

# TEXAS TRAVELLO

## COMING UP

A major tourism initiative is being developed by the **South Sulphur Regional Development Association**, a nonprofit corporation that works to preserve the history, heritage and culture of Delta, Hopkins, Hunt and Lamar counties. The **Texas Cultural Center** will be constructed as a historical park on the southeast side of **Cooper Lake**, a 19,000-acre impoundment on the South Sulphur River. Plans include a museum, a replica of a Caddo Indian village, a late 18th-Century living history farm and a major outdoor drama staged in a 1,500-seat amphitheater. For updates, watch this space.

**NBGS International**, designers of water park rides worldwide, hopes to partner with the city of **New Braunfels** and the **Wurstfest Association** to create a **Wasse Strasse** (river walk) and **Transportainment™** system along the Comal River. Project manager **Bob Sohn** said NBGS is currently seeking public input for the ambitious two-part plan. Wasse Strasse would entail extending the partial walkway already in place into a beautifully landscaped trail along the 2.5-mile stretch from Garden Street to the Wurstfest grounds—the perfect setting, they say, for art shows, string quartets and other cultural events. Transportainment™ would combine transportation, sports and entertainment to create a river walk experience unique to New Braunfels. An artificial river running against the current of the Comal would be built from Garden Street to Clemmons Dam, transporting tubers to and from various entrances and exits along the route. Water-enthusiasts could even float to Schlitterbahn Waterpark, then back again. At the city council's request, NBGS will submit a comprehensive business plan sometime next spring. For details, call Bob Sohn at 830/609-9490.

In 1988, **Errol W. McKoy** was hired as president of the **State Fair of Texas in Dallas** “to upgrade the fair a notch, both aesthetically and artistically.” *The Dallas Morning News* reports Mr. McKoy has not only succeeded in cleaning the place up, but has changed the

fair's culture, as well. He's placed neat-looking trash cans every few feet, stationed police on elevated platforms, widened streets to dilute the crowds, cut out beer sales at 10 p.m., and removed activities that tended to promote aggression, like punching bags. Now Mr. McKoy is looking five years down the road, envisioning the fall extravaganza as an international event with a world's fair look and feel. That means food, music and dress from cultures around the world, world-class exhibits, theme park rides, expanded shows, a large permanent tower, and floral displays and water fountains “everywhere you turn.” He hopes to attract cattle breeders from ranches throughout the U.S., and wants to increase college football games from two to four. The economic impact of the State Fair on the North Texas area is worth about \$350 million annually, or equal to hosting three Super Bowls a year.

**Houston** lost its Oilers to Nashville five years ago. Now majority owner **Robert McNair** is wasting no time putting together business aspects for Houston's new National Football League team. The

**Houston Texans** are set to take the field in 2002. *The Dallas Morning News* reports the organization is working hard toward the team's \$900 million start-up, putting in long days building a \$367 million stadium, selling suites and seat licenses, and marketing sponsorships and merchandise. The staff hit the road this fall, scouting players who might someday make the team. As for the fans, they've been signing up for tickets since they went on sale last Thanksgiving Day, and are already sporting T-shirts, caps and other items emblazoned with the team's name, a bull's head and the colors of deep steel blue, liberty white and battle red. For more info, call toll free 1-877-NFL-2002.

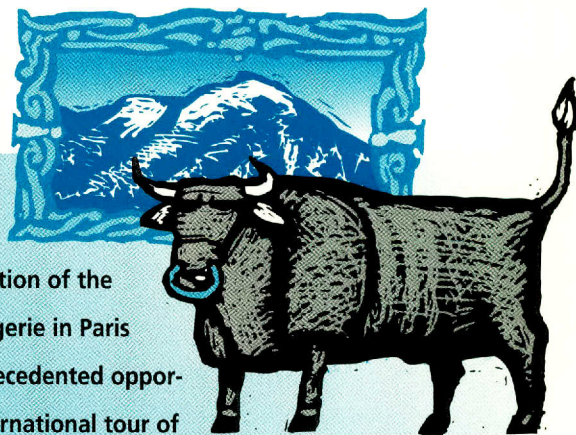
## PLACES

In the tiny village of Los Indios, a small group of volunteers are promoting tourism opportunities along the Texas-Mexico border on an international scale. On September 1, **Los Indios International Visitor Bureau** began welcoming visitors from its headquarters in

## PARIS IN COWTOWN

Extensive renovation of the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris created the unprecedented opportunity for an international tour of

81 paintings from the museum's renowned Jean Walter and Paul Guillaume Collection. ***From Renoir to Picasso: Masterpieces from the Musée de l'Orangerie*** will be on view November 12 through February 25 at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth. The exhibition presents a panorama of the great masters of French painting from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and includes works by Renoir, Cézanne, Derain, Matisse, Picasso and Rousseau. Open Tuesday through Sunday at 3333 Camp Bowie Boulevard. For more information, call 817/332-8451.



