredes
- 25** Kevin W. Perkins
- 20** Regina M. Kresge
Steven J. Lawrence
Rhonda C. Ledbetter
- 15** A T M M. Chowdhury
Michael A. Pete
- 10** Tracy L. Beck
Craig C. McCallum
Brenda L. Sanchez
Francene G. Williams
- 5** Vickie L. Jackson
Tung Nguyen
James R. Rogers
Joshua P. Washburn

El Paso

- 5** Arturo Barraza
Oliver U. Catano

Fort Worth

- 25** Robert C. Freeman
David A. Neeley
- 20** Anthony X. Ragland
Jamy L. Sawey
- 15** Tanya L. Fitzgerald
- 10** Nermin Begovic
James N. Pool Jr.
Martin D. Stewart
- 5** Edward A. Bodiford

Houston

- 30** Wesley D. Naumann
Thomas B. Tucker
- 25** Jeffrey J. Suderski
- 20** David W. Moore
Tapas K. Tarafder
- 15** Michael Blackshear
Terry U. Childress
Roberto Espinosa
- 10** Douglas E. Bruno
Rafael A. Contreras
Wanda J. Meador
- 5** Linda A. Lindsay
Ilona M. O'Brien
Mark D. Weihrich

Laredo

- 10** Manuel Viana Jr.
- 5** Santiago G. Rodriguez

Lubbock

- 10** Julia D. Perschnick
Derald W. Shadix
- 5** Justin N. Heflin

Lufkin

- 20** Thomas E. Ivey
- 15** Abigail B. Bell
Carolyn S. Edge
- 5** Jim B. Grissom
Vivian A. Harrison
David R. Sanders

Odessa

- 20** Joel S. Griner
Alexander Strambler Jr.
- 10** Richard A. Gutierrez
Richard L. Walters
- 5** Roberto O. Hernandez
Christopher N. Morales

Paris

- 25** Ray R. Crabtree
Tammy B. Sims

- 20** Corinna W. Clark
Laura E. McCoin
Billy M. Meador
- 15** Shari L. Coker
Michael C. Reeves
- 10** George E. Erwin
Oscar L. Thomas
- 5** Christopher D. Duvall
Kerry W. Rumbaugh

Pharr

- 30** Linda R. Flores
- 25** Donato Solis
- 10** Ramon Beltran Jr.
Andres A. Espinoza
Jose Hernandez
- 5** San Juan Martinez
Javier Martinez
Jaime Mendez Jr.
David Reyes
Jorge A. Villarreal

San Angelo

- 10** Herlinda S. Bilbrey
Matthew T. Wingfield
- 5** Tobin L. Scott

San Antonio

- 15** Guillermo A. Dougherty Jr.
Keith H. Hutzler
Manuel Martinez
- 10** Aaron L. Knoblock
Esequiel M. Moncada

Tyler

- 15** Bentley R. Jarrett

Waco

- 30** Ricky L. Siegeler
- 25** Lisa A. Haussner
- 20** Duane E. Biels
Ross O. Lewis
- 15** Richard E. Martin III
David L. Nutt
- 10** Russell D. Flournoy
- 5** Brian E. Booker
Kendrick S. Kelly

Wichita Falls

- 20** Darell E. Johnson
Cecil C. York
- 15** Jesse L. Fleming Jr.
- 5** Robert C. Knippa

Yoakum

- 35** John Johnson
- 30** Justin C. Wostarek

- 25** Mary Lou Fritsch
Anita K. Yarborough
- 15** Chris W. Berger
- 10** David W. Downs

**Division/Office/
Region:**

Administration

- 10** Annette S. Trevino

Audit

- 5** Ruben A. Juarez

Bridge

- 20** Garry L. Vail

Construction

- 10** Ali R. Habibi

**East Regional
Support Center**

- 20** Maria Pasku Dazdja

Environmental

- 15** James P. Barta Jr.