**TRAVEL TALES  
OVERHEARD**

**GAINESVILLE TIC** A passel of pedaling police officers (yikes!) passed through Gainesville last month on a bicycle tour from Oklahoma to the state capitol in Austin. The group was raising awareness for people who have lost limbs. With many of the riders sporting artificial arms and legs, they made their point—that people with missing limbs are fully able and whole.

**LAREDO TIC** The Rock, the people's champ of the World Wrestling Federation, and Steve Austin and his monster trucks stopped in on their way to the Monster Truck Show in Laredo. Manager Leo Garza said The Rock was joined by other wrestling greats and WWF commissioner Nick Foley to help promote the weekend event and meet their fans.

**TEXAS TRAVEL LOG**

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Ann Kelton, Editor

Contributing Editors: Jane McNally, John Russell, Mike Talley

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City Hall. Volunteers network with chambers of commerce and tourism entities on both sides of the border to provide the latest in maps and brochures on the area's accommodations, attractions and museums. **Lucia Weaver**, the bureau's director, knows the region and the business well. She served the state for several years as a nationally certified travel counselor in TxDOT's Travel Information Center in Harlingen. Lucia, along with other volunteers, worked with Mayor **Tina Bennett** and city commissioners to solicit city approval and support. Open Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Heywood and Sixth streets. Call 956/399-4255 for more info.

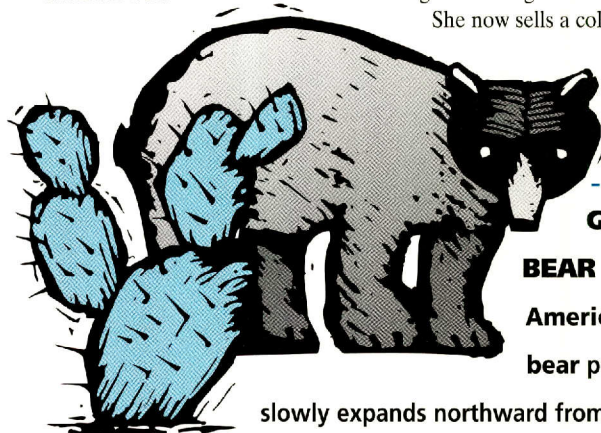
**O**n February 24, Austin billionaire and telecommunications executive **Steve Smith** arrived in **Lajitas** by helicopter an hour before the town was to be auctioned, hoping he could pick up a good deal. *The Dallas Morning News* reports his winning bid of \$4.2 million bought him the 2,650 acres that contain the unincorporated town, plus another 21,350 acres between Lajitas and Terlingua. The tourist village sits just beyond the western tip of the expansive Big Bend National Park and includes more than 90 hotel rooms, a restaurant and saloon, shops, a nine-hole golf course, stables, an 80-space RV park and a trading post. Mr. Smith plans to add another nine holes of golf, expand the airstrip, and add a spa, an amphitheater and a lagoon-style swimming pool. So far Lajitas business owners have embraced the personable new owner as a much-needed boost for the sagging resort, and are encouraged by his community support. Though some residents fear he'll turn Lajitas into a posh retreat, Mr. Smith insists he won't ruin the area's rustic charm. If anything, he says, he wants to stabilize it by attracting second-home owners and year-round visitors to even out the tourism slump. "I don't want a crowd of people here, I don't have to make more money, I don't want to build more hotel rooms," he says.

**T**he **Nacogdoches C&VB** recently unveiled a new **Fall Foliage Trail**, designed to guide visitors through some of the most beautiful and scenic routes in East Texas. The trail winds through five historic counties and highlights sites of interest along the way, including the Mission Delores Visitors Center in San Augustine, the Shelby County Courthouse in Center, Millard's Crossing Historic Village in Nacogdoches, the Texas Forestry Museum in Lufkin, and Caddoan Mounds State Historical Park near Alto. The Texas Forest Service predicts the peak viewing time will be November 4 through 19. For more info or to request a free map and guide, call 1-888-564-7351.

**T**he city of **Grapevine** will take over operations of the **Tarantula** steam excursion train on December 1. In a city steeped in railroad history, the venture will enhance Grapevine's link to its past, and will assure the continued stability of a first-rate attraction. The 1896 steam locomotive began carrying passengers from the Fort

Worth Stockyards National Historic District in 1992. Four years ago, excursions were extended to Grapevine. The *Tarantula* ran into trouble when Coe Sun Inc. of Michigan, which leased the train from Fort Worth & Western Railroad, fell short of \$400,000 in needed maintenance and repairs. Under Coe's authority, the train derailed twice, and the vintage steam engine went out of commission because of neglect. While the city of Grapevine works to rebuild the steam train, a diesel locomotive will temporarily pull the four 1925 day coaches between Grapevine and Fort Worth. The *Tarantula* departs from Grapevine's Cotton Belt Depot for runs to the Stockyards at 10 a.m. on Saturdays, and at 1 p.m. on Sundays. The round-trip ride from the Stockyards to Eighth Avenue leaves at noon on Saturdays and at 3 p.m. on Sundays. For more info, call 817/625-RAIL.

**L**ast year, **Ginny Garcia** abandoned a design business in San Antonio to open a glassblowing studio in **Boerne**. She now sells a colorful line of goblets, vases



**GRIN AND BEAR IT** As the American black bear population

slowly expands northward from the lower **Big Bend Region**, ranchers are learning bears are not the threat they previously perceived. *The Desert Candle* reports outreach programs in the form of slide presentations, discussions with private landowners and dissemination of information on the ecology of black bears have effected a peaceful coexistence in the Chihuahuan Desert. Though a few isolated problems continue, experts say the majority of incidents occur when drought prevails and natural food supplies are low. The American black bear is listed as a threatened species in Texas, and comes under the protection of Texas Parks and Wildlife.

and hummingbird feeders at her studio on the I-10 frontage road just north of town. The *San Antonio Express-News* reports the prospect of plentiful tourist dollars and the absence of big-city regulations persuaded Ms. Garcia to invest in **Garcia Glass Art Inc.** With fewer than a dozen commercial glassblowing studios in Texas, Ms. Garcia joins a select group of Americans who are making their mark on an art form that traditionally was dominated by Italians. Open Monday through Wednesday, and Friday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; free demonstrations on Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At 39340 I-10 West. Call 830/249-1661 for details.

**MEXICO TRAVEL**

Mexico's president-elect **Vicente Fox** said he will consider **legalized casino gambling** when he takes office December 1. *The Dallas Morning News* reports Mr. Fox won the election in July promising to throw Mexico's economic development into overdrive. Well-managed casinos would help generate millions of jobs and billions of dollars in foreign investment, Mr. Fox said. "We're open to promoting casinos and gambling in a modern, new way," he told Texas business leaders, during a four-day sweep of the U.S. and Canada. "But they must be well-selected and well-supervised. They must produce resources for Mexico and income for the government." Though critics worry that gambling could lead to increased corruption in Mexico, economists and industry analysts say legal casinos probably would generate enormous tax revenue, in a country where tourism is already one of the leading generators of hard currency and jobs.

**HISTORY**

A **bronze statue** of Texas hero **Juan N. Seguín** was unveiled on October 28 in Seguin City Park. The statue was made possible through fund-raising efforts of the **Seguín Family Historical Society**, a dedicated

group of Seguín's descendants, who work to preserve and promote family and Texas history. The family applauds their ancestor as "a Texan for all Texans," an unsung hero, who unfairly was branded a traitor. As a third-generation Texan, Seguín fought as a colonel under General Sam Houston in the Battle of San Jacinto, served as senator during the Republic of Texas days, and was elected mayor of San Antonio. He was then slandered by fellow Texans, thrown into prison in Mexico, then, when given a choice of prison or the Mexican Army, fought against his own country. At last count, some 200 family members were expected to attend the October ceremonies. The larger-than-life statue of Seguín astride his horse faces east toward the San Jacinto Battlefield.

The border dispute between Texas and Oklahoma got so ugly that in 1931 it required the deployment of the Oklahoma National Guard and the Texas Rangers. *The Dallas Morning News* reports one of the final steps in establishing a formal boundary was taken in September when the U.S. Senate unanimously approved the **Red River Boundary Compact**. The House previously had endorsed the measure, agreed upon by both state legislatures and signed into law by governors George W. Bush and Frank Keating. The border was established in 1821 by a treaty between the U.S. and Spain. The problem was not a shifting boundary, but rather an artificial line that needed to be located and marked. The new boundary was drawn at the Red River's south bank where vegetation begins, placing the river under the jurisdiction of Oklahoma.