Finance

- 15** Roxane R. Brunson
Gloria P. Marks

Human Resources

- 15** Deanna J. Berry
Valerie M. Johnson
Alysa L. Powers
- 5** Brian L. Melcher

IT Operations

- 35** John A. Goth
- 25** Anthony B. Harper
- 15** Christopher W. Burford
- 5** Barbara G. Harcketts

IT Services

- 20** Jerry D. Thompson

**North Regional
Support Center**

- 15** Sheryl E. Hood
- 5** William S. Hendrix

Maintenance

- 50** Larry Buttler

**South Regional
Support Center**

- 30** Ramiro Meza

Public Transportation

- 25** Patricia A. Bittner

Right Of Way

- 5** Bradley A. Matejowsky

Traffic Operations

- 10** Anna L. Hovenden
James G. Jones

Travel Information

- 5** Daphne B. Adkins
Shana W. Powell

**UPCOMING
TxDOT
EVENTS**

Nov. 15
Texas Transportation Commission Meeting
(Rangers Ballpark, Arlington)

Nov. 21
Day before Thanksgiving (Skeleton Crew Day)

Nov. 22
Thanksgiving Holiday (All Agencies Closed)

Nov. 23
Day after Thanksgiving (All Agencies Closed)

Dec. 13
Texas Transportation Commission Meeting
(Austin)

Dec. 24
Day before Christmas (All Agencies Closed)

Dec. 25
Christmas Day (All Agencies Closed)

Dec. 26
Day after Christmas (All Agencies Closed)

Dec. 31
New Year's Eve (Skeleton Crew Day)

Retiree Report July 2012

District:

Atlanta

10 David A. Jarrett

Austin

42 Mickey E. Johnson

31 Carlos A. Lopez

Childress

27 Keitha B. Tiffin

Corpus Christi

29 Victor P. Lara

29 Rudolfo Rivera Jr.

12 Cecilia K. Amthor

Dallas

30 George H. Kubicek

15 Roger J. Reynolds

7 Kenneth R. Vanderslice

Fort Worth

27 Gary M. Langley

24 Michael B. Szurgot

15 Otis R. Skinner Jr.

14 Billy W. Landry

Houston

30 Douglas C. Conrad

10 Robert W. Henry

8 Phillip E. Hartell

Odessa

26 Samuel Natividad

22 Robert C. Watts

Paris

29 Tommy W. Baugh

26 Kerry Hansford

23 Connie J. Starling

San Antonio

11 Johnny V. Sandoval

Tyler

30 Rodney D. English

Waco

28 Teresa T. James

27 David G. Stimmel

Youkum

29 Frederick R. Lerma

28 William G. Hundl

Division/ Office/Region:

Construction

24 Vennie A. Gardner

Finance

21 Pearlle M. Rowland

4 Dorothy A. Looney

General Services

9 Rose Atom

IT Customer Relations

27 Jimmie L. Prichard

East Regional Support Center

25 Barbara S. Smith

South Regional Support Center

28 Robert J. Wagner

Toll Operations

18 Maxine P. Ball

Transportation Planning & Programming

34 James L. Randall

Retiree Report August 2012

District:

Abilene

20 Ronnie W. Balliew

Amarillo

34 Anita A. Linger

30 Robert Hollingsworth

28 Durward M. Dorris

26 Louis B. Gallegos

24 Larry L. Wyble

17 Steve D. Gross

Atlanta

33 Steven C. Juneau

28 John R. Ellis

Austin

34 Deral A. Milliken Jr

31 Timothy S. Nicholes

27 John R. Wagner

26 Alan D. Hudson

26 Gary Armijo

25 Donald A. Leclerc

24 Russell G. Morgenroth

19 Alvin B. Fisk III

18 Robert N. Jordan

Beaumont

33 Steven R. Templeton

31 Charles J. McLellan

20 Dianna M. Hanks

Brownwood

34 James E. Wilson

31 Travis J. Bundick

Bryan

31 Steven M. Huff

30 Donnell Burns

25 Donald M. Sanders

16 Carolyn K. Dobos

Childress

15 David G. Seal

13 Phillip T. Mackey

10 Paul E. Davis

Corpus Christi

30 Mario M. Ybarra

29 Carlos M. Armadillo

Dallas

40 James H. Pickel

35 Dario R. Arriaga

35 George W. Coppock

35 Harold G. Campbell Jr.

27 Bruce L. Bovee

22 Nasser Askari

20 Richard C. Mason

5 Juan G. Casiano

5 Richard L. Jones

Fort Worth

35 Michael W. Looney

35 David L. Webb

28 Albert C. Ray

25 Lindsay K. Buckler

12 Barbara A. Lewis

10 Sharon L. Murphy

10 Nancy G. Price

9 Toni Trudgett

Houston

30 Anthony P. Garcia

29 Carolyn A. Bednar-Wood

28 Kenneth L. Ozuna

27 Sammy Gomez

25 Charles A. Neuman

16 Elvin K. Edwards

13 Margaret J. Stanley-Wells

Laredo

33 Jesus O. Menchaca

23 Francis A. Schell

Lubbock

27 Lehmon C. Jacobs

Lufkin

31 Bryan K. Smith

29 Joe R. Warr

18 Judy A. Carrell

11 Alexander C. Zienko

Odessa

31 Jackie C. Lambert

22 Gay D. Brooks

16 John P. Struthers

Paris

20 Bill D. McBride

Pharr

31 Armandina R. Olvera

25 Alfredo Abrego

23 Leonel Guerra

18 Isabel Y. Avelar

San Angelo

33 Hector Dehoyos Jr.

29 Steven D. Plowman

16 Nancy K. Fisher

11 Shirley A. Yerg

San Antonio

35 Arthur R. Henderson

34 Edward K. Schmidt

32 John K. Benson

28 John Waliky Jr.

28 Bobby S. Morquecho

District:

El Paso

Epolito N. Ramirez
Maintenance Technician
Years of Service: 14
Retired: 1986
DOD: 9/18/12

Fort Worth

Leonard R. Jones
Maintenance Technician
Years of Service: 24
Retired: 1983
DOD: 8/20/12

Leslie Arlon Carter

Mechanic/Welder
Years of Service: 23
Retired: 1991
DOD: 8/31/12

Lufkin District

Shelia M. Whitton
Administrative Assistant III
Years of Service: 8
DOD: 09/24/12

Willie J. Grisby Jr.
Engineering Technician I
Years of Service: 18
DOD: 09/01/12

Phyllis G. Jeffcoat
Administrative Assistant III
Years of Service: 12
DOD: 08/15/12

Yoakum District

Louis M. Liendo Jr.
DeWitt County
Maintenance
Years of Service: 38
Retired: 1993
DOD: 09/28/12

Division/ Office/Region:

General Services

B.B. Bentley
Chief of Warehouse Operations
Years of Service: 42
Retired: 1999
DOD: 3/11/11

James G. "Jim" Davis
Director I
Years of Service: 31
Retired: 1993
DOD: 4/30/12

Michael Duncan
Clerk IV
Years of Service: 22
DOD: 2/18/12

Lee McKinney
Clerk IV
Years of Service: 5
DOD: 7/16/12

Juan "Johnny" Ramos
Administrative Technician III
Years of Service: 25
Retired: 1993
DOD: 8/15/12

27 Cheryl L. Ives
27 Terry G. Gentry
22 Barry L. Engelke
12 John A. Polito

Tyler

30 Preston L. Massey
29 Odis M. Cates
23 Marion P. Burlison
6 Charles E. Cornelius

Waco

34 Richard J. Skopik
33 Billy S. Pigg
30 Duane A. Schwarz
30 David J. Pittman
26 Michael W. Vincent

Wichita Falls

26 Vernon D. Sorrell
26 Jerry L. Sconce

Yoakum

35 Johnny J. Parr
33 Louis W. Etie
29 Alberta T. Garley
23 Quentin D. Novosad
10 Larry W. Mobley

Division/ Office/Region:

Aviation

24 Russell D. Deason Jr.

Bridge

28 Charles E. Walker
26 Michael F. Gesch
19 David M. Blume

Construction

34 Rebecca L. Jares
29 Javier J. Vela
29 Bryan E. Stampley
27 Roy F. Collins Jr.
26 Elaine M. Smith
25 Leonard D. Garcia
16 Debra J. Wilson