**MUSEUMS**

The **San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts** has showcased contemporary American ceramic art since opening in 1985. Now the museum brings to its community an international



**WIR SPRECHEN DEUTSCH**

The Amarillo Convention & Visitor Council responded to

the high volume of hits from Germany on its Web site by adding a new home page. With a quick double-click on a small German flag, German-speaking visitors can learn about Amarillo's climate, history, accommodations, attractions and shopping, all in their native tongue. Director of tourism **Jutta Matalaka**, a native of Germany, said, "Germans, along with other Europeans, come here to realize their dream of wide open spaces and Western lore. Our new site will allow them to get information they can understand. It also lets them know we care." The CVC will expand foreign language offerings to meet demand. Willkommen in deutsch? Key in [www.amarillo-cvb.org](http://www.amarillo-cvb.org).

**TEXAS TRIVIA**

Who was the first Mexican American elected to the Texas Senate in the 20th Century?

When revolutionary upheaval swept Mexico in 1910, thousands of people left their homeland in search of political asylum. Many found refuge in San Antonio, where they opened businesses and began the rise of the Hispanic middle class. One of these early immigrants, Leonides Gonzalez, had served as mayor in Mapimi, Durango, and as a political-party chairman. In 1911, when Gonzalez became the target of revolutionaries, he and his family fled. A son, Enrique Barbosa Gonzalez, born in San Antonio in 1916, would become the first Mexican American elected to the Texas Senate in the 20th Century. In 1957, Henry B. Gonzalez attracted national attention when he staged the longest filibuster in the history of the Texas Legislature in opposition to 10 racial segregation bills. For more than 22 hours he "roared." He succeeded in killing eight of the 10 bills. Gonzalez served in the state senate until 1961. His crusade to help the common people continued during his tenure as a U.S. Representative, from 1961 to 1998. At the lonely end of many votes, Henry B. Gonzalez was branded a lone wolf. "The vote that carries the weight of moral conviction... is a vote that eventually triumphs," he once said.

**TEXAS TRIVIA**

perspective through the work of **Ulla and Gustav Kraitz** of Sweden. Approximately 30 large outdoor ceramic and granite sculptures were installed on the museum's rooftop sculpture deck and on the grounds. On view through January 21 at One Love Street. Call 915/653-3333 for details.

A proposed \$1 million, 2,000-square-foot exhibition at the **Texas Energy Museum** in **Beaumont** got a boost with the receipt of two major grants. **Unlocking the Energy of Oil** will interpret the science, chemistry and technology of the refining and petrochemical industry by allowing visitors to explore, discover and experience the inner workings of the manufacturing process. Educational programs focusing on organic chemistry and scientific principles will enable educators to enhance science curriculum through class field trips. The exhibit will open in the summer of 2001 as a component of the 100th anniversary celebration of the Lucas oil gusher, which blew in at Spindletop oil field south of Beaumont on January 10, 1901, and which signifies the beginning of the world's modern petroleum industry. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday at 600 Main Street. Call 409/833-5100 for more info.

<b>NUMBERS</b>				
<b>TRAVEL CENTER</b>	<b>Month Visitors</b>	<b>Percent Variation*</b>	<b>Visitors Year-to-date</b>	<b>Percent Variation*</b>
AMARILLO	10,605	-15.81	125,475	-0.66
ANTHONY	11,583	-15.88	105,528	-4.60
DENISON	27,036	+4.96	243,765	+11.24
GAINESVILLE	27,540	-14.50	278,487	-10.09
LANGTRY	5,292	-25.76	65,664	-12.02
LAREDO	6,639	+17.90	87,207	+9.32
ORANGE	30,171	-16.22	385,260	-7.16
TEXARKANA	41,616	-0.59	355,476	-5.72
VALLEY	12,714	-0.52	196,122	-24.59
WASKOM	30,384	-14.91	381,363	-1.59
WICHITA FALLS	11,595	-26.85	153,165	-14.29
CAPITOL COMPLEX	7,575	+19.05	78,411	-9.89
<b>CENTER TOTALS</b>	<b>222,750</b>	<b>-9.33</b>	<b>2,455,923</b>	<b>-6.46</b>

	<b>This Mo.</b>	<b>Y-T-D</b>
<b>Mail Services</b>	47,456	939,558
<b>Literature Distributed at Trade Shows</b>	0	0
<b>Automated Attendant Road Condition Calls</b>	6,788	117,739

Dial toll-free 1-800-452-9292 for travel assistance from TxDOT's Texas Travel Information Centers (8 a.m.-6 p.m. daily, Central Time)

Internet address: [www.traveltex.com](http://www.traveltex.com)  
[www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com)  
[www.dontmesswithtexas.org](http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org)

Data as of October 31, 2000  
 \*Compared to last year

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