Design

26 Barrie D. Cogburn
15 Jesus A. Araiza

Environmental

27 Alfred J. McGraw
5 Marvin R. Kimbro

Finance

28 Merrilynn R. Higgs

General Counsel

27 Robert W. Jackson

General Services

19 Paul O. Cortinas

Human Resources

14 Amelia V. Arriens

IT Customer Relations

30 Nellie S. Nunez
25 Jacob K. Moore
18 Jackie K. Taylor
9 Mohamad Abdulkader

IT Operations

23 Gary M. Popp

Maintenance

30 David R. Bennett
25 Judy S. Gage-Werner
14 Thomas R. Barrett

Performance Excellence

14 Eleonore G. Atwood

Regional Support Center East

31 Nancy Y. Fincher

Regional Support Center North

32 Thomas L. Doss
30 Jerry L. Frick
24 Mickey L. Marlow
19 Bobby R. Marshall
13 Clara M. Sullivan

Regional Support Center South

25 Mario Guerra
25 Sandra L. Davis
22 Frank R. Clark

Research & Technology Implementation

30 Ricky Collins

Strategic Projects

28 Matthew E. MacGregor

Transportation Planning & Programming

18 Raul Cantu Jr.

Travel Information

19 Nola P. McKey



125 E. 11th St.
Austin, Texas 78701

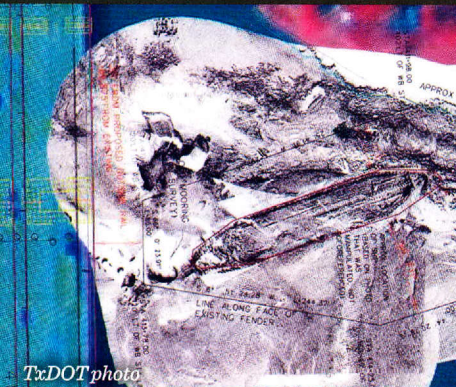
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TN Online (TxDOT computers only):
<http://crossroads/>

NEW BRIDGE BRINGS UP OLD HISTORY



TxDOT sonar photo of the WWI ship next to the bridge.

Beaumont Maintenance Supervisor Todd Dinger has many good reasons why he is happy to see a new bridge going up on I-10 at the Neches River in Beaumont.

In the two years he's been on the job, Dinger and the rest of the Beaumont crew have patched potholes and repaired asphalt and concrete on the 60-year-old bridge. And those repairs usually take place at the wrong place and at the wrong time.

"The last place our crews want to be is doing emergency repairs on the Neches River Bridge during afternoon rush-hour traffic."

Potholes on a bridge tend to grow exponentially. This means crews have to work fast and at a moment's notice to keep the pothole from spreading across all lanes of the bridge, forcing all lanes closed for repairs. Now, a \$59 million segmental bridge project means Dinger and his crew can focus their maintenance skills on other highways.

Any major bridge project, especially one on an interstate, can have an impact on traffic. But the biggest challenge for the contractor may not be the actual construction project. Instead, it might be what is hidden in a few feet of water.

Sunk next to the project site lays an old World War I ship. In the early part of the 20th century, Beaumont built ships along the Neches River as part of the overseas war effort. At the end of the war, one of the ships caught fire and broke from its moorings. It eventually sank and settled to the murky depths of the Neches.

Forgotten for nearly a century, the ship's story has resurfaced and caught the attention of historians and the public. This piece of forgotten history now means Williams Brothers Construction, the project contractor, is treading carefully as it works to modernize Beaumont's highways and preserve an important piece of the area's history.

"Williams Brothers realizes and appreciates this historic relic," said Beaumont District Engineer Tucker Ferguson. "They are taking great steps to steer clear of the wreck site, including using GPS technology to mark those areas off limits to workers and workboats."

Avoiding the wreck means working within the existing right of way. But it also presents a challenge to the contractor, who must build a new bridge and still handle the 80,000 vehicles that travel the bridge each day. The I-10 Neches River Bridge connects Jefferson and Orange Counties, and is one of the few river crossings in the area.

To help speed construction, TxDOT has included several milestones and incentives for the contractor reaching into the millions of dollars. Keeping the project on schedule is crucial to Southeast Texas' commerce and traffic flow, especially along a section of interstate.

Once completed, Williams Brothers can breathe a bit easier knowing they've completed an important I-10 project without disturbing a rare archaeological find. And Dinger and the rest of Beaumont Maintenance will find satisfaction in that they won't have to deal with potholes anytime in the near future. **TN